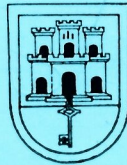


# GIBRALTAR

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

22 February 1983  
1 to 90

NO. 1 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the Select Committee of the House on the Matrimonial Causes Ordinance has not met for some 8 months because of pressure of work on the Attorney-General's Department, will Government provide the necessary funds in the forthcoming budget to permit this department to meet its commitments?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir. My commitments to the Select Committee are personal, not departmental as such.

Sir, I wonder whether after this question has been dealt with, Question No. 85 might be called because it relates to the same matter.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, we will do that.



THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, what action has the Law Officers' Department taken since December in connection with the Theatre Royal?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, this complaint was heard in the Magistrate's Court on 14th January, 1983. It had been adjourned to that date from 10th December, 1982, because of the illness of one of the defendants' counsel. The owners were ordered to complete within 6 months the works specified in the notice that had been served on them under Section 23 of the Town Planning Ordinance. Some of the works had in fact been completed before the order was made.

/ SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 2 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Are there many more works to be done still?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I can tell the Hon Member what was asked for in the notice in respect of which an order was made if he can just bear with me very briefly, I have it here. It is a rather detailed matter but this is in fact what the terms of the order were. First of all, a number of steps were to be taken for preserving the amenity, these were to remove all defective plaster and to replaster in the same style as the present style. The second one was to remove and/or repair defective casement windows and frames including glazing. The third one was to repair and paint the facade to colours approved by the Chief Planning Officer. There was also a requisition to make good defective plastering on the staircase and to repair railings and there was a requirement to repair and paint two coats of oil for the external woodwork, iron and other surfaces. There was a requirement so far as the east and west elevations were concerned to make good defective plaster and to re-decorate walls and woodwork in the same way as I have already described and as far as the passageways were concerned there was a requirement to prepare and paint two coats of oil to all the existing external woodwork and to decorate walls and ceilings as required. The matters in respect of the passageway are the ones which have been complied with.

HON G T RESTANO:

I take it then that six months have been given to the owners to complete all these works, is that correct?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, six months is the normal rule. It is the procedure by way of complaint if the order is granted the Justices I think normally say you have six months in which to do it. If at the end of six months it is not done, I do not think we should contemplate a non-compliance, but if in fact it is not done then remedies lie.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

22.2.83

NO. 3 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, since the last bound volume of the Laws of Gibraltar was for the year 1979, can Government state whether it is proposed to produce any bound volume for subsequent years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Yes, Sir. The binding of the annual volumes is in fact now up to date. Copies of the 1980 and 1981 volumes are available for purchase from the Government Secretariat. The tables for the volume for the year ended 31 December, 1982, have been prepared. They are now being checked. As soon as this has been done, they will be sent to the printer for printing and for the binding of the volume.



THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, has anyone been prosecuted for defacing public buildings and monuments with posters during the past twelve months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, no one has been prosecuted in the past twelve months but two alleged offenders have been reported for process in the past fortnight.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 4 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask why no one has been prosecuted when in fact public buildings and monuments have been defaced over the past twelve months?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

My answer, Mr Speaker, really has an element of assumption. I assume it is because no complaints have been received but I will look into the matter. If complaints have been received I will ask why prosecutions have not been brought.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, if it is an offence does the Police have to wait for a complaint before taking action, is this what the Hon Attorney-General is implying that unless there is a complaint although there is an offence the Police will not take action?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I do not think it is quite as simple as that but I do think it would be unrealistic not to say that in respect of minor offences I would think, by and large, the Police act on complaints rather than themselves taking the initiative but I will enquire and find out why more action has not been taken.

NO. 5 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government say what the loss in revenue from the non-allocation of the flats at Westside Comprehensive now amounts to?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, rent lost from the non-allocation of flats at Westside amounts to £2,010.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 5 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Attorney-General say when these flats will be allocated?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I can only say, Mr Speaker, that discussions are still continuing with the Associations concerned at the moment.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, only today there was something in the Chronicle from the Civil Service Association criticising the Chamber of Commerce. I have not actually read the article but does the Attorney-General not think that there is legitimate grounds for criticising the lack of progress in what seems to us on this side of the House a very simple matter, the question of allocation of flats at Westside Comprehensive. Is there no way at all under which negotiations between the Government and Staff Associations cannot be carried on more efficiently or are we doomed to have never ending negotiations in any matter where the Government is concerned?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Establishment at present does not consider that the negotiations will be never ending, they have not been completed at this stage but they feel they are making useful progress?

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask, how long have the negotiations been going on for, how many months?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It must have been at least since the last House met, I will have to check to find out exactly when they started.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, would I be correct in saying about four months? What are the issues that make it so difficult to come to a reasonable compromise or decision?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I do not know the answer to that, I will have to find out and come back.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether the Police intend to employ any more policemen within the next three months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the manning levels of the Police Force are currently under review in the light of the practical effects of the pedestrian opening of the frontier. It is anticipated that additional policemen will be recruited when this review is completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 6 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, in the circumstances will the Attorney-General undertake to offer those cadets who were asked to leave in October of last year will he give them first refusal in any new jobs?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, that is not within my gift, in the first place. In fact, anybody who wishes to may apply, of course, including those people but every application will be dealt with on its merits.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Government give any assurances as regards those cadets who were trained to be policemen and were then asked to leave, or reservists?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, if I may say so to the Hon and Learned Member, I think I really made the position clear on my previous answer that anybody may apply and every application will be dealt with on its merits.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I just take up the position of the cadets, not the reservists. I understand that in fact the cadets had their employment terminated when they reached the age of eighteen for no reason other than the fact that they reached the age of eighteen and they would have had to join the permanent force otherwise, is that the case or not? There were a number of cadets who I think were being encouraged by the previous Commissioner, apparently the present Commissioner is not very keen on cadets, and is it the case that there were some cadets whose employment was terminated purely because on reaching the age of eighteen they could no longer continue as cadets and wouldn't that be a case for treating the situation as something differently if they were then terminated because at that

time there was no post but they had already been working for something like two years and would have normally on reaching the age of eighteen continued in employment in the case of the cadets? Would the Hon Member not think that that would be a case very like an apprenticeship where somebody is not offered employment because there is no immediate vacancy but the vacancy might come up later on?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not myself self aware that anybody's service has been terminated recently, I mean in the past few months for any reason other than the fact that there was not at the time he was recruited the amount of work in the event that turned out to be the case. If there was then it may be a matter that the police will wish to look at again but I have to look into the facts of the matter.

NO. 7 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government been informed by MOD whether they propose to issue redundancy notices to any of their employees during the course of 1983?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. The Government of Gibraltar has received no official notification. However, Her Majesty's Government has categorically stated its intention to close the Naval Dockyard in 1983. To do this would require the issue of redundancy notices during the course of this year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 7 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon Member aware whether Appledore has been informed by the Ministry of Defence of when they propose to issue redundancy notices?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member agree that it is not very desirable that Appledore should be saying that redundancy notices are to be issued on the 30th June and that the Government itself should not have been informed of this?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I was not aware that Appledore have made this statement.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member expect to be informed by the Ministry of Defence that they intend to issue redundancy notices before it happens?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON J BOSSANO

Is it the Gibraltar Government view that if the proposals for the Dockyard's commercialisation put forward by A & P Appledore International Ltd work as envisaged, it will operate considerably well?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the Government of Gibraltar accepts the views of its Consultants that if the A & P Appledore (International) Limited proposals, taken at face value, were to work, a commercial ship repair operation could be viable. It was for this reason that the Government agreed to take part in a detailed project study. The Gibraltar Government has however made it clear to Her Majesty's Government that it would not only wish to be satisfied that a commercial dockyard would over a period develop into a viable operation but also that this operation together with other measures would satisfactorily meet HMG's undertaking to support the economy of Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 8 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, is the Financial Secretary then saying that as regards the Dockyard's commercialisation the Government has already made up its mind that it is a viable proposition?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I did not say that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Didn't the Hon Member say, Mr Speaker, that what the Government was not yet decided on was whether the commercialisation would be sufficient to meet the commitment to sustain the economy but that in fact the Consultants view that commercialisation was viable had been accepted?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I said that the Consultants said that if the proposals were to work, a commercial ship repair operation could be viable. What the Government has got to be satisfied is that the proposals would work.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, what is at present being decided is whether they will work as envisaged or not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is part of the exercise, yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

But the Government is satisfied that if they do work as envisaged then they are viable or that it would operate considerably well, I think are the words I have used, quoting, Mr Speaker, the statement made by the Chief Minister on television when the announcement was made selecting Appledore. So the Government view is that as envisaged the thing is viable, what is in doubt is whether in practice what is envisaged can happen, is that it?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 9 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has ODA agreed to reimburse Government for the sums spent on works connected with the frontier opening?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, a project application on road and car parking works connected with the frontier opening was sent to ODA on 24 September, 1982, for a sum of £365,000. A reply from ODA was received on the 19 January, 1983, to the effect that aid funds could not be approved for retrospective payments.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 9 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So in fact, Mr Speaker, the indications, I think, that the Government had at the time when the matter was raised in a previous meeting of the House which were that in the special circumstances of the case the thing would be treated exceptionally has not materialised?

HON A J CANEPA:

It has not materialised. I think that ODA are speaking to their generally well-known attitude of not accepting projects for retrospective payment. It has happened in the past on other projects. We were hopeful that having regard to the exceptional circumstances to the need post-January 1982, to get on with the works to be ready for the anticipated opening in April 1982, we were hopeful that they might have picked up the project but they did not.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister not agree that the lesson to be drawn from this is that in future we should not take on commitments unless we have got some sort of guarantees?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, it is a commitment which we might have had to take on in any case, it might have had to be locally funded as is now going to be the case. I do not think we can wait for ODA, quite honestly, to give us a commitment before we proceed on works which are urgent and I think that the works that were covered by the sums that I have mentioned, notably in the British Lines Road and the Airport car park, the traffic lights and car parking that was provided in Queensway, I think they were needed in any case. It isn't as if it is an overall loss because if they had approved the project we would have £365,000 less of ODA funds to spend on other things which we hope to be able to spend the money on.



HON J BOSSANO:

I accept that entirely, Mr Speaker, given the ceiling on aid but what I am suggesting to the Minister is that, for example, if he takes a situation such as this, would he not agree with me that if the Government does a rush job to meet a deadline arising out of an agreement entered into by the British Government, then the British Government should be expected, I would say, to pick up the bill at the end of the day, that the Government drawing a lesson from this if the British Government is going to stick rigidly to the rules of saying: "We have to approve anything before we do it", then it requires on the part of the Gibraltar Government more caution before it commits itself to something which it may then not be able to pay at the end of the day without sacrificing something else.

HON A J CANEPA:

I think it had to be done for good Government, I think it was necessary if things were to flow smoothly and I think that the results have proved that the works have even in the intervening period prior to the partial opening of the frontier, I do not think that the works were entirely abortive notably in the case of Winston Churchill Avenue. As regards the general principle I do believe that there is a distinction to be drawn between projects which are desirable purely from an internal point of view and projects which up to a point external circumstances may force on us. I think we made a very good case to ODA. On the other hand there is, I believe, another project where we had gone out to tender before full approval was given, I won't mention which it was, and yet they did give approval subsequently. One does not know exactly where one stands with ODA, sometimes political factors come into it and we seem to make headway as was the case with the project that I have mentioned.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 10 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that in the view of the PEIDA consultants the chances of successful commercialisation of the Dockyard are now less than they were a year ago?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. The Consultants who evaluated the commercialisation proposals and who are currently working with Government officials in the Project Study Phase have expressed no such view.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 10 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member saying that they have not expressed any such view recently or at any time?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am saying, Sir, that the Consultants who are working with us now have expressed no such view recently.

HON J BOSSANO:

Have they expressed such a view previously to the Gibraltar Government, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think, Mr. Speaker, if my memory serves me, that the PEIDA Consultants themselves expressed the view that the sooner commercialisation took place the better. This was mainly connected with the RFA programme in that this could be eaten into if commercialisation didn't start early.

HON J BOSSANO:

And is that view still held by PEIDA or not, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I do not know, Sir, we have no contact with PEIDA at the moment.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member not agree that if he has no contact then in fact it is misleading to say that PEIDA has not said so recently. Is the reason why they have not said so recently because they have no contact, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The reason why they have not said so recently, Sir, is they are no longer Consultants to the Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

So then is it correct, Mr Speaker, to infer from that that the last time that they acted as Consultants to the Government their view was that for every month of delay in the implementation from the original date they had proposed, the chances of success would be diminished, is that the view they last put to the Government when they were last Consultants?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That may have been the view which they put to the Government when they were last consulted but since then things have moved apace, the situation is not as it was then, and therefore whether they would hold that view now on the evidence available now I have no idea, it is totally speculative.

HON J BOSSANO:

So in fact we have no idea, Mr Speaker, that they have changed their mind either and it would be equally correct to infer that on the basis of their last statement, if one takes their last statement, their last statement indicated a year ago that every month of delay would diminish the chances of success, is that correct or not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am really not interested in what PEIDA said a year ago, what we are looking at now is the present situation with two expert Consultants, one Financial Economic Adviser and one Ship Repair Adviser, and they, knowing the present situation, have not expressed the views mentioned by the Hon Member and knowing the PEIDA Report because they took part in it originally.

HON J BOSSANO:

Has in fact the Financial Secretary asked the present Consultants whether in fact they disagree with the previous Consultants?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I haven't had the pleasure of meeting our Consultants since the Hon Member put down his question, if I had I might have put it to them but I am satisfied, as I am working with them on this project, that they do not subscribe to that view at the moment.

HON J BOSSANO:

Without having asked them, Mr Speaker. The Hon Member's mind-reading ability obviously stretch beyond the House, is that the position? Mr Speaker, I want to know, without having asked them and without having discussed the subject, he knows that the Consultants at the moment employed by the Government who are not the same Consultants that originally made the statement but who worked with those Consultants and who presumably at the time, a year ago, agreed with PEIDA, they have now changed their minds, he knows that and he has not asked them, is that the position?

MR SPEAKER:

I think that the answer that the Hon Financial and Development Secretary has given is that with the contact he has been having with them, that he has not got that impression, no more or less, I think that is what he said, perhaps I may be incorrect.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Thank you, Mr Speaker, you have put it very succinctly, if I may say so.

NO. 11 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how much the present consultancy by A & P Appledore is costing ODA?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. It is not the practice of the Overseas Development Administration to inform overseas Governments of the costs of consultancies carried out on their behalf.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 11 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Hon Member then not know or is it that he is not in a position to inform the House?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not know what the total cost to ODA of this consultancy will be.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether A & P Appledore are engaged in:

- a) a feasibility study to determine whether their own proposals are viable, or
- b) a programme of preparatory steps for the implementation of their proposals?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Neither, Sir. A & P Appledore (International) Limited are assessing in more detail the various factors which have a bearing on the viability of commercialisation prior to a final decision being taken by the Government of Gibraltar and Her Majesty's Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 12 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the final decision is to be taken by the Government of Gibraltar why is the Government of Gibraltar itself not assessing these factors?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, we are assessing the factors insofar as we are working in a project team with representatives of A & P Appledore, representatives of HMG and of this Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

But Appledore itself who is doing the main work, presumably, is not in any doubt as to the viability of the proposals?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I assume not, Mr Speaker, otherwise they would not be taking part in this exercise.

HON J BOSSANO:

So therefore, Mr Speaker, they are engaged now in a process of assessing the factors that condition the viability of the proposals but they know, a priori, that the proposals are viable?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

They know, Mr Speaker, that in their opinion the proposals that were put forward are viable subject to the requirements linked to those proposals being met and it is those aspects which are being looked at at the moment.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, then surely if it is a question of the requirements being met it is not a question of assessing the viability of the proposals but of negotiating for those requirements to be met with the parties who have to meet those requirements, would that not be a more accurate way of describing it, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I would not use the word negotiating, I would use the word discussing.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, if Appledore is so sure of the success of this venture why is it that they have not invested or is it that they have not been asked to invest in this project?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, Appledore has indicated that they would be prepared to invest after a period.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't that really a rather lame way of going about a project of which they are so sure that it is going to be a success and shouldn't it be demanded of them to invest to justify their conclusions?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think that that is another question.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, it does not arise from the question. Next question.

NO. 13 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state who has had access to the report prepared by its consultants on the evaluation of proposals for the commercialisation of HM Dockyard?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, copies of the report were made available to Her Majesty's Government, His Excellency the Governor, Ministers and the five Government Officials involved in advising the Government on the project.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 13 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it the intention of the Government at any stage to make copies of the report available to other Members of the House?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, a report on the evaluation of the proposals was made to Members of the House and to other interested groups by the consultants. Subsequently, a synopsis or summary of the report was made available. It is not the intention of the Government to make that report public until the present project evaluation is completed.

HON J BOSSANO:

I have not asked him about not making it public, Mr Speaker. Would he answer the question I have asked him?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Hon Mr Bossano has asked whether it is the intention of Government to release the report to Members of the House, not to the public.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No decision has been taken yet as to whether it will be released or the time when it will be released.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member not agree that the Chief Minister's motion on the Agenda Paper which asks this House to endorse a decision that they have taken is crucially linked to the information in that report which other Members in this House do not have?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That, Mr Speaker, is a matter of opinion.



HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member's opinion is that the decision that the House is being asked to endorse in the motion has nothing to do with the report? Is that the opinion?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I did not say so, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, which of the two is it, Mr Speaker, I mean, does it or does it not have something to do with the report because if the Hon Member says no decision has been taken to make the report available to the House and the House is going to be asked to vote on a motion which in my judgement . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

I think perhaps the way that the Member should raise the question is as to whether the Hon the Financial and Development Secretary feels that it would help the House to come to a decision.

HON J BOSSANO:

What I am asking specifically, Mr Speaker, whether in fact the motion which refers to endorsing a policy or a decision taken by the Government regarding the importance of the Base, whether that is in any way relevant to anything in the report or the report has nothing to do with it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I would question the analogy and in any case he could argue that in the discussion of the motion.

MR SPEAKER:

Most certainly. He is just asking the Hon Financial and Development Secretary whether it would assist Members to come to a conclusion in the debate if this report was made available, is that right?

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, I would have asked for the report to be made available in any case but given that no decision has been taken I am asking the Member whether he thinks that in fact it would assist, it would have any bearing on that motion.

MR SPEAKER:

That in itself, of course, is a matter of opinion and there is no need for the Minister to answer.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask that the Government gives us an assurance that before making a final decision on the commercialisation or otherwise of the Dockyard this report will be made available to Members of the House not necessarily now but certainly when it comes to the stage of making a decision that would affect very substantially the future of Gibraltar, does the Government not agree that Members of this House at least in order to take an informed view of the matter should have that report made available?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Member is pre-empting the question which comes up subsequently.

MR SPEAKER:

Which number?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No. 89, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 14 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government in view of Spanish competition affecting local public establishments, such as bars and restaurants, because of lower overheads in Spain, consider reducing the general rates, electricity and water tariffs and licence fees to enable them to compete on equal terms?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. As was made clear in the Government's press release of 7 February electricity and water services are no different from any other commodity purchased by the consumer and there is no reason why the supply of these services to bars and restaurants should be subsidised by the generality of taxpayers.

Furthermore, apart from the hotel industry the Government has no information on the proportion these charges bear to total operating costs and therefore to what extent any reduction in any of these fees and charges would have any effect in making them more competitive. The Hon Member must be aware that a substantial element in operating costs in these sectors is wages which it is understood are substantially lower in this sector in Spain.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 14 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't the Government taking a rather narrow view and seeing it purely from the utility undertakings point of view, etc when in fact by being so narrow minded Gibraltar may be losing quite a substantial amount of money by going over the border which could be spent here and that in itself might enable the wages to remain to the present level which if something is not done will soon start coming down to the lower level.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, you must ask questions.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think the question is, is not the Government taking a narrow view? Mr Speaker, I do not think so. I think what we do want to have if one is going to look at this is what proportion of general costs are electricity and water services and rates. If any movement were made on these what would the effects be on the total costs of this sector? This information has not been provided, I think it is rather important. The hotels, yes, we have got that information, we have not from the rest of the sector.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Hasn't Government been approached by the Victuallers Association on this matter and haven't they put the case very strongly as to the advantages that would have?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Government has been approached, Mr Speaker, yes, but we have received no information which would help the Government in reaching a decision.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has the Government asked for this information to be supplied to them to be able to take an informed decision on the matter?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I personally have not had any meeting with the Licensed Victuallers Association.

HON A J CANEPA:

They have not been to see me, Mr Speaker, so I do not know who they have been to.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They have only written letters.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, as this is quite an important sector in the private sector of our economy, does the Minister not consider that it would be advisable as part of their monitoring process of the effects of the partial opening of the frontier, to call in the Licensed Victuallers Association and ask them for particulars to see the effects of these charges or whatever has on their competitiveness?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether I have been promoted and the question is addressed to me as a Minister or whether it is addressed to the Minister for Economic Development and Trade. However, as I am answering for the Government on this perhaps I can answer. Yes, I agree it would be and I am quite happy to discuss this with the trade. At this time just before the budget normally I have a series of meetings with the trade right across the board and I am happy to meet the Licensed Victuallers Association.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am very glad, Mr Speaker, that is a much more reasonable and sensible approach.

MR. SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state when they intend to take appropriate action to stop the economy bleeding to bankruptcy as a result of the partial and discriminatory opening of the frontier on supposed humanitarian grounds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, with the agreement of the Hon Members I would like to answer Questions 15, 18 and 75 together.

Sir, between 15 December and 13 February local residents made 104,906 crossings into Spain and 83,038 Spaniards came into Gibraltar. On best evidence available the Government estimates that on average £100,000 to £150,000 per week, that is 10% of consumer expenditure, is now being spent in Spain. Expenditure by Spaniards in Gibraltar is thought to be well below this figure. However, in assessing the net impact of this leakage on the economy it should be understood that in most cases expenditure on goods or services by Gibraltarians here or in Spain take the form of imports. The important point is the multiplier effect which generates employment and revenue for the Government.

As was clearly stated in a press release issued on 7 February, 1983, the Government will consider possible remedial measures if and when it is clear that these are required and are in the general interest of the economy. A number of measures have already been introduced - the change from the 24 to the 72 hour rule for entitlement to normal duty free concessions; the quota on personal imports of bread and the reduction in duty on cigarettes.

The Government is preparing information on and considering contingency measures which would affect all areas of trade and economic activity to protect the economy if the current partial and discriminatory frontier opening persists.

The timing of implementation of any such measures will nevertheless depend on developments at the frontier which continue to be monitored on a daily basis and on the rate of progress for the full implementation of the Lisbon Agreement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 15, 18 AND 75 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:.

Sir, can I ask about the estimated expenditure by Gibraltarian residents in Spain of £150,000 per week, does that not work out at roughly £6 per person going over to Spain and is that not a very conservative estimate, aren't the crossings roughly coming to about 25,000 minimum a week?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is based on £10 a head.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, if it is based on £10 a head, Mr Speaker, then something is wrong somewhere. I get the figures of the crossings every week, Mr Speaker, some weeks it has been 40,000, some weeks it has been 35,000 but the lowest it has been on any single week is 19,000 and therefore at £10 that would be a minimum of £190,000 a week. I get the details every week, Mr Speaker.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think perhaps the Hon Member may be misled by the figures that he gets which I also get because they talk about crossings and a crossing is two-way for each person so it is half, really, of the numbers.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider basing the import duty on the Free on Board (FOB) price as against Carriage, Insurance and Freight (CIF) price to enable British and other EEC countries products to compete on more equal terms with Spanish goods?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the suggestion by the Hon and Gallant Member merits and will be given careful consideration. Under international trade conventions, the Government appears to have flexibility in operating either on FOB or CIF based system for charging import duties. In general, the CIF element adds between 10% to 15% on goods imported by sea. The corresponding figure for goods imported by air is higher, and can range from 30% to 50%.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 16 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am very grateful for that, Mr Speaker, but I would just like to point to the Hon Financial and Development Secretary that some goods, particularly the bulky ones are sometimes even as much as 100%.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I must also put up the marker that such a change could reduce the competitive edge of goods from Britain and the EEC against goods from South East Asia very considerably and this is a matter that has got to be looked at very carefully.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 17 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider reducing import duties across the board to engender a new competitive spirit in the trading community of Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. I refer the Hon and Gallant Member to the Government Press Release dated 7th February. The Chamber of Commerce itself has recognised that a general reduction in duties would be neither viable nor effective in present circumstances. The Chamber's recommendation that import duties as well as profit margins on cigarettes should be reduced has been adopted.

A reduction on import duties across the board would only be justified if they were accompanied by corresponding reductions in traders' margins and if the results of such reductions were to be a greater turnover in consumption which would either maintain or increase the existing level of revenue for both the trade and the Government. Without this result the trade would not be in a better position and the Government would be forced to reduce expenditure on its public and social services.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 17 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Hon Financial and Development Secretary aware that by the mere fact of reducing duty the actual selling price is reduced not just on the total price but also part of the margin comes down since the price is usually the cost of the goods plus duty?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I am fully aware of that point but it doesn't take account of the margins at the moment which are extremely high in certain areas of goods.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since the Government is not prepared to do it across the board could the Government give an undertaking that they will look at other items besides cigarettes and spirits which I am sure are attractive to visitors which could, I think, if the duty were reduced might generate business fairly quickly rather than leave it before it is too late?



HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are prepared to look at anything. What we are doing at the moment is having reduced the duty on cigarettes to test the elasticity of demand to this reduction and if one finds that there is a vast increase as is being projected, then we will be able to move but meanwhile, Sir, there is plenty of scope for reductions on a large number of items that could be attractive to persons coming in by a reduction in margins.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Shouldn't the Government act boldly in this situation and not wait slowly for the reaction of one particular item but tackle a few at a time?

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are debating now.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, we will no doubt have an opportunity to expand on this in the motion before the House of the Financial and Development Secretary when he requests us to confirm his reduction on cigarettes and we will have an opportunity to speak rather more widely on these issues.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I fear so.

22.2.83

NO. 18 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J. BOSSANO

What steps is Government proposing to take to protect the Gibraltar economy in the light of the effect of the frontier opening?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 15 and 75 of 1983.

NO. 19 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is Government in a position to state the estimated amount of currency that has been exported from Gibraltar through the frontier since its partial opening and the amount imported since that date and furthermore can Government state whether there is any machinery by which the transfer of amounts out of Gibraltar to the same destination through banks can be monitored?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, confidential information is available from the 20th December, 1982. It provides only a rough guide and by no means reflects the true position.

I will supply the information to the Hon Member in confidence, and copy it to Members of the House opposite.

With regard to the further point made in the question, since the abolition of exchange controls in 1979 there are no longer any restrictions on the movement of currencies in or out of the territory and for this reason there is no longer any monitoring of currency movements.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 19 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Government not considered that it would be advantageous to it in monitoring the effects of the frontier opening, to have such information available?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, to do that we would need to take powers and if we took those powers I think they would be inimical to Gibraltar as a Finance Centre.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what practical steps it has taken, if any, since 1st April, 1982, to extend further the facilities available in Gibraltar as a Finance Centre?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Mr Speaker. The Banking Ordinance has been enacted together with the Regulations tabled earlier in this meeting. Other regulations are in preparation and in sum they will provide the necessary legal framework for an orderly expansion in the banking sector. A Banking Supervisor has been in post since 5 November and members were appointed to the Banking Advisory Committee on 31 December.

A new section was created within the Treasury to deal with financial centre activities under the Financial Sector Adviser appointed on 25 October. The House will recall I made reference to his functions in my reply to the Hon Leader of the Opposition's Question No. 171 of 1982.

A further appointment has been that of the Insurance Adviser who is to assist the Government in the revision of insurance legislation and advise on the machinery which will be necessary for the supervision of insurance companies and in fact that Insurance Adviser is in Gibraltar this week and holding discussions.

These appointments, Mr Speaker, are indicative of the importance the Government attaches to the role financial centre activities can play in the economy.

Finally, Sir, I should mention that the Government will shortly bring proposals to the House seeking legislative changes which will permit, amongst other things, an extension of the Companies (Taxation and Concessions) Ordinance facilities to foreign incorporated companies which are known as Part IX Companies under the Companies Ordinance and for the introduction under the Income Tax Ordinance of a new tax base for non-resident owned companies. It is the intention to publish the Bills containing these proposals shortly with a view to enactment at the next meeting of the House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 20 OF 1983

HON. A J HAYNES:

Are these proposals regarding the Companies legislation, Mr Speaker, are the proposals motivated by any Bar Council group?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure in which bar they are being discussed but, Sir, they have been put forward by the Finance Centre group which comprises all professions including representatives of the Bar but also the insurance group, the banks, accountants, it is a wide-ranging spectrum of views.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I have seen a copy of a letter of the Finance Group. They feel, as I understand it, rather frustrated by the lack of progress in all matters that have to be done or to pass to try and make more of a success of Gibraltar as a Finance Centre. Can we take it from the Hon Financial Secretary's answer that we are to see significant progress both in the legislation and in policy in these areas in the immediate future?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, yes, I would not say significant progress I would say progress. What is required after this is for the business to come here before we see any significant progress but certainly in terms of legislation and setting the scene on which progress can be made, then I hope that we shall have set that and it will then be for the professions to go out and get the business.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 21 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is Government satisfied that sufficient thorough inspections are being made by Customs Officers at the frontier to ensure that

- 1) proper duty is being paid by those importing dutiable goods and
- 2) the importation of unlawful items are impeded?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is satisfied with the inspections being carried out by Customs Officers at the frontier. Duty is being paid in accordance with the provisions of the Imports and Exports Ordinance and Customs Officers are fully aware of the prohibitions on importation of restricted and prohibited goods.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 21 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how much duty has in fact been collected there?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

About £11,000 since December. I have got the exact figures if the Hon Member would like them. December 15-31, that is the Christmas time - £6,664; the whole of January - £2,600; February 1-7 - £702; February 8-13 - £518; February 14-20 - £577. Hon Members can see from that, Mr Speaker, that I get a report every Monday morning from the Collector of Customs on the movements from the previous week in detail and I have myself been down there to see how the Customs are working and I am quite satisfied that the measures which they are taking are those which are required.

NO. 22 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government release the figures of applicants for housing on the Waiting List as at 14th February, 1983, giving the number in respect of the various categories, ie 4 rooms, 3 rooms, etc?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are 1,803 applications on the Housing Waiting List as follows:-

170 for Bedsitters.  
 443 for 2RKB  
 669 for 3RKB  
 457 for 4RKB  
 59 for 5RKB  
 5 for 6RKB

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 22 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Am I correct in assuming that the position has hardly changed since October? Is there any indication that the figures will go down substantially in the next six months or not?

HON J B PEREZ:

Definitely not within the next six months, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Minister satisfied that the level will stay at the mark of about 1,800 or not?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir, I think it will remain stable within the next six months around 1,800.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government confirm or deny that the tenants of 32 Flat Bastion Road were told by the Housing Minister on the occasion of a visit to Gibraltar by Mrs Judith Hart MP that they would be rehoused in the first modernised area to be completed in Flat Bastion Road?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, Sir, during the visit of Mrs Judith Hart the tenants of 32 Flat Bastion Road were informed that the Government proposed to modernise that building. However, financial constraints have made it impossible to proceed with any further modernisation in that area since then.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 23 OF 1983

MR SPEAKER:

I had some difficulties as to whether to allow this particular question or not because I was not sure when Mrs Judith Hart had last come to Gibraltar and I didn't know whether it was within the term of this administration?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

She came to Gibraltar with her team to discuss the development programme of 1979/81 and I think it must have been either 1978 or early 1979.

MR SPEAKER:

In other words, before the present administration?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

During the Labour Government.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I mean locally, before this particular House.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, before this particular House.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there a ruling?



MR SPEAKER:

It is not a question of there being a ruling but it is a question of this particular Government not being responsible for the undertaking given by another Government.

HON A J HAYNES:

It was the same Government.

MR SPEAKER:

I am not going to argue. That is my ruling.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, my point is that these people were promised about five or six years ago, and the Minister has confirmed it, that they would be allocated a modernised house in Flat Bastion Road. The Minister has explained that there are financial constraints, is he now in a position to say when and how these persons are to be rehoused as envisaged in 1978?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, all I can say is that if it is decided to demolish that particular building or modernise that particular building and we have the necessary funds available, then quite obviously those tenants will in fact be rehoused whilst the works are in progress and they would then have the choice either of going back to that particular property or staying in the particular quarter which has been offered to them for decanting.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Minister for his information of what happens in modernisation. I am aware of what happens with the modernisation scheme, I want to know if there is going to be one or not in this particular house?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer you have been given is it depends on financial constraints.

HON A J HAYNES:

Yes, but that, Sir, is a matter which by now perhaps the Minister has had some time in which to consider the matter and perhaps he can give me more light on the matter.

HON J B PEREZ:

I can answer in this manner, Mr Speaker. There is another question in the Order Paper, Question No. 79, which will be answered by a colleague, I think it is the Hon the Minister for Economic Development and Trade, because the question is asking what housing projects

is the Government envisaging and the answer will be given then but I can tell the Hon Member that this particular property in Flat Bastion Road is not at present included due to financial constraints.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister then undertake not to give these glib assurances that seem to have been given by the previous administration as to promises for houses to be built when they are not going to be built?

MR SPEAKER:

No, next question.

NO. 24 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state how many persons live in Government accommodation without a tenancy agreement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are seven squatters at present.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 24 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Has Government got a uniform policy to be enacted as against or in relation to these persons or not?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, legal action is taken against squatters.

HON A J HAYNES:

How long has the person longest resident in one of these premises been there?

HON J B PEREZ:

I haven't got that information with me, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister tell us whether it is last week or two weeks or what?

MR SPEAKER:

No, he has not got the information, it is as simple as that.

HON A J HAYNES:

Well, what information does the Minister have, Sir?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, you ask your questions and you will find out.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state exactly what the policy is?

MR SPEAKER:

You have been told the policy is to take legal action to evict these squatters.

HON A J HAYNES:

Yes, Sir, but not necessarily squatters.

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question?

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the position that not necessarily all the persons living in Government accommodation without a tenancy agreement are squatters?

HON J B PEREZ:

Sir, it is very difficult for me to answer that.

MR SPEAKER:

You have been asked a very straightforward question. Is the questioner to assume that the only persons who are in Government accommodation without a tenancy agreement are those seven squatters? That is what you are being asked.

HON J B PEREZ:

As I read the question, Sir, it is asking me how many squatters live in Government accommodation.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, will Government state how many persons live in Government accommodation without a tenancy agreement?

HON J B PEREZ:

Seven, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

And now you are being asked whether the seven squatters are the only tenants living in Government accommodation without a tenancy agreement?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir, as far as I am aware.

MR SPEAKER:

You have now been given the answer. The answer is that as far as he is concerned the only people living in Government accommodation without a tenancy agreement are these seven squatters he has referred to.

HON A J HAYNES:

On a point of clarification, Mr Speaker, is the Minister answering as regards squatters, ie those people who go unlawfully into premises and occupy them or is he also including in his answer of seven persons, persons who have lawfully gone into premises . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, you have been given your answer. The Minister has stated to you categorically that as far as his information is concerned the only people living in Government accommodation without a tenancy agreement are those seven squatters, it is as simple as that. Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state what progress has been made in handing over the allocation of houses to the Housing Committee?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, Sir, satisfactory progress has been made but as yet this matter has not been finalised.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 25 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

What progress has taken place, Mr Speaker?

HON J B PEREZ:

One of the things that has already been changed is the reconstitution of a Medical Board. In future all matters relating to people who are medically categorised will no longer be done by either the Housing Allocation Committee or by the Housing Advisory Committee, it will be done by the Housing Medical Board which will consist of three consultants. They would also deal with all medical certificates which are in fact submitted by applicants, they will be processed by the three consultants.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there a present backlog in assessing medical certificates, Mr Speaker?

HON J B PEREZ:

Not that I am aware of, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

When is it proposed that this Medical Board will be constituted?

HON J B PEREZ:

Within the next two weeks.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Medical Board have the power to allocate houses or just to allocate points?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir, the allocation will be done via the Housing Allocation Committee but the allocation of the 20% houses for medical category will be on the advice of the Medical Board and also they will deal with medical certificates for pointage valuation.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there going to be an increase in the maximum number of pointage given to medically categorised applicants?

HON J B PEREZ:

This is a matter which is being looked at at the moment because it is my view that applicants very readily submit medical certificates and the idea of the Medical Board is that in certain cases they will have the right to ask the person who has submitted the certificate to be medically examined.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is the negotiation going along with the allocation of houses, handing it over to the Committee, is that taking into account the Minister's known dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the Housing Allocation Scheme in its ability to secure the fairest allocation of houses? Is he trying to at the same time reassess the Housing Allocation Scheme?

HON J B PEREZ:

I would need separate notice of that because it refers to the allocation rules.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 26 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state how many Government flats though tenanted are unoccupied and if so will Government give details?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, as far as the Department is aware, there are five flats not currently occupied by their respective tenants and necessary action for recovery of vacant possession of same is proceeding through the normal channels.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 26 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Is it a uniform policy that will be followed?

HON J B PEREZ:

Once we have the evidence in every particular case if we are satisfied that a particular person is not occupying the tenancy legal action will be instituted.

MR. SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 27 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether they propose to move the Housing Department from the City Hall?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is proposed to move the Housing Department from the City Hall when St Mary's First School at Hospital Ramp is vacated by the Department of Education and the necessary conversion works and repairs to the building have been carried out.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 27 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

What is the estimated cost of the move, Mr Speaker?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have no idea, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister enquire into the estimated cost before he undertakes to move?

HON J B PEREZ:

The question, Sir, is asking whether the Housing Department proposes to move, the answer is yes, the Housing Department proposes to move.

MR SPEAKER:

You have been asked whether you are prepared to get an estimate of the cost before the move is made?

HON J B PEREZ:

The point is, Sir, that it is too early at the moment, we have not got the costings but obviously this is a matter which will be looked at.

HON A J HAYNES:

Money is no object is it, Mr Speaker, they can spend money on their departments as they wish?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, order.

HON A J HAYNES:

What is the use to be made of the City Hall when it is vacated by the Housing Department?

HON J B PEREZ:

I don't know, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, what is the need to move from the City Hall?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. Next question.

NO. 28 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the position as regards the readings of the aural levels at King's Bastion Generating Station and the new Generating Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, noise level readings taken in the vicinity of the dwellings at King's Bastion give an L50 of 67dB(A)s.

Similar readings were taken at the nearest residential areas adjoining the new Generating Station at Waterport, namely, the north-west corner of Varyl Begg Estate, and the level recorded was of 55dB(A)s.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 28 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister equate the decibel readings with, for instance, a conversation?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, it is not the Minister's job to explain what these things are and what they mean.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, on a point of clarification.

MR SPEAKER:

I will not have that question.

HON A J HAYNES:

It is a point of clarification. Did the Minister for Municipal Services state at the time when the proposals to build the new Generating Station . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

You are entitled to ask whether the aural levels are acceptable within the standards accepted.

HON A J HAYNES:

Did the Minister for Municipal Services say that the noise levels of the new Generating Station would not exceed the noise of a conversation and he equated the kind of noise . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Will you state with chapter and verse when the Minister stated that and will you ask him to explain why he is now changing his mind.

HON A J HAYNES:

Well, I do not know, is he changing his mind, I do not know.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, I am not going to argue. If you have said that the Minister has stated in this House on a previous occasion that he has made a statement I want chapter and verse as to when he said it and then you can ask the question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, it was a point of clarification.

MR SPEAKER:

No, will you please not deviate. You have made a statement, if you want to pursue your question will you please tell me when and where he has made the statement.

HON A J HAYNES:

Well, I would need time to research.

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to argue. I am not going to have the time of the House wasted.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister tell us whether 55 decibels is within the accepted norms or not?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

And will the Minister tell us whether the readings for the King's Bastion Generating Station are within the accepted norms or not?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 29 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is the Government satisfied with the emergency exit arrangements for the Lewis Stagnetto Ward at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the emergency exit arrangements at the Lewis Stagnetto Ward are not entirely satisfactory, bearing in mind the current usage of that Ward. This matter has been the subject of discussion with the City Fire Brigade, but so far no adequate alternative has been found. These discussions are, however, ongoing and it is hoped that a solution will be found soon.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 29 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Does not the Minister himself have any ideas as to how to resolve the problem?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am not an expert on this, Sir, but may I say that the problem is that there is a fire escape but most of the patients in this particular ward are unable to walk so perhaps a sort of a chute would be appropriate but I am not an expert. I know it is being looked at.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 30 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government list the number of studies giving the cost, purpose and date of each consultancy that has been undertaken since and including the Preece, Cardew and Rider Report on the needs of the Generating Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the Preece, Cardew and Rider Report concerning a Study of Power and Water Requirements for Gibraltar up to the year 2000 was submitted in April, 1976, and its cost was met from ODA funds.

In January, 1980, an update of the 1976 Report, at no cost to Government, was submitted by Preece, Cardew and Rider on "Proposed Power Generating Plant and Desalination Plant".

No further consultancies have taken place.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 30 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I think that the Government has misunderstood my question. I was not limiting myself to the Generating Station and there is no indication that the question was intended to be limited to the Generating Station. I am asking the Government what consultancies which includes the Port Study, the Dockyard Study, the Finance Centre Study and there have been many, many consultancies. Beginning from that one and since that one how many studies have been undertaken on everything, there is nothing here about the Generating Station, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

May I say that I have often when I have been authorising questions come to the conclusion that I myself was not quite clear what was being asked. It is understandable that Government may have misunderstood it. I think it is only right that you should perhaps ask whatever question you wanted to ask now and perhaps the information is available.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, when considering the way of answering this question the extent of it was considered the same as you did and it seemed to us reasonable since it referred to a Report that it meant generating because it finishes that with the Preece, Cardew and Rider Report on the needs of the Generating Station. Certainly it would not have been possible to provide all the data in the time available for a question of all the consultancies that have taken place since then in a number of fields but a list will be prepared and supplied or given at the next meeting.

HON J BOSSANO:

I would be grateful if it can be supplied when it is ready, Mr Speaker, without the need to wait for the next meeting.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask, Mr Speaker, isn't the person at the moment chairing this Committee that has been going on for some time in the nature of a consultancy, the cost?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us be clear, which Committee?

HON P J ISOLA:

The Steering Committee between Management and Staff.

MR SPEAKER:

You are now referring to the Generating Station.

HON P J ISOLA:

Isn't that paid for and isn't that costing £4,000 a week, the chairmanship?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, although no other consultancy studies have been undertaken there have been two other occasions where consultants have been engaged. These were the Committee of Inquiry into the Electricity Department under the chairmanship of Sir Howard Davis and the Steering Committee under the chairmanship of Mr Ray Edwards. Both these consultancies have been met from Secretariat funds.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask what has been the cost to date of the Steering Committee consultancy because that is a continuing thing, isn't it, and at what rate is it costing per week?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid I do not have the figures required for this and I would require due notice.

MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps the Hon Member will give an undertaking to supply the information.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, I will undertake to supply the answer in writing, if I may, to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would I be right in saying that the services of the Chairman of the Steering Committee is costing the taxpayers around £4,000 a week?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I have not got the accurate information. I will endeavour to get it and I will give it to the Hon Member as soon as possible.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 31 OF 1983

THE HON G T RESTANO

In view of the fact that it apparently has been found necessary to extend the hire period of the skid-mounted and the trailer-mounted generators would Government state:-

1. the total hire costs to date of the generators and the total for other expenses
2. any savings made due to supplier's contractual agreement during the guarantee period
3. the cost to Government for repairs, maintenance etc outside the guarantee period
4. the total amount of hours to date that the engines have been used
5. for how long more does Government expect to have the generators on hire
6. the estimated value of the generators as at the present time
7. the estimated cost to Government for the repatriation of the engines, and
8. whether Government still holds the view that hiring the generators was a better solution than outright purchase?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

1. The total hire and other costs to date of the generators are as follows:-

SKID GENERATORS

Hire Charges	£320,661
Spares (UK)	5,478
Bank Charges	789
Installation Costs	85,036

TRAILER-MOUNTED GENERATOR

Hire Charges	£120,020
Installation Costs	37,097
Dismantling	2,763
Repatriation	4,211
Bank Charges	324

2. The contractors expenses during the guarantee period which have not been chargeable to Government are estimated to amount to over £12,000.
3. The cost to Government of repairs and maintenance outside the terms of the guarantee is estimated at £4,600 for the four skid generators and £1,067 for the repatriated set.
4. The total number of hours the engines have been used is 11,049.

5. The skid generators would already have been repatriated had it not been for a fault which occurred in Engine No. 10 last August. The replacement parts were not received until December and the engine has only been put back into service these last few days. It is expected that the skid generators will be sent back to Britain within the next few weeks.
6. The value of the four skid generators is estimated at £285,000 based on a depreciation of 15% per year.
7. The cost to Government for the repatriation of the four sets is estimated at £38,000 inclusive of all demolition, handling freight and rehabilitation.
8. The answer to the final part is in the affirmative.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 31 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I will take that one first. How can the Minister say that it was better to hire than to purchase when as far as the skid-mounted generators are concerned the outright purchase cost would have been in those days £395,000 and so far in hire they have paid £320,000 and on top of that the value of the sets are £285,000 which does not belong to the Government but had they purchased originally as we told them to in fact, for £395,000 the difference between the purchase and the hire price would only have been £70,000 and yet the Government would have had engines worth over £¼m? Can the Minister say how he can state that the outright purchase was not as favourable as hire?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are three answers to the Hon Member's question. First of all, I would like to refer him to Answer 301 of 1982.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not get involved.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In that answer a comment was made by the Hon Financial Secretary, and I am quoting from Hansard: "You cannot really look at it from the point of view of establishing whether an amount has been reached. If the skids had been bought outright we would have been paying the full amount on day one and that amount would have been obviously borrowed or loaned. If you are paying it through time obviously, if you discount that at the end of the day you pay less but the financial analysis shows that you needed to have the skids for about five years or more before it was really worth buying rather than hiring", that is the first one. Secondly, on the depreciation factor of 15% I think it is slightly under-estimated and it could well be more in which case the figure of £285,000 would be less. Finally, we know that the active period for these sets or the working period for these sets is about seven years, the maximum that we can expect at any time is ten years. Therefore, I think this answers the three points that the Hon Member of the Opposition has raised.

HON G T RESTANO:

First of all, I would like to ask the Hon Financial and Development Secretary on what basis he makes the statement that economically the skids had to be purchased or hired for about five years, the purchase element?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Based on calculations made on the interest rates at the time and the amount that we had to borrow in order to purchase the skids.

HON G T RESTANO:

On what percentage was that made, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not get involved, with due respect.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, did the Financial Secretary at the time take into account the fact that after two years, and it is now just over two years we have had the skids, that £285,000 is the approximate value of them and that that money of course is lost to Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, we also took into account the view that whatever the token value after depreciation, the possibility of selling them at that value was minimal. There is a great difference between what the value is of our assets depreciated at the normal depreciation for that asset and what you can sell it for on the open market.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister confirm that he has said that the skid-mounted generators have been working for 11,049 hours, that in effect means that in two years they have each been used for four months only?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Could the Hon Member repeat the question, please?

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister confirm that in the two years, just over two years that the skid-mounted generators have been on hire, they have been used for as little as four months each?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Well, Mr Speaker, all I can say is that the amount of kilowatt hours generated by the skid generators account for 2% of the electricity generated by the Department and I hope this will in another way answer the Hon Member's question.

HON G T RESTANO:

No, Mr Speaker, I said can he confirm that they have been used as little as about four months in two years based on 11,000 hours?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The skids, Mr Speaker, are mainly used for peak lopping periods, therefore it is difficult to say for how long they have been used. They have been used when we have needed extra power at peak times so it is rather unfair to say that they have been used for a specific amount of time, they have been used whenever peak loading is necessary but they have certainly not been used for four months continuous running.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the Minister said that the life of one of those generators is ten years. Could he explain if it is just ten years whether they are lying idle or whether they are being used? What does he mean by a life of ten years?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the life of one of these sets is usually approximately seven years. At the most it would be ten years but after ten years these sets are virtually and to a large extent practically deteriorated to an extent where no . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

What you are being asked is whether it is seven or ten working years at the maximum or is it calendar years.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, whether it is seven or ten years depends on the use of the sets.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

If therefore the skid generators have only had about four months in use the life expectancy of those generators is almost as new and still we are sending them back for about half the cost, how can the Minister explain that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the life expectancy could be seven years or it could be ten years but the main thing is that if one is to run the sets for a longer period of time one must also consider the amount of work involved in rehabilitating these sets, the maintenance of these sets, the replacement of these sets and all these add up to a substantial figure so that in the final analysis these sets would cost much more than the actual £395,000 which was the original figure given to us when we bought them.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, what has the Minister said?

MR SPEAKER:

If you had paid attention you would have heard. I will not have you standing up to ask those questions. I will call you to order if you do it again.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, on a point of clarification. Wouldn't it be correct to say that the life expectancy of these generators should be measured in hours of production rather than in years and if that is the case, I would assume that it is, that an engine is assumed to have 10,000 hours after which it has to be either refurbished or what have you. If that is the case and we have been told that these engines have been running for 11,049 hours, then would it be reasonable to ask the Minister how many hours of running life have these engines got in them?

MR SPEAKER:

The Minister has not got the answer, these are technical questions which Ministers are not supposed to know.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, how much life they have in them is impossible to say and there are no firm details to which I can refer. The only thing I can refer to is the actual number of hours that they have run.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

From the figures given, Mr Speaker, the generators are almost new and what I am trying to say is what figures can he produce if he says that it would cost a lot of maintenance or looking after, can he explain how when the generator is almost new in his calculation he feels that it is better to hire than buy because of the tremendous cost in maintenance?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. What the Minister is being asked is that taking into account the condition and state of the present generators how can he justify the last part of his answer that it was better to hire than to buy, it is as simple as that. All you are being asked is in the light of what has been said are you still satisfied that hiring the generators was the right thing to do.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, that is my answer.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I would like some clarification from the Minister. Having given all this information solicited originally by my Hon Colleague on my right where we now have, I think, each engine on average has been running 2,210 hours each, that is in fact not four months that represents 92 days, in a period of over two years. How can the Minister reconcile that in relation to what he said that the depreciation is 15% and that he himself thought that figure was too low?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, several things have to be taken into account. First of all, the engine itself, the siting, the conditions under which the engine is working, it is almost like a car. The depreciation of a car could be 15%, it could be 30%, it could be 40%, on the conditions under which it is used, on the place where it is kept. What I am saying is that the depreciation of 15% which is a commercial depreciation of an engine, brings it down to this actual figure but I feel that the depreciation could well be slightly higher and there the final figure would be less than the figure we have provided in this question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could the Minister say when he is repatriating the generators, did he say next week?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In the next few weeks, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can he also say what is the hire charge now for the generators per month?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The hire charge per month of the generators unfortunately I do not have with me but if the Hon Member wants I shall give the answer later on in the meeting or just after the meeting. I am sure I can get the answers within a day and I shall give them to you.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can he also confirm and explain, the original estimate was for those engines to be in Gibraltar for twelve or at a maximum eighteen months and now we have had them for about twenty-seven or twenty-eight, can he explain why?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

We have kept them because No. 10 engine developed a fault, a fairly severe fault last year and we have not received the necessary parts until December. It has now been put into commission and it is producing 2.4 megawatts and now it is reasonable to be able to send back the skiid generators which are no longer necessary in order to save the money for these sets which are no longer viable.

HON G T RESTANO:

When did No. 10 break down?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In August, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, on the trailer-mounted generator can the Minister inform this House how many hours of operation that had before it was shipped out?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member will remember he asked this same question in a previous question at the last meeting of the House, in fact, it was No. 301 of 1982, and the trailer-mounted generator which is the one that the Hon Member is referring to, had been running for a period of 613 hours.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government make a detailed and comprehensive statement on the current position regarding all aspects of the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, a detailed and comprehensive statement on the current position regarding all aspects of Waterport Power Station, as stated in the question, would encompass areas which are simply too broad in scope, a degree of specialisation and technical detail to incorporate into a reasonable answer. Strictly speaking, therefore, the reply to the question has to be in the negative.

This does not mean that Government is not willing to give information on any particular aspect of Waterport Power Station, or for that matter, on any topic that may be of interest to the general public.

Indeed I hope to be able to give a full account of the situation at the next meeting of the House and deal with the whole question.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 32 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Why is it possible, Mr Speaker, for the statement to be made at the next meeting of the House and not at this one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, there are only in practice three working days in which to prepare questions and some of them require a considerable amount of research.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I asked why is it possible to do it for next time and not for this time?

MR SPEAKER:

The Hon the Chief Minister has said that the time which Government has to prepare answers to questions is basically three working days from the time they have had notice of the question being asked and it has been physically impossible to prepare the information and the report and as a result of this question Government has given an undertaking to give the information at the next House.



HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, does this mean that the Government would not have made a statement on the position of the Waterport Power Station unless they have been asked a question specifically by my Hon Colleague?

MR SPEAKER:

It does not mean that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Chief Minister willing to answer any specific questions now?

MR SPEAKER:

Which specific questions?

HON G T RESTANO:

On the Waterport Power Station. If he cannot make a comprehensive statement then, presumably, he may be able to give some specific information.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is a highly technical matter on which the Minister will want notice every time on any item.

HON G T RESTANO:

Or is it that he is afraid to give the answers?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 33 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, will the Minister for Municipal Services circulate the Members on this side of the House with the information as a result of Question 301 of 1982 to which he gave an undertaking?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, a total of 4,760,273 kilowatt hours was generated during the 10,469 hours the skids had been running.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 33 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister inform the House as to the costs of per kilowatt hour with the skid-mounted generators compared to King's Bastion?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this would involve quite a lot of working out including certain divisions and multiplications and we could probably work it out for him in due course but at the moment this question certainly is rather distinct from the original question and I just have not got the necessary answer for the Hon Member.

MR SPEAKER:

In other words, you are prepared to give the answer in due course.

HON W T SCOTT:

So long as he gives me an undertaking and does not take as long as he did at the last meeting of the House to answer this one.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, is Government satisfied with the general condition of street-lighting in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, Government is satisfied with the general condition of street-lighting in Gibraltar, but endeavours to improve standards wherever appropriate.

Financial provision is made every year for improvements to different areas, as can be seen from the estimates for the Improvement and Development Fund covering Public Lighting.

The main thoroughfares can be said to comply with the requirements of the British Standards Code of Practice No. 1004 on streetlighting.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 34 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, on the question of streetlighting, not specifically on this point, I suppose, but generally within this subject is the matter of beacon lights or zebra crossing lights. Is the Minister in a position to undertake to ensure that all these Belisha beacon lights will be operative or are operative?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I shall endeavour to do as the Member requires and certainly provide some sort of light in the way of beacon lights for the crossings that the Member has mentioned in his question. There is a problem in this respect because I feel that certain zebra crossings do not conform with the legal requirements but I shall endeavour to provide as much as I can as far as lighting is concerned in these beacon lights and in the lights which shine onto the actual zebra crossings to try to prevent any mishap in the future.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister know what percentage of streetlights are out of order at the moment?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

That is difficult to answer. If the Hon Member has gone by Line Wall Road lately he will have noticed that we have replaced all the lights in Line Wall Road and we have improved the streetlighting in Line Wall Road considerably. It is the duty of the Police and the general public to report fused lamps and then this is passed on to the department and the department can inspect them individually and correct them. We always try to make sure that streetlighting is

kept up to the standards required, we always do our utmost because this is a very sensitive area of streetlighting. We certainly improve streetlighting every year and in fact this year we have improved Line Wall Road, we have improved Devil's Tower Road which is certainly much better because this was a black spot where several accidents have occurred in the past, Keightley Way Tunnel and other minor areas and we intend to carry on the same in the next year and years to follow so that we improve the streetlighting in Gibraltar to a standard where not only will it comply with the requirements of the British Standards Code of Practice on streetlighting but it will be better than that specific code.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, when considering any further improvements on the streetlighting could the Minister take into account the embellishing of the area by perhaps doing away with the utility type and introducing one that will be in character and in keeping with the sort of aspect that we want to produce in Gibraltar, could he do that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I thank the Hon Major Peliza for this question. It is a very valid question and I certainly pay heed to it. We have considered this and we are in the process of embellishing the areas that need embellishing with specific streetlighting so that we are not going to put a modern thing where it is an oldish area. We are trying to do this as we tried to do in the Piazza some time ago. The other thing that we have done this year which I think Hon Members will be quite glad about is the fact that we have done some floodlighting at the entrance to Main Street before you get to Casemates which I think looks very nice and I think it embellishes Gibraltar as a whole.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Minister for Municipal Services state whether Government is imposing any restrictions on the importation of telephone aids and facilities?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

No, Sir, restrictions are not being imposed on the importation of telephone aids and facilities, but it is illegal to attach these to the telephone network without Government consent.

The guideline adopted is to refuse consent where the service is already adequately provided, but to allow it otherwise, eg facsimile machine and the like.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 35 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that the department has created a monopoly as far as telephone aids are concerned?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, as far as I am concerned the department is a monopoly.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is he aware that consent is not being given even though certain aids are legal, say, in the United Kingdom?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, to which aid is he referring to?

HON G T RESTANO:

Metering aids, local metering.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Representations have been made on behalf, I believe, of an interested party on meters at home and in fact I should have the correspondence here with me and the fact is that there was a long discussion with the Superintendent of Telephones initially. I think what you referred to really is a letter sent to Mr Fortunato from an interested party.

MR SPEAKER:

I think what the Hon Member has been asking is whether Government objects to the installation of apparatus by private individuals. I think the answer has been it is not accepted if the service is being

given by the Department. I think the Hon Member has given us an example, meters to be able to record the calls. I think the answer perhaps might be that meters are provided by Government and therefore that is why they are not being allowed. I don't think we should get involved in further matters.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Department at the present moment in time, is it in a position to provide meter facilities?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, we are and we are providing meter facilities not only in the Telephone Department but we are already providing coin boxes which have metering facilities and people are able to dial from pubs and the like. I do not know exactly what the Hon Member is getting at, what other type of metering facilities?

HON G T RESTANO:

Metering facilities in private homes. Is the Department at this moment in time in a position to supply those?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Then I have to go back to the letter because an interested party desired to do this, he had a long talk with . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

The Hon Member is asking a simple question. Is Government able to supply metering facilities for private homes now and if not do they object to the individual supplying it themselves, it is as simple as that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, we can provide the metering facilities at home.

HON G T RESTANO:

How many have been installed so far?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as I know we have had no requests for any installation of private meters at home, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

What is the length of time that it takes between an application and an installation?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, with the improved productivity of the Department we always try to endeavour to do this as soon as we are able to and in fact we always give priority to this type of request.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does it take a week, does it take a month, a day?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it always depends on the amount of work at a particular time but how long it will actually take it is impossible to say. Let me say that we shall do it if the request is made as urgently as possible.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what has been the revenue of the Telephone Department during the months of October to January broken down into local and trunk calls?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Telephone Department revenue for the months of October to January for calls is as follows:

<u>Government Shares</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>November</u>	<u>December</u>
IDD Calls	£11,992	£13,728	£14,120
Operator Calls	21,600	17,900	17,500
Local Calls	30,223	34,058	37,940
Total Revenue	<u>£63,815</u>	<u>£65,686</u>	<u>£69,560</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 36 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

The question did say October to January.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The fact that the question said to January really was taken by me to mean that this was the three months October, November and December but as far as the January figures are concerned we do not still have the final figures for January so even if you wanted January I would be unable to give it to you at this precise moment.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 37 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, Sir, will Government circulate the Members of this House with statistical information dealing with how many people there are in employment between the ages of:

- a) 55 and 60
- b) 60 and 65, and
- c) over 65 years in
  - i) Government employment
  - ii) MOD and/or DOE/PSA employment, and
  - iii) in the private sector

and furthermore how many people there are in receipt of Old Age Pensions and how many contributors there are to the Scheme in the above two a) and b) categories?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Yes, Sir. I shall be glad to obtain this information and circulate it to the Members of the House in due course.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 37 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, why has it not been possible for the Government to circulate it at this meeting of the House having due regard that this question was put to them about a week or so ago?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the Hon the Chief Minister has already mentioned that in actual fact we only have about three days to prepare a question.

MR SPEAKER:

May I perhaps state in fairness to Government that Members are free to send in questions at any time before the next meeting, in other words, the time limit is six working days prior to the meeting but there is no rule that prevents them from sending questions long before that and I think on questions which are factual and on which Government has to do a fair amount of statistical work, it is only right that they should be given as much notice as possible in fairness to them and in fairness to the Opposition because in that manner they will be getting the information they require but in fairness to the Government one must say that if the Opposition waits until the last moment to ask the question then Government has only got three working days in which to prepare the answers and they are inhibited by the time limit.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, that is obviously totally acceptable to us but issues do arise where no more notice or very little extra notice can be given and in circumstances of that nature it seems rather sad to me that an issue of this nature could not be and further supplementaries could not be asked at this meeting rather than at the next one when by then it is no longer an issue.

MR SPEAKER:

But then the Opposition must accept the constraints under which Government is working and there is nothing much that one can do, in other words, it is fair to accept that the Opposition may not be in a position to ask the question before but one has to accept the constraints under which the Government is working.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, the point is, as you have said, that the bulk of the questions come at the very last moment. All I can say is that the Government starts working on the questions as soon as they are dished out by the Clerk because after all he gets them perhaps five minutes before the deadline, he has got to issue them they have got to go to Departments.

MR SPEAKER:

They have got to be cleared by me.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They have got to be cleared first by you, then they have got to go to departments, then they have come and be prepared and be cleared by the Minister in his department and then sometimes it requires consultation with another department and as you have rightly said questions of this nature where a certain amount of research is required could be given with time. There is no lack of willingness to give information but we must have the time.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I do not think it is quite correct to say three days, as I understand the position the questions are cleared . . . . .

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Three working days.

HON P J ISOLA:

Even that, the questions are cleared on the Monday by you, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

The questions are cleared by me on the Monday within hours of having received them.

HON P J ISOLA:

I do not think there is any complaint in that direction, Mr Speaker, they are cleared by you on the Monday and they are available to the Government on the Tuesday morning and the House does not meet till the following Tuesday so it is not three days by any stretch of the imagination. It may be that the Government now finds it difficult to answer questions, it may be that their departments are not able to cope which is surprising, I would have thought, having regard to the expertise available to the Government in the Government Secretariat which increases from time to time. I would have thought that some of these questions, there may be a reason, but it is very strange, Mr Speaker, that this is the first meeting that the Government seems to have ducked answering questions that are extremely relevant to the Gibraltar of today.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that it is completely uncalled for. The Hon Mr Bossano sent fifteen questions a great deal ahead of the time and it was easier, in fact, and for that reason we had more time in that we were only dealing with 70-odd questions of the other side of the Opposition but anyone who sends any question ahead of time and not just at the last moment helps the Government in getting the information for them. This last question we are dealing with requires a considerable amount of statistical study before it can be given in the breakdown that has been given, the rest we have tried to answer as best possible.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, I think this has been salutary, I think we have ventilated the position.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am sure the information being requested would certainly be very useful but it must be rather difficult, for example, to know the ages of the people employed in the private sector, I would think this is not a very easy thing to obtain anyway.

MR SPEAKER:

My remarks have been made in the full knowledge that the factual information which is being asked takes time to compile, otherwise I would not have said so.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, although I accept the point made by the Hon Mr Bossano in respect of this question I must say it is very unsatisfactory in the case of the Waterport Power Station that the Minister for Municipal Services should have ducked the issue completely and should have not informed the House of a situation in relation to a Generating Station that is causing considerable worry and especially after substantial power cuts, only last week, that he should have

chosen not to give the House any information at all but fortunately there will be an opportunity to get more information in the course of supplementary estimates where I note that that department is again asking for substantial sums of money and we will deal with it there.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If there had been a question addressed to a particular point such as power cuts but the question was so general that to do justice to it you had to write an essay, really, on what is happening.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Chief Minister confirm that in answer to Question 331 of 1982 in which I asked for a list of those Government buildings which had been reported by the Environmental Health Department as buildings which required to be repaired giving dates when repair requirements were first reported and the dates of the subsequent reminders, if any, I was told no, I won't give you that information.

MR SPEAKER:

That is a matter of Government attitude, that is not what we are discussing.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, may I clear one point on this question? In fairness to my department even though I still think it is a very short time for a very comprehensive answer to a very comprehensive question, the department did make an attempt to provide some figures but we realised that we were not able to give as much of the facts as possible in the short time that we had available and in actual fact in the Ante Room I have invited Mr Scott to come along to the department so that we can even try and extract more information than he has asked for.

HON W T SCOTT:

I am very grateful for that, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Mr. Scott might wish to ask whether in due course will be in the immediate future.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, my invitation was immediately after the House, to go as soon as possible.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 38 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government not consider that the monthly unemployment figures up to and including November, 1982, as circulated by the Department of Labour and Social Security did not represent an accurate position and if so why has it taken so long to correct the position?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, as the Hon Questioner is aware, the method used by the Department of Labour and Social Security for compiling the monthly unemployment figures was revised in December, 1982. During the preceding few months, it had been noticed that the number of persons actually reporting weekly at the Employment Exchange did not quite match up to the mounting figures of unemployment at the end of the month, and it was realised that this was mainly because the latter included, inter alia, persons who had established entitlement to unemployment benefit, even if they had not reported regularly to receive the benefit.

All the Department's statistical data is collated manually, and it was not until additional staff was recruited in December, 1982, as a result of staff inspection, that it was possible to make the change to the new system which is considerably more time-consuming. The end-of-the-month unemployment figures now given do not include persons who have not reported for employment during the month (whether or not they would be entitled to unemployment benefit). In such cases, it is not known whether they are in Gibraltar or whether they are still interested in obtaining employment, and it was therefore considered that their exclusion gave a more realistic picture of the unemployment situation on the particular day.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 38 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that in fact this arises out of pressure from the Manpower Planning Committee that in order to do a proper job of manpower the figure of unemployment should reflect the figure of availability of labour?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

NO. 39 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, will Government consider initiating a further survey on the costs and benefits of lowering the retirement age?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, if by "Retirement age" the Hon Questioner means pensionable age under the Social Insurance Ordinance, then, as I said in recent correspondence in the local press, this is a matter which will continue to be an aim of policy of this Government.

Consideration which the Department of Labour and Social Security has given to the matter during the past few years shows that, on financial grounds, it is not possible to proceed on this at present.

It is understood that resulting from a recent report by an all-party Committee of the House of Commons, the DHSS in the United Kingdom is drawing up a White Paper accepting in principle the move towards a retirement age of 63 for men and women by the early 1990's.

When the economic future of Gibraltar becomes clearer it may be the occasion to obtain expert advice from the United Kingdom to assess the full implications of:

- a. lowering Old Age Pension age for men to 60 or
- b. fixing a common Old Age Pension age for both sexes somewhere between 60 and 65.

22.2.83

NO. 40 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government further extend the information given in the monthly unemployment figures so that the different nationalities are clearly shown?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the monthly unemployment figures are now sub-divided into "British" and "Aliens". Although it will take up more clerical time I do not think that there would be much difficulty in subdividing them further into "Gibraltarians", "Other EEC" and other different nationalities.

NO. 41 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is it the intention of the Department of Education to allow the use of the Gymnasium at Westside Comprehensive after school hours and by arrangement with the Stadium Manager?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, it is the intention of Government to provide for the community use of the Games Hall at Westside School outside defined hours set aside specifically for school use and maintenance. The precise arrangements have yet to be discussed and agreed by all parties concerned.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 41 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask whether these facilities will be for the use of both sexes?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker. In actual fact there is a tournament running on Saturday at Westside in relation to badminton.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, are there toilet facilities for the use of both sexes in a girls' school?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, because there are male teachers.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 42 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is it Government's intention to put out to tender the shampooing of the carpets at Government schools?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, it is Government's intention to put out to tender the shampooing of the carpets at the new Westside School.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 42 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, wouldn't it be cheaper to buy a shampooing machine and have the cleaning staff of the school shampoo the carpets?

MR SPEAKER:

I will allow the question but perhaps that should have been the original question.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It is considered by Management Services that shampooing of the carpets requires delicate handling and costwise it would be far more economical if the work was put to a private enterprise.

HON J BOSSANO:

Has the Minister cleared the possibility of putting this out to tender with the union that represents cleaning in Government schools?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am not in a position to answer that question.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister not agree that he should find out first whether there is an objection from the union that is responsible for negotiating conditions in this area before he puts it out to tender otherwise he might find the shampooing blacked?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 43 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, in relation to the Statement of Reallocation No. 5 of the Consolidated Fund, Warrant No. 12, Head 3, Sub-heads 7 to 17, what special schools, and how many children are involved within the sum reallocated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, three children are currently in residential schools in the UK. One child is attending Pitt House School in Terquay and two are attending St John's School for the Deaf in Boston Spa, West Yorkshire.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what has been the response to holiday advertising for the coming summer season and how it compares with the last two previous years?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Tourist Office through its London Office conducts a coupon response campaign every year starting in September/October.

For 1982/83 we have received 11,150 enquiries up to 4 February, 1983, as compared to 15,500 enquiries during the same period for 1981/82 and 10,800 in 1980/81.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 44 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, there seems to be a fall on last year. Is the Minister at this stage pessimistic or optimistic? Does he think there might be a change, could he perhaps give an indication of why he believes that there has been a lowering in the replies so far?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think there are a number of answers to that question, Mr Speaker, there are a number of factors that contribute to it. Value for money, the strength of the pound is one very important issue. The pattern of late bookings is another matter which I think the Hon Member is totally aware of, of people not prepared to deposit money in advance six or seven months before their holiday and therefore they allow their money to gain interest in the bank but I am optimistic, Mr Speaker, because the pattern seems to be that the interest is certainly there. We have found last year that summer is not a season that we do badly in any year but I think that you will find that this summer may be slightly better than the one we had last year.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if the number of visitors from Morocco have increased or otherwise since 1979 by giving figures by seasons, if possible?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, it is impossible to give by seasons. The following are the figures of excursionists from Morocco for the years 1979, 1980, 1981 and 1982:

	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>
Excursionists	26,251	29,881	27,674	33,059
		+13.8%	- 7.4%	+19.5%

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 45 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am very glad to hear that there has been an increase, Mr Speaker. I wonder whether the Minister can say to what he attributes the increase and also whether he is proceeding in the same or perhaps even in an improved manner to keep the increase on the go?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Morocco has always been a market that we could tap well from a touristic point of view. I think the increase has been due to the fact that there has been an increase in Morocco of foreign tourists and there has been a campaign including a day trip to Gibraltar. In addition to that, of course, we do know that a lot of people do like to come here from Morocco, Moroccans themselves, Moroccan nationals, who would like to even spend more but their own currency restrictions and their own customs requirements in their own country makes things quite difficult for them to come and purchase as much as they would like. I should also say, Mr Speaker, that we have had an intensified advertising campaign in Morocco as I mentioned in answer to previous questions in the House; we have advertised in the Journal de Tanger and we have paid trade promotion visits as far down as Casablanca and Rabat.

NO. 46 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what has been the hotel occupancy for December, 1982, and January, 1983, and how it compares with the same months the previous years respectively?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, I regret I am unable to furnish hotel occupancy statistics for November, December, 1982, or January, 1983, as some hotels have not submitted their returns to the Government Statistician.

However, the comparative occupancies for September and October, 1981, and 1982, are as follows:

SLEEPER OCCUPANCY

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>
September	44.1%	60.3%
October	39.1%	42.6%

NO. 47 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether the Gibraltar tourist spot in the Commonwealth Institute has been refurbished or redesigned?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, I must make it quite clear that the Commonwealth Institute Exhibition is not a tourist spot and has never been under the Tourist Office.

This exhibit is not aimed at tourists but is of an educational nature.

However, it was agreed by Council of Ministers that the Tourist Office should prepare a costed project for submission to Council.

Our Advertising Agents in UK are at present looking into what would be the most economic and effective yet attractive way in which the Rock could be best represented.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 47 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is this not the position which I was informed in April of last year and what has happened since April?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, it is the same position. Since then the then Acting Financial and Development Secretary visited the stand. I myself have visited the stand and I have held two meetings with the Commonwealth Institute Directors about the total refurbishment of the Institute and ours has not been done for several years. We are looking at it but I must emphasise it is, I would like to use the word, very expensive and we are looking at something that can be done which modestly we can meet.

HON A J HAYNES:

When does the Minister expect some definitive answer or some definite progress in this matter?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I hope during the next week or so to be able to get some information as to various plans that are going to be put forward as to what can be done and then it will be up to Council of Ministers to consider what option, what design will be accepted and obviously its cost effectiveness will be uppermost in our minds.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 48 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how much of the £800,000 provided in the last year's budget for expenditure on the Viaduct Causeway will actually have been spent by March 31st this year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the revised estimate for this year ending 31.3.83 is £20,000. The sum of £10,800 has been spent to the middle of February and it is anticipated that another account for fees of the same order should reach us for payment by the end of March.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 48 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Government think that the £800,000 are likely to be spent in the forthcoming financial year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, I should imagine that the amount that will be spent next year will be nearer £1.2m to £1.5m.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if in view of the heavy losses suffered by the Gibraltar Quarry Company Limited they will consider changing the directors and management of the company to try and avoid any further losses of public money?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the problems which the Gibraltar Quarry Company Limited have been faced with can in no way be attributed to its Directors or the management of the company.

As this House is perfectly aware the problems have emanated from the fact that the company took over a venture that was not operating satisfactorily. Government therefore has no intention of changing the Directors and management of the company.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 49 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Wouldn't the Minister agree that it is really the people who are responsible, whether Directors or management or both, who really have to face the music because of perhaps the bad judgement in accepting the recommendations of the consultants or whatever it was and also for the fact that this has been taking so long to put the matter right and which of course continues to cost money to the Government? Isn't that in some respect their responsibility?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, as I have told the House on many occasions there were specific reasons why the company ran into loss. I shall be making a statement later in the House which may prove that those losses have now turned to profit.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Government chose to make this a company rather than a subsidised industry and in a company, normally speaking, it is the directors who are responsible to the shareholders for any losses. There have been losses and yet the directors do not seem to be responsible to the shareholders of this company which are in fact the people of Gibraltar.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Nobody said the directors were not responsible to, basically, the general public of Gibraltar who are the shareholders. I have just make a remark that the losses which the company suffered from may, following a statement I shall be making later in the House, have turned into a profit. I think I have stressed on many occasions



that it was because certain measures had to be taken that we were running at that time at a loss but that we were going to lay those measures at the door of Robertson's Research and hoped to recoup the money, had the money been recouped which I shall be announcing in due course, then the company would not have been making a loss, there would be no need for these questions, in fact, I would be standing here and obviously be receiving the applause and congratulations of the Opposition for the company running so well.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the statement be made at this meeting of the House, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can the Minister for Public Works explain his apparent inability to have the last morning refuse collection up Main Street commence at 9.30 in accordance with assurances given by him in this House and elsewhere?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the personnel who undertake the refuse collection of the Main Street area have been given strict instructions to the effect that the late morning collection must not start until 9.30 am. On a number of occasions the personnel have started this last round some minutes before the stipulated time and they have been reprimanded for not complying with standing instructions. The work is being supervised daily and the necessary action will be taken if the instructions are not complied with.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 50 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Was the supervision done this morning, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I regret, Mr Speaker, that I do not have the time nor the inclination to stand at the end of Main Street every morning to see that they start at 9.30 sharp. I think the Hon Mr Restano has more free time and he is able to do it and he rings me up and writes me letters frequently when they start a few minutes early.

HON G T RESTANO:

No, Mr Speaker, it is not that I have the time available, it is that I go to the office early enough to be able to see whether they start earlier than 9.30 or not. Perhaps the Minister goes to his office much later than 9.30 and therefore he wouldn't know but I can tell him . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Order, you have each had a go at each other, let us leave it at that.

HON G T RESTANO:

I can tell him that this morning, for example, and I have been writing letters to him, and this is not a frivolous matter, the reason is that when the refuse collection starts and it starts much earlier than 9.30 it starts around 9 o'clock, most shops are closed at that time, most of the shops do not open until about 9.30 and that is why it is impossible for them to get rid of their rubbish because by the time they open their shops and they have their refuse prepared in plastic

bags or what have you to put out the next morning, by the time they open the refuse collection has passed. The Minister has given assurances, he gave assurances in the House in December, he has given assurances to me . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Let us ask a question.

HON G T RESTANO:

But it is just not happening, he is giving assurances and he apparently seems unable and I would like to know why he is unable to get the morning collection to start at 9.30?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

For the Hon Member's information, the Minister is in his office before 9.30 every morning. The instructions were given to the refuse collectors on that round to start at 9.30 specifically because it was appreciated that most shopkeepers do not open before 9.30, perhaps if they got as early to their shops as the Minister gets to the Department of Public Works then the refuse would be put out before 9.30. I have given very strict instructions, I see no reason why those instructions should not be followed properly but I think it will be appreciated that where men are hanging around for ten or fifteen minutes there is a little inclination for somebody to say: "Come on, let us get on with the job it is only five minutes difference", and perhaps the ordinary man who is doing the refuse collection does not fully appreciate all the ramifications that if they do start a little early it does create a lot of difficulty because the shops have not put the refuse out, they do not appreciate that they seem to think let's get the job done and we are out of Main Street, etc. I will once again pass through to them the fullest instructions and the desire of the Hon Mr Restano and I presume the House, that this should start at 9.30 as scheduled.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I resent that last comment of the Minister and I think I have to say something in reply to that. He said it was my wish, it is after all and would the Minister not confirm and I go back to the question in October, that that was the instruction or those were the agreements that had been reached between the . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Fair enough, there is no need to pursue the point.

HON G T RESTANO:

But I resent that. I think the Minister is trying to get away from the fact that he cannot control his staff and he is trying to put the blame on me.

HON J BOSSANO:

Has the Hon Member received any complaints from anybody else about this matter?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Again, Mr Speaker, I believe that he has, he has received a letter from a firm in Main Street.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, I was approached by Messrs Valmar who said: "Would it be possible that the collection could be done at 9.30", and it was following his approach that I said: "Yes, I'll see that it is started at 9.30".

HON G T RESTANO:

Was he not approached by Messrs Bata?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

22.2.83

NO. 51 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is the Minister for Public Works now in a position to inform the House on the programme over the next 12 months for the painting of Crown Properties including Government housing?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir, the programme for the painting of Crown Properties including Government buildings is now in the process of being prepared for works due to commence in April, 1983.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 51 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

When will the Minister be in a position to inform the House on the details of the programme?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When the Government has voted the money and during the budget I hope to give some details.

22.2.83

NO. 52 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, in relation to Question 286 of 1982 is the Government now in a position to inform this House on the outcome of the discussions it has been having with the Consultants to the Sand Recovery Scheme on the East Side?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Mr Speaker, I propose to make a statement on this matter later in the proceedings of this House.

22.2.83

NO. 53 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government confirm or otherwise that it employs a firm of Consultants as its advisers on steel who are also a principal supplier to Government of that product?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir, that is not the case.

NO. 54 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Why has it been found necessary to erect a wire fence on the west side of the playground outside Warspite House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, this fence will delineate a new clothes drying area which has been requested by the Tenants Association.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 54 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, this area which I have seen is minute, is this for the Tenants Association of Varyl Begg, Warspite House or the House opposite?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, it is a drying area which will be used by the tenants of the two Houses on either side of the area which is not so small, it is about 30 feet by 40 feet.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, unless I am mistaken and I went down there, the area that I am referring to can be no more than about 10 feet by 4 feet. It would appear that we are not talking about the same thing.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The only area I can recollect where we have erected a wire fence on the west side of the playground is between Warspite and Barham House and that is easily 30 feet by 40. I will see the Hon Member and perhaps we will discuss it between us, if that is satisfactory.



NO. 55 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is it Government's intention to do away with the round-about and see-saw in the playground outside Warspite House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Well, Sir, on the basis that this is the same area we are talking about, I would refer the Hon Member to the previous question. In order to construct the drying area it will be necessary to re-position the roundabout approximately 30 feet to the east of its present position. The chains will be re-positioned in the near future. If it is only a 10 feet area we cannot move it 30 feet. I think when we see it together it will be far better, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 55 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would I be right in assuming that the reason why this fence has been erected has been at the request of the tenants living on the ground floor of Warspite House who complained of children playing in that area?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There was a request by the tenants that a fence could be erected. It was put to the Tenants Association, the Tenants Association saw no objection to the fence and said at the same time this could become a drying area and that was agreed and that is why it is delineating the drying area.

THE HON A T LODDO

Can the Minister for Public Works say when he proposes to provide protection to the windows in Hargraves Barracks?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the protection to the windows to a flat at Hargraves Barracks has been programmed to take effect before the end of the financial year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 56 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I was not referring to a flat, I am referring to protection to the windows in Hargraves Barracks. There are a number of tenants and a number of flats and there have been a number of complaints. I am not referring to one specific tenant or one window. When does the Minister propose to provide the protection to these windows which he promised at the last but one meeting of the House?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I know that one flat is being done, Sir, I presume the others may be done in due course. I think the flat that is being done is the one that is in the direct line of fire from balls.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask why it is taking so long to provide protection for these windows of these tenants when the ones at Varyl Begg have been done with such speed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because one is putting up a fence which is made in England and is brought out here in large rolls and can be put up very quickly. The other one is a specific job that has to be done in the garage who have to make the wire grills to put over the windows, there is tremendous pressure on the blacksmith's department in the garage and things have to take their time.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 57 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, does Government propose to do anything about the dilapidated state of the public conveniences (both internally and externally) at Market Place?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, I beg to differ. The public conveniences at the Market Place were last redecorated during the 1980/81 financial year. Further maintenance has been programmed for the coming financial year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 57 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister begs to differ. I should I think, Mr Speaker, possibly declare an interest here in that I am forced to make use of these conveniences but would the Minister tell me when was the last time he visited these conveniences?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, no, I will not allow that question. It is not the responsibility of the Minister to inspect public conveniences.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I assure the Minister that they are in a dilapidated state and would he care to see that it is remedied?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 58 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is the Minister for Public Works aware that the kerb stones on both sides of Main Street, and for its whole length, become extremely slippery and dangerous when wet, and what does he propose to do about this?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the old stone kerb stones at the northern end of Main Street (between Cathedral Square and Casemates) have become polished due to wear.

It is hoped to repave the whole area of Main Street when this section is pedestrianised with coloured paving blocks. Under this scheme the old kerbs and asphalt paving would be removed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 58 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, this obviously could take a long time. In the meantime does the Minister propose to have anything done on a temporary basis?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, we normally have one or two rather elderly gentlemen who could be put to the task of chipping them, we will get it done for you.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 59 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the public conveniences at Market Place are situated at the bus terminus, would Government consider keeping them open for longer hours?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it seems that the Market Place conveniences are getting an inordinate share of the questions.

The public conveniences at the Market Place are open from 8 am to 7 pm and during this time there is a male and female attendant present as the facilities include showers. Government is currently conducting an exercise to establish whether the opening hours of all public conveniences should be changed. Government has received no requests for extending the opening hours of the Market Place public conveniences.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 59 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, may I correct the Minister on two points? These conveniences are open from 9 am to 6 pm and the Minister has received an enquiry as to the hours of opening from yours truly.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I stand corrected, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government undertake to effect the necessary repairs to Gavino's Dwelling within the next six months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, some urgent repairs have already been carried out and other essential repairs will be effected during the course of next year as part of the normal housing repairs programme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 60 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister tell us what has been done and what is likely to be done and can the Minister answer the question in the light of the unilateral correspondence which has been going on for a few months?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the unilateral correspondence, I think, has been replied by word of mouth. The roofs have been repaired and as far as I can recollect some of the staircases have been repaired. I think the building needs painting, that is one of the things that may be scheduled in the forthcoming year.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, it will or it may be? What will be done in the next six months?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If you do not vote any money at the estimates then nothing will be done, if you vote a lot of money then more will be done, we will have to wait until the estimates come.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister propose to include in the estimates of repairs monies to be spent on the refurbishment of Gavino's Dwelling, yes or no?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not prepared to say definitely yes because when we do our schedules they sometimes have to be changed by emergencies which come along during the year and those that are less vital get left behind.

HON A J HAYNES:

He prefers to keep his promises for when visiting MP's come out and then he can promise the moon, is that what you do?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 61 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state what progress has been made in the decanting of Jumper's Building and whether any surveys have been conducted on the state of the building?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as has been previously stated in the House (Question No. 148 of 1982 - 6th July, 1982) it is necessary to totally decant one of the two blocks of flats before any further surveys can be conducted. The Housing Department continues to face difficulties with those tenants who have refused the alternative accommodation which has been offered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 61 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

How many tenants are there yet to be moved to get at least one block free and when does he envisage that this block will be made free?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think I would be correct in saying that at least 75% of all the tenants living there have already been made offers of alternative accommodation. We have only been successful, I think, in three cases whilst we are still persevering with the rest. The problem is that we make an offer, the tenant for various reasons rejects the offer and we have to await another flat to become vacant in order to offer it to the tenant but I do not want to say anything further because I would not like what I say to be misconstrued and make our job even harder than it is at present.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 62 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, has Government reached any decision on the recommendation of the Chief Restorer of the Department of the Environment's Conservation Studio in London?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as the Hon Member is aware, from my answer to Question No. 234 of 1982, it is Government's intention to implement the recommendations of the Chief Restorer. The necessary financial provision will be included in the draft estimates of expenditure for 1983/84.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 62 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I am aware but the answer to my previous question on this subject was that the Minister would be in a position to make some statement in three months time and as the three months have elapsed hence my question. Do I take it now that the Minister actually cannot give a definite commitment at this moment and he requires a further three months?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, we are putting it in the estimates, that is the definite decision but of course the estimates are subject to final approval by the House.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 63 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has the Gibraltar Taxi Association made representations to the Gibraltar Government in relation to the adequacy or otherwise of existing taxi licences as far as numbers are concerned and have any proposals been submitted in relation to this by them?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, in the course of meetings which I have held with the Gibraltar Taxi Association they have represented that the number of taxi licences should not be increased but that instead, two full-time drivers should be allowed per taxi in order to provide a more continuous service.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 63 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister say whether it is his prerogative or that of the Government to grant taxi licences?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, I think there is a later question on this but taxi licences are granted by the Transport Commission who normally take the line that they should be given a viewpoint by Government as to what they should do with regards to the number of taxi licences as such.

MR SPEAKER:

We might leave it there because Question No. 65 deals with the issue and grant of taxi licences.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does Government propose any legislation in relation to the representations made by the Gibraltar Taxi Association?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the position that was agreed with the Gibraltar Taxi Association and has the Government's approval is that there should be at a date to be introduced, two drivers per taxi with the proviso that the second driver must be a full-time employee and have no other job. This will obviate the people who are part-timers taking up a second job as part-time taxi drivers. At the same time it was agreed that once the Lisbon Agreement came into force then two months after that date or at such prior time that it might be considered necessary by Government, the situation would be looked at once again in the light of circumstances to see if there were a need to increase the number of taxis operating on the roads.

HON P J ISOLA:

But that would not be a matter for Government decision, would it, the number of taxis operating on the road?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Government would recommend to the Transport Commission that the number of taxis should be increased from the present number to a new figure.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does not the Government consider that the law should be amended to give effect to what is the reality and that is that the Government makes the decisions in these matters and not the Transport Commission

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I do not see any specific need to amend something that is working reasonably well at the moment.

HON P J ISOLA:

That, of course, is a matter of opinion, Mr Speaker, but can the Minister state whether when amending the law as it will require an amendment to the law, the Government will ensure that the full-time driver that is employed in relation to the taxi is employed during normal working hours as opposed to 7 o'clock at night to 7 in the morning or something of that nature?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think that brings in a lot of ramifications. I think, and I hope some time in the future to have further consultations with the Taxi Association to try and get an improved service. What is required is a comprehensive service, I would not say 24-hours a day but at least 20 of those 24 hours because there are specific periods during the day and night when taxis are required at certain places and it should be such a system that all those requirements can be fully dealt with satisfactorily which at times I believe is not the case.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state if there are any full-time taxi drivers unemployed and can Government state the reasons for their being unemployed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, there are two full-time taxi drivers registered as unemployed. No vacancies for taxi driver have been notified to the Director of Labour and Social Security.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 64 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

But is it not fairly obvious why no vacancies have been notified to the Minister? Is it not partly due to the circumstances surrounding the reasons why these taxi drivers became unemployed and has he not had representations to this effect, not only him but other Ministers in the Government?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think that the Hon Member will be pleased to learn that a meeting between the Taxi Association and these full-time taxi drivers is likely to be held in the very near future and the situation may be cleared up.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, whilst it is obviously the hope of everybody that these sort of situations should be cleared up will the Minister bear in mind the fact that there a number of part-time taxi drivers in gainful employment and that those who earn their living entirely from full-time taxi driving should be given a chance to earn a living in that profession?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

While it is not unreasonable that a person who has full-time employment in a certain type of employment should be given every opportunity so to do, in the question of taxis the granting of a specific licence to such a full-time driver where that licence becomes a very powerful financial asset and perhaps might be transferred to a third party for a consideration within a very short period, then the situation is somewhat different. I am just speaking completely off the top of my head but there might be some mileage in considering whether a number of extra taxis if they were required might be put on the road as owned by Government who would then employ people to drive them, that is only just a thought, there is nothing definite in it..

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is there in fact a specific trade of taxi driver or is a driver a driver? Are the people who are unemployed unemployable other than in that capacity, is that the position? Are they registered and are they only offered employment as taxi drivers in which case, presumably, they will always be unemployed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think in the Labour Department they are registered as taxi drivers but I do not suppose this would preclude them taking some other type of job if it were offered to them.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is there any reason why people who have been in full-time employment as taxi drivers and have lived through that trade for a number of years should be driven out of it due to the internal politics of the profession?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not accept that they are being driven out of it by the exigencies of the profession. I think this is simply one of those situations that can arise from time to time and can possibly be settled from time to time.

HON P J ISOLA:

But isn't it a fact that some of those full-time drivers lost their job because they applied for a licence to the Transport Commission in their own right? Are we going to be blind to what has happened?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I can see the Hon Member has taken the propaganda put on him by certain people. I wouldn't like to say exactly what are the merits or demerits of this case or why these people have at the moment not found occupation as taxi drivers.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 65 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether the Transport Commission is able to grant additional taxi licences, if found to be required, without first seeking Government approval?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, in performing its functions, the Transport Commission must have regard, among other things, to the extent to which the needs of the proposed services are already met, the desirability of providing efficient and adequate services, and the elimination of unnecessary or unremunerative services. As I said earlier, Sir, the situation is that the Transport Commission relies on Government to give them guidelines as to the specific numbers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 65 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

The Hon Member has not answered my question and that is can the Transport Commission grant additional taxi licences if found to be required without first seeking Government approval?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think in actual principle it could, in practice it does not work that way.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is there any point in having a law that gives them the power to grant licences which they do not exercise without first going to the Government, the Government talking to interested parties and then instructing the Transport Commission? Is that the way a Transport Commission should be run in Gibraltar under the Traffic Ordinance?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

This law, I believe, was promulgated in the days of the old Legislative Council before there were Ministers or anybody with Ministerial responsibility and therefore the powers were given to the Transport Commission. Since a stronger form of Government came in it has been the practice, as I say, for the Transport Commission to apply to Government to give guidelines. It might be possible that the law should be amended, we will look into it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister give urgent consideration to that because it seems to me that under the law what the law says is that the Transport Commission shall in their discretion grant taxi licences, that is what the law says, but the practice followed is entirely different.

It appears that the matter is decided in Council of Ministers and it may be the right place to decide matters of such importance but if it is the right place does not the Minister agree that the law should be changed because otherwise the Transport Commission is a farce?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We will look at that urgently.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister also look at the fact or advise the Transport Commission that where an application is before the Transport Commission it should hear it and not defer it for a year or two years while things go on in the background relating to those applications?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have no knowledge of the Transport Commission having applications for a year or two years and they have not looked at them, I think they have looked at them and possibly rejected them. As I said before, the practice over the past number of years has been that guidelines should be sought or are sought by the Transport Commission from Government as to the number of taxi drivers and to other specific matters dealing with transport.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister look into the matter a little closer and ask to have papers from the Transport Commission and see the number of applications that are awaiting for decision and in some cases for actual hearing and is that a healthy situation for a judicial tribunal from whose findings there is an appeal to the Supreme Court but people cannot appeal to the Supreme Court if the Transport Commission does not hear the application and goes to Government for instruction? Isn't that a thoroughly unsatisfactory situation that should be put right?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If you will give me details of some of these applications that you allege have been non-processed I shall be happy to look at them with the Transport Commission.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I would like to say something on this. The Transport Commission has got an independent Chairman who knows his law and the Commission itself if they want to. The point is as stated by the Minister that the matter has taken another dimension since the Commission was appointed, I think, in 1968 when the licensing authority was the City Council and I think maybe there is hesitation in dealing with the matter. As far as we are concerned, certainly the Government has not directed the Transport Commission not to hear applications.

HON P J ISOLA:

But does the Chief Minister think it is a healthy situation whereby the Taxi Association or discontented taxi drivers or anybody involved in it has to go to Ministers and Members of the Opposition to try and get things done that they want when there is a Transport Commission set up by law to determine exactly those matters?

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it in fact the case that the Transport Commission has made no attempt to increase the number of licences or been overruled by the Government in this respect?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, Government was put in the position of considering whether the number of licences should be increased. They took opinions from different sources one of which was the Transport Commission and the Transport Commission said that at this present juncture they did not see any need to increase the number of licences though they left it open if the circumstances vis-a-vis the frontier etc, should change then a new look might be taken.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister why should the Transport Commission or the Government ask these questions to each other? It is surely not for the Transport Commission to ask the Government if they can increase licences, it is for the Transport Commission to carry out the duty laid on them by law which allows them to give more licences if they think the circumstances justify it. If the position is different should not it be put right?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is a rhetorical question, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

No, it is a very real question, Mr Speaker.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think we have undertaken to look at it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the original question of the Hon and Learned Member says if found to be required. Am I correct in saying that as far as the Transport Commission is concerned they have found that it is not required and it isn't that they have found otherwise and been overruled by any external body? If the Hon Member is saying that the law leaves it to the Transport Commission is it not a fact, can the Minister not confirm that as far as the Transport Commission is concerned no further licences are required?



MR SPEAKER:

I think in fairness to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition what has been said is that the practice has arisen whereby even though the Transport Commission has an inherent power and discretion to issue licences it does not exercise that power without consultation with the Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

The Transport Commission cannot, Mr Speaker, am I not right in saying, come to a conclusion when the law tells it to look at every application on its merits? Change the law by all means.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is it a normal or a recognised practice for ambulances to drive up one-way streets in the wrong direction?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it is not normal practice but in a case of real emergency and where other routes are congested, then, provided no danger is caused to other road users, the ambulance driver would endeavour to get to the hospital with the least possible delay.

May I digress a little, Sir, I was in London the other day and there was a very bad fire in a certain area and I saw two police cars, two ambulances and three fire engines go up the wrong side of the road.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 66 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

I appreciate, Mr Speaker, the reply that where streets are congested then the priority is to get the patient to hospital but I would like to quote him time, date, place and check whether it was in fact necessary. At 9.45 pm when there is not all that much traffic on the roads, on Friday 11th February up Library Street. I raise this question because when such occurrences happen should cars be coming down the right way they could interfere with the whole object of the exercise and that is getting the patient to hospital as soon as possible. I think it is perhaps irresponsible for such things to occur at that sort of time at night.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We will ask for a report on that and I will let you know.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

22.2.83

NO. 67 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the cost of street painting, ie yellow parking lines and white direction lines, for the year 1982 and will Government state whether the works were tendered for?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The sum of £3,404.19 has been spent by the Police so far during this financial year on the painting of yellow lines and white lines. The works were tendered for.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 67 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Government satisfied at the result of these exercises? Is it not true that the paint has worn off very quickly?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

For next year's estimates, Sir, the Public Works Department is putting in that the painting should be done by the Public Works Department who will have equipment which will have a more lasting type of paint.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state what progress has been made, if any, in bringing certain legislation, namely, Traffic (Motor Vehicles) (Construction and Use) Regulations into line with EEC directives?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, I regret that it has not been possible to make any progress. The responsibility for advising on different aspects of traffic matters, including this one, is at present divided among a number of departments. The best method of coordinating this responsibility is being investigated and I have no doubt that, as soon as this has been agreed upon, we shall be able to make good progress on the Construction and Use Regulations.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 68 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, we have been fobbed off for two years on this point. Will the Hon Attorney-General confirm or deny that the legislation sadly requires up-dating, that the effects of out-dated legislation in this respect is prejudicial to the introduction of modern techniques and advances in the construction of cars?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I do not accept that the Hon Member has been fobbed off in this matter for two years and I will avoid the use of such expressions as sadly. This is a matter in which, as I understand the position, there are Community directives which have to be brought into force. We are talking about the Construction and Use Regulations I think it is obvious that they are lengthy and technically involved regulations and if these are to be implemented fully and properly a good deal of research is necessary and that is what lies before us basically.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Attorney-General at least consider the introduction of smaller amendments to carry through for the moment which relate to control of braking systems and the general advice on braking systems is to be found in the present British legislation. What they hold is a fair brake is the kind of brake that is being built into British-made cars; the same applies to the European legislation for braking systems, it applies to the manufacture of European-made cars, I do not see that it requires any great technical knowledge on our part to extract from the necessary legislation those clauses which would enable the supervisors in Gibraltar to allow an advance braking mechanism to be passed in Gibraltar and not to be turned down on the basis that it may be better but it is not in conformity with our laws. I think small measures can be taken without any great difficulties and will the Minister confirm it?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, any legislation has two elements to it, it has the technical and there is the legal aspect apart from what is commonly called lawyers law. I have already made the point that so far as traffic is concerned there is a consideration of the definition or coordination, I should say, of responsibilities. I cannot say whether it is practical to go ahead with one particular aspect of it or not but I strongly suspect the answer is that it is desirable to look at the whole Construction and Use Regulations as a whole, they are very technical, they are very complicated and I do not myself see any particular merit in doing them piecemeal.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is the Attorney-General now advocating the revision of the law which we on this side of the House have made reference to on numerous occasions?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has any progress now been made with a view to amending the Merchant Shipping Ordinance so that ships registered in Gibraltar may be deemed to comply with manning requirements if officers of those ships are certified officers in EEC countries and should no progress yet have been made will Government state what steps it has taken to try to have this Ordinance amended?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, as stated in answer to Question No. 101 of 1982 the Captain of the Port inquired as to the position regarding certificated EEC nationals being employed on British ships in June 1981, and was informed by the Registrar General that this was not possible.

The matter was again raised in talks held with officials of the Department of Trade when these visited Gibraltar in December, 1982. The whole structure of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 was then discussed. The officials of the Department of Trade reiterated that no EEC countries including the United Kingdom permitted other nationals as certificated officers on board their flagships. One of the reasons given being that of jurisdiction over the officers concerned in cases of an offence being committed. Each flag state wants to have supreme control of all officers employed on their ships. This would not be possible if non-British officers were employed on British ships.

It was further pointed out to the Department of Trade team by the Government officials that in our own Merchant Shipping Ordinance a section specifically granted powers to HE the Governor to dispense with the requirement of employing a British certificated officer as Master of a Gibraltar registered ship. The team, however, explained that a similar section was included under the British Merchant Shipping Acts; the interpretation given by the United Kingdom to that section being that it is only applicable in cases of emergency and not as a matter of course.

In answer to the Hon Member's question consultations are still continuing in respect of the review of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894. It is apparent that on the question of employing EEC nationals the Department of Trade are adamant that this will not be possible on British registered ships.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 69 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

But was this House not told, Mr Speaker, when the matter was first raised that the Government was awaiting amendment of the UK Merchant Shipping Act in order to bring, the impression that one was given at the time was that the amendment to the Merchant Shipping Act would in fact in the United Kingdom allow the certification of EEC personnel on British ships?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think that impression can have been given, Mr Speaker. What has been received is a consultative document in which the UK Department of Trade is informing or is seeking from the Dependent Territories their views as to the proposed legislation. The proposed legislation as in that consultative document, does not envisage any lifting of this restriction in respect of manning requirements and it is against the ambit of this consultative document, against that background that the consultations which I have referred to have been taking place but I do not think that I have ever given the impression that because the UK 1894 Merchant Shipping Act was going to be amended that it would follow that this restriction would be lifted. I think what we did say in the House either I myself specifically or the Hon the Financial and Development Secretary was that we very much hoped that because in the exercise on diversification of the economy we were trying to project Gibraltar as a Finance Centre, we thought that there might be some mileage in getting more ships to register if this restriction was lifted, that I think the impression may have been given that we thought we had a strong case and we have made that point very forcibly but, as I say, they are quite adamant that this cannot be done.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask then, Mr Speaker, what exactly is the position of the Gibraltar Government now? Are they going to accept without further ado this adamant attitude of the British Government in this particular area or do they intend to do anything else about it?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, I think, as I say, Mr Speaker, that they are very adamant. The indications are that we are not going to prevail on this particular point. What we are therefore additionally trying to establish is whether Gibraltar as a registry port should also become a convention port. The difficulty there is to try to weigh up the implications of such a step. If we were to become a convention port it appears that it would be necessary to create a marine administration branch within the Port Department, the cost of that because of the rather specialist technical officers who would have to be employed, people like nautical surveyors and nautical engineers, the cost of that in staff alone could be in excess of £50,000 and it remains to be seen whether the benefit that would accrue to the economy which are difficult to quantify, would be such as to make that expenditure worthwhile. I say £50,000 in salaries through staff alone, with all the difficulties of trying to find them accommodation and so on. But that is on a slightly different tack within the ambit of the amendment to the Shipping Act. On the former one which is the one that has been exercising our attention, it does seem as we have come against a brick wall, we can attempt to break our heads against it further but it may come to nothing.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister consider when further putting his case across, in linking this sort of operation with the Finance Centre that we hope to create in Gibraltar as well as and I think perhaps even more linked if it is necessary to have a commercial ship repair yard?

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to extend the scope of the question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, I am just asking if he would consider using these arguments.

HON A J CANEPA:

But we have already done so, Mr Speaker, one of the arguments that we are putting across, of course, is that if there is going to be a commercial ship repair yard in Gibraltar it does fit into this scenario that we have been hoping to put into effect of making it possible for more ships to register in Gibraltar by lifting this requirement, it is an argument that has been put across but there does not seem to be much mileage.

HON A J HAYNES:

What are in fact the arguments which the Hon Minister has made in relation to our application for the bar on British Captains to be removed?

HON A J CANEPA:

I have already explained what the arguments are this afternoon. I can repeat what they told us as well but I have stated both sides.

HON J BOSSANO:

The Hon Member is talking about certificated officers, in fact, this applies solely to the Master of the ship, does it?

HON A J CANEPA:

No and others, and the Mate.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, in fact, under our own Ordinance is it not the case that the limitation on nationality is only mentioned in the context of the Master?

HON A J CANEPA:

My understanding is that it isn't just the Master it would also be, say, the first and the second Mate.



HON J BOSSANO:

But in fact under the Ordinance that we have in Gibraltar the Ordinance does not say anything about nationality except that it says that the Governor may give a dispensation in respect of the Master. Surely, the implication there is that it is only the Master that requires to have British nationality otherwise it would have to say they would give a dispensation in respect of everybody.

HON A J CANEPA:

We have been trying to convince the UK Department of Trade that under the ambit of a new Act legislation should be amended so that it would not be a requirement either for the Master or the Chief Mates to be British certificated officers. We have been wanting to widen, in other words, to have more flexibility. The Hon Member is quite correct in saying that the powers which His Excellency has in exceptional circumstances in case of an emergency to grant exemptions are in respect of the Master only.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say then if there is nothing specific in the law to lay down the criteria where dispensation is to be granted, what is to stop, in fact, the Governor from granting a dispensation?

HON A J CANEPA:

Because the use of exemption provisions in pursuit of commercial advantage is not the purpose for which these provisions were written into the Ordinance, they are to be used in case of emergency or for other exceptional circumstances.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, that is not what the law says, that is the opinion of the DTI, is that right?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

And what is therefore in law to prevent an exemption being given from the Governor or does the Governor take orders from the DTI, is that the situation? If the Government wanted the Governor to grant an exemption and the law permits it, what is the situation?

HON A J CANEPA:

I imagine the situation, Mr Speaker, is that I do not think that the Merchant Shipping Ordinance is a defined domestic matter, perhaps the Attorney-General might enlighten the House, I do not think it is a defined domestic matter.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government investigate the recommendations of the British Parliament's Expenditure Committee on measures to prevent collisions and strandings of noxious cargo carriers in waters around the United Kingdom and report on the recommendations in relation to the Straits of Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, copies of the recommendations made by the British Parliamentary Expenditure Committee on measures to prevent collision and strandings of noxious cargo carriers in waters around the United Kingdom have not yet been received.

Arrangements will be made to obtain a copy in order to study their implications and their application in relation to the Straits of Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 70 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I could facilitate a copy to the Hon Member.

HON A J CANEPA:

I would be very grateful, Mr Speaker, because last Wednesday the Captain of the Port was in the Foreign Office in London and they did not seem to be able to trace what the actual report was about on the basis of the information in the question. If he can be more specific, if he can allow me to have a copy then I can quote chapter and verse and try and get a copy for ourselves.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 71 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government say whether there have been any recent developments with regard to Parson's Lodge?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, in July last year I made a statement regarding the future use of Parson's Lodge. I then explained the position following the expiry of the option granted to the Company interested in developing the site as an hotel. The view of the DPC was that it was unlikely that a hotel development of the magnitude envisaged would materialise under the prevailing circumstances. The Commission therefore considered that, rather than allow the site to fall to waste, a more modest development of a tourist orientated nature which would exploit the historical character of the site would be desirable.

There has since been an approach from an interested party, but because of the trust status of this Organisation it has requested the grant of a freehold or a long lease of the site as a condition precedent to their investing in the proposals. The Commission feels that if the site is to remain as a historical feature, ownership should remain with the Government. The Government is prepared to consider making the site available on licence terms which would enable an interested party to operate commercially from the site on a touristic basis. Such an arrangement would enable the Government to monitor the viability of the scheme without granting title over such an important site. The possibility of this is currently being investigated by the Lands and Surveys Department in consultation with the Tourist Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 71 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask whether the Minister would be prepared to let me know of any further developments without the need to have to come to the House and ask the question when any progress is made?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that is a very sensible approach, Mr Speaker. I would invite the Hon Member to get in touch with me from time to time, to phone me or if we happen to see each other I will keep him abreast of the situation.

NO. 72 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, Sir, with regard to the answer given to Question 343 of 1982 will Government make an up-to-date statement on the position of the proposed East Side Reclamation Scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the position is that the two parties have now replied to the Government queries regarding their financial proposals for a feasibility study and other details related to the infrastructural requirements of the scheme. These are still under consideration.

I therefore regret that I am unable to disclose any further information at what is now a critical point in the selection procedure. The Government has also engaged a financial consultant to assist in the study.

As soon as I am able to do so I will make a full statement on the outcome of these deliberations.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 72 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, will Government, I am sure they are aware, but it has to be said publicly on this side of the House, that an investment of this nature by proposed developers could reach many hundreds of millions of pounds and that to keep a proposed investor waiting for months and years perhaps on occasion because of the pedantic manner it is done, it is not for me to say, but there could perhaps be reasons where the prospective developers just cease to have interest in Gibraltar and go elsewhere. I think that is a very important point that should be taken very much to mind.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am very much aware of that, Mr Speaker. The problem is that it is very difficult to choose as between the two sets of proposals, very, very little to choose between them and it is extremely difficult to select one and not the other. Having said that, I am very conscious of the fact that in not selecting one or the other we may fall between two stools and have neither.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 73 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm whether the restrictions affecting the type of projects on which the £4 million aid allocation can be spent also apply to the additional £9 million recently announced?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Mr Speaker. The ODA officials who visited Gibraltar earlier this month confirmed that the £13 million aid allocation would be confined to infrastructural and revenue-earning projects.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 73 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that this is now established policy for any aid from UK?

HON A J CANEPA:

It appears to be the case, Mr Speaker, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Government in a position to say, Mr Speaker, whether this is likely to cause any delay to the rate at which the money is spent as it has done in the past, in fact?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, Mr Speaker, I am making a somewhat comprehensive statement on the whole question of development aid later in these proceedings. I do not want to anticipate that but I think the Hon Member could have a point. On the other hand it could facilitate the rate at which money is spent if ODA, for instance, on the question of infrastructure depending what attitude they take on an application that has been made for further distillation plant, if they approve of it then money will come readily on stream. If they say no then we have got to think back and try and bring other schemes on stream and there is a danger that we will be running out of schemes.

HON J BOSSANO:

What I am trying to establish, Mr Speaker, is if in fact there is a clearcut set of criteria which enable the Government to know what is going to be approved beforehand or in fact is it the case that until they get a yes or a no they are not definitely sure whether it falls within one definition or the other?

HON A J CANEPA:

There are criteria, broad guidelines that enable us to get a fairly broad response, nevertheless we still have to go through the process of submitting specific project applications and we can never know for sure that these are going to be approved.

HON J BOSSANO:

So that in fact if the Government can submit something in the expectation that it would be considered to be infrastructural development and then find that in the judgement of the ODA it is not and therefore it is not acceptable?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, it might be infrastructural but they might not be able to agree to the full cost of the project for other reasons. I hope that this will become clearer later on in these proceedings as I answer other questions and make my statement.

NO. 74 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does Government consider that the level of aid of £9 million over 3 years recently granted by HMG is sufficient to sustain the Development Programme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, although I gave notice on the 7.2.83 that I proposed to make a statement on development aid later in these proceedings, I am quite happy to deal with this question in general terms. The £9 million allocation, in addition to the £4 million tranche agreed in December 1981, represents a shortfall of £5 million on our bid for aid funds towards the new Development Programme. The extent to which this appreciable aid allocation will be sufficient to sustain the programme will depend on the speed and direction of planned expenditure in relation to our priorities and to our own local contribution. The overall commitment to the new programme currently at some £20 million, although lower than originally envisaged, will nonetheless be substantial, particularly having regard to existing local financial constraints and the British Government's declared readiness to make available an additional sum over five years which could amount to £40 million for the Dockyard.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 74 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if in fact the Hon Member is suggesting, I am not sure whether he is, that this could be sufficient because of the additional sum of £40m that might be available for the Dockyard, would he then say that if that £40m was not available he would expect to be able to get more than the £9m in order to maintain the Development Programme?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is very conjectural, Mr Speaker. My own personal view is that had it not been for this element of £40m I would have found it difficult not to describe the money that we have got as inadequate. However, having regard to that, having regard to the problems generally of the United Kingdom economy, having regard to the cuts that there have been in the ODA budget, I think the sum involved is appreciable. It will be even more appreciable if we are able to spend it and, if we are allowed to spend it over the next 3 years, then it will be a welcome injection into the economy but if approval is slow in coming and it is spread out over a longer period of 4 or 5 years then the impact is not going to be all that great particularly because of an area which I attach a lot of importance to not just because of its social aspects but because of the fact that it is labour intensive, namely, housing, does not figure in ODA projections.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

22.2.83

NO. 75 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

In view of the fact that the frontier has now been opened for pedestrians in a restricted manner can Government make a statement as to the effects that this manner of opening is having on the economy of Gibraltar and what steps does Government propose to take to mitigate these effects and when?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 15 and 18 of 1983.



22.2.83

NO. 76 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state whether there has now been a full agreement with the British Government as to the manner in which the Development Aid granted by the British Government amounting to £13m is to be allocated and if not will Government state in what areas there has been agreement in principle and whether there are any areas in which the British Government has indicated that it will not agree to allocation of Development Aid Funds and will the Minister make a comprehensive statement on the matter?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, I propose to deal with this question as well as with Question Nos. 77, 78, 79 and 80 in the statement which I will make on the Development Programme later in these proceedings, notice of which I gave you on 7.2.83. I will of course be willing to answer supplementaries from Members on points of detail raised in questions which may not have been fully covered by the statement.

22.2.83

NO. 77 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, is Government now in a position to inform this House as to the specific projects in the 1981/86 Development Programme which are not subject to ODA funds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Answered together with Question Nos. 76, 78, 79 and 80 of 1983.

22.2.83

NO. 78 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Is it Government's intention to proceed with the redevelopment of the Piazza as shown in the recent PWD Exhibition and if so is this project contained within the 1981/86 Development Programme?

ANSWER.

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Answered together with Question Nos. 76, 77, 79 and 80 of 1983.

22.2.83

NO. 79 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A. J. HAYNES

Will Government release the details of any new housing projects to be commenced within the next twelve months giving the estimated costs?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Answered together with Question Nos. 76, 77, 78 and 80 of 1983.

22.2.83

NO. 80 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether or not any of the ODA funds cleared in December, 1982, are to be allocated in refurbishing Waterport Wharf or the Western Arm facilities for liners and generally in accordance with the Port Feasibility Study?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Answered together with Question Nos. 76, 77, 78 and 79 of 1983.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give the reasons for the delay in the submission of the report of the Select Committee on the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the Select Committee completed its report and agreed on its recommendations on 21 October, 1982. The necessary draft Bill is being prepared.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 81 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not rather a long time for the law to be drafted since the end of the findings of a Select Committee and the bringing of the Ordinance to this House, Mr Speaker?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, I agree it is four months, in fact, and I have not lost sight of the fact that the present moratorium expires on the 31st March.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Hon Member have any idea when he will be able to be in a position to bring that legislation to the House?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the present moratorium expires on the 31st March and that is the target I am working to.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I go back to my question on divorce. The Select Committee is a Committee of the House and therefore ought we not to have the report of the Committee here, we can then consider the legislation, surely? Is it not desirable that the House should be able to have time to look at the report and debate it before it being thrown in with a Bill and everything else as if the thing was completed and done?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am grateful, can I clarify the matter, Mr Speaker? I think by a draft Bill it is more accurate to say a draft of a draft. One is not talking about a Bill to be introduced in the House as such, one is talking about a draft of a Bill, as it were, appended to the report which I think it not an unusual procedure in Select Committee

reports, certainly I have seen it elsewhere, but that is not a Bill in the strict sense of the word before this House, it is a way of depicting, of showing what the Committee itself would have in mind and, of course, in no way encroaches upon the prerogatives of the House.

HON P J ISOLA:

I appreciate that, Mr Speaker, but wouldn't it be better to have the report at an early stage so that Members of the House, so that the public can look at it and make representations rather than be in a position in March where the Bill has to be rushed through all its stages because of the moratorium coming to an end? Why not have the report in to the House so that Members can look at it?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think I am stating the position correctly but I think if the report was before the House before the moratorium comes to an end it does not necessarily follow that the Bill itself should be taken through in that meeting of the House.

NO. 82 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Does Government intend to increase lottery ticket numbers in the near future?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. The Government, acting on the advice of the Lottery Committee arrived at on 4 February, 1983, will increase the number of tickets in the ordinary draws by 1,000 ie from 19,000 to 20,000 tickets. There will also be two main changes in the prize structure:

- a. the Second Prize will now be £4,000 instead of £3,000, and
- b. the Third Prize is increased to £2,000 from £1,500. The First Prize remains unchanged at £20,000.



NO. 83 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will the Chief Minister ensure that Ministers who receive letters from Members of the Opposition on their departmental responsibilities reply promptly to these letters?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, Ministers do in fact reply promptly to letters addressed to them by Members of the Opposition - and, indeed, by others - on matters relating to their departmental responsibilities.

If, for some reason, there have been any exceptions to this practice I invite the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition to bring them to my attention and I will take the necessary steps to see that it does not happen again.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 83 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that it is desirable that letters from Members of the Opposition should be replied to within, say, a period of fourteen days at least?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know, it all depends on the subject matter. The Hon Member has a certain amount of correspondence with me and he knows that we try and reply as quickly as possible. I think fixing a time of fourteen days might be too much for a simple enquiry and perhaps too little for an extensive one but I do impress upon my colleagues, and I think they know that that is my wish, that Members should have early replies from Ministers on matters on which they write to them. In fact, I think if they use this media more, some of the small matters that are dealt with at question time could well be dealt with in that way if it is really for clarification so I certainly will make sure that they do answer Members quickly.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

22.2.83

NO. 84 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether GBC has engaged sub-contractors from non-EEC countries for publicity work in respect of commercial advertising?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, I am informed that GBC have not engaged a contractor for publicity work.

NO. 85 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government now in a position to say when the results of the findings of the Select Committee on the Matrimonial Causes Ordinance will be brought before the House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, subject to the agreement of the other members of the Committee, I propose to report at the next meeting of the House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 85 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

It is not a question of the agreement of the members of the Committee, is it not the case that the members of the Committee are in fact unable to proceed because the work on the drafting on the legislation has not been done and it has not been done because the department has got too much work and if the department has got too much work how can the Hon Member say that the Government is not prepared to provide funds because it is a personal commitment? Surely, the drafting of the proposed recommended Bill is not a personal commitment, it is an obligation on the Hon Member's Department.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

May I answer that question in two steps, Mr Speaker. First of all as to the expression "the agreement of other members of the Committee", by that I mean that I must clear my final draft with them. It is quite correct, of course, that the matter does not lie with them it lies with me. What I meant to say was that before the proposals can come to the House I must formally consult the other members of the Committee and make sure they are happy. Coming to the second part of the question, it is my understanding that it would not be appropriate for me to delegate to somebody in my Chamber's work that may need to be done under a Select Committee and that is why I regard it as a personal commitment.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask the Hon and Learned Attorney-General, is it not the proper course in the case of this particular Select Committee for the Committee to submit its Report to the House? Is there any need for legislation? The House could reject the Report so why spend time on draft legislation that might not have the approval of the House in respect of a Committee in which there is a free vote? May I suggest that the House gets the Report from the Select Committee as soon as possible so that we can make a judgement on it and not be forced to accept legislation at the same time.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there is no question, I think, if I may say so, of being forced to accept anything but the Select Committee has agreed to prepare its Report in a certain way and that is what I am embarked on, the matter lies with me.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, this question does provide a convenient opportunity to ask the Hon and Learned Attorney-General how many qualified lawyers there are in his Department?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

There are five, Mr Speaker.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how many resident Gibraltarians are entitled to register for British Citizenship and how many have done so up to now?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, it is practically impossible to calculate with any degree of accuracy the exact number of Gibraltar belongers who are entitled to be registered under Section 5 of the new Nationality Act. Before the registration process commenced the total number, inclusive of persons resident abroad, was not expected to exceed significantly 20,000. It has since become apparent that the number of Gibraltar belongers who have automatically become British citizens at the commencement of the Act by virtue of a connection with the United Kingdom is greater than originally estimated. It is now therefore considered that approximately 15,000 resident Gibraltar belongers are entitled to apply for registration as British citizens under Section 5.

On 16 February the number of applications submitted totalled 3,500. The first 200 of these had by then already been approved and the registration effected.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 86 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Chief Minister state if in these 3,500 are included those who have applied for the forms or is this actual registration? I understand that they go for the form, take it home and then they register.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What I said was: "On 16 February the number of applications submitted totalled 3,500. The first 200 of these had by then already been approved and the registration effected". What it means is that 3,500 have lodged their claim over that period and already 200 have come back and then they will start coming back gradually.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I do not think the Chief Minister understood my question. Over and above that figure I imagine that there are people who have literally gone there and asked for the forms, has he got any idea how many?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No. The number of forms removed are very considerable, they take a long time, much more, 5,000 or 6,000.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So it could be much more than 3,500?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, 3,500 are the ones that have been lodged, not the ones that have been taken away. We have printed about 20,000.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Thank you very much.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 87 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Other than on sovereignty, does the Lisbon Agreement give the Gibraltarians the right to veto any arrangements affecting Gibraltar's relationship with Spain?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Lisbon Agreement as such does not deal with the question of vetos. The question of sovereignty is covered in the Agreement by a reiteration of the British Government's intention fully to maintain its commitment to honour the freely and democratically expressed wishes of the people of Gibraltar as set out in the preamble to the Gibraltar Constitution.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 87 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does that mean, in fact, that the British Government's commitment as reflected in the Lisbon Agreement is limited to sovereignty?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I do not think that that is the case. First of all, there is the fact that the leader of both major political parties will be present at the talks and that the matters to be discussed affecting Gibraltar's relationship with Spain will be at large. May I also remind Hon Members and particularly the Questioner of the text of the resolution which was passed on the 17 July, 1980, which reads: "This House considers that, following the Lisbon Agreement in April, 1980, and once direct communications have been re-established, consideration of any proposals for further cooperation on the basis of reciprocity and full equality of rights must be on a mutually beneficial basis and insofar as such proposals relate to the rights and interests of the people of Gibraltar, should not be acceded to without the agreement of their elected representatives who will safeguard the legitimate rights of all sections of Gibraltar and the identity of its people".

HON J BOSSANO:

And in fact, is that point of view now accepted by Her Majesty's Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Her Majesty's Government are well aware that this is a resolution of the House of Assembly and Her Majesty's Government are in no doubt about how the people of Gibraltar feel generally on the matter and I have reason to believe that that is very much the case in respect of those who would form the team if and when the talks take place.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if I can bring the Hon Member a little bit down to earth. What I am trying to establish is in fact whether the situation is that he can be overruled on the basis that something is a non-defined domestic matter of foreign affairs when it comes to any arrangements affecting Gibraltar and Spain as he understands the Lisbon Agreement, somebody else may understand it differently but since he supports it I want to know what he understands by it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can understand that there will be no major decision taken which is contrary to the wishes of the people of Gibraltar in matters affecting our status and our own position and our viability and so on and that should any attempt be made in that respect we shall have no hesitation in bringing the matter to the notice of this House, of the Members of Parliament, of Members of both Houses of Parliament and of world opinion if necessary. It was done before in another forum and I think it would be done now. I have no reason whatever from what I have seen to intimate that we are going to find ourselves in an embarrassing situation in that respect, at least I have that confidence.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 88 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

What are the measures of economic co-operation with Spain that it is proposed to raise in the context of the implementation of the Lisbon Agreement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, matters to be raised in the context of the implementation of the Lisbon Agreement must of necessity remain confidential at this stage. The Leader of the Opposition and I, who work in close consultation on these matters as part of the bi-partisan policy, will have clearly before us at all times the guiding principle of mutual benefit which is contained in the Lisbon Agreement. We will, of course, consider any constructive suggestions on economic cooperation which the Hon Member may wish to put forward.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 88 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

I must congratulate the Hon Member on his sense of humour, Mr Speaker. I take it then, Mr Speaker, that when the Lords were given a reply by Lord Belstead that there were matters of economic cooperation which the British side wanted to raise, from what the Hon Member has told me it means that he knows what these things are?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know what Lord Belstead had in mind, I know a few of the things but I do not know what Lord Belstead had in mind when he answered that and I have not got the text in front of me but I think, if I remember rightly, the tenor of that question was that it was one way in which Britain and Spain could get on on matters of general interest between them which had nothing to do with Gibraltar. That that was the objective also of the Lisbon Agreement that is to get on well on the question of Gibraltar, then that would give them wider areas on which they could agree on matters which had nothing to do with Gibraltar but which the Gibraltar question appears to have been an objection to it being progressed, that is how I understood it, but certainly I cannot say what he had in mind about that but it is quite true to say that there are a number of matters that have been held up or the atmosphere has not been right in bilateral relations between Britain and Spain on matters not directly connected with Gibraltar that they hope will be softened as a result of a better atmosphere created by the Lisbon Agreement.

HON J BOSSANO:

But on matters of economic cooperation affecting Gibraltar the Hon Member would be expected to be consulted before they were put to Spain, is that correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, of course, that is quite easy, it is the other way about that we have to be careful, proposals made for economic cooperation coming from the other side. From this side, of that I have no doubt at all.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government when making public all relevant information about the closure of the Naval Dockyard and its commercialisation allow sufficient time for public debate to influence the final decisions in Gibraltar and in the United Kingdom where Members of Parliament complain of not having adequate information on which to base a responsible view?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

An abstract of the consultants report on the evaluation of proposals for the commercialisation of the Dockyard was published and the consultants give an oral presentation to Members of the House and to interested parties. The Government has it in mind to make similar arrangements to publicise the report of the Project Study Team when this becomes available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 89 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Chief Minister aware that a Member of the British/Gibraltar Group indeed asked for the PEIDA Report to be made public so that they would be able to get themselves informed as to the situation and perhaps at this very stage start influencing opinion in the Commons bearing in mind that the Government of Gibraltar is in principle against the closure of the Dockyard?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am aware that the Chairman of the British/Gibraltar Group has asked for a copy of the PEIDA Report to be put in the library of the House on two occasions. On the first occasion we were consulted and we thought that for as long as there is an element of study and commercial judgement on this matter that it would not be in the public interest to provide that information in the library of the House of Commons. The second request has now come and we are looking at it again but I do not think that the answer is likely to be any different.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Couldn't the Chief Minister give considerable thought to this because my own experience certainly recently is that there is a lot of sympathy in the Commons for Gibraltar in that respect and that if Members had knowledge of the seriousness of the situation brought about by the closure of the Dockyard, I think we would have a lot more support and they would be indeed much more effective in putting a case for Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, Mr Speaker, insofar as the closure of the Dockyard itself is concerned, Members of the Lords and Commons and indeed Ministers of HMG, particularly Members of the Lords and Commons, are fully aware of our views not least as a result of an all-party delegation from this House which visited London in April of last year and therefore there can be no doubt that they are aware of that and in fact we had recently another visiting MP who was made fully aware of our views on this matter. That is insofar as the concern about the closure of the Dockyard. I do not know if it is looked at from that point of view, that the disclosure of the PEIDA Report is going to make the Gibraltar lobby make the British Government change its mind about whether the Dockyard should be closed or not, the rest is a matter of judgement but we have been in touch continuously with leaders of the British/Gibraltar Group and we have continued to do so.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Chief Minister consider that April last year is a long way back, lots of things have happened since then and that it might be a good idea for another visit from a Gibraltar delegation, in fact, I have requests from Members of Parliament that they would like to see a delegation from Gibraltar going there and speaking to them and indeed, apart from that is it not fair to say that the Chief Minister himself is restrained as to what he can say if he cannot quote the Report which is confidential and therefore isn't it fair to assume that he cannot put a good case for Gibraltar precisely because he is inhibiting himself by not being able to give away the information?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will be modest and say that I can put the Gibraltar case as well as the Hon Questioner, perhaps with less vehemence and perhaps with a little more responsibility.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, if he will give way, I have not said that I could put it better than him.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, but you have been trying to carry on your little campaign in London part of which is being, perhaps, very beneficial, part of which has had its feedback which is not perhaps as good as the Hon Member thinks but be that as it may, the Hon Financial and Development Secretary gave this morning the reasons why the PEIDA Report at this stage could not be made public and that is the only question I am really answering now arising out of the supplementary of the Hon Member.

HON J BOSSANO:

In fact, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is mistaken, surely. What the Hon Financial and Development Secretary was talking about was the report the synopsis of which was made public. Is it the view of the Chief Minister that the report by the consultants who selected Appledore should not be made available to Members of this House of Assembly?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think that that was a supplementary of the previous Questioner at all, I understood him to talk about the PEIDA Report having been asked for by a Member of the House of Commons.

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is mistaken. When the Member of the House of Commons, Mr McQuarrie, recently asked for the Report, and perhaps the Hon Member will check his information, he asked for two reports, for the report of PEIDA and for the report of the consultants who selected Appledore and what I asked in an earlier question in a supplementary to the Financial and Development Secretary and perhaps the Hon Member may now be in a position to give me an answer, is whether he would agree that rather than limiting ourselves to a synopsis which is at the discretion and on the judgement of the person making the synopsis, the full report which was put to the Government selecting Appledore should be made available to Members of the House, I was not asking for it to be made public but I was certainly asking for it this morning to be made available to Members of the House.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer is yes but not now. It is still considered because we have not finished the project stage, that publication of the report is sensitive insofar as it is a report which is being worked out with the officials of the Gibraltar Government and the British Government with a preferred operator and for as long as that is on the mat and no decision is taken, I think that it is not in the interest of the public to do that. Equally, I would anticipate that we cannot have a decision, the final decision of that, without bringing the matter to the House.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Member perhaps he will correct me if I am wrong, but is it not the case that what is at present being studied by the three parties that he has mentioned are the Appledore proposals and not the report of PEIDA, Bells Associates and Coopers and Lybrand, surely, that is not being studied any further?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The project team are looking at the effects of the Appledore proposals on the economy which is also part of what was looked at in the evaluations made by PEIDA and the various other persons so that whilst it may not be looking at the proposals put forward by other prospective operators, the half a dozen or so that put them forward, they are looking at the Appledore proposals plus the whole matter of the report which relates with the effects that the Appledore proposals would have on the economy of Gibraltar generally.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if we have a situation where the Government has commissioned a report by PEIDA which is secret, dating back to September 1981, then this is followed by invitation to tender and another report by Bells Associates, Coopers and Lybrand and PEIDA which in turn is secret at this stage and there is going to be a third report to be produced by the end of April this time involving Appledore, are we being told that the Members of this House are expected to digest the three reports produced over a period of 1½ years and that none of the two previous ones can be made available until the final one is produced, is that the Government view?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Incredible, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could I just clear one point? I directed myself at one report as a supplementary but if he notices the question it is all relevant information, all the reports you may have.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider publishing a news sheet for distribution to Peers and MP's to keep them informed of developments in Gibraltar such as the closure of the Naval Dockyard?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir, because I do not believe that this is necessary. I am constantly and regularly in touch with both Mr Albert McQuarrie, as leader of the British/Gibraltar Group, and with Lord Bethell, as Chairman of the Gibraltar in Europe Representation Group, and keep them closely informed of developments in Gibraltar, not only on the question of the closure of the Dockyard but also on other matters of importance to Gibraltar such as the effects of the partial opening of the frontier and my exchanges with the Gibraltar Socialist Labour Party on the question of the Naval Base.

Insofar as the closure of the Dockyard is concerned, as I said before, we had this meeting, there is no reason why we should not have a delegation but in fact Mr McQuarrie is preparing now at my invitation of some time ago, the possible sending out of a CPA delegation to Gibraltar of four Members, two from each of the bigger parties, the younger Members who have joined Parliament in the last election, because we have a good rapport with quite a number of the older Members but some of them are not very well aware and in fact only late last week I had a letter from Mr McQuarrie saying that he was finishing the arrangements for the sending of a delegation. I myself also take the opportunity whenever I am in London to see our friends in the House of Commons and the House of Lords and keep them au fait apart from correspondence I exchange continuously with them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 90 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, whilst in no way belittling the work that is done by being in constant touch with the British/Gibraltar Group and certain other Members, isn't the Chief Minister aware that it was due to the spread out information that was possible during the British citizenship campaign that enabled us to get the citizenship and that it is not enough to have a group just by itself who with the best will in the world cannot possibly disseminate this information even within the House of Commons as effectively as it could be done by the Gibraltar Government from time to time keeping them abreast of developments in Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, it is very difficult to get across to 650 Members and, of course, I was told once by an MP that he normally puts into the waste paper basket about 75% of the material he receives if they are on subjects in which he is not interested and therefore it may be a useless effort sometimes. I think it is much better to select a cross section of MP's who we know have got an interest one way or another than bombard 650 letters into, perhaps, a few more or a few less after the boundary decisions that are being taken, to inform everybody. Perhaps a comprehensive sheet of the situation could be prepared and have it available for those who are interested, that I will look into.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Thank you very much.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Hon Member whether the memorandum that was taken last year is available to Members in the Commons or is that also on the confidential list? The memorandum which all representative bodies signed in Gibraltar.

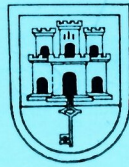
HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is available and it has been circulated. I am quite sure that I sent copies to those who can distribute them, that is already there. I am sure that most of the people who got a good rapport with that have got a copy of that and we have also recently sent Members of the British/Gibraltar Group the other memorandum prepared by the Leader of the Opposition and myself with regard to the question of the Foreign Affairs Committee Report which dealt with the Lisbon Agreement which the Hon Member was not associated. We have sent a number of copies of that both to the British/Gibraltar Group for distribution to the members and also to the Gibraltar in Europe Representation Group.



# GIBRALTAR

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

23 March 1983  
91 to 181

NO. 91 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, why is it (a) that the Report of the Select Committee on the Matrimonial Causes Ordinance has not been circulated with the Agenda for the coming House of Assembly meeting?

(b) that there is no notice of motion on the Order Paper seeking the approval of the House for the Report as is usually the case with Reports of Select Committees?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the Report could not be completed in time for the Agenda. It is being tabled at this meeting in order to meet a commitment I gave at the last meeting. There is no notice of motion on the Order Paper because it is appreciated that all Hon Members will need a reasonable period of time to study the Report. A notice of motion will be given in due course.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 91 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon and Learned Attorney-General not agree that it is thoroughly unsatisfactory that documents that are being considered or are to be laid before the House should not be circulated to Hon Members before the Agenda? It is a very unsatisfactory way of doing business.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Sir, I cannot disagree.

HON P J ISOLA:

On the other point, Mr Speaker, as I understand the position if there is no motion on the Order Paper seeking the approval of the House, the Report of the Select Committee remains confidential until the House has considered it.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

That is my understanding of the situation, yes.

MR SPEAKER:

That is correct, most certainly, it is confidential to the Members of the House.

HON P J ISOLA:

So that, Mr Speaker, will the Hon and Learned Attorney-General not agree that the absence of a motion is unsatisfactory then for two reasons, that the public knows that the Report has been laid on the table of the House and yet the public has not access to it and is this not likely to lead to dissatisfaction at the manner in which we conduct our affairs?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think I have already said that I agree that it is generally unsatisfactory that this should not be included with the Agenda.

HON P J ISOLA:

And the last supplementary, is it right, Mr Speaker, not right that is probably the wrong word, is it appropriate to draft a Bill to go with the Select Committee Report when the Committee's Report has not been considered by the House and could be rejected?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think there is nothing wrong whatsoever with attaching a draft of a Bill to the Select Committee Report.

HON P J ISOLA:

The Hon and Learned Attorney-General may say that but is it, especially on a subject on which the House has taken a free vote, haven't we wasted a lot of time at the end of the day if the Report of the Select Committee is rejected by the House and all the work on the legislation has been done for nought?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

If the Report of the Select Committee is rejected by the House then perhaps we have wasted some time but it is common practice, if I may say so, to attach a Bill on whatever subject a Select Committee deliberates on. I think there are two advantages to it, one is that it illustrates to Members exactly what the Report is recommending should be achieved and, secondly, if the Report is adopted the work has already been done on those aspects of it. Of course, it does not preclude amendments to the Bill, it does not preclude additional provisions.

HON P J ISOLA:

But does this not go to the normal practice in this House where a Select Committee Report, the House accepts or does not accept the Report and then the Government considers the legislation that is required in their view to implement the Report? This, to me, seems to be the mistake.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I cannot agree that it is a mistake and I think there is nothing in the Report which pre-empts the prerogatives of Members of the House to vote on such legislation or to introduce such legislation as they wish.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, perhaps the Hon Member could confirm that it is up to the Members of the Select Committee to present their findings in the way they consider most appropriate and in this case that includes the draft of a Bill, perhaps he can confirm that that is the case?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, on two points. On the question of the confidentiality it is regrettable that it is not being discussed at the same time. On the other hand I am sure that people will understand that it will be made public as soon as it is going to be debated and that the Report is not a Government Report but a Report of both sides of the House. With regard to the other matter I do not recall at the moment any other Select Committee that was appointed specially to amend any legislation but I confirm what the Attorney-General has said that certainly it is the practice in the United Kingdom that if the Committee wish to show and makes it easier, perhaps, how the Committee sees the legislation in their recommendations by producing a model draft of what they would like. That does not mean that that is a draft of the Government, it is a draft of those who have subscribed to the Report and I think that should be commended.

HON P J ISOLA:

How is explanation going to be given to the public, Mr Speaker, of a Committee that . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

I am afraid that we are beginning to debate.

HON P J ISOLA:

I do not wish to debate but it is a matter of importance as far as the procedures of this House are concerned.

MR SPEAKER:

As far as the procedures of this House are concerned I believe that I am the person to pronounce on that, the procedure which has been carried out is completely and utterly in order. It is up to the House now to decide when the Report is considered whether they accept the Report and the proposed legislation, either one or the other or both or none. The procedure is correct even though it may not have been followed on other occasions.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, my basic complaint is that a Select Committee that was set up in November, 1980, reports to the House at the very last minute thus not allowing for the House to consider and debate the Report and not allowing the public to even see it until possibly now in June after the budget statement or is it proposed to put a motion in the House during the budget session?

MR SPEAKER:

With respect to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition, that is fair comment on the question of the fact that the Report has been laid and is not going to be discussed. I thought we were discussing the question as to whether it is right and proper for the Committee to include the Bill in the Report.

HON P J ISOLA:

I accept, Mr Speaker, the Committee can put the Report in any shape it likes. What I am worried about and what I am concerned about is that a Report should be laid before the House which cannot be made public and which will not be made public unless, of course, it is leaked, for another two months at least and that a Select Committee Report should come to the House in sufficient time to enable a motion to be put confirming the Report and if that means that the legislation cannot come with it then so be it because what the House is concerned about is the recommendations of the Select Committee.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the matter has been ventilated and we will call the next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many prosecutions have there been during the last twelve months for abandoning derelict cars?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

There have been no prosecutions, Sir. It was found in the past that when enquiries were made with a view to prosecution those who had abandoned vehicles went to ground and much time was wasted while the vehicle remained in the streets. More recent policy has been to seek the cooperation of the owner in order to get agreement to remove and dispose of the vehicle and this has saved time and removed eyesores.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 92 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Hon and Learned Attorney-General when does the Police consider a car to be a derelict because there are a number of cars on the roads in Gibraltar which are slowly being dismantled and this dismantling process takes a matter of weeks? When does the Police consider that the car is derelict before taking any action?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

As I recall, Mr Speaker, the law applies to two matters, derelict cars and abandoned cars, and indeed the Questioner refers to the abandoning of derelict cars. I think it is quite a nice point but if I was asked for an opinion I would say the moment at which it becomes derelict is the moment at which it can be shown that nobody really is concerned to take care of it or do anything with it. If it is something short of derelict, I have to look into this but if it is something short of derelict, if it is merely constituting an eyesore, then I think that we passed some legislation in this House some time ago which would enable us to take action not under the Derelict Vehicles Provisions but under provisions, as I recall it, of the Public Health Ordinance.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, why have no prosecutions been taken under the legislation which we passed in this House?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I did not understand this to be the point of the original question. I can enquire and find out but I would need time to find out that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government explain how two children were able to cross the frontier into Spain undetected by the Police?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, I presume the question relates to the two who entered Spain on 10 March. They did not enter Spain through the frontier, but on their own admission by climbing around the fence at Eastern Beach.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 93 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would then I be correct in assuming that this part of the frontier with Spain is not under the security that we would wish?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, I do not think that is necessarily a correct assumption. The authorities who do supervise this area have been informed of the incident, obviously.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would this mean actually that it would be possible for fugitives from justice to cross over into Spain via the same way?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It has been known in the past, to my knowledge.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, if it has been known in the past why haven't the authorities done anything about it?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The authorities do not encourage the situation at all, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 94 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, in order to release the more able bodied policemen for genuine police duties, would Government consider employing Wardens as they did previously?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 94 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, why not when one considers, am I not right in saying, that to have a Policeman on a pedestrian crossing four times a day must surely be costing the taxpayer a hefty sum of money?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The Government has never employed Traffic Wardens as such. Some years ago a number of elderly men were employed on car parking duties and they also assisted with school crossings and also beach duties but the arrangement was discontinued on the basis that it was inefficient and uneconomical.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Attorney-General trying to tell us that it is more economical to have a Policeman doing lollipop-man duty than have an actual elderly person seeing children across a pedestrian crossing?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think I also referred, Mr Speaker, to the fact that it was not sufficiently efficient and of course efficiency is a factor on the whole thing.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is there any special qualification needed to see children across a pedestrian crossing?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, care and alertness but, Mr Speaker, may I say by way of information that there are some jurisdictions in which the children themselves, the senior pupils of a school, manage pedestrian crossings as school patrols. That is a matter which is a possibility, it is a possibility I think which will require an element of public acceptance before it can be considered further.



HON A T LODDO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the public accepted all this before, I do not see why the public should be asked to accept it all over again.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am sorry, I think I have not made myself clear, I am talking about school patrols manned by senior pupils in a school and I know that elsewhere that arrangement works very well and in fact it is a far more serious offence in real terms to disobey a school patrol manned by a pupil than it would be, possibly, by a Policeman.

HON J BOSSANO:

This supposed inefficiency, Mr Speaker, that Wardens were apparently guilty of, could it have been due to their age? Is the Hon Member saying that to use Wardens is per se inefficient or that the Wardens that were in post at the time were elderly?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I do not think I could say that these Wardens per se were inefficient, I take the point.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member look into the question of the use that is made of the Police Force before he increases the number of Policemen employed as he has intimated at the last meeting of the House? Will he do it?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think it is not really a matter for myself but it is certainly a matter I will discuss with the appropriate people.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, have there been any prosecutions for illegal importation of meat products since the partial opening of the frontier?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir. The quantities detected have not warranted prosecutions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 95 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Have any fines been put locally at the frontier?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

Have any fines been imposed?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

If there is no prosecution there cannot be a fine.

HON G T RESTANO:

What is done with the meat products which are found to be brought in illegally?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

They could I think be seized, I do not know whether they are seized I would have to enquire but they are seized in fact. In fact, since the frontier was partially opened there have been 403 cases of illegal foodstuffs being detected but they have all been of a very small nature in no case did they weigh more than half a pound and it seems that many of the individuals concerned were not aware of the restrictions.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask again, if there have been 403 incidents what is done with the products which are seized?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

They are destroyed.

HON G T RESTANO:

Are certificates made available, destruction certificates?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I have to enquire into the details of the matter but I am sure they are destroyed in accordance with the law.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 96 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state whether the qualifications required to be held by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer have now been decided?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir, they have not. As I stated in answer to Question No. 198 of 1982, the grading of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer post is dependent on the outcome of the review of the Senior Grades which has not yet been finalised. Once it is, the qualification requirements will have to be reconsidered depending on the level of the final grading.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 96 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how long is this going to take, we have been at it for about two years already at least?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I cannot give an estimate of how long it will take.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Hon Member say what is causing the delay?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The negotiations that are going between the Government and the union have yet to be concluded.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government disclose its areas of disagreement with the Civil Service Unions which have apparently arisen out of the interpretation of the revised General Orders?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the disagreement arose because the Unions considered that they should be consulted before a final decision was taken in any particular case arising out of the General Orders on trading activity and business interests of Civil Servants. The Government's view was that these were not matters for consultation but for the Government to exercise its discretion and judgement. Talks were held on 9 March, following which the blacking action was suspended. Agreement was reached on 18 March.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 97 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Hon and Learned Attorney-General state whether the result of the agreement is that the Government decides these matters or not?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think that is the essence of the agreement, yes, but there is provision for consideration of representations made by the Unions.

HON P J ISOLA:

Before the Government makes a decision what is the exact procedure if the Government considers that there has been a breach of General Orders what will be the procedure followed in this sort of case, can we have that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The officer would be informed before a final decision is taken of the action that the Government proposes to take in order that he may make representations if he wishes. He will also be reminded of his right to consult his union who may make representations on his behalf. Once any representations have been considered by the Government they will take a decision and if that decision is adverse the officer affected will be able to appeal.

HON P J ISOLA:

Appeal to the Governor, I presume?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Under General Orders there is provision for appeal.

NO. 98 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether 96 or 84 flats have been made available as quarters under the 1973 Agreement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the number of flats made available by the Government under the 1973 Agreement is 96.

However, due to retirements and resignations the number presently occupied by serving officers stands today at 84.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 98 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Does this mean that the difference between 96 and 150 or the difference between 84 and 150 have yet to be delivered to the civil service?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Has yet to be made available under the Agreement, yes.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does this mean that the Government is going to be required to produce an extra twelve quarters or is it sufficient that the 96 stands for the purposes of the Agreement?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

My understanding of the matter is that those twelve houses will be made up.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the information given to us in answer to Question, I cannot remember now, but in October of last year which indicated that 96 had been made available and the ones yet to be made available was the difference between 96 and 150 or whatever.

MR SPEAKER:

Those 96 have come down to 84 now as a result of retirements, that is what the answer says.

HON A J HAYNES:

In other words, they become de-quarterised if the occupant remains in it. Why should the resignation of a civil servant result in Government having to produce another quarter under the 1973 Agreement?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

For the simple reason that if it doesn't we have to give a flat to the civil servant who has resigned which may be much less convenient at the time because there is no accommodation to give them.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is this envisaged under the 1973 Agreement or not?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The position, Sir, is there is a commitment to provide 151 flats and of course if people are retiring that is affecting the situation. I would like to make it clear, Mr Speaker, if I may, that although the answer before this House in 1982 was in fact 96 I think I did provide subsequent information to clarify the position.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, but that subsequent information did not clarify the problem sufficiently for me not to have to ask the question.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, I think I am very clear on the matter. The commitment of Government is 151, they had allocated 96, due to resignations and retirements they have only got 84 and therefore their commitment is the difference between 84 and 151, I think it is very clear.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is the position that the Government could provide 151 quarters on the 1973 Agreement, everybody then resigns and they still have . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, Order. Let us not make an issue of everything. The answer you have been given is very clear. Government's commitment are 151 houses. At one particular time they had allocated 96, due to resignations and retirements there are now 84 committed therefore they have still got the balance between 84 and 151 to allocate if it is needed.

HON A J HAYNES:

If Government reach the figure where they have allocated 150 and suddenly those 150 occupants all retire from the civil service they are back to square one, they need 150. Is the Agreement such, Mr Speaker, and I cannot believe the Agreement is so loosely phrased . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Order, what are you asking now?

HON A J HAYNES:

I am asking whether the Agreement is termed in such a manner that on the allocation of a quarter that allocation is pending whether or not the officer retires? What does the 1973 Agreement establish? Is it a written Agreement?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The 1973 Agreement, Mr Speaker, as I understand it and I will double check this, is a commitment to provide 151 quarters for serving members of the union concerned.

MR SPEAKER:

Is it a written agreement?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am sure it is, Mr Speaker, I cannot say definitively because I haven't looked at it but I am sure it is.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I feel that instead of providing 151 units which was . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, this is question time. You have asked for information and you have been given information.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the 1973 Agreement is likely to result in far more than 151 quarters . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is hypothetical. Next question.



THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state the amount of revenue in the form of duty collected at the frontier customs to date, since the partial opening of the frontier?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the total amount collected up to 15 March, 1983, was £13,289.35.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 99 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Financial Secretary say on what particular items, generally, they were collected?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir. I can give the Hon Member a complete breakdown but broadly for the House now I will say much of it was on drink; wine - £2,200; spirits nearly £2,000; liqueurs - £2,700; very little on cigarettes, only about £40; nearly £2,000 on clothing; miscellaneous items £3,500 and then very small amounts on perfume - £215; motor vehicle spares - £241; jewellery - £3.78; records £450 and watches - £9.45. I will send the Hon Member full details and a copy to all Members of the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

What is the duty calculated on? Do invoices have to be produced or is an estimate made at the Customs?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

It is calculated on the value in town.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 100 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government state what has been the average gross pay per month of Revenue Officers on duty at the frontier since this was opened to pedestrian traffic?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the average gross pay per month for Customs Officers on duty at the frontier is as follows:-

Executive Officers - 15/31 December 1982	-	£388
January 1983	-	£914
February 1983	-	£1,195
March 1983	-	£920
Assistant Officer - 15/31 December 1982	-	£205
January 1983	-	£546
February 1983	-	£615
March 1983	-	£571

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 100 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, unless the Government intend to introduce measures which would require either less Customs Officers or no Customs Officers to be at the frontier, does the Government not consider that the rise in gross pay per month gives rise to a situation where there should be a substantial recruitment, perhaps?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think, Mr Speaker, that it is rather early to make that suggestion. Of the Executive Officer, his monthly pay comes to £641.66 and they get a shift allowance of £128.33 because they are on a shift, that comes to £770, so that the overtime and salaries probably coming out for him are just under £200 a month. For the Assistant Officer the total monthly pay and shift allowance is something like £542 a month and his overtime etc about £76 a month. One would need to see what pattern develops before one says that there should be any changes in the manning levels.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 101 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that tighter restrictions on the passage of goods across the land frontier have been implemented by Spanish customs officials following the announcement of Señor Moran's visit to UK?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. There is no firm evidence that tighter restrictions have been implemented.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 101 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Has there been any noticeable difference then in the goods brought back by people on which duty has been declared in the last couple of weeks and in the period immediately before, has that been looked at?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I don't think so, Sir. Goods for private consumption are being allowed to be imported into Gibraltar. Some things have not been allowed through, for example, we understand that five kilo drums of detergent were not allowed through, large items like that. In the main I do not think that there has been any great change although individuals have complained that they have had certain things taken off them but there is no real pattern of a strengthening of the control and that is why I used very carefully the words 'no firm evidence'. Isolated instances, yes, but a definite trend, no.

HON J BOSSANO:

What about in the opposite direction, Mr Speaker, people taking things back from Gibraltar into Spain, has there been any trend there?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Well, Sir, as we don't look at whatever they are taking over we have no idea as to what is getting through.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if the arrears on general rates and municipal services charges accumulated in the accounts of traders generally have decreased or increased since the partial opening of the frontier?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the present computerised system for the billing of municipal services does not identify whether a particular account is for trade or not. The identification for telephones is for either business or residential purposes and for electricity and water billing is either for domestic or commercial purposes.

However, in an endeavour to answer the question put by the Hon Member I instructed that a number of accounts known to belong to businesses other than Licensed Victuallers should be taken at random and scrutinised from the computer and these showed that 40% of them, in payment of municipal services were in fact being paid promptly since the partial opening of the frontier.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 102 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Did I hear rightly 40%?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, 40%.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So does that mean that 60% are lagging behind now that they were not before and can the Government state to what they think they can attribute this if this is so?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, they may well have been accounts that were lagging behind before the opening of the frontier.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So, in fact, am I right in saying that from the information the Financial Secretary has got now he just cannot say?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is very true, Sir, it would take an enormous exercise on the computer to try and extract full details of this information, an exercise which would delay the preparation of bills to be sent out and the accounting for funds and submission of receipts. Really it would be not worthwhile doing.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I understand the problem, Mr Speaker, but perhaps at estimates time we might be able to get more information on this.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 103 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government confirm whether there is an embargo from the Licensed Victuallers Association in the payment of municipal charges by its members in protest at the inordinately high licence fees that they have to pay as compared with the UK and the unbalanced competitive costs of municipal charges that they have to pay in comparison with the neighbouring area and will Government furthermore state what is the estimated monthly loss in revenue and its own policy on this matter?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, I am not aware that there is an embargo from the Licensed Victuallers Association.

On the question of lower overheads in this sector in Spain, I would refer the Hon Member to Question No. 14 of 1983 asked by the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza in which I stated that apart from the hotel industry the Government has no information on the proportion that the municipal charges and licence fees bear to the total operating costs.

I also undertook to discuss this question with the Licensed Victuallers Association. I set this in train on the same day and the Licensed Victuallers Association have been asked to submit and are preparing details of their overhead charges including municipal charges and licence fees to arrive at the total costs of providing their services and I understand that this information is likely to be with my office towards the end of this week.

On the second part of the question a number of accounts of Licensed Victuallers were taken out at random and scrutinised. 35% of these showed that payment of municipal services had been paid promptly since the partial opening of the frontier.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 103 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

So that means that the 65% will not pay promptly, is that correct?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, but it does not mean to say that 65% were not paid promptly because of the opening of the frontier, it could be because they were not paying up-to-date anyway beforehand.

HON G T RESTANO:

When the Hon Financial and Development Secretary started his reply I think he said that he had no knowledge of an embargo, is that correct?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have had no intimation from the Licensed Victuallers Association that they have placed an embargo, in fact, a member of my staff has been in discussion with the President of the Association and they have had very useful discussions. We have indicated the sort of information we would like them to provide and they have undertaken to provide it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 104 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government say in terms of income tax how much above UK Gibraltar is taxed at present?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, I assume the Hon Member refers to personal not Corporation Tax. The difference in personal tax payable depends very much on the gross salary and family composition. Taking a married couple with children the difference across a broad spectrum lies between 11.4% and 33%. For an average income of £8,000 pa the difference in the amount payable in taxation is £283 pa or 18% and I can, if the Hon Member wishes, give him and other Members of the House a breakdown for married couples showing gross incomes between £5,000, £8,000, £10,000, £15,000, £22,000, Gibraltar tax, UK tax, the difference in money and percentage terms.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 104 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

That would be quite useful, Mr Speaker. Could I just ask the Hon Member one thing, has he in fact done the comparison on the latest revision of UK allowances by 14% or prior to that?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I did it on the latest figures.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 105 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

When did PEIDA cease to act as consultants for Government?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, PEIDA completed their consultancy work for the Gibraltar Government in September 1982 following the submission of the report on the evaluation of proposals for commercialisation of the Dockyard. This report was prepared in conjunction with Coopers and Lybrand Associates and A R Belch Associates.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 105 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Government explain why they decided to retain the other two firms whom they had not used previously and in fact did not continue to retain PEIDA in the so-called project stage of the commercialisation proposals?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in the project stage we required a ship-repair adviser to assist us and also accountants, auditors and also some legal advisers. We did not require the economic advice which PEIDA had been providing for the study.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I take it, Mr Speaker, from that answer that the fact that PEIDA is no longer the Government's consultants does not indicate dissatisfaction with their advice on past consultancies?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, the Hon Member can take it that we were not dissatisfied.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has Government any policy in mind to reduce Government administrative expenses and municipal services costs to assist Gibraltar becoming more competitive in the circumstances created by the partial opening of the frontier?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is Government policy to contain the level of expenditure to a minimum consistent with an adequate, efficient and cost effective service to the public. A number of areas which have come under close examination and control include staffing levels, reductions in overtime and computerised billing.

The Hon Member should however bear in mind that substantial new capital investment has been incurred or committed in acquiring new plant for the municipal services and loan repayments therefore account for a significant element in the cost of these services.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 106 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since these bodies are really monopolies and are not really cost effective orientated in the business sense, wouldn't it be a good idea for the Government to engage someone who has some kind of business mind to look at the way the monopolies are run and try and see if there is a more effective way of doing it at a lower cost?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

It would be possible, whether it would be worthwhile or not I don't know, Mr Speaker. My only personal experience of a private company running municipal services was in the Pacific where they were rather more expensive than any other Government organisation that I have met.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't it a fact that a similar exercise in England has reduced the cost very considerably in many Departments?

MR SPEAKER:

No, you are not required to answer that question. Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does Government hold the view that the implementation of the Lisbon Agreement will be of economic benefit to Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is impossible to say until the Agreement is actually implemented and patterns of trade and expenditure are established.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 107 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Would it be true to infer from that, Mr Speaker, that when Mr Pym says in the House of Commons that he is pressing for implementation of the Lisbon Agreement because it will be of economic benefit to Gibraltar he isn't doing so because he has been advised to this effect by the Government of Gibraltar?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I certainly have not given Mr Pym any advice.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member then be kind enough to give him the advice he has just given the House, that it is impossible to say until it is put into effect?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think, Mr Speaker, that I have made it quite clear and when I say I, my staff or I with the assistance of my staff, have made it quite clear in our projections of revenue over the next five to seven years that if we assume an open frontier that for the first period there would be a drop in Government revenue and we have always made it quite clear in putting forward these figures that it was not necessarily the panacea that some people thought.

HON J BOSSANO:

And this view, I take it, Mr Speaker, has been put to the British Government, the British Government is aware of this?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

It has certainly been reflected in figures which we have sent to officials of the British Government, I personally do not correspond with the British Government.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what is the value of imports for 1982 for the category "other commodities" as compared with the value in 1981 of £29,530,000 and can they further state how the figures for January and February compare with the same amounts in 1982 and 1981?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the value of imports for "other commodities" in 1982 stood at £29,557,000 a marginal rise over the 1981 figure. The figures for January and February for the years 1981, 1982 and 1983 are:-

(£000's)	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
January	£2,098	£1,880	£1,784
February	<u>£1,821</u>	<u>£1,972</u>	<u>£1,097</u>
	<u>£3,919</u>	<u>£3,852</u>	<u>£3,881</u>

Those, of course, are in money terms not in real terms.

23.3.83

NO. 109 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if they have monitored sufficient data on the effects of the partially opened frontier so as to take remedial action if this is necessary, or if not can they say when they expect to be in a position to make an assessment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the Government continues to monitor the effects of the partially opened frontier in consultation with the Chamber of Commerce and other commercial interests. The trend is clearly a net negative expenditure leakage and the matter is to be discussed shortly with Hon Members opposite, following preliminary talks which have taken place with the Chief Minister, and with the Chamber.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government give the figures for 1980/81 and 1981/82 for the following: GDP (factor cost), GNP (factor cost), National Income and the same figures per capita?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the figures are estimated as follows:-

	<u>1980/81</u>	<u>1981/82</u>
GDP (factor cost)	£58m (£2,231 per capita)	£63m (£2,423 per capita)
GNP (factor cost)	£72m (£2,769 per capita)	£80m (£3,077 per capita)
National Income	£67m (£2,654 per capita)	£75m (£2,885 per capita)

I would ask the Hon Member to note that the 1981/82 figures are provisional estimates.

NO. 111 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the discussions presently taking place with A & P Appledore International and officials of Her Majesty's Government on the proposals the company has put forward, have to be completed by a given date?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the discussions are expected to be completed by the middle of May this year. As I have explained in answer to questions on this matter in earlier meetings of this House, the Dockyard project study which commenced in December, 1982, was envisaged to take between four to six months to complete.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 111 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is there a deadline of the 30th April by which a report has got to be submitted?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it the case then, Mr Speaker, that the Government is not yet in a position to give a date when a final decision is expected to be taken?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is so, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say that there will be no redundancy notices issued before a final decision is taken on the proposals being looked at?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, that is a matter for the British Government, I am in no position to make a statement to that effect.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member not agree with me that that view should be put to the British Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I can convey that view to the British Government in meetings which I hold.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Was Government aware in April last year that the potential commercial operator of the Dockyard attached a great deal of importance to as long a programme of Naval work as possible?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, all the potential commercial operators of the Dockyard who intended to undertake ship-repair work indicated in their respective proposals, submitted at the end of May last year, that they required a substantive naval work programme over a period of three to five years. The basis of their proposals in this respect was for a naval work programme which would assist in the transition to a commercial operation and which would taper off in the last two years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 112 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, in April last year was there an indication of who the potential commercial operator might be?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, we knew in April last year that there was a list, let me put it another way, Sir, the original intention was that the cut-off date for the submission of proposals was the 31st March, 1982. Because of representations received from certain potential operators we stated that those who gave a firm statement of their intention to submit a proposal by the 31st March would be allowed up to the 30th May in which to put those proposals forward but in April there was no knowledge as to who the operator would be.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



23.3.83

NO. 113 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether they have now recruited a legal adviser specialised in the commercial ship repairing field?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, a legal adviser specialised in the maritime field will shortly be appointed. The gentleman concerned visited Gibraltar recently for familiarisation and to hold preliminary discussions on the relevant aspects in the A & P Appledore proposals currently under study.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 113 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Government say whether this adviser was recruited through ODA?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

And is it being financed by ODA, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

NO. 114 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government now decided to release the Report of the consultants who selected Appledore to Members of this House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 114 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

They have not yet decided, Mr Speaker, or they have decided no?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The question was: "Has the Government decided to release it?", the answer is no, we have not yet decided to release it.

23.3.83

NO. 115 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state how many patients were seen by the ENT Specialist during his last two visits to Gibraltar broken down into (a) GPMS patients and (b) private patients?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir. The visiting ENT Specialist saw the following number of patients during his two latest visits:

	<u>December 1982</u>	<u>February 1983</u>
GPMS	58	48
Private	10	25

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can the Minister for Health and Housing state whether it is still his policy to allow private medicine to be carried out in Gibraltar at St Bernard's Hospital by consultants during their full-time paid employment time and if so whether any time qualification is imposed and furthermore whether participants in the GPMS scheme are relegated to second class patients thereby?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, consultants employed at St Bernard's Hospital are permitted to see private patients on hospital premises in conformity with the practice in the United Kingdom. The maximum time allowed for private practice is equivalent to one session per week. I do not agree that GPMS patients are relegated to second class patients.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 116 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Are the bookings for these private patients, Mr Speaker, made by the hospital staff?

HON J B PEREZ:

All patients seen by the consultants are seen on a referral basis from local practitioners. Appointments are therefore channelled through the staff of St Bernard's Hospital and in particular with each respective department.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 117 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state when was the feasibility study of the introduction of a hospital laundry carried out?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir. The feasibility study was carried out in May, 1981.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 117 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Can Government say whether in fact as a result of that feasibility study they consider it desirable to introduce a hospital laundry?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as a result of that feasibility study carried out in May, 1981, the Government thought it was uneconomical to have its own laundry. However, the matter is being looked at afresh.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 118 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what is the total number of places in premises registered as suitable accommodation for workmen under the Labour from Abroad (Accommodation) Ordinance, 1971, and the number of persons licensed to keep premises having such accommodation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the total number of beds in premises registered as suitable accommodation for workmen under the Labour from Abroad (Accommodation) Ordinance, 1971, is 3,238 but for various reasons such as families wishing to live alone etc, the accommodation available is under occupied and the actual number of beds used is 2,950.

There are currently 293 persons licensed as keepers of this type of accommodation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 118 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask does, in fact, the accommodation of labour from abroad apply to all non-Gibraltarian labour or to all non-EEC labour or to all non-British labour, is there a criteria on nationality?

HON J B PEREZ:

I think, Mr Speaker, that it applies to non-EEC.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what plans it has to expand the facilities for dealing with geriatric patients?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, Sir, Government is at present considering the facilities for dealing with geriatric patients in general. Discussions are being held with interested parties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 119 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister not agree that on the basis of the figures about the population given recently showing a 60% increase in the last 20 years in the over 65 age-group, there is clearly going to be greater demand for these services and that must be reflected in a greater provision of facilities?

HON J B PEREZ:

Absolutely, Sir, that is precisely why I said in the answer to the question that we are in fact considering the whole question of facilities, the whole question of geriatric patients with interested parties, in particular with Mount Alvernia, because at St Bernard's Hospital, we are in fact experiencing problems with the large number of geriatric patients occupying beds there and they are also having second thoughts. I do agree.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 120 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state its policy as regards the granting of a tenancy to a successful housing applicant where the applicant is married?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, it has always been and it continues to be the practice to put tenancies in the name of the head of the family. However, joint tenancies between husbands and wives are created on request.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 120 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, whilst I appreciate that the housing applicants, if married, are entitled to ask for the tenancy to be put jointly in their names, will the Minister confirm that no advice is given to the tenant as to what options are open to him nor to the effect of a joint tenancy or a single tenancy or any other advice of any form?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think that is entirely a matter for the successful applicant but may I add that what happens is that when Mr X or Mrs X goes to the Housing Department and put their respective names on the waiting list as an applicant, when they qualify for a house it is the successful applicant who is offered the house. Whether it is a woman or it is a man it is entirely up to the applicant to say whether he or she would like a joint tenancy. As I say, the Housing Department will grant a joint tenancy on request of the successful applicant.

HON A J HAYNES:

But will the Minister confirm that no advice is given to applicants as to what the importance of a joint tenancy otherwise confers?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, yes, I do confirm that advice is not given but I would add, Sir, that that is not considered to be the function of the Housing Department.



HON A J HAYNES:

I appreciate that the Housing Department does not give legal advice to housing applicants but, Sir, in the circumstances and in order to obviate the need to give advice as to the effect of a joint or single tenancy, will Government consider automatically giving a joint tenancy where the applicants are married and only allowing a single tenancy on election and on election with consent?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether there has been any response to their recent invitation to transfer Government tenants and will Government give an estimate of the amount of transfers it hopes to achieve in the next twelve months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, a survey is being currently undertaken to determine the number of tenants who are actually overhoused, but no invitation has been made to move any such tenants at this stage.

The number of overhoused tenants is still unknown.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 121 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister confirm whether or not the survey which is by way of a letter, Mr Speaker, with a form in it, has been answered to by the majority of those to whom it has been circulated or whether there has been little or no response?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, I think the response has been quite good so far.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister say whether he is aware whether that part of the questionnaire which enquires as to the tenant being prepared or not to move into smaller accommodation, whether that particular part of the questionnaire has been ticked favourably ie, with an idea of moving or not?

HON J B PEREZ:

The truth of the matter is that most people do not in fact volunteer to move but when we have completed the survey we will know exactly how many people are in fact living in overhoused conditions and then we will have to consider taking legal action against some of them or preferably doing it by persuasion.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister answer the second part of the question which is will he give an estimate of the amount of transfers it hopes to achieve in the next twelve months?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I said that the number of overhoused tenants is still unknown which I thought was quite obvious that therefore I could not really give an estimate of the number of transfers it is hoped to achieve in the next twelve months.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not have some idea?

MR SPEAKER:

No, he has not, he has said so.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, he must have some idea as to the amount of overhoused tenants in Gibraltar otherwise he wouldn't have done the survey.

HON J B PEREZ:

I do not think it is right for me to make a guess, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have said you haven't got the information. Next question.

NO. 122 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many "transfers" of Government tenancies as between Government tenants have been arranged by Government in the last twelve months and how many have been agreed privately and subsequently ratified by Government in the same period?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, no statistics are kept of exchanges between tenants or of requested exchanges which have not been approved. Requests for transfers are submitted to the Department and if approved are recorded in the respective tenancy files.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 122 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

If the Minister were to introduce a system whereby the amount of transfers could be monitored, he may have been in a position to answer my previous question and will the Minister now consider introducing a slightly more efficient system of intelligence into the Housing Department? Mr Speaker, has he answered my question or am I to be given the usual rebuff?

HON J B PEREZ:

I do not think I normally give rebuffs to the Hon Member, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Well, I do not seem to have got very far this morning, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Does the Minister for Municipal Services still intend to enforce legislation passed by Government majority in March, 1982, to compel householders living in private accommodation to have fire extinguishers in their dwellings at their's or the landlord's cost?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, Government does intend to enforce legislation requiring householders living in private accommodation to have fire extinguishers in their dwellings.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 123 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say how he is going to enforce that legislation?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, in answer to Question No. 123 of 1982 I had said that the amendment to the Ordinance was an enabling amendment which empowered regulations to be made to require fire fighting equipment to be kept in private premises. The regulations were being drafted by the Attorney-General, Sir, and when these regulations are drafted we had, during the discussion on this Bill, the Chief Minister said that before the legislation would be published it would be brought to the House so that we could discuss the legislation involved.

HON G T RESTANO:

I still would like to know, Mr Speaker, because we were told in Question No. 123 of last year that the Attorney-General would report back and give us information. This has not, in fact, been done so I really would like to know, first of all, how that enforcement is going to be carried out and, secondly, the other part of the question was the payment of these fire extinguishers. It would then mean that there are two categories of people in Gibraltar, those who pay for them and those who get them free, in other words, those who are Government tenants. Will the Minister confirm that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, those two points have obviously not been fully considered and we are awaiting the legislation from the Attorney-General's Chambers as to how we are going to deal with that matter.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Hon Attorney-General tell us when he will have the regulations ready?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I would like to report back during the course of the House if I may, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

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HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, in answer to a question earlier in the House I undertook to, well not in answer to the question, during the course of the question, I undertook to enquire as to the state of the proposed Fire Equipment Regulations. I have made enquiries and the position is this, that I did say in the House as has been drawn to my attention I think it was in the earlier part of last year, that the matter was ready for drafting. In fact, it was in the sense that I was aware that Regulations had to be drafted and there was a decision on the Regulations but it was rather a loose and slightly premature statement, I think, because in fact what is happening is that the Fire Services Department are considering the implications of introducing regulations and the drafting instructions have not been completed or forwarded and it is a matter which is still under consideration.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the Services Telephone Network is not yet equipped to have meters does Government consider that the 15% extra charge on rentals is equitable compared with its income from local metered charges since their inception?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the 15% extra charge on Forces rentals were introduced in October, 1982.

When the Government reduced its rental by approximately 37% in January, the Forces rentals were maintained at the +15% rate of October and they have not therefore had the benefit of this reduction.

The Government considers this equitable until such time as the metering of Forces local calls is possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 124 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Minister have statistics as to what is in fact the average for payment in local meter charges as compared to the 15% extra on the Services charge?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the only information I have is that now the rental to the Services lines of which there are 48 is £33.33, the reduction is £18.27 there is at least £15 difference there but as to accuracy I have not got the actual figures which the Hon Member requires.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could perhaps the Minister try to find out those figures and let me know?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Certainly, Mr Speaker, I shall endeavour to let Mr Restano know.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 125 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether it would be possible to reassess the unit telephone metering so that all units are of one minute duration and would Government give an estimate of the cost of such rearrangement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

No, Sir, it would not be possible.

The metering system works on units of 4p and uses time as the basis of charge.

It is therefore not possible to time the unit as suggested.

The unit charge is linked to the speed at which meters can work for long distance calls due to electro-mechanical limitations. Since countries vary in distance from the originating point, different metering rates are used to identify charge bands. The rate is also linked to the local call rate since it uses the same meter for both functions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 125 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure I understand any of that but can the Minister confirm whether or not in other countries, for instance, in England, the system is that every unit is of one minute duration and if you ring at a peak hour then the unit is costing you more and if you ring at a non-peak hour the unit is costing you less? The basis of my question is on that kind of background set-up. Can the Minister confirm whether that is so, have I made my question clear?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, certainly, Mr Speaker. What he was referring to in the United Kingdom this is not so, in fact, local calls have gone up in the UK from 4p to 5p plus VAT which is 15% and the time allowed for peak, standard and cheap have been cut down to 1½ minutes, three minutes and eight minutes. The real answer to this is that the electro-mechanical meters are unable to receive impulses so quickly if they are reduced to one minute.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not get involved in technicalities. The answer is that it cannot be adjusted.



HON DR R G VALARINO:

It cannot be adjusted. Being a technical answer what I would like to offer the Member opposite is that on a convenient date if we could both go to the Telephone Department we could then go into all these aspects so he would be clear in his own mind because there are technical problems involved, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if the Minister will bear with me one minute I will outline the kind of problem which I was hoping . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, under no circumstances.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm or deny the problems suffered by the camera which monitors the meter and will the Minister confirm that this camera is out of order and has been for some time?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, about this camera, which I cannot honestly see how it can arise out of this question, this camera had a malfunction and in fact when I went on official business to the UK with Mr Charles Fortunato we took the camera to Coventry so that it would be repaired but, anyway, we have a stand-by camera which will do the job until we get the other camera back.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm or deny that in the interim when the camera has been malfunctioning that the bills processed have been on an average consumption rather than actual consumption?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

How do the costs per kWh generated at King's Bastion compare with that of -

- a) the skid generators, and
- b) the trailer-mounted generator, inclusive of hire charges?

Mr Speaker, if I may, I automatically assumed that the four last words in that question referred to both a) and b) and not just to the b) section.

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, in fact, this was really a reply which I was supposed to give to the Hon Member in the last House which I offered but because this House has come so quickly I had been unable to prepare the due answer.

Mr Speaker, by their very nature and operating regime, high speed diesel engines and for that matter gas turbines, both of which use high grade fuels, are more expensive to operate. They are consequently assigned either a peak lopping or a reserve plant role and rarely a base load duty. Consequently it is totally unrealistic to compare the unit generating costs between plants assigned such different operating regimes. This is true for any utility which operates similar plant and the reasons are obvious. The unit costs will naturally be very different.

In the particular case of this question, the comparison so simply requested is not accurately possible since there is not sufficient information at hand to provide a sound economic base which would enable all relevant costs to be brought into the equation.

Any such comparison naturally requires the plant capital costs or standing charges to be included. In the case of the skid-mounted generators and the trailer-mounted set, which were available under a hire agreement, the plant costs over any given period are easily quantifiable but this is not as simple to do for the fixed base load plant at King's Bastion.

In spite of this, an attempt has been made to arrive at a comparison. To facilitate the work, it has been considered necessary to carry out the comparison over a full financial year. The last audited accounts for the financial year 1981/82 have been used and a table produced, which I am circulating.

From the table, it can be appreciated that a real comparison is not possible in the absence of a standing value for plant at King's Bastion.

Furthermore, the table also brings out the great disparity in the operating hours over the one year period, which evidence that the operating regime of the temporary plant was that of peak lopping and reserve plant exclusively.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 126 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, am I right, generally, in assuming that the cost per kilowatt hour generated by the skid generators and the trailer-mounted generator is substantially greater than that by King's Bastion?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, yes, Sir, on two counts. First of all, that as I said the stand-by generators are only for peak lopping and therefore the units generated and the hours run are much less than the base load plant and, secondly, because there cannot be any value assigned to the present plant that we have got at King's Bastion. Therefore the figures at the end are doubtful to interpretation because there are several factors missing but they are more expensive, yes.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, am I therefore also not right in assuming that there is a certain element of subsidy if the kilowatt hour, the unit charged to the consumer would not reflect the cost of the skid generators and the trailer-mounted generator? In other words, if the skid generators and the trailer-mounted generator, the cost of the production per kilowatt hour of each is commensurably greater, am I not right in assuming therefore that there is a form of subsidy?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister if therefore under those two assumptions, once there is no longer the need for the skid generators and the Waterport Power Station comes on stream, there could perhaps be an indication, there could perhaps be a set of circumstances where there might well be a reduction in charges because the commensurate running costs would be therefore lower?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, yes, I get the Hon Member's point of view that once the whole system has been set, we have engines at Waterport and. . . .

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is yes, let us not go into details.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister therefore telling this House that we can look forward to a reduction in electricity charges?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I cannot commit myself to that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Minister for Municipal Services give an account of the maintenance programme that has been carried out during the last twelve months on the engines at the King's Bastion Generating Station, the anticipated programme for the next twelve months and give an appreciation of the state and estimated life-span of these engines?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

## Part I

Generally all engines are serviced or overhauled as per manufacturers recommendations or as anomalies are observed. During the past twelve months the following engines completed the recommended running periods and maintenance were carried out accordingly.

No. 10 engine - Top overhauled  
 No. 11 engine - General overhaul  
 No. 12 engine - Presently undergoing general overhaul  
 No. 13 engine - Top overhauled.

In addition, No. 10 engine has had all exhaust valves and injectors serviced twice, again as recommended.

No. 11 engine has had all exhaust valves and injectors serviced three times.

No. 12 engine has had all exhaust valves and injectors serviced four times.

No. 13 engine, all valves and injectors serviced once. This is because No. 13 valves are serviced every 3,000 hours as against every 1,000 hours on the other engines.

No. 9 engine is presently completely stripped down for a rebuild.

## Part II

It is anticipated that engines 10 and 13 will have run the hours due for overhauls and therefore general overhauls will be carried out on these two engines during the next twelve months.

## Part III

It is not possible to give a definite life-span for these engines, other than to say that their life-span will be extended by the operation of plant at Waterport.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 127 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Is there no anticipated programme to overhaul in the coming twelve months, a top overhaul to Nos. 9, 11 or 12?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, all overhauls are based on manufacturers recommendations and basically that is dependent on the number of hours that they are run.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether these particular engines are going to be overhauled during the current year.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

It could well be.

HON G T RESTANO:

Why doesn't the Minister know?

MR SPEAKER:

Because he doesn't know when the particular overhauls as prescribed by the suppliers of the machines come up but they will be done according to the schedule of overhauls required.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, these engines have been here for over twenty years, does the Minister not have a programme?

MR SPEAKER:

In fairness, I must say this. The Minister is not responsible for the supervision of the overhauls of the engines. If general questions are asked the information is given but he cannot have at his fingertips every single aspect of the maintenance of the machines in the Generating Station.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I take your point of course but the question did ask what was the programme for the next twelve months and it struck me as odd that there seems to be nothing which is going to be done, according to the Minister's statement, on engines 9, 11 and 12, perhaps he could say why?

MR SPEAKER:

Without wishing to get involved, the answer is because perhaps during the next twelve months there is no call to overhaul the engines other than the ones that are being done now.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

That is right, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government make a comprehensive statement on all aspects of the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Yes, Sir, I am afraid that the answer is a little bit long, Sir.

The turnkey contract for Waterport Power Station was awarded to Hawker Siddeley Power Engineering on the 26 February, 1981, and involved the installation and setting to work of two 12 cylinder Mirrlees Blackstone Major Mark III engines with a capacity each of 5.24 MW, together with all the necessary ancilliary equipment. In addition it was to include office accommodation and an adequate amount of other facilities such as stores, degreasing room, work-shops, laboratories, messing and washing facilities.

The key contract dates for completion referred conclusively to the engines being put to commercial use and these were specifically May and July, 1982.

As is usually the case in projects of this nature, involving in particular heavy civil works, the need for adequate consolidation of reclaimed land and a large amount of pile driving to a depth of over 15 metres, a measure of slippage was inevitable.

It was not until August, 1982, that the first of the two engines started to undergo its pre-commissioning trials, during which control devices are set to their operating parameters and protective mechanisms are tested in service to ensure they operate under the proper circumstances and in the proper manner to safeguard the equipment.

Since the capacity of the engines is large in proportion to the system load, particularly at that time of the year, namely late summer and in the absence of any adequate load banks in the territory, the tests had to be carried out using system load. It was inevitable that brief interruptions in electricity supply occurred whenever the engines tripped out while control and protective systems were being tested to achieve stable operating conditions. The loss of generating capacity was at times more than 50% of the plant supplying the system and given the very high cost of fuels today, it was not economical to carry sufficient spinning reserve to cover the possible loss of the sets under test at all times. This was limited to those occasions when tests required deliberate tripping on load. Furthermore, the present generation of the electrical control equipment such as the automatic voltage regulators, to name but one, are no longer the sluggish and slow acting electro-mechanical devices of the past but use present day solid state micro-electronic technology and are so effective and have such fast acting times that they do not allow the operating personnel sufficient time to take corrective measures on the system by the shedding of load to compensate for the loss of generating plant. This can lead to overloading of other plant and, in a cascade effect, has caused a total blackout on several occasions. This is known to happen in even large national grid systems and is consequently much more

likely to happen in very small systems such as Gibraltar's, when at times there are only two engines running and the loss of one engine immediately can produce up to 100% overload on the remaining set.

The second of the sets at Waterport started its own pre-commissioning tests a few weeks after the first one and both then went on the contractually stipulated reliability runs over a period of thirty days. Both sets had minor problems such as oil and water leaks, but the second set completed its successful reliability run on the 10th November, 1982. However, the other set experienced a number of fuel injection pump seizures which required closer investigation than any of the other causes of interruptions in either of the sets, particularly since none of the pumps on set No. 2 produced this.

As a result of the investigations carried out at both the manufacturers works and their sub-contractors, minor modifications have been introduced, and the modified pumps are already back in service with set No. 1. This particular engine has now run over 3,000 hours and has just recently been serviced and thoroughly inspected. No problem has been identified and all items inspected have been found in excellent condition. The engine has now recommenced its reliability run and over the whole period has produced in excess of 12 million units to the system.

Engine No. 2 has also completed 3,000 operational hours and has generated 10.6 million units to date. It is currently undergoing its first service and is due to come back into service within the next few days.

All the systems currently in operation are working satisfactorily and the contractor's personnel is continuing to operate the plant.

As is normal in such contracts, the entire installation had been split into a number of taking-over certificates. These are signed, usually with listed exceptions which are then progressively cleared on the advice and under the supervision of the Consulting Engineer's site supervisory staff. In the case of Waterport Power Station, the contract involves 21 such certificates and to date 20 have been signed with various operative dates. The lists of exceptions are gradually being reduced and it is hoped that this process will be completed during the course of April.

Mr Speaker, on a number of occasions both during the period when the Station was under construction and now more recently since the engines have been in operation, there have been rumours circulating that there were foundation problems at Waterport Power Station and that either the buildings or the engines or both were experiencing detrimental effects due to this. I would like to take this good opportunity to dispel any doubts which might still exist in some minds and to report that not only has there not been any problem of this nature but putting it more positively there has at no time been any doubt as to the soundness of the foundations for either the buildings or even more important still, the engines themselves.

I would now like to refer to the manning of the Station by the department's own staff. As is generally public knowledge, Mr Speaker, this has been occupying the almost full attention of the Steering Committee for a number of months now. The setting up of this Committee was a recommendation by the Committee of Enquiry into the Electricity Department which carried out its work between March



and June last year. Ideally, the Steering Committee should have been established earlier than September last, but the House is fully aware from the explanation given by the Hon the Chief Minister at an earlier meeting of this House, that it proved very difficult to obtain the services of an independent Chairman as had been recommended by the Committee of Enquiry, who incidentally also estimated that the Steering Committee would require about nine months, with at least a weekly meeting to carry out the work it had to deal with. The work of the Committee continues and as will generally be known from a recent statement which it issued, it is progressing successfully with its negotiations.

I can only hope that progress will be maintained and that in the very near future full agreement on all the aspects associated with the work assigned to the Steering Committee can be achieved. Thank you, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 128 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

I am grateful for that statement, Mr Speaker. May I ask first on the engines themselves. I think the Minister said that No. 2 engine had completed its reliability period. If that is so has Government taken over that engine yet?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No. 2 engine, Sir, as far as I can recollect the outstanding item because I said that there were 31 but I feel that the answer is that it has, yes, contractually.

HON G T RESTANO:

It has been formally and officially handed over to the Government of Gibraltar?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Contractually.

HON G T RESTANO:

Who is manning it? Who is manning the engine which has now been handed over to the Gibraltar Government?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I said this in the answer. In the second page I said: "All the systems currently in operation are working satisfactorily and the contractor's personnel is continuing to operate the plant".

HON G T RESTANO:

Why does the Government not man it itself?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, basically because some of the reliability tests have taken longer than usual and the other reason is that we are awaiting the final recommendations of the Steering Committee so that the Waterport Power Station can start on what we could call a new leaf and certain procedures can be laid down which are not present at King's Bastion.

HON G T RESTANO:

I take the point about the Steering Committee but in fact the reliability period ended I think he said on the 10th November, 1982, that is three months ago, so therefore the answer which he has just given other than on the Steering Committee cannot be so, it is not that the reliability periods have taken so long, it finished on the 10th November, 1982, so there have been three months, according to the reply, where it has been manned by the contractor and not by Government because of the Steering Committee not having come to an agreement, is that the answer?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, one of the major answers is because the procedures for the Steering Committee recommendations have not been concluded.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us be clear because otherwise we are going round in circles. The answer is that it is being manned by the contractor until such time as the Steering Committee has finished its work.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would like to know, Mr Speaker, are any of the staff in the department being trained because after all these are new machines and presumably they would require training before taking the Waterport Station over. Is there any training taking place at the moment or has there been?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir, when we come to the budget debate we shall see that we have arranged for training to take place.

MR SPEAKER:

So the answer is that no one has been trained as yet.

HON G T RESTANO:

Why not?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Because, Mr Speaker, Sir, it would put everybody in an invidious position because there are certain sections within the Generating Station and if we send certain sections down there we will have a comeback from other sections so therefore until the whole agreement is reached we should not proceed to a final solution.

HON G T RESTANO:

But does that mean, Mr Speaker, that when Government eventually takes over that Station that they will have nobody trained in the running of those engines?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the thing is that the Hon Member makes a slight error on training. Let me assure him that a lot of people at King's Bastion are trained on engines. There are certain differences between these engines and the other engines but the training programme is not as large as envisaged by the Hon Member opposite, it just needs certain areas of training.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, on the Steering Committee itself . . . . .

HON P J ISOLA:

I don't want to interrupt my Hon Friend but can the Minister state what is the additional cost to the electricity consumer of having the No. 2 engine manned by the contractors instead of by the Government? What is the cost to the Government of the contractors doing them this favour?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid I do not have the necessary information.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, isn't that of great public importance? The Chairman of the Steering Committee is under £4,000 a week, that is one man, running an engine and manning it outside the terms of their contract the Government surely must know, does the Financial and Development Secretary know what is the terms of the agreement with the contractors providing for this extra work to be done by them outside their contract?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us get an answer to that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, on that point I would like to disagree with the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition.

MR SPEAKER:

You are really being asked a simple question. We must not debate the issue. You have been asked have you got the information related to the cost to Government of the contractors running No. 2 engine. If you haven't got it just say you haven't got it but that is all you are being asked.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I haven't got it and certainly it is not £4,000, the figure intimated by the Hon Member.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am not worried about that at the moment, Mr Speaker, we can debate that because there is a record on that but we are very worried, we must be worried about the additional public expenditure because the Government is unable to . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

You might insist on the information but let us not debate the consequences.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister, Mr Speaker, to get that information and communicate it to the House before we rise today because, surely, that information must be readily available, the cost to the public of this extra manning?

MR SPEAKER:

Can the Minister answer that question? Can he give the required information today to the House?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition asked if the Financial and Development Secretary knows, yes, I do know, I know the gross cost. The gross cost was £13,000 a week and it is now about £16,000 a week but we have got to set off against that the cost of the manning that would be there if it were manned by our own staff. That, I am afraid, I do not know.

HON P J ISOLA:

But in actual fact what is happening is that . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

We are debating, with due respect, this is question time. You have been given your information, you can deduce what you like from it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, but the Hon Financial and Development Secretary has made a statement on it.

MR SPEAKER:

No, he has given an answer to a question.

HON P J ISOLA:

No, he has said that it could be offset, Mr Speaker, with respect, to what it would cost anyway to run it and my question following that would be surely the Government must know the number of people it requires to man a Generating Station?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, that is what the Steering Committee is working on, how many people will man it and what they will be paid and what allowances they will be paid and this is the problem.

HON P J ISOLA:

But in actual fact it is costing the people who pay municipal charges, it is costing them now, we have the cost of the Chairman of the Steering Committee plus we must add to that £16,000 a week extra because the job has not been done.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect to the Hon Leader of the Opposition, we are now really debating.

HON G T RESTANO:

What areas have the Steering Committee agreed upon as far as the manning levels of the Station are concerned?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

It is impossible to say, Mr Speaker, Sir, what areas have been agreed on. The only thing I can say as in the statement put out by the Steering Committee that 'considerable progress has been made in many areas of the enquiry recommendations and that the detailed discussions that have been taking place are confidential as any other similar joint Management union body that exists in any other area of the public sector'.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when the Committee of Enquiry made its report to His Excellency the Governor they made a number of recommendations some of which bear directly on the Steering Committee and on the manning. Can I ask if, for example, there has been agreement on . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, most certainly not. You have asked a question: "Will Government make a comprehensive statement on all aspects of the Waterport Power Station?" You have been given an answer, you can ask supplementaries on that answer but let us not go into the Steering Committee now and its progress because you could have asked a simple, clear question on what progress has been made on the Steering Committee. No questions have been asked on that so let us keep to the question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can we know how long that Committee is going to take to decide on the manning of the Waterport Power Station because it has other work to do as well?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, we do not know until the Committee finishes its work.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, surely, the Government as one side of the Committee, shall we say, the Management side, surely it must know what sort of progress is being made, does it not?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it takes two to tango.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister tango and tell us how much progress has been made?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the progress is good and we hope that in due time all problems will be solved.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does he know how many men are going to be used there, has agreement on that been arrived at?

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to get any further on this one, it is obvious.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister at least state, in general terms, in what areas there has been progress? He is saying there has been progress, presumably he must know, he has got a Head of Department, he has got his own civil servant in that Committee, surely, he can inform the House in what areas there has been progress?

MR SPEAKER:

I think in fairness to the Opposition the only questions that one should be able to ask is, is Government in a position to give an estimate as to when the report is going to come but let us not go into details.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Minister answer that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, this particular answer I feel is encroaching on No. 180 of 1983 by the Hon Mr Restano.

MR SPEAKER:

Which is that question? Will you read the question?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

"Will Government reveal what has been the weekly cost of engaging a Chairman for the Steering Committee . . . ."

MR SPEAKER:

No, you may not be in a position to give an answer and you say you don't.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

"And how much longer the services of the Chairman will be required?"

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, you have been asked a simple question. Can you give an indication to the House as to when the report will be ready? If you cannot you cannot, it is as simple as that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, I will pre-empt Question No. 180 which finalises that these negotiations should be concluded during the course of April.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask, will the public not be able to see the Power Station until we have the official opening of the Power Station to which the Hon and Learned Chief Minister referred to as taking place very shortly when he spoke in the debate of censure on the Government on power last November or somewhere? Can the Minister state is this opening not likely to take place until the Steering Committee has concluded its work and the Government accepted its recommendations?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us get an answer to that one.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have consulted the Chief Minister and both he and I feel that the opening will be before the Steering Committee finishes its recommendations.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister explain why it was said with such confidence in the censure motion, now about five or six months ago, that the official opening would take place very early in the new year? On what was that based, was it based on the confident expectation that the Steering Committee would complete its deliberations by the end of that year or some such thought?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think, Sir, it is quite fair to say that it was not anticipated that the Steering Committee's progress, though it has been very good, may have taken as long as it has taken.

HON P J ISOLA:

But then can I have an answer, why was it that these statements were made confidently and yet we have no opening, no date for the official opening from the Minister and we are told that even the manning of No. 2 engine at great expense to the public has to await the completion of the deliberations of the Steering Committee?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is very long since the Hon Member has had any part in public office but he should know that things that happen in affairs of this nature sometimes take longer than anticipated at the time when the projections are made inevitably by human errors or by human miscalculations or by difficulties created, all sorts of things take longer in the end, but you must make an honest assessment at the time you are making a statement. That was an honest assessment, it was wrong and it was wrong and that is the end of it.



HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Chief Minister not agree, Mr Speaker, that when he did announce in this House in October, 1979, that we would have a 5-megawatt engine . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, no, order. Let us ask questions which seek information and nothing else. Let there be no justification at question time for statements that have been made before.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I ask the Hon and Learned Chief Minister if it is true that since we have hardly had any other Government than the present Government in office, it is true that we have learned to live with very, very considerable slippage right through their life?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, with respect, let us call the next question.

NO. 129 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government give a fuller explanation for the need to re-allocate £11,805 in the Electricity Undertaking vote?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, out of the £11,805 mentioned, the Department re-allocation £9,010, the difference of £2,795 being for the Customs Department.

The Department re-allocated £6,950 to Subhead 1, Personal Emoluments in order to meet the cost of one additional post of Clerical Officer for the period of two months and overtime costs connected with the implementation of some of the recommendations of the Committee of Enquiry for King's Bastion Power Station.	£ 720
	<u>£6,230</u>
	<u>£6,950</u>

The cost of £2,060 was re-allocated to Subhead 85, Purchase of Vehicles in order to purchase an additional vehicle in connection with Waterport Power Station.

<u>£2,060</u>
<u>£9,010</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 129 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister say what measures are being taken to improve the safety and working conditions as required by the Factories Ordinance?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I can hardly see how this arises out of this question.

MR SPEAKER:

In fairness, there is no relation to the question.

HON G T RESTANO:

It is quite clear in the statement of reallocation, Mr Speaker, the explanation given there is that the £6,950 . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

But you are looking at the statement which was given to Question No. 126?

HON G T RESTANO:

It is Statement of Reallocation No. 7 of 1982/83 and it says: "£6,950 to meet the costs of an additional Clerical Officer post, £720 increase in overtime worked to improve safety and working conditions as required by the Factories Ordinance". I am asking what measures have been taken to improve the safety and working conditions?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the money was spent really as a recommendation of the Committee of Enquiry for King's Bastion. The Committee of Enquiry took some of the ideas of what the Hon Member had suggested but the recommendation of the Committee of Enquiry really is that management must provide adequate cleaning methods and material, must remove all rubbish to prevent any possible fires and the repainting of King's Bastion. To some extent it has also helped in providing fire precaution recommendations.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when I see that the reallocation is being made from training and staff apprentices personal emoluments, does that mean the training and staff apprentices scheme will have £6,900 less, is there a smaller training programme than was at first anticipated?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 130 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government satisfied with the security of the prison and will Government give an explanation as to how a prisoner was able to escape from it last week?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, Government is not satisfied with security at the prison. Its location and the absence of secure perimeters seriously undermines the security of the establishment, in spite of measures put in hand over a number of years.

As regards the second part of the question. The prisoner Aston managed to saw through two bars of the cell window and make his way out of the prison building by climbing over the wall. The matter is now under police investigation and this will be followed by an enquiry to ascertain whether there was negligence on the part of officers on duty.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 130 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, will Government take any further measures to try and improve the security of the prison seeing that the possibility of a new prison just does not exist?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, yes, I think so, this will obviously follow the enquiry from the police to see whether other measures can be implemented but of course there will be financial restraints.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 131 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, why was it found necessary for five teachers to accompany thirteen adult students to La Linea, and was the teaching time-table affected in any way?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, a group of five teachers and thirteen senior students from Bayside School visited a Secondary School in La Linea recently outside normal school hours. The visit was organised through personal contacts and did not affect the teaching time-table at Bayside School in any way.

NO. 132 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is the Minister for Education satisfied with the standard of teaching, as regards "Spanish", in our schools?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the standards achieved by local students taking Spanish External Examinations are now extremely high.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 132 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, then I take it that the Minister is satisfied with the standard of teaching?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, of course I am.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister about the statement that he was alleged to have made at a meeting in the John Mackintosh Hall in respect of which he wrote a letter to my Hon Friend but can he tell the House whether he has written to the newspaper concerned asking them to make a correction of what was a rather unfortunate quotation, to put it mildly?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, if it had been any other newspaper I would have written but not to that newspaper.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it the view of the Hon Member that he only writes to his own party newspapers?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, I have allowed the question which was not relevant to the original question.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I am prepared to answer it.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you cannot answer a question I have ruled out of order. Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 133 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will Government consider the re-provisioning of the Governor's Meadow First School at some other site, and the demolition of the present buildings, so as to expose the main entrance to the Alameda Gardens?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, Government is unable to give any degree of priority to the possibility of re-provisioning of the Governor's Meadow First School at the present time.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government considered amending the Shop Hours Ordinance to allow those trading establishments generally who wish to do so to open on Sundays and has corresponding consideration been given to protect fully the interests of Shop Assistants should such amendment to legislation be effected?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, Government has not given consideration to amending the Shop Hours legislation specifically to allow shops to open on Sundays as a matter of course. However, consultations will very shortly be resumed with the Chamber of Commerce and the TGWU to obtain their considered views on the retention or revocation, in whole or in part of the Shop Hours Ordinance, and this will, of course cover the aspect of Sunday opening.

In view of this, the second part of the question does not arise at this stage, but I would draw attention to paragraph 5 of the Conditions of Employment (Retail Distributive Trade) Order, 1980, which lays down minimum overtime rates for retail distributive trade employees who are required to work on Sundays.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 134 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when did the Minister say he would be having consultations with the Trade Unions and the Chamber of Commerce?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Very shortly.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what are the limits for the granting of credits for Social Insurance contributions during periods of illness or unemployment?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, credits for contributions, which count equally as paid contributions for certain purposes, are granted during limited periods of sickness, full-time education, maternity, unemployment or incapacity for work due to industrial injury and since 1981 for life if an insured person is totally and permanently incapable of work.

An unemployed person who has satisfied certain contribution conditions shall be entitled to credits for a maximum of 26 weeks in any one period of unemployment. After exhausting the maximum he can only requalify for unemployment credits if he has worked for a period of, or periods totalling 13 weeks.

The same applies to incapacity for work, other than incapacity for work due to industrial injury.

As regards incapacity for work as a result of an industrial accident or a prescribed occupational disease, a person continues to be entitled to such credits for as long as such incapacity for work continues.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 135 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say whether in fact people are made aware of this or is it not the case that in the explanatory leaflet put out by the Department it just says that there is a limited period but unlike other entitlements to Social Insurance Benefits there is no indication of the length of period or of the contribution conditions?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I think there is an element of truth in the question put by the Hon Member. I will try and make this information more comprehensive for the general public.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I also ask him to consider the adequacy of limiting this to 26 weeks in a situation where we are experiencing longer periods of unemployment than in the past and where in fact people, particularly cases where people are retired compulsorily from the public service at the age of 60, may find it very difficult to get another job until 65?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, of course there are always financial implications in what we are discussing. He has mentioned one particular aspect of our system which I am not particularly happy about and that is the compulsory retirement at 60 and sometimes the inability because of a low pension to continue paying the Social Insurance contribution. I am concerned with that, it is something that I have myself highlighted within my Department, we will study it and see what the financial implications are but I am as concerned as the Hon Member opposite, certainly in that aspect.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government say how many of the estimated 4,000 Spanish nationals entitled to Old Age Pension have claimed it?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, out of an estimated figure of about 3,800 Spanish nationals entitled to Old Age or other Social Insurance Pensions and not collecting them, 954 have enquired regarding their entitlement between 15.12.82 and 15.3.83.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 136 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does in fact the answer that the Hon Member has given me mean that there were people who were claiming it before the 15th December?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am answering the question, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Yes, I know that, Mr Speaker, but the Hon Member has said 3,800 and I think in the written answer that was circulated to a previous question there was a figure of 4,000.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

That was an error.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Minister whether the enquiries that he has mentioned have actually led to the processing of claims or they have simply been enquiries and they have gone no further?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Enquiries noted, no processing so far.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, does Government intend to repair the floodlighting system on the basketball court at Landport?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

No, Sir. The Government has no plans to reinstate the floodlighting system having regard to the existing facilities at the Sports Hall.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 137 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, are the existing facilities at the Sports Hall sufficient to meet the demands on it?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

They are certainly sufficient, Mr Speaker, to deal with competitive games other than training and unless there was a particular case made that the Basketball Association as such was unable to carry out their fixtures, I do not think Government at this stage could consider reinstating the floodlighting system at Landport Ditch. I should also say, Mr Speaker, that we did find when floodlighting was in operation there that it was very costly and there were many instances where the floodlighting was left burning until 3, 4 and 5 in the morning till the police had to switch them off, it was not a very satisfactory state of affairs at all and there was a lot of vandalism.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, have the Government received any representations from the Basketball Association to have that repaired?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Not as far as I am aware, Mr Speaker, I am told that there has been some approach to have it repaired, if by repaired it means because they were bent over in the gale and one thing and the other, of making the playing area less dangerous. Certainly I will look at that very sympathetically but not reinstating floodlighting.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state if the partially opened frontier has beneficially or adversely affected the tourist trade generally and in either case, is there a plan to foster the advantages or to overcome the adversities?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the effect of the partial opening of the frontier is covered in answer to Questions 109 and 178.

I should add, however, that insofar as tourist sites are concerned there has been an appreciable increase in the number of visitors.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 138 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, in the number of visitors but in terms of cash which we are obviously interested in does the Minister believe that this has been beneficial to the tourist trade generally?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the fact that 1,000 or 4,000 people come in and spend a penny, a pound or fifty pence is obviously better than what was happening previously so there must be some benefit but I am not prepared to say what benefits because I do not know, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I don't know whether the Minister is in contact with the trade but surely the trade must inform him whether they are doing well or not, for instance, day tours. I don't know whether they have in any way approached the Minister and said: "We are in difficulties".

MR SPEAKER:

If you ask a specific question you can get a specific answer but not a general question. Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 139 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if two of the reasons why few cruise liners call at Gibraltar are because the berthing facilities lack the necessary amenities and the surroundings are touristically offensive?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, there has been a substantial increase in the number of cruise liners calling at Gibraltar. There has also been a general tidying up of the surrounding area which has improved matters.

As I said in my reply to Question No. 170 on 17 July, 1980, the Government has no immediate plans for improving facilities at the North Mole.

NO. 140 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many trips, giving dates and destination, have been undertaken by the Minister for Tourism in 1983 and give similar details regarding any further trips scheduled to take place this year and will Government state the costs of the trips to the department to date?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have attended two promotional trips in 1983 to the UK at a cost of £523 each. They are:-

<u>Date</u>	<u>Destination</u>
31 January	Swindon
1 February	Stockport
2 "	Huddersfield
3 "	Wakefield
28 February	Newcastle
1 March	Middlesborough
2 "	York
3 "	Nottingham

As yet no definite decision as to intended Trade Promotions for 1983/84 has been taken.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 140 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister state whether or not the £523 is the total cost to his department or whether we are just talking about the Minister's expenses? I am interested in knowing the cost to the department as a whole.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid the question is very badly asked. The question asked as to how many trips the Minister has taken and the cost of the trips to the department so I cannot presume that he is thinking of whatever. I am answering the question as it is asked. If he wants other information then I am afraid the question is not very explicit. I think I have answered the question. If I had been asked as to the expense of the Trade Promotion or the Trade Promotions that I have attended then of course it would be a very different figure.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm or deny that every time we ask questions on these lines he only gives us his own figures to try and deflate the budget?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, because normally I do not <sup>get</sup> questions on tourism from the Hon Mr Andrew Haynes, I get questions on tourism from my Friend the Hon Major Peliza who is the shadow Minister for Tourism.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that his marked reluctance to give the figures in fact indicates that it has been a bit of jolly, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I take exception to that and ask for your indulgence because I think that if he was to consult his colleague the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza there would be a very different view coming from Major Peliza where I have been urged to go on more of these so-called jollies. If there is no coordination between the Hon Mr Haynes who really has no direct responsibility as opposed to the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza, then I am afraid I am wasting my time in standing up and answering these questions.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister give an indication of how many tourists he thinks these promotions have resulted in?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I think it is better to give him the rebuff that I think he deserves, I am not going to answer, Mr Speaker.



NO. 141 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, why is it (a) that the Report of the Select Committee on the Landlord and Tenant (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance has not been circulated with the Agenda for the House of Assembly meeting?

(b) that there is no notice of motion seeking the approval of the House for the Report as is usually the case with Reports of Select Committees?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the inclusion of the Report of the Select Committee on the Landlord and Tenant (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance in the Agenda for today's House of Assembly meeting was erroneously effected.

MR SPEAKER:

May I interrupt there, certainly not by the Clerk of the House of Assembly.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, not at all, it was from another source. This Report is not yet ready for submission to the House. When it is so ready, it will be circulated to all Members prior to laying on the table of the House and the requisite motion seeking approval will also be made. Any inconvenience is regretted.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 141 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state what led whoever did it to request that it be put on the Agenda of the House when apparently it is not even ready at this point of time?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Hopeful expectation, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I express the hope that that expectation will be justified in the not too distant future?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We are working to that end, Sir.

NO. 142 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what is the latest position with the Woodford Cottage Development?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the latest position is that the Woodford Cottage Housing Association have now formally decided to put the scheme out to tender, and this is expected to be done shortly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 142 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Has the Government had any indication from any of the individual members of the Tenants Association that their support is now less warm than it would have been had the frontier not opened?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is there any time limit as far as the Government is concerned on the development of that scheme for the Tenants Association to act and start physically building?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There is no specific time limit as such, Sir, but Government of course presses them to do it as expeditiously as possible.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has Government anything to do with the putting out to tender of this project? Has Government given any assistance in relation to this at all?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Apart from what I stated a long time ago, Sir, that Government made some very sketchy outline plans, no, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

Government as I understand have envisaged two or more quarters as part of that development. Does Government have a representative in that Tenants Association?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

At the moment, Sir, there is no plans for Government to take up any of the quarters.

HON W T SCOTT:

There has been a change in policy then, presumably, because the last information we had in this House was that Government would be taking up an option.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the last information in the House, if I may interrupt, was the fact that any not taken up by the Housing Association would be taken up by Government, but there were no firm commitments. I am not here to answer questions but I do recall that.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, that is correct, Sir. The whole intention was that the scheme would be entirely for private enterprise but should it fall down because there was one or two not so taken up then Government would step in and take them over but at the moment there are enough to cover the whole scheme.

HON W T SCOTT:

When saying enough, Sir, is the Government saying that all the houses have now been taken up?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, sixteen.

HON W T SCOTT:

I think the original number was seventeen in two phases?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is correct, there was a slight readjustment to the development of the scheme and I believe I mentioned to the House that it had been reduced to sixteen.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 143 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, when does Government intend to start cleaning up the beaches?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, cleaning of beaches is scheduled to start in mid-April, just before the opening of the official bathing season.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 143 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not agree it would have been better to have started the cleaning before the Easter break?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, because there is still the risk of an easterly storm destroying all the good work that might be done.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will the changing rooms and the different paddling and swimming pools on our beaches be operational for the Easter Holiday?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir, it is not envisaged that the changing rooms and the different paddling and swimming pools on our beaches will be operational for the Easter Holiday.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 144 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is it that the Minister does not expect heavy usage of these facilities as has been the case in previous years?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, it is that there is not the funds to give the overtime that is required for this sort of thing.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does not the Minister agree that in fact over the Easter period if the weather is fine all these areas are full of holidaymakers, local holidaymakers and tourists and does he not consider it in that case a worthwhile expense at least to have the toilets open so that people can use them because my experience last year was that in fact that is what happened? It was a lovely Easter and the beaches were crowded, the areas were crowded and complaints left, right and centre that the toilet facilities were locked up. Cannot the Minister do something about that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, from information we have been receiving so many people have already booked up cars to go to Malaga etc over the Easter holiday and spend their time in Spain, it is somewhat futile to prepare an expensive scheme for Gibraltar as happened on Commonwealth Day when the beaches were empty and everybody was at the Sierra Nevada.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister in fact encouraging people to do precisely that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, we are just being realistic.

HON P J ISOLA:

Shouldn't the Government give consideration to those people who do stay behind? Is the Government not aware that there are still a great number of people in Gibraltar who take their recreation within Gibraltar, at least fifteen, anyway?

MR SPEAKER:

Does the Minister wish to say anything?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, even if we really ignore the needs of the Gibraltarians, since we want to bring tourists to Gibraltar doesn't the Minister believe that at least in that aspect he should try and see that all these amenities are available to visitors?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am sure the Spanish tourist is not coming over to visit our beaches.

HON P J ISOLA:

What about from the United Kingdom what about the tourist policy of this Government, it is in shambles.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state where the responsibility falls for the upkeep of flags flown on Government buildings and will they ensure that the flags flown are in decent conditions?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, a list is held in all Government Departments having flag-poles in their buildings stating the dates on which flags are to be flown. However, a reminder is given from the office of the Deputy Governor a day or so before the appointed day.

Each Department is responsible for its own flags.

Perhaps the Hon Member would wish to pin point the exact building where the flag was considered not to be in good condition so that if not already done, measures can be taken immediately to replace the flag in question.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 145 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I think the Minister is aware of the building that I refer to and it was not my intention to bring that particular case out because the Minister dealt with it satisfactorily but what I was thinking is to avoid a repetition. Mr Speaker, the building, as he knows, is the City Hall and I was suggesting to him that perhaps if there is no arrangement for someone to look after those flags that someone should be appointed.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When the flag was flown on the 19th February, 1983, the rope which keeps the flag there actually broke and it took about eight or ten days before we could get somebody to go up and remove the actual flag. A new flag has now been put.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is Government considering passing this problem over to the Steering Committee?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 146 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state why Jumper's Bastion is allowed to continue littered with rubbish and rusting domestic appliances notwithstanding this matter has been called to their attention previously in the House of Assembly?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the rubbish and other domestic appliances at Jumper's Bastion have been deposited by the tenants of the vaults there. This is contrary to the conditions of their leases.

They have therefore been given two weeks notice to remove these accumulations. This notice expired last Friday and the matter has now been referred to the Law Officers for necessary action.



NO. 147 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government state for how many days the Refuse Incinerator has been out of action since 1st December, 1982, giving the reasons?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Incinerator was not operating during the following periods since 1st December, 1982:

January 16th, 17th, 18th - Plant did not operate due to a malfunction of the grates in the furnace. Refuse continued to be accepted and was stored in the hopper.

January 25th to March 1st - Closed for routine annual overhaul.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 147 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

What other arrangements were made between the 25th January/March 1st to dispose of the rubbish?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As is done normally when the plant is up for an annual overhaul it is tipped from the ash chute.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is this five week period normal? Does it normally take five weeks to undertake the annual maintenance of the Incinerator?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Normally it takes between three and five weeks. It depends once the furnace has cooled down and inspections can be made to ascertain what damage has actually been done and how many fire bricks have to be replaced, etc.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, for how long has the Public Works Department been in possession of the Street Cleaning Vehicle and how much did it cost?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, PWD took possession of the Street Cleaning Vehicle on the 27th November, 1982. Cost of vehicle was £23,477.88.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 148 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Is the Government satisfied, Mr Speaker, that the work that was originally undertaken for the Street Cleaning Vehicle is being undertaken by it because as far as I have been made aware there are certain limitations with the sweeping of the road by the vehicle, in other words, it seems to be concentrated basically on the edges and not round the centre?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We are satisfied, Sir. There are small limitations, of course, where a lot of cars are parked you can still actually hosepipe between the cars but it does slow down the work considerably, to that extent there is a limitation otherwise we are quite satisfied, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

I presume, Mr Speaker, that this went out to tender as well?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It did not go out to tender because it is the only machine of its type within the price range that we were willing to pay, there were other machines but they were considerably higher priced.

HON W T SCOTT:

If it did not go out to tender how come the Department determined that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Deputy Director and myself visited an annual fair of vehicles of this type and we saw all types of vehicles. We had had our eye on this type of vehicle for three years, it was about the correct size we wanted, it was on the lorry chassis that we had

knowledge of, it was within the price range we wanted, we waited three years while we contacted other City Councils which were using the vehicle to see if it was giving satisfactory results. As I say, the other vehicles were considerably larger, the great point of necessity is that it should not be wider than a certain width, the other vehicles were much wider and also much more expensive.

HON W T SCOTT:

What is the source of origin of the vehicle?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

UK, Sir.

NO. 149 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what has been the lifespan of the Police patrol cars some of which have recently been replaced?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the last time Police patrol cars were replaced was in August 1981, when three Toyota cars were purchased to replace three Ford Escorts which had been in service five years, having been purchased in September, 1976.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 149 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Is there not an indication, in fact, Mr Speaker, where one Police car has recently been replaced which is not a Toyota?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not aware of that, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

I see a Mazda car being driven by the Police every day and the registration number leads me to believe that it is only a few months old.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If you would like to give me information later I will look into it and give you a written reply.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government give its reasons and an estimate of the costs of moving the Housing Department to St Mary's First School and will Government state its proposed user, if any, for the Housing offices in the City Hall?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, a decision has been taken, in principle, to accommodate the Housing Department in the St Mary's First School building at Hospital Ramp in due course. The project has not yet been costed and action to do so will not be taken until much nearer the time of the event possibly in two or three year's time. The accommodation becoming vacant in the City Hall will be shared between the Telephone Department and the Accountant-General's Department who also have certain accommodation problems which can only be solved within the City Hall complex.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 150 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is it the case then that it is not so much that the Housing Department has to move but that the Housing Department is occupying space which Government has other use for?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, it is a little bit of both. The position is that one wishes to use one's accommodation to the best advantage and if you have a section like the Telephone Department which is basically in the City Hall already and they need some expansion and if you have pressure from the Accountant-General's Department which again is located to a great extent in the City Hall and needs expansion, it would seem reasonable that they should expand into the City Hall area rather than have one little piece here, one little piece somewhere else. There will be no difficulty in moving the Housing Department as one unit to another area.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would there be room or is there any sort of plan within Government's thinking for another user for St Mary's First School?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is estimated, Sir, that the Housing Department can be fitted into the St Mary's School and there will be room to spare. Who will take that room we do not yet know.

HON A J HAYNES:

But will another Government Department be accommodated at St Mary's School or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, a small department could be fitted in there.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has Government considered finding alternative premises other than St Mary's School for the Housing Department, premises which could be more central?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Government has an Office Committee set up to look at all these things. They go through all the different possibilities and ramifications of the position and they have come up with the idea that St Mary's School may be the best place for the Housing Department.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister answer that part of the question which relates to the reasons for the move other than the negative reasons that are proposed by the Telephone Department and the Accountant-General, is there any advantage to be attained from moving to St Mary's School for the Housing Department?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, they will have considerably more room than they have at the moment where I believe two or three people, including the Director of the Housing Department, all have to share the same office.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is it proposed then to increase the size of the Housing Department or is that not included in the plan?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is proposed to increase the area that they occupy but not the number of persons employed.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 151 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government give the costings of the present repairs and maintenance of the Humphries Estate giving the average cost per block?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, we are presently not undertaking any major repairs or maintenance works at Alameda Estate. As is general to all Government Housing, the Public Works Department attends to requisitions for repairs as received from tenants or arising out of maintenance requirements. Costings of individual requisitions are not immediately available, these are charged to the main head of charge namely: "Maintenance of Buildings (Housing)". To elicit individual requisitions would be a time consuming and costly exercise.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 151 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I think the Minister has not quite understood the point of the question. I am concerned with the general external facades. I am not interested in the individual requisitions of the flats, I am aware that Humphries Estate in the last six months or a year or so, I cannot remember exactly when it started, has had block by block plastering on the outside following by paintwork, has that been costed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir. I think the last one that was done was about £30,000.

HON A J HAYNES:

That would be the average cost or are some more expensive than others?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It will depend partly on the size of the building and partly on the condition of the building. If a lot more plastering is required before painting then the cost will go up, also if the building is larger like, I think, Alameda and Kingsway Houses, the cost is greater.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister be so kind as to give me in fact the answer to the question, I have misled him in the question.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I can find out the costs of the last one and projected costs for other buildings.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am much obliged.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



23.3.83

NO. 152 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is Government now satisfied with the remedial works carried out on a trial basis on some flats in one of the Glacis Estate Tower Blocks?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 152 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does that mean that the Government is now in a position to proceed with the flats in that Block and in the other one?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Hopefully, if the House votes the money at the forthcoming Estimates, work will commence on doing the whole lot over a period starting the next financial year.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether any contact or discussions have taken place with Spanish firms in relation to the Viaduct Causeway project?

ANSWERTHE HON. THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, a Spanish contractor has submitted an application to the project consultants, Messrs Wallace Evans and Partners, for pre-qualification. The contractor paid a call on the Director of Public Works and met members of the PWD staff who are working on this project. The DFW had these discussions with the contractor, who intimated they would probably work in consortium with a local company, in order to obtain information which would assist consideration whether they are eligible to tender.

A decision as to their eligibility to tender has not yet been made.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 153 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

I take it, Mr Speaker, that all these consultations were cleared politically beforehand with the Minister?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Director of Public Works approached me and I said yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Government not think that in view of the fact that in some other areas of the economy although the Government seems to have been taking a line of considering putting business in Spanish hands reprehensible it can hardly set a good example itself by appearing to be leaving a door open for a Spanish firm to take over a public contract?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, the Hon Member has a point there, in fact, it has been tightened up where applications come from Spanish firms but of course the first application about this firm came to us from the UK consultants who have been approached direct.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, won't this work be put out to tender anyway?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, they are asking if they will be allowed to tender in consortium with a local company and we wish to know before we accept any firm to be allowed to tender whether they are capable of doing the work and what have you, etc.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Government know who the local company is?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not sure that I should say that in the House but we do know who it is.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, is there anything within the eventual contract that would determine a successful contractor to sublet part or all of his work to a company like this who need not be vetted by the Department?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not sure what the conditions of the tender will actually say but of course you might get the instance that the Government was going to buy some Ford Escort cars and of course if you looked into it deeply you would find that 50% of that car was manufactured in Spain.

HON W T SCOTT:

But I am looking to the situation, Mr Speaker, which perhaps what we are discussing now might be totally academic, there might be a vetting required for tenderers but a successful tenderer having been vetted . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

What is the question you are asking?

HON W T SCOTT:

The question is, are we not being academic here and are we looking for those safeguards adequately or should we not ensure that in the terms of contract that that should not be included as a safeguard?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, I am not sure how academic it is, Sir. We have done over the last seven or eight years a considerable amount of development work and I think that development work has used a vast quantity of aggregate all of which has come from a Spanish source.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the local contractor firm involved a firm that could do a work of this kind and of this size?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, they could do the work but of course they would have to buy their materials somewhere and I presume that is why they are interested in the approach from the Spanish company.

HON P J ISOLA:

What I am asking, Mr Speaker, is whether this particular contractor is a contractor that has experience in large projects in Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is a contractor that is in the highest category of tendering procedure, that is over £1m.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 154 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government state the latest situation with regard to Development Aid since the last meeting of the House and state what progress there has been in this direction since then?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, there have been no significant developments with regard to aid projects since the detailed statement which I made in this House on the 22nd February, 1983.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 154 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the statement correct that the development assistance to Gibraltar during the present financial year will be £2m?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is a statement which I think was made yesterday in the House of Commons. I have not been able to check whether that is correct, Mr Speaker. I do not know what is the basis of that information.

HON P J ISOLA:

The basis is the Minister for Overseas Development.

HON A J CANEPA:

But I only saw that this afternoon before coming to the House.

HON P J ISOLA:

I know but what I am asking the Minister is whether the extent of development aid during this financial year is in that region or not?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't think so, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

It is less?

HON A J CANEPA:

I would say so, yes.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister then take some steps to rectify this position?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state its reasons for the proposed increase in berthing fees at the Camber and will Government undertake to enhance the facilities there?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Camber was handed over to Government on the 31st December, 1978. The fees then being charged remained in force till 1st November, 1982. Since taking over the Camber, Government has doubled the number of moorings available. In addition Government has spent over £41,500 in resurfacing the hard, installation of ring bolts, repairs to underwater cavities and the installation of lighting bollards. Ducts have also been provided for future telephone or electricity requirements. The facilities have therefore already been enhanced and the increase in fees is simply intended to reflect a realistic charge.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 155 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, will Government confirm or deny that they were given a lump sum by the MOD to effect necessary repairs when they took over?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is nonsense, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

He denys it?

MR SPEAKER:

The Minister has said that it is nonsense.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the revenue at present raised from the Camber berthing fees is in the region of £12,500 per annum?

HON A J CANEPA:

What is that, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Would you confirm that the berthing fees raised from the Camber is in the region of £12,500?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not have the information available with me, I would have to check the estimates of revenue.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the revenue increase would be from £12,500 to £25,000 per annum?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, if the £12,500 figure is correct. Broadly speaking, the charges have been doubled.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the pontoons which have given the increased berthing facilities to the Camber were free to Government, they were part of the White Marina complex?

HON A J CANEPA:

They were laid by the Marina developers, that is correct, as part of the agreement entered into at the time with the Government.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the following facilities do not exist to the present occupants of the Camber: water facilities, electricity facilities, there is no adequate supervision, there is no security . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member carries on the way he is I might be tempted to double the charges further within the space of another twelve months.

HON A J HAYNES:

Bully boy, eh?

MR SPEAKER:

Order.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister believe in democracy?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, order.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member does not have a monopoly on being correct by any means. If he were to direct his attention to the Estimates for 1982/83 a copy of which I would imagine he has or he ought to have, page 11 thereof, he would find out that Subhead 18-- Camber Charges, the estimate of revenue for 1982/83 is £8,000.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that none of the facilities exist in the Camber of the ones I have listed so far?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I will not allow that question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that road tax licences is going to be less than that required of berthing facilities at the Camber?

MR SPEAKER:

No, you can find that out by looking up the law and finding out what the road taxes are and comparing it yourself. That is information you can easily get for yourself.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, all I want to do is ask the Minister what are the facilities available to those in the Camber other than just moorings?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not know, Mr Speaker, but one thing that I can say is that they are getting it pretty cheap, people using the Camber are getting very good value for money. If they were to try and berth their boats in one of the Marinas they would soon find out what the real position is.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister consider enhancing the facilities as a result of the increase in berthing fees?



HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, because these charges were due to have come into effect in early 1981 and in fact they were deferred until the improvements that I have referred to in my answer had been effected.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am very sorry to hear that, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, Sir, can Government state if the new Pilot boat purchased with a Government loan has arrived in Gibraltar and if so whether import duty was paid?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Pilot boat has indeed arrived in Gibraltar and is already serving its intended purpose. Import duty has been paid.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 156 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Can I ask the Hon Member when the boat arrived?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I do not have the exact date neither do I know exactly when duty was paid but I can tell him when the decision was taken that duty had to be paid and it was before estimates were approved during the course of the last meeting of the House of Assembly when the Financial and Development Secretary and I consulted on the matter.

HON W T SCOTT:

What I want to ask the Hon Member is whether import duty was paid at the time of importation as required by law?

HON A J CANEPA:

That I cannot say, Mr Speaker. It doesn't matter, the requirement by law is that import duty had to be paid and there can be no question of import duty being waived. If there had been an application for that the only thing the Government could have done would have been to give an ex-gratia payment in return, to make an ex-gratia reimbursement, but it would not have been considered.

HON W T SCOTT:

With respect, Mr Speaker, my question has not been answered and that was why duty was not paid at importation as required by law?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Minister has answered your question. He has said he is not sure when it was paid. I think the Hon Minister said that it has been paid, he cannot say when, whether it was at the time of importation or after. He has given an answer.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I think the Minister said that he had had consultations with the Hon Financial and Development Secretary at the last meeting of the House about the question of import duty but the boat was already here, surely it must have been after that the consultations with the Financial Secretary took place.

HON A J CANEPA:

The Collector of Customs intimated to the Hon Financial and Development Secretary and myself the first morning of the last meeting of the House that the Pilots' Association were considering making an application, I think, to the Government for import duty to be waived and we consulted and the answer was that the import duty would not be waived and therefore the question did not arise..

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 157 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, has Government received or does it expect to receive any further applications for loans from the Pilots' Association for the purchase of boats and what new criteria will Government insist on?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, no applications have been received from the Pilots' Association in respect to further loans for the purchase of another boat. It is possible that such a request could be made in the future, as the acquisition of one new boat will not solve the present problems. However, the Hon Member will recall my statement on this matter at the last meeting of the House when I categorically stated that further loans would not be contemplated unless the boats are built here in Gibraltar.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if they would welcome a ferry service between Gibraltar and Algeciras and if they have any policy on the running of such a service to ensure that the interests of Gibraltar are safeguarded?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, Government would welcome a ferry service between Gibraltar and Algeciras since it would improve maritime communications. The Government's policy on this matter is that the provision of such a service should be based on the fundamental principle of reciprocity and mutual benefit.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 158 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does he include in this reciprocity and mutual benefit the possibility of having a local firm doing it, not just a Spanish firm?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, indeed, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 159 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if they have received any proposals for the implementation of a ferry service between Gibraltar and Algeciras?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir, no proposal for such a service has been received.

THE HON J BOSSANO

What use has been made of the ex Key and Anchor Club since Government paid MOD £100,000 for it?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, in the first instance let me clarify that although the value of the building transferred to the Gibraltar Government was agreed at £110,000 the amount actually paid was £63,403 this being the residual sum after deducting the cost of reprovding certain facilities within the area retained by the MOD.

As to the use that has been made, the North Wing on the first floor was allocated to the Education Department for an extension to Bishop Fitzgerald's School. The premises were in fact occupied by them in 1978 in advance of the effective date of the transfer, namely, 25 January, 1980. Part of the ground floor was then converted into office accommodation for the DLSS in connection with labour enquiries from visiting Spaniards. The first floor of the West Wing has recently been converted into further office accommodation for the Audit Department, thus decongesting the Secretariat complex. The remainder of the Ground Floor is now being actively considered as alternative accommodation for the Income Tax offices, presently in private rented accommodation, which may have to be vacated if agreement is not reached with the landlords on the terms of a new tenancy.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 160 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if that area is used by the Income Tax will that take up the whole of the available space or will there still be vacant space?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not quite sure about that, Mr Speaker, I do not think there will be a lot of space left after that.

HON J BOSSANO:

I take it the Government does consider as a matter of policy that they ought to make full use of the place having paid money for it?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Mr Speaker, not only in respect of this place because we have paid a considerable sum for it but because it is also the Government policy to try to provide accommodation for its departments from within its own resources having regard to the high rents being charged by the private sector.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is it Government policy to convert premises which have been used for social and cultural activities to office buildings?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am afraid I am not going to have that question, not under this question. You can ask any questions you like on what use the Key and Anchor is going to be put. Next question.



NO. 161 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is it Government's intention to proceed with the planned pedestrianisation of Main Street even if the cost has to be met from local funds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. Government intends to proceed with the planned pedestrianisation of Main Street even if the cost has to be met from local funds. However, since the work will be carried out in phases, the extent of pedestrianisation and the projected time scales will be regulated by the cost of each phase in relation to other commitments.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 161 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Would Government not agree that if in fact it is facing a situation where it may have limitations on allocation of resources in Government expenditure, the commitment to pedestrianisation must be seen in the light of what else is being sacrificed?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I would agree with that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 162 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, has Government any plans for the development of St Jago's Barracks?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, St Jago's building is being considered by the Office Accommodation Committee in connection with Government's policy to move departments from expensive private rented accommodation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 162 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would Government consider making the St Jago's building available as a school and transferring Governor's Meadow from the Alameda Grand Parade?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, it is not an easy question for me to answer having regard to the fact that there could be educational considerations involved. The Minister, I think, answered the specific question this morning on the demolition of Governor's Meadow First School. I think it is too early a stage for a decision of that nature to be taken with respect to St Jago's quite apart from the fact, as I have said, Mr Speaker, that we have got it tentatively earmarked for office accommodation the extent to which we will actually require it may depend on something else which we are hoping to vote funds for in the Estimates that we will be bringing to the House for the next financial year. There has also been a recent approach in connection with an exchange of buildings that might involve St Jago's which I only got last week and I would like to be able to study the matter further. I do not think from the wide aspect of the point of view of land use there are serious objections to the use of St Jago's building for school accommodation but I would imagine that the nature of the building, Mr Speaker, is such that it would have limitations in that whereas formerly it was used as a secondary modern school what the Hon Member has in mind would entail its use by children of infant school age and I would have doubts as to whether that building is suitable for that purpose.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Government in view of the fact that we must be looking towards developing our tourist industry and the exposure of the main entrance to the Alameda Gardens with the beautiful wrought iron gate is I think an asset which we should develop, could I ask the Government before they take a final decision on turning St Jago's into office accommodation to really consider the possibility of moving the school so that that temporary structure which goes by the name of the Governor's Meadow First School can finally be knocked down to expose a very beautiful part of our City?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that that is desirable, the point made by the Hon Member, but the problem, Mr Speaker, is that the Government already has identified priority requirements in respect of education which are; the reprovisioning of St Mary's First School now at Hospital Ramp and probably to go to Town Range and I think that the next one is the need for an extension to St Joseph's Middle School which is required having regard to the movement of population to the South district occasioned by Rosia Dale and by projected new housing at Gasworks. These are the two priority areas and I do not think, Mr Speaker, that there is much money left after those have been met to do what the Hon Member would like us to do, at least not for the next few years.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 163 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many sites put out to tender by Government for development are still undeveloped?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, there are eight sites awarded by tender which are awaiting development. Five of these comprise residential development and the remaining three are for commercial purposes.

All the sites are held under building licences for a limited period so that the Government is able to monitor the situation as and when these expire. Except for one case, which has become litigious, these developments are at the planning stage. However, progress in each case is constantly kept under review.

NO. 164 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many of the garages opposite the Dockyard Technical College are used as such and how many are being sublet?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, five of the ten sheds are being used as garages. From evidence which has come to light as a result of Government's action to obtain possession for demolition it appears that three are being sublet.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 164 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, when the time comes for these garages to be demolished, presumably alternative sites to the occupants will be made available. Can I take it that the people who are subletting their garages because obviously they do not require them as such, will not be given an alternative site or will they also be given an alternative site which they can subsequently sublet again?

HON A J CANEPA:

An offer has been made, Mr Speaker, of an alternative site in Devil's Tower Road, in the vicinity of that area, has been made to the tenants. I do not think a sufficient amount of progress has been made on the matter since the Government got a Court Order for possession for me to be able to say very much more about it. I think, Mr Speaker, that until we can come to some reasonable arrangement with the tenants as a whole since mainly the extent of sublets is a minority, unless we can make some real progress I think the question which the Hon Member is putting does not arise though it is a point which has got to be kept in mind. I am aware, in fact, that in one or two cases a light industrial use is being put to those sheds which may amount to the sole means of livelihood of the individuals concerned. I am aware of one or two cases and I have the matter very much in mind.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, will the Government take that into consideration when handing these alternative sites, in fact, to give priority to the sublet tenants rather than the tenants who obviously have no need for these garages?

HON A J CANEPA:

I will take that into consideration, Mr Speaker, but I cannot really tie my hands, well, they are not my hands they are the hands of the Surveyor and Planning Secretary, in respect of the agreements which may be arrived at, generally, to achieve what is really a requirement because the MOD demolished the Romney Huts on condition that the Government should do likewise in respect of those garages for environmental reasons.

HON P J ISOLA:

But the people in occupation are the people who have got to be rehoused, not the tenants, surely. Under the Part 2 which applies to business premises surely the tenant has no standing in the matter at all, I would have thought.

HON A J CANEPA:

The problem, Mr Speaker, is that these tenancies and the conditions thereto were taken over by the Government on transfer from the MOD in 1974.

HON P J ISOLA:

I appreciate that, Mr Speaker, but if the garages are to be demolished surely it is the people who are actually using them that should be rehoused, not the people who have them as a sort of business, surely?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think it is for the Government to take a policy decision on the matter and then for the matter to be pursued further by the Legal Department but we are at a stage now where having got an order for possession I think the Government can begin to try to come to terms with the people concerned which it has been very difficult to do.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is it still the policy of the Government to re-site the Revenue Station at Waterport?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. Now that the Port Department have moved to their new premises at the North Mole, it will be possible to move the Customs Department to the offices previously occupied by the Port Department, thus improving Customs control over the Port area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 165 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister say why it has taken so long to do this?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, the main problem was that the move of the Port Department to the North Mole was not effected until last June. Also, I think that the funds for both moves were supposed to have been provided out of the previous development programme, I think, and which in the event never materialised.

HON G T RESTANO:

I do not think that that is quite correct, Mr Speaker. I remember and perhaps the Minister will recall that his predecessor said that the work to commence the rehabilitation of the new Revenue Station which was taken on by the Port Department, would commence in November, 1978, funds were there, so why wasn't it done? My reckoning is it is 4½ years since the Minister's predecessor said that.

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not know if there is any purpose in debating in this House why Mr Abraham Serfaty made a statement which he made in November, 1978.

HON G T RESTANO:

No, he made it in May, 1977.

HON A J CANEPA:

Worse still. The fact of the matter is that the Port Department was not reprovided until last June and therefore the question of the Customs cannot arise. If he asked me for a date I would refuse to give him one lest my successor may also in years to come have to carry the burden of a statement which I have made.

HON G T RESTANO:

It seems to me, Mr Speaker, that we do ask questions on this side of the House and we expect to get accurate answers. Can we expect in future to get fairly accurate answers and not answers with no . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are now debating, with due respect. You have been given an answer. The answer has been that they could not do anything with the Revenue Offices until such time as the Port Department moved to its new premises which they did not do until June, 1982. Perhaps the previous Minister has made a statement which the present Minister cannot substantiate but it is not for him to do that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I think his predecessor was answering and replying on behalf of the Government, that is how I take it. If that is not so perhaps I can get confirmation of that.

HON A J CANEPA:

What happens with the development programme is that the Government sets itself objectives, there are projects which it would like to do within a development programme and a submission is put in to Her Majesty's Government, the extent of aid might fall short or in the course of the development programme the on-going projects the cost is exceeded considerably and therefore funds run out and therefore what was a bona fide objective at a given point in time such as in 1977 or 1978 may have to be deferred and it is very difficult in this sort of fluid situation to be completely pinned down.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could the Minister say whether in fact the funds were made available and were not spent for other reasons and therefore the project approval was withdrawn?

HON A J CANEPA:

It could well be, Mr Speaker, that funds were voted here in the House and in the event the project was not proceeded with, that may well be the case, I don't know.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am not asking whether it could well be the case, I am asking if the Minister could find out whether it is the case?



HON A J CANEPA:

Well, Mr Speaker, I am a rather busy Minister and I do not mind finding out information if the information is required for a particularly valid purpose but I do not like to act as a postman when, as I say, I do try and work a reasonably long day.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean that the Minister will not find out?

HON A J CANEPA:

If the purpose for which the Hon Member wants the thing is a valid one, yes, if it is just to score a debating point I will give him the debating point, he is right and I am wrong and Mr Serfaty was wrong and it has not been done.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

23.3.83

NO. 166 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Does Government have any short term and/or long term plans for the Engineer House area and if so could details be given?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Answered together with Question No. 169 of 1983.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what is the latest position regarding the construction of the proposed multi-storey car park at Casemates?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the latest position is that the developer is pursuing his enquiries with regard to the various matters which have to be resolved before commencing development. Amongst these is the question of reproviding the seven MOD quarters included as a condition of tender. The MOD have recently indicated that if the developer provided five quarters which would meet their requirements on a temporary basis, then they would be able to hand over the site in anticipation of permanent reprovisioning. This would accelerate the development process considerably. The Company is therefore making enquiries in this direction.

In addition a number of meetings have been held with other interested parties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 167 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask first of all, Mr Speaker, has the MOD in fact handed over the land to the Gibraltar Government yet?

HON A J CANEPA:

Is he asking has there been a formal transfer of the land, I doubt whether there has been a formal transfer, no.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Minister say what is the normal practice for the handing over of land from the MOD to the Gibraltar Government, is there an official document or what happens?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think what would happen, Mr Speaker, would be that there would be a letter of intent to the Government.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has there been no letter of intent of any sort saying that the MOD will hand over?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, there is no problem about the fact that this site is going to be handed over, no question of any difficulties even though there has been no formal transfer as such.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it subject, presumably, to the reprovisioning of the quarters, that is the only condition? May I ask then, was that also not the condition in the tender when the tender was awarded that the successful tenderer would in fact reprovide those quarters and may I ask why has it not yet been done?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is in the answer that I have given. I said: "Amongst these is the question of reproviding the seven MOD quarters included as a condition of tender. The MOD have recently indicated that if the developer provided five quarters which would meet their requirements on a temporary basis, then they would be able to hand over the site in anticipation".

HON G T RESTANO:

But my question was, Mr Speaker, that when this whole business was last spoken about in the House there were various tenderers and this particular tenderer was chosen because that company complied with all the conditions that the Government wanted and one was the immediate reprovisioning of the quarters and it was on that basis, presumably, and perhaps the Minister can confirm that the company was granted the tender and therefore if it granted the tender under those conditions why has that company not carried out the conditions of that tender?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think that the fault lies with the company, Mr Speaker. The MOD requirements regarding reprovisioning has been the subject of further consideration since the announced closure of the Dockyard because the MOD are now having a new and overall look at their quartering requirements, that is why it has been possible for them to establish that they only require five instead of seven quarters and an offer has been made by the developer of five flats which are the subject of consideration by the pertinent MOD authority. I think the ball is really with the MOD at the moment.

HON P J ISOLA:

But then if the developer is now being excused from providing seven and they need only provide five, is there provision in the tender to ensure that the Government gets the benefit of the saving of two quarters rather than the developer because it is public land that is being put out to tender on a particular basis and any benefit that accrues after the date of tender surely in respect of that should accrue to the Government otherwise the Government is being possibly unfair to other tenderers who tendered on the basis of seven.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, is it suggested that we now call a halt to everything and we go out to tender again on the basis of only five quarters because that is what the MOD are asking for today or we ask the developer to pay a premium of, say, £100,000 in respect of the two quarters which they are not having to provide?

HON P J ISOLA:

No, Mr Speaker, but the developer could be asked to provide two quarters which could be used by the Government in respect of public accommodation and public housing because that is the commitment of the developer.

HON A J CANEPA:

That is a matter I think which the Government has to seriously consider, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, with your leave may I refer back to the exchanges that took place in supplementaries arising from Question No. 167.

MR SPEAKER:

Is that Engineer House?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, the multi-storey car park at Casemates and the point made by the Leader of the Opposition in respect of whether the Government should not have the benefit of the two quarters over which there might not be a reprovisioning requirement. In my answer I said that the MOD had recently indicated that if the developer provided five quarters which would meet their requirements on a temporary basis then they would be able to hand over the site in anticipation of permanent reprovisioning. At present the position is that permanent reprovisioning would still have to be settled but the MOD are in fact reconsidering that and in the event that the permanent reprovisioning requirement should be less than seven, there is already a requirement under the tender conditions for the reduction, as it were, to be reprovided for the benefit of Government or an appropriate sum to be paid in lieu to the Government.

NO. 168 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, Sir what is the latest position with regard to the East Side Development?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member will recall that I explained last December that the two parties, whose schemes were under consideration, had been asked to submit certain information on the provision of infrastructure and their proposals for the necessary hydrographic studies.

This has now been received and has been considered by the Land Board. I am afraid that owing to their confidentiality I am unable to disclose further details except to say that the information submitted by both parties does not facilitate the selection process, as had been intended. Nevertheless, the Government has engaged a Consultant who is looking at both schemes in detail and who will report to the Land Board on the outcome of his investigations. In the meantime the Government has approached the two parties with a suggestion that may well obviate the need for selection and at the same time achieve the desired objective.

A reply from the two parties is now awaited.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government state what is the present position with the Engineer House Development Scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, although plans have been prepared for a Housing Scheme on the Engineer House site, the Government has decided to defer construction in preference for other schemes which have been prepared in respect of the following sites: Gasworks site, Tank Ramp Phase II and Road to the Lines Phase II.

Nevertheless, in the short term it is proposed to demolish the existing structures and clear the site for use as a temporary car park. This would reprovide the car parking spaces lost as a result of the Old Command Education Centre Scheme and at the same time would serve to provide the public with an open amenity area in what is at present a very congested part of the City.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 166 AND 169 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is the overall, the long term plan, does the Government consider that to be funded by ODA or locally funded?

HON A J CANEPA:

The present position, Mr Speaker, is that ODA are not providing any funds for housing. If there is another tranche of development aid from ODA to follow the present £13m no doubt we would propose to come back to the charge on the question of ODA funds for housing.

HON G T RESTANO:

So if the ODA funds do not come about is it the Government's intention to put it out as a specific project for housing for private development?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, it would be public housing.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think the Minister got me wrong. Not for private development, housing development but carried out by tender.

HON A J CANEPA:

But how is the question of funding, Mr Speaker, the question of the money, I take it that the Hon Member means will it be locally funded, is that what he is asking? Yes, hopefully, if funds are available.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, if I recollect correctly I believe the Minister answered the question to me that the demolition was going to be carried out and that the car park was going to be done a few months back, I would say a year if not eighteen months or two years. Can the Minister state now whether in fact what he said is going to be done?

HON A J CANEPA:

It has been done because the question that the Hon Member was asking me was at the time when there was a problem in the Government taking over Engineer House and arising from that question he asked a number of supplementaries one of which was what was the use which the Government intended to put that site to and I said that it was public housing and I remember since then giving further details in the House that there is a project to build about fifty flats there.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Yes, but he also said that he was going to pull down the existing house and he was going to have a car park there.

HON A J CANEPA:

If the Hon Member can find from a Hansard evidence of that I will apologise to him for that but I do not recollect having said in the House previously what I have said in this answer.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

If the Hon Member will check he will find that he did say it. All I want to know is that on this occasion he will do that and that he will do it quickly.

HON A J CANEPA:

If they are voted for by the House, it is intended in the draft estimates to provide funds for the purpose.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I also have a very distinct recollection of what my Hon Colleague on my right has said.



MR SPEAKER:

Order. It is a simple matter, it is impossible to ask for information the way we are doing. If Members say that they do recollect it is a simple matter, we do provide Hansard, will they please quote and then we do not have to have an argument as to whether it was said or it wasn't.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, it was just a supplementary.

MR SPEAKER:

Whatever it is, if a statement of fact is being made on which an answer is required I require the statement of fact and that is I require the quotation from Hansard, it is as simple as that, but let us not argue as to whether it was made or it was not made.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, regardless of what I may or may not have said in the House before the fact is that the House has never voted funds or never been asked to vote funds for this purpose but it is intended to do that for the financial year 1983/84 and then the burden will be on the Government to get the project in motion in the course of the financial year.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does it not appear from what the Minister has said that the chances of Engineer House being used for public housing in the next five years are fairly dim?

HON A J CANEPA:

In the next five years I wouldn't say so, in the next two, yes, but in the next five I would hope that everything cannot, I am not an optimist by nature but I would very much hope, Mr Speaker, that the economy will pick up and that we might after the next couple of years be in a position to come up with another development programme which will contain a substantial chunk of housing because it is the next highest priority project for new housing, Engineer House, after Gasworks it is the one that we would like to proceed with.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I know, Mr Speaker, when the demolition is likely to take place provided, of course, the funds are voted?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, I cannot give that information at this stage.

HON G T RESTANO:

But is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that development generally at the moment is at a standstill and possibly now would be the best time to use the labour force to do that?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, Mr Speaker, if we bring the funds to the House at the meeting next month then the funds are there to go out to tender for the demolition.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't the Minister confident that he will get the vote through at the next House or is the majority not going to be there?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Surely that is a matter of respect to the House to say that the money is voted by all. We are giving credit to the other side that they are contributing to the voting of the funds.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many houses have now been put up for tender in the home ownership scheme and give a breakdown of the estimated costs of repairs in relation to the houses made available under the above scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, a total of nine Crown Properties with a modernisation potential of twenty residential units have been awarded by tender. The costs of repairs vary according to the condition of the properties and the extent to which the lessees propose to carry out refurbishment. On average the estimated costs submitted by the successful tenderers ranged from £7,000 to £12,000 per modernised unit. In the case of one of the smaller units, however, the cost was given as £1,600.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 170 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister satisfied that the mortgage facilities required for the financing of these home ownership schemes are being adequately provided?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, does that arise from the question, the mortgage facilities?

MR SPEAKER:

Will you ask the question again?

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister satisfied that the funds required for the repairs are being made accessible in easy tranches or not?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a private commitment by the tenderer and has nothing to do with the matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

On a point of clarification, Mr Speaker, the idea, and the Minister will correct me if I am wrong, of the scheme was to enable one particular class of Gibraltarians, primarily the young married couples not those who are well off, the Minister will concur with me that the Building Society provisions in Gibraltar are fairly primitive and as such since his intent is to aid these people has he made enquiries into the banking facilities?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am aware, Mr Speaker, that the Gibraltar Building Society has provided, I think in the course of the last year, something like £360,000 in mortgage facilities.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Minister aware of any difficulty encountered by potential tenderers or tenderers in relation to the funds to be raised?

HON A J CANEPA:

I have had an approach, Mr Speaker, from some of the interested parties in connection with the provision of the lease and the Government has been happy to accommodate the people concerned by making that possible.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can he be more explicit, I am not quite sure I follow his answer in the terms of the lease availability?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, Mr Speaker, initially it had been the intention of the Government not to give the lease until the work had been completed but the banks are also involved and I think it has been possible for the Surveyor and Planning Secretary to arrive at a formula which will enable the people concerned to get the funds which they are seeking from the banks and for the banks as well, I think, to get the guarantees which they were after. It looks as if matters are going well, Mr Speaker. As I said, I had an approach from some of the people concerned and as a result of action taken in the Land Board I think the matter has been satisfactorily circumvented.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, how many more houses are going to be up for this scheme in the next, say, twelve months, Sir?

HON A J CANEPA:

There is another batch of properties already identified and additionally it is intended that the Minister for Housing, the Minister for Public Works and myself should view certain other properties in order to establish on the one hand the requirements, I think, of the Housing Department and also to establish which are the other, as it were, residual properties that might be suitable to put out to tender again.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister be more specific, has he any idea of how many?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, not until we have been able to survey the number of properties in question.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 171 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

What is the estimated value of the estate occupied by the UK departments in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, I am afraid the Government is not in a position to provide the information requested.

Without wishing to labour on the technical considerations involved in such an exercise my Hon Friend is well aware that the definition of value is often the subject of diverse opinions. In crude economic terms, it is usually expressed as the price a willing purchaser would pay to a willing vendor for a particular property in the latter's possession. Where, however, value cannot be tested in the open market, then other considerations apply. In the property world these considerations are primarily influenced by the state of the property market, which in turn is largely reflected in the prevailing rental levels, the location, state of repairs, permitted user, restrictive covenants, planning restrictions and other miscellaneous factors which a valuer must assess individually.

These matters are obviously considered in depth by the Government's valuers at the appropriate times whenever the Government is in the process of either acquiring or disposing of an interest in land.

Having said that, the Government does not consider that it is, for the purpose of such an exercise, the pertinent authority to carry it out.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 171 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Given all those limitations, Mr Speaker, can the Minister give an indication of the value that the property occupied by the MOD would have if instead of it being the MOD that occupies the property it was a private company?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, I would not hazard a figure.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, how does the Government decide how much MOD should contribute in rates if they have no idea what property they are occupying?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a matter for the Valuation Department from the rating purposes and the user purposes and that is arrived at every year in consultation between the Valuer of the Ministry of Defence and our own Valuer. It is quasi judicial in that there are many installations here that are not rateable because they do not get any services and that I think can be found from the element of percentage of rates which the Imperial Government pays in lieu of rates but it does not reflect the value of it because sometimes they are considerably undervalued because of their non-user but some element of indication could be got there if it can be found. The advantage of course is that they pay in one payment early in the year for the whole of it and we do not have to be collecting rates as we do in the rest. I know a little about that because of the City Council.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will, in fact, the Chief Minister look into the possibility of identifying that in the draft estimates, Mr Speaker?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will try, I don't know whether it appears but I know that it exists somewhere.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 172 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is it intended to compile a new register of electors prior to the next general election?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the current register of electors was published in August, 1981. It included the names of those persons who, although they had not attained the age of 18 years at the time of publication, would attain that age by 31 March, 1983.

To compile and publish a new register would take about six months and would cost around £21,000. Taking that into account the small movement in population and the relatively few additions required to the current register, it is considered that a supplement to this register should be published later this year. Provision can be made to include persons who will attain voting age by 31 March, 1985.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 172 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So that means that anybody who was missed out the last time will have an opportunity to be registered before the next election?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, that is right.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is there any monitoring done to take away from the register those people who have passed away?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, they are just not there to vote.

HON G T RESTANO:

Sometimes they do vote.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think that our system is particularly susceptible to that and I think there would be great objection from the funeral directors.

MR SPEAKER:

It has been suggested that it is the practice in Gibraltar for people who are up in North Front to exercise their right to vote. I do not think it has been insinuated, I hope it isn't. Next question.



NO. 173 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make arrangements so that holders of UK passports may have a passport issued in Gibraltar at a special rate pending arrival of their UK passport in the event of no other arrangements being possible?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. There is no provision in Law to issue passports at a reduced rate and it is not intended to provide therefor. Arrangements exist whereby holders of UK passports may, if these are required for travel and subject to certain conditions, retain them whilst their applications for new passports are being processed. It is therefore in the interests of the holders to apply for new passports well in advance of the expiry date of their current ones.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 173 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Did I hear the Hon and Learned Chief Minister say that a holder of a UK passport does not have to hand in his passport when applying for a new one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will repeat what I said: "Arrangements exist whereby holders of UK passports may, if these are required for travel and subject to certain conditions, retain them whilst their applications for new passports are being processed". They keep their passport, the application of the other passport is being processed and when the passport comes it is exchanged. They do not have to give it up at the time for the application for the renewal if there is good reason for their holding it.

HON P J ISOLA:

I don't know whether the Hon and Learned Chief Minister has got the point of my question, I am talking really mainly in respect of those Gibraltarian British citizens who have chosen a UK passport and who use that passport, for example, to go to Spain and who are put at a great disadvantage with holders of what the Chief Minister has called Gibraltar passports which, of course, they are not, they are also British passports, but are at a disadvantage with those people because they have to wait six weeks for their passports and does not the Chief Minister agree that it is desirable that those who wish to have UK passports as they are entitled to having applied for British citizenship, should not be in a worse position to others who have not even applied for British citizenship or who prefer to keep their British Dependent Territories citizenship and therefore get passports issued in Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No cases have come to my notice of anybody who has applied for registration under Section 5 who has applied for a UK passport because his Gibraltar passport is expired which is what I think the Hon Member was asking.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I think you are both speaking at cross purposes. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition could ask whether there can be facilities for the renewal of UK passports in Gibraltar, that is what you are asking.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the trouble is that the questions that I have asked should have come in the other way round. They have been put down for answer, in my view, the wrong way around because the first one should really follow the second one but it has been put the other way round so I am forced to ask it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I was going to say that perhaps he could ask his next question and we could answer both together.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government seek authority from the United Kingdom authorising the Gibraltar Government to issue UK passports in Gibraltar as agents for the British Government to British Citizens and thus avoid the delay that obtaining such passports brings?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, enquiries at official level in connection with the arrangements for dealing with applications for registration under Section 5 of the British Nationality Act, elicited the information that it is not the policy of the United Kingdom Government to authorise the holding of stocks and the issue of United Kingdom passports elsewhere than in the United Kingdom or by Consular Posts abroad.

I have material here for supplementaries but I may as well give it out in order that we get the whole spectrum. A scheme exists whereby British citizens and British subjects with the right of abode in the United Kingdom may, while they are in a dependent territory, obtain United Kingdom passports. It is under this scheme that persons who acquire British citizenship by registration under Section 5 of the British Nationality Act may apply for the issue of United Kingdom passports. Passports applied for under this scheme normally take from six to eight weeks to be issued. However, arrangements have been with the United Kingdom Passport Office to speed up the procedure as much as possible in respect of applicants who have registered under Section 5. In any case applicants in this category who already hold valid passports will not normally be required to surrender these whilst their applications are being processed if their current passports are required for travel. I hope that this clears the matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 174 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

But would the Chief Minister consider asking because Gibraltar is the only case and therefore there are problems, would the Chief Minister consider asking for this matter to be looked at again because is he aware that in the application form for an application for United Kingdom passport, a declaration has to be made by the person who applies in which he states that he is residing in the United Kingdom and that, obviously causes difficulties in respect of British citizens who have their permanent residence in Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will certainly enquire but, first of all, we have had already a number of certificates of registration issued under Section 5 and already a number of people as a result of that have made applications for UK passports and we have not had, to my knowledge, I would like to enquire and if necessary I will let the Hon Member know and I think it will have come up in the preparation of the reply to this question because they have been prepared by the

Passport Office, we have not had any complaints that the UK passports that are being asked for from here as a result of registration under Section 5 are having any difficulty in being issued. In fact, my information is the opposite that they have undertaken to accelerate those passports from about six to eight weeks to five weeks.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I am grateful for that but in fact is the Chief Minister aware that the declaration of any applicant signed are at present being signed incorrectly?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It may be that that shows the anomaly of the privilege that we were able to obtain that it was not conceived in the preparation of the passport that other people than those who were British subjects under the Nationality Act of 1981, they did not think of Section 5 registration and no doubt that should not be signed and I have no doubt that if in lieu of that you certify "I am registered under Section 5 of the Nationality Act", that should do but we have had no complaints back from people who have applied and I do not know whether in fact we have had any come-back, in fact, any UK passports issued for registered people under Section 5 since the original registrations were received. I would have to look into that.

HON P J ISOLA:

The point I want to make, Mr Speaker, is that since the case of Gibraltar is unique and in fact Gibraltar, the territory, people living here permanently are and will become, by and large, holders of UK passports, that there is a need for the Gibraltar Government to bring to the notice of the British passport authority that in actual fact the geographical area of Britain from the point of view of UK passports should really be extended to Gibraltar and that Gibraltar should accordingly be an issuing authority and this would obviate a lot of the problems that are bound to arise in the future.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will certainly bring to their notice that part of the anomaly in the application but with regard to the latter part of the question I must reiterate the fact that when officials were discussing the registration, and I think it is fair to say that we were delegated the power of checking and, in fact, to make an application you put your original paper, they are checked and they are given back to you so that they give registration as certified by our officials which I think is an extent of the trust that they have placed on us that we would register only the people who are entitled to register and even in those circumstances, with that willingness that they have shown, they have said that they are reluctant to allow UK passports to be held other than in the United Kingdom or British Consular posts. I will make the point but already I find that there has been that element of negotiation and it has not met with results. I will make it again, no problem.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since the Government may find difficulty as the Chief Minister says in getting that, could the Chief Minister look into the possibility of having the sort of temporary ones that are issued by the Post Office in England being issued in Gibraltar to be able to cover that period in which people may want to use it and there is obviously a delay because of distance between here and the UK?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will take both things up.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government say when they anticipate the study of the implications of Spain's membership of the EEC for the Gibraltar economy, being conducted pursuant to the motion on the subject carried by this House in July, 1980, will be completed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member will recall, the Committee considered and agreed a lengthy paper on this subject in December. We have since then been engaged in correspondence with a view to bringing the study to a conclusion as soon as possible and I could add that we have some hiccups in one or two areas. I aim to reconvene the Committee in April or early May.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 175 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Chief Minister not agree that when the Committee is reconvened it should set itself a target date by which time its work should be completed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, certainly, provided of course that the target date is realistic having regard to the fact that a number of areas are outside our jurisdiction in the sense that unless we get some feedback in certain areas it may be useless to make representations but I have no complacency about the matter simply because there seems to be a delay on the part of a certain country to enter the Community.

HON J BOSSANO:

But the Government does agree that in fact the time within which this work can be completed is not entirely under our own control that in fact we are working, if you like, against the clock in the sense that the negotiations with Spain's entry are still proceeding?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is why I had that in mind and I also have in mind another factor and that is the life of this legislature.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government make a statement on the recent incident at the frontier when a GBC crew was not allowed entry into Spain with their equipment and can Government state whether the journey was really necessary?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the facts of the incident are as follows:

At 9 am on 10 March, a GBC camera crew made formal declaration to the Gibraltar Customs of the equipment they intended taking temporarily into Spain.

As is the practice, the producer crossed into Spain to obtain customs clearance for the equipment. He was seen by the Senior representative of the Spanish Customs, who explained that although the crew had the necessary permits to film in Spain, they could not bring in the equipment through the La Linea border. He pointed out that it could be imported via any other Customs port, eg Algeciras.

The documents produced were:

- (a) the accrediting Press Cards
- (b) the ATA Carnet issued by the Gibraltar Chamber of Commerce for Customs documentation purposes, and
- (c) the filming authorisation.

This latter document had been issued in Madrid by the Ministerio de la Presidencia - Direccion General de Medios de Comunicacion Social (the Ministry of the Presidency - Director-General of Social Communications). It authorised filming of commercial topics, specifically publicity spots on purchases and services. It also authorised entry of cameras and electronic equipment via the Puesto de Control de La Linea de la Concepcion (La Linea Control Post) and its use in the Campo Area and the Costa del Sol.

I am advised that GBC had not experienced problems in crossing the frontier with their equipment since they first did so on 15 December, 1982.

With regard to the second part of the question. The Corporation is an independent body and it is not for the Government to intervene in its day-to-day activities.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 176 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean that the Government does not know what was the purpose of the journey?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, what I say is that we are not prepared to say whether the journey was really necessary.

HON P J ISOLA:

As the Government has asked GBC for a report, obviously because they are an independent Corporation and the Government has nothing to do with them, has obviously had to ask them for a report on the incident, can the Chief Minister at least state what was the purpose of this journey?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think this comes out specially from my answer. It authorised filming of commercial topics, specifically publicity spots on purchases and services so, obviously, they had permission to go to film material for commercials for the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is that why they were going to Spain on that particular day at that particular time, that is my question?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have no reason to believe otherwise.

HON P J ISOLA:

So the Chief Minister has not been told why they were going there on that day, it could have been to do an interview of Mr Moran or the Mayor of La Linea or some such like personality?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think it is a bit of a contrast between one and the other but, anyhow. I have not been told by GBC specifically for the purposes of this answer, but my understanding is that it was one of the regular number of visits that they have gone to Spain to seek publicity for their advertising revenue.

HON P J ISOLA:

So that we can enjoy our television so much more by seeing all these lovely properties to be sold in Spain and so forth. Then the journey was not really necessary, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, that is a matter of opinion and comment. Next question.



NO. 177 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state who has had access to the Port Feasibility Study since it was completed in February, 1981?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, copies of the Gibraltar Port Study were circulated to Ministers, a number of Government officials, to the Leader of the Opposition, the Flag Officer (Gibraltar) and the Regional Director (PSA) on a confidential basis.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 177 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if the Port Study in fact has got material which is bound to make a difference to the development of trade in Gibraltar, does the Hon Member not think that people who have to take investment decisions on certain assumptions should be made aware of what is the expert advice the Government is acting on because the private sector in ignorance may be acting on certain assumptions of the Government on the basis of confidential reports on different assumptions?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I have been able to provide information to the Gibraltar Shipping Association, relevant extracts from the report, I have not been able to make the whole of the report available to them and I have also been able to arrange for queries from parties interested in the development of ferry services in the Port area, I have been able to relate from material and information to be made available. The report contains information which is confidential and since it is in respect of three matters; in respect of Spain and there is information there which if the report were to be made public could conceivably be used against us; in respect of EEC matters, which was the subject of a question to the Chief Minister a moment ago, again the advice that we are getting in respect of the EEC could be prejudicial, and there is also information in the report as I recollect, and comments about individual stevedoring firms which I do not consider that it would be proper for their competitors to have access to. I have had a request, a letter that I received only today from the Chamber of Commerce where they are asking for the report to be made public pursuant to a motion which was passed at their annual general meeting and I intend to explain to them why it cannot be made public but to invite them to arrange for any parties who are interested and who wish to have specific information to contact the Government and we would endeavour to answer any queries which they might have. Beyond that I do not think I can take it, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister then saying that in fact it is impossible to produce a version of the report with the parts that he considers should not be made public taken out?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker, having regard to the manner in which the report has been drafted, there are paragraphs throughout the body of the report which is very lengthy, in fact there are two very fat volumes, there are paragraphs throughout the report which I think it would be an extremely laborious exercise to excise meaningfully.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Minister whether he would agree with me that in fact in the context of other reports that have been produced, for example, such as the Dockyard study which was made available to a far wider group of people, that second report kept on making references to the first report which people who had not seen the first report could not make head or tails of, would he not agree that for the sake of consistency at least he should give the people he has given the second report to a copy of the first so that they know what the second one is about?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, except about the comments that I have made with respect to these individual companies.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 178 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does Government now hold a view as to the effect the pedestrian opening of the frontier has had so far on the Gibraltar economy?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I have given notice of my intention to make a statement on the frontier situation which should cover this question and give the Hon Member an opportunity of asking any questions on that.

23.3.83

NO. 179 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government list all the studies, consultancies and experts that have been engaged since Preece, Cardew and Rider giving the date, purpose and cost of each?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 181 of 1983.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government reveal what has been the weekly cost of engaging a chairman for the Steering Committee of the Electricity Department, how many times this person has travelled to Gibraltar in his official capacity, how many meetings of the Committee have taken place and how much longer the services of the chairman will be required?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the weekly cost of engaging a chairman for the Steering Committee of the Electricity Department has averaged £1,940 over the 30-week period beginning 30 September, 1982, and ending 31 March, 1983 (excluding the Christmas week during which no expenses were incurred).

The chairman has travelled to Gibraltar on twenty-one occasions and there have been twenty-one meetings of the Steering Committee.

It is not possible to state with any certainty how much longer the services of the chairman will be required as this depends on the progress of the negotiations but it is anticipated that these negotiations should be concluded during the course of April.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 180 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

May I have, Mr Speaker, a breakdown of the weekly cost, £1,940?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, certainly, Sir. The weekly expenses include a fee of £250 per working day charged by the Industrial Society, the cost of flights, accommodations and subsistence allowance. It should be noted that the fee is considerably lower than normally charged by the Industrial Society for similar consultancies in the United Kingdom.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it not correct that the Society charges a flat rate of £1,250 a week, is that correct?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid I cannot answer that question because I do not have the necessary information.

HON P J ISOLA:

But, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is being asked the weekly cost of engaging a chairman and we were told in the House in the meeting of 8th December, 1982, by the Financial and Development Secretary, if I may quote, Mr Speaker, from page 112 of the Hansard and that was when the House was being asked to vote an additional sum to the £23,000 already voted making it up to £54,000, the House was told by the Financial and Development Secretary that: "There is a fixed, specially reduced, but a fixed rate which runs into a figure of £1,250 a week. The balance relates to the salary and travelling expenses of the chairman himself". That is what the House was told and later on, may I remind the Minister, at page 114, the Hon and Learned Chief Minister, after telling us that the first consultancy of £23,000 was covering six weeks went on to say: "It has been extended for a similar period or an extra week, I forget now, that is why it is £54,000". So we were asked then to vote provision for an additional £32,000 for a similar period of six weeks or possibly seven weeks and then I asked the question: "That means that it is costing us almost £4,000 a week", and nobody from the Government side denied. Can the Minister, because presumably the Government had the facts then as they have now, can the Minister explain why we were told it was just under £4,000 a week in December, 1982, and we are now told it is £1,940? Has there been a new agreement or are we getting the right information now or were we given the wrong information in December by the Financial and Development Secretary and by the Hon and Learned Chief Minister? Could we have an answer to that?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the information which I gave the House in December was obtained from the Establishment Branch who were paying this gentleman and I am quite certain that at that time it was correct.

HON P J ISOLA:

If the information given at that time is correct, can the Minister tell us on what new terms has this been negotiated because may I remind the House that at that particular meeting, and I am not going to go through the Hansard but it is there, it actually can be seen, the hope was expressed by the Hon and Learned Chief Minister that we might see the end of it, he was going very quickly and hopefully it would all end within the six weeks. Am I to understand from the figures now given from the Minister that due to the fact that the Government's optimism as regards the Steering Committee has not been justified, that new conditions have been worked out with the Industrial Society and if so will the Minister tell us what these are and for how long?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, these are the figures that I have at hand and in fact they are correct. I will check and give an answer to the Hon Leader of the Opposition as to what has transpired but it is obvious from the statement that the miscalculation has been due on his part to a wrong appraisal of the situation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, how can the miscalculation be made on my part, can the Minister explain, when the Hon Financial Secretary has just told us and I accept what he says because he is the financial man, that what he said in December was correct and what he said in December and what the Chief Minister said in December led us to the irresistible conclusion that it was costing us just under £4,000 a week. How am I mistaken, it is his colleagues that are mistaken, is that the position?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I will check on the figures and that will probably prevent the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition from pushing his blood pressure too high up.

HON P J ISOLA:

I do not know if it is because he is a doctor he is able to reduce it as quickly as he increases it but may I tell the Hon Member that the statement that my party made about the person concerned costing the Gibraltar taxpayer or whoever, the electricity bill payer, was not given to us by any birdie or anything else, we took that from looking at the Hansard report of this House and we took that from a combination of statements by the Financial and Development Secretary, the Hon and Learned Chief Minister and the Hon Minister himself though he did not say a word in that particular meeting presumably he did not know what was going on but he did say it at a previous occasion so I would be grateful if he would check these figures and let us have them, I am sorry I have interrupted the line of questioning from my Hon Friend.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said to the Hon Member that I will check these figures.

HON G T RESTANO:

When the Minister says, Mr Speaker, that the conclusion of the Committee should be sometime during April does he mean the whole of the conclusions or just that part of the conclusions that relate to the Waterport Station?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The requirements of the Steering Committee as to the manning of Waterport Power Station.

HON G T RESTANO:

So then would it need to sit for a further period to discuss the works practice recommendations it has to recommend?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

If you read the Committee of Enquiry's Report it says that this Committee should eventually become a full Works Council and this is the intention that whilst the Committee establishes what is necessary as far as Waterport is concerned a full Works Council will be set up and they will take over the role of this Committee.

HON G T RESTANO:

So the Steering Committee will, the Minister hopes or expects, by April to recommend all the details for the Works Council, is that correct?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer that has been given has been very explicit. When the Steering Committee finishes its work insofar as the Waterport manning has been completed, then it will revert to its original intentions and it will sit as a Council.

HON G T RESTANO:

The programme, as I understand it, is that the Steering Committee has to, among other recommendations, make recommendations of how the Works Council which is going to succeed it is going to work so therefore it has, as I see it, two areas of recommendations, one on the manning of the Waterport Power Station and the other on the rules and procedures of its successive Committee so I would like to know whether the April date which the Minister has mentioned is for both areas or just the manning of the Waterport Power Station?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, hopefully, for both.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in answer to Question 180, I stated that the average weekly cost for the period ending the 31st March was £1,940. The weekly cost includes a fee of £250 per working day charged by the Industrial Society. Supplementary funds were sought in the October and December meetings of the House. The rest of the amount necessary was obtained from savings in the Secretariat vote giving a total of £58,210 up to the 31 March, 1983. This averages out at the figure given by me in answer to



question 180. The fees has been constant throughout the consultancy. The supplementary funds sought were to cover the cost of the on-going consultancy and not for any specific period of time. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to correct a typing error which appeared in answer to the question, in line 3 of paragraph 1, the second figure 30 should be deleted.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, all I would like to say on that is that what the Hon Minister is saying clearly conflicts with what was said in the meeting in December and we will talk about it during the budget, possibly.

23.3.83

NO. 181 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government state how many consultants have been employed by them since 1980 and what the total cost of these consultancies has been?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, despite the limited time available particularly on this occasion because of the Commonwealth holiday, the necessary study has been made and I am circulating a detailed analysis to Members. I do not expect any supplementaries at this stage but if there is any query, it is rather a lengthy document.

# GIBRALTAR

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

23 March 1983

182 to 246

Vol II

NO. 182 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, will Government explain why there was no audit for the Public Works Department in 1981/82?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, may I first of all make a general point which is relevant to this question and to Questions Nos. 183 and 184 tabled by the Hon Member. The post of Principal Auditor is constituted under Section 71 of the Constitution. Section 70(3) of the Constitution provides that in the exercise of his functions the Principal Auditor shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority. I make the point, Mr Speaker, because I cannot myself speak for the Principal Auditor unless he wishes me to do so, in this case he does wish me to do so.

Mr Speaker, the answer to the question is that it is based on an assumption which is not correct. An audit of the Public Works Department was carried out during the period referred to by the Hon Member.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 182 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Will Government explain therefore why there has been no comment in the annual accounts as presented by the Principal Auditor on the Public Works Department?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the reason there has been no comment is that having conducted an audit of the accounts of the department, the Principal Auditor did not think that there were any financial implications that merited being included in the Report and he also did not find on examining the accounts, any unauthorised expenditure. Can I make one point clear that in saying he conducted an audit, he conducted an audit of a selection of the accounts of the department, I would not like to give the impression that he conducted a complete audit of the department.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 183 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, how many Government Departments have had full audits over the last three years and which Departments have had partial audits over this same period?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the question covers three financial years ended on the 31st March, 1981, 31st March, 1982, and 31st March, 1983; it therefore calls for a rather lengthy reply and with your permission I would like to circulate a paper providing details of the information sought. Before doing so may I explain that the general audit of the Treasury accounts affects all expenditure incurred by the various departments. The examination by the Audit Department of Treasury vouchers and journal vouchers as well as Crown Agents accounts, therefore achieves a degree of audit on all accounting transactions carried out within or on behalf of the departments. This exercise is complemented by a departmental examination of records, systems and controls and the absence of any departmental audits must be looked at bearing these considerations in mind.

NO. 184 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, can Government inform this House why every Government Department is not fully audited every year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, it is not clear from the question what is meant by "fully audited". If it means that every single Government transaction should be audited, then the answer is that this is not possible because of the practical considerations involved. The Constitution provides that the Principal Auditor will have discretion in the exercise of his functions and it is therefore up to him to determine his priorities and to carry out such audits as he considers necessary in order to certify the accounts. Having said this the Government agrees that it would be desirable that all departments should be audited annually.

The Hon Member will be pleased to learn that as a result of specific and comprehensive recommendations submitted by the Principal Auditor for the restructuring of his department the Government has agreed to the addition of a further Higher Executive Officer and to reducing the complement of Clerical Officers by four. The Principal Auditor is confident that the new structure will enable him to carry out a more effective programme of audit. These changes follow the recent increase in the establishment of the audit staff by one Higher Executive Officer and the transfer at the Principal Auditor's request, of the Stores Verifier from the Treasury. The revised structure was considered and accepted by Management Services; it is based on the principle that officers leading an audit team must have the ability to understand and appraise systems quickly, make sound judgements, write cogent reports and argue conclusions at senior levels if necessary. These requirements are not often met below the level of Higher Executive Officer.

The House will no doubt also be pleased to learn that the structural changes which have been made, while, as I say, enabling the Principal Auditor to carry out a more effective audit programme, will also result in an average saving in staff costs amounting to £10,000 pa.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 184 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, am I right therefore in assuming that Members of this side of the House can look forward to a fuller audit of each and every Government Department from now on?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think, Mr Speaker, I must reiterate the point that the Principal Auditor must have a discretion where he thinks fit but in general terms, yes, I think it is hoped that by virtue of this new arrangement it will be possible to conduct more comprehensive audits of each department.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government state the position regarding the allocation of Garages at Westside School?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the Quarters Allocation Committee have now allocated the six garages adjoining Westside School.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 185 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, have the garages been allocated to the occupants of the flats directly above?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member means the Westside flats, the answer is not necessarily.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, am I not right in assuming that the six flats at Westside were to be allocated together with the garages and for that reason the electricity supply to these garages is directly connected to the flats above them?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I would have to make enquiries into that, I do not know that detail.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I assure the Hon Attorney-General that that is the case, the electricity supply to the garages is connected to the electricity supply of the flats immediately above and if this is the case wouldn't it be logical for the garages in question to be allocated along with the flats particularly in view of the fact that there is a letter from the architect saying that had he known that these garages were not to be allocated with the flats he would have made provision for more storage space for these flats which are rather small?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

That may be so, Mr Speaker, but I am not in a position to comment. I take note of the point but I am not in a position to comment on it.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, will Government then in the meantime hold back on the allocation of these garages until the Attorney-General is completely satisfied?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I am sorry I cannot give that undertaking, the offers have in fact already been made to people.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do I understand correctly, the offers have been made, they have not yet been allocated?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

That is in fact so, Mr Speaker, and I think my original answer was misleading to that extent. The position is that the offers have been made and replies are awaited.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 186 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government consider making the cash awards which accompany Long Service and Good Conduct medals realistic by 1983 standards?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir. This cash award is granted as a token gesture and is not related in any way to increases in the cost of living or in salaries.

The position in the United Kingdom is that such medal awards do not attract cash grants.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 186 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, am I not right in believing that originally the cash awards that accompanied these medals were on the basis of the salary of the officer receiving them and they formed what amounted to the monthly salary or the weekly wage and if that is the case wouldn't it be realistic to bring up the cash awards in line to present wage levels?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, it may well be that when the concept or the idea of the medal was first introduced the amount of money chosen as an annual grant bore some correlation to one's income so it is no longer regarded in the same way, it is now seen as being simply a token gesture.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 187 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government say how the proceedings in connection with the old Shell Petrol Station at the junction of Landport and Corral Road are proceeding?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the matter remains the subject of arbitration proceedings but I can say that terms of settlement are now being discussed, 'without prejudice' of course, between the parties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 187 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, this is the answer that I have been getting now for the last two years. Has the Attorney-General any idea when this matter will be settled?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

If I can use an Americanism, Mr Speaker, momentarily, what I mean is in the very near future.

HON W T SCOTT:

Am I right in assuming that there is an element of the Lands and Surveys within that as well on building application?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I would be grateful if the Hon Member could clarify the point, I am not sure that I understand the point.

HON W T SCOTT:

I have been led to believe that part of the present delay is due to the Lands and Surveys not granting the necessary planning permission.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, that is not the case. I am not sure I can agree that we have been trying for two years to settle but the present delay or the present cause is because there have been proposals and counter proposals and we are at the moment I think where we have a mutually acceptable proposal.

NO. 188 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state how many complaints have been made to the Police in relation to the conduct of persons using the Amusement Arcade situated opposite the Cathedral of St Mary the Crowned or in the immediate neighbourhood thereof and what action, if any, has been taken?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, since 1st January, 1983, there have been no such formal or written complaints to the Police but constables patrolling the area from time to time move people on or speak to them if their conduct is noisy, disorderly or offensive.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 188 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Hon and Learned Attorney-General saying that the conduct of the establishment and of people surrounding is wholly desirable at the moment, it is perfectly in order and fine and would the Hon Attorney-General not agree that that is not the impression that is given from people living in the area or who have businesses in the area?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that there have been no written or formal complaints but that if the Police do see people acting in a way which they think is, obviously they must have a basis as to how they intervene but if they do see people acting in a way which is disorderly or annoy people or offensive they do speak to them or move them on. My own impression during the times I have been through is that people do seem to accumulate there. I cannot in all honesty say that I have ever seen rowdiness there but on the other hand, of course, I am not there 24 hours a day myself.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Attorney-General has referred to from the 1st January, 1983. Am I to assume from that that there were no complaints during 1982?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I cannot say that. We took the 1st January, 1983, as what we thought was a reasonable period. I will certainly find out whether there were complaints during 1982 if the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition wishes me to.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Hon and Learned Attorney-General state whether any special surveillance of that particular area is carried out by the Police in view of the fact that certain known pushers of drugs do consort in that area?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I cannot say that as a matter of personal knowledge, Mr Speaker, but I think I can say quite safely that obviously that is an area which does attract attention. I think the Police are aware of that as an area where people gather and to that extent will keep an eye on it, I am sure. I can ascertain whether that is so as a matter of fact but I am sure it is.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could the Hon and Learned Attorney-General ascertain that because I have put this question because of a number of complaints that I have received from people who live in the area and who work in the area and who have businesses in the area who consider that there is a marked deterioration in what is essentially the centre of our city?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, of course, Mr Speaker, I will convey this.

NO. 189 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, why are cars, which do not display current road licences, allowed to park on the public highway?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, during the period 1 January, 1982, to 31 December, 1982, 34 people were reported by police for not displaying current road licences and 253 reported for not having a current road licence. So far this year 16 people have been reported for these offences.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 189 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is there an on-going procedure in these cases because it would seem to me to be very little to have to pay in the way of a fine if a person who does not display a road licence gets reported once, fined, and that is the end of the matter? Is there an on-going procedure whereby that offender is reported until he is made to get his road licence or is it a one-off thing?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think a person who hasn't got a road licence commits an offence every time he uses a vehicle or has a vehicle on the road without a licence.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I was referring particularly to cars which are parked and remain parked for months on end. They do not have a road licence and they are parked in the same spot indefinitely. Is this type of car or is this type of offence reported on a continuing basis or is it reported merely once and that is the end of the story?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I will have to look into that but I think certainly the penalty for not having a road licence should be such, obviously, as to be more expensive than paying the road licence but I will look into it, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 190 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, have any cars been towed away from towing zones since legislation was introduced to this effect?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, no cars have been towed away since the legislation was introduced because no tow-away areas have yet been demarcated. However, Ministerial approval has been given to go ahead with the demarcation of a number of such areas, the first of which will be at Governor's Street. The necessary traffic signs have to be erected and roadmarking works carried out prior to implementation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 190 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, did I hear correctly that no towing areas have been demarcated and how can this be when whenever there is a parade or a processions or any outdoor organised activity the Police put up portable signs which say 'this is a towing zone'? Does it mean in fact that these signs which have been put by the Police have had in fact no authority behind them?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think those signs are of a kind which are of a temporary nature. I had in mind permanent tow-away areas but there is power under the Traffic Ordinance to erect traffic signs and while the Government is concerned to monitor closely permanent traffic tow-away areas, I think that the class of situation where you want to do something for a morning or for a few hours in the morning is perhaps not one which was within the ambit of that supervision. I think under the Traffic Ordinance there is power to put up traffic signs from time to time but I see that as being outside the scope of the permanent system of towing away.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask then whether any cars have been towed away from these temporary towing zones?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I have no knowledge that any have.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

24.5.83

NO. 191 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government now in a position to make a statement on the legalisation of Citizen's Band in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government is not yet in a position to make a further statement on the legalisation of Citizen's Band radio in Gibraltar. Following discussions on this matter in the UK, as stated in my reply to question No. 225 of 1982, and the receipt of additional information, the matter is being further studied to decide which of the two systems available, FM or AM, should be adopted in Gibraltar. When this study has been finalised proposals will be submitted to the Government for consideration.

NO. 192 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J FELIZA

Will Government consider minting a Gibraltar pound coin?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

The Government is currently studying whether to mint a Gibraltar pound coin. A final decision has yet to be taken. The considerations include the cost and expected life of a coin compared with those of notes, the number of Gibraltar one pound bank notes in reserve and likely public acceptability of the coin. On the latter aspect the Government wishes to see whether the introduction of the one pound coin in the United Kingdom last month will have wide public acceptability. As the Hon Member will be aware, it appears from press reports that the introduction of a similar coin in the Isle of Man earlier this year was not a success.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 192 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will Government also consider minting other coins in current tender in the United Kingdom like 50p and 20p?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

We could do this, Mr Speaker, but it would be an expensive exercise, the minting of coins is extremely expensive. It would also require an amendment to the UK Coinage Act.

HON A J HAYNES:

I appreciate the difficulties but I understand also, Mr Speaker, and perhaps the Financial and Development Secretary will confirm or deny, that though it is expensive to mint coins of the tender that I am indicating they still are nevertheless cheaper than the bank value of the same so that a 20p coin would cost less than 20p to mint?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am a little confused by the Hon Member's question because there are no 20p notes. I accept that at net present value if you have a coin instead of a note although the initial cost is higher a coin lasts thirty to fifty years life, take an average of that, the life of a note is probably about a year so that in net present value terms the coin turns out to be cheaper but as we have no notes for the smaller denominations one would not be gaining anything except possibly the difference between the face value and the cost of minting.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Financial and Development Secretary state whether or not he will investigate the feasibility or otherwise of minting all forms of coins for Gibraltar?



HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I will investigate the financial considerations. We can mint them, that is not difficult, but the thing is whether it is worthwhile in finance terms doing so.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that if the English pound coin is used wisely and we do not mind a Gibraltar pound coin, the Currency Note Security Fund could be pretty badly affected?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

This is a consideration, Mr Speaker, but I doubt very much myself whether the Currency Fund would be more gravely affected by a coin than it is by the English pound note which circulates here. We have a running battle with the banks trying to stop them from issuing UK notes and only to issue Gibraltar notes for that very reason and it seems to me that people are less likely to come with twenty or thirty one pound coins in their pockets than twenty pound notes in their wallets and so we are rather hopeful that the coin will lessen the number of one pound notes in circulation.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would Government give consideration to waiving duty on non-printed paper in order to enable Gibraltar printers to carry out their operations on a more competitive basis?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government is willing to consider reducing the import duty on non-printed paper should it be represented that duty is a significant factor in printing costs; there is no such evidence at present. The House should be aware that the Government has sought to protect the local printing industry in a number of ways. To discourage the importation of printed matter into Gibraltar, an import duty of 12% was imposed in 1982; newsprint however, which is widely used in some sectors of the printing industry does not attract duty. Additionally it is a condition for the award of a tender for printing for Government Departments that the printing must be executed in Gibraltar or in the UK but not elsewhere.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 193 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

So, Mr Speaker, is the Hon Financial and Development Secretary saying that if representations are made to him by the printers Government is willing to investigate reducing the duty?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is what I said, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 194 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, has there been any significant change since March 1983 to the figures given to this House arising out of Question No. 100 of 1983?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir, there has been no significant change since March 1983. The gross pay for Customs Officers on duty at the frontier for the months of April and May is as follows:-

	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>
Executive Officer	£965	£1,029
Assistant Officer	£599	£ 637

NO. 195 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

What is the average time that a patient under the Group Practice Medical Scheme has to wait before being seen by a resident consultant at St Bernard's Hospital from the time of the referral letter from a local practitioner?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, the average time that a patient under the Group Practice Medical Scheme needs to wait to see a resident consultant following referral by a general practitioner is 24 days. It should be noted, however, that emergencies and/or urgent cases are seen immediately after discussion of the case between the general practitioner and the consultant.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 195 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I must say that people who do come to see me must be the unlucky ones because they always seem to have to wait far longer than 24 days, perhaps the Minister could answer that?

HON J B PEREZ:

All I can say, Mr Speaker, is that the average waiting period is 24 days. If there are any cases which have taken much longer I would urge the Hon Member to bring it to my attention and the matter will be investigated thoroughly.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister explain in that case why somebody who after receiving a referral letter or after a referral letter having been sent by a local practitioner is told that he has to wait about a month and a half but if he asks to see the consultant privately he is seen the following day?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am not aware that that is the case, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I can give examples to the Minister. I think it would be invidious to give any names here in the House but I will certainly give it to him and I would like to have a public explanation. Mr Speaker, having given the information when I do give it to the Minister will the Minister give me a public explanation?

MR SPEAKER:

In fairness to the Minister I think whilst you should not refer to the names for obvious reasons you must give chapter and verse as to dates and what has happened.

HON G T RESTANO:

Yes, I have said once I have given him that information.

MR SPEAKER:

But you haven't.

HON G T RESTANO:

When I give him that information, I cannot give it here because it would be invidious, will he commit himself to give me a public explanation?

HON J B PEREZ:

Of course, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 196 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, do all cigarettes imported into Gibraltar carry a Government health warning?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, under the Agreement signed between the Government, the tobacco importers and the cigarette manufacturers, only cigarettes intended for sale locally are required to carry a Government health warning, cigarettes imported for sale ex-bond to shipping, yachts etc do not carry health warnings.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government state what has been the total cost to date of the Chairman of the Electricity Department's Steering Committee, how often he has come to Gibraltar and how many days he has spent here in his official capacity?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

1. (a) Mr Speaker, Sir, the total cost to 15 May, 1983, of the Chairman of the Steering Committee is £71,499.93.
  - (b) Since I informed the House on 23 March, 1983, in reply to Question 180, that the Chairman had been to Gibraltar on 21 occasions, he has made a further 3 visits. This brings the total number of visits to Gibraltar by the Chairman to 24, in the period up to 15 May, 1983.
  - (c) The Chairman has spent 178 days in Gibraltar, in his official capacity, between September 1982 and 15 May 1983.
2. The new Station at Waterport has cost £7m. It is essential therefore that we get the working arrangements absolutely right from the very start, particularly against the background of the troubles in this Department in recent years. The Government considers this money well spent but is conscious, as is the Chairman and the Steering Committee, of the need to bring about early agreement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 197 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm if he never expected this operation to last as long as it has done?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

And was it not therefore at the time considered that the figure for the cost of the Chairman would be for a far shorter period and for an on-going operation now almost a year, more than a year, perhaps, for a person to be paid £400 a day for his services over an extended period, does not the Minister consider that this is somewhat high?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all let me put the Hon Member on the correct tack. It is not the Chairman who is being paid it is the Society who is being paid the appropriate amount of money. As to the time factor involved there are various outstanding issues and these issues should

be resolved and must be resolved especially when, as I mentioned in the second paragraph of my answer, that it is against the background of previous troubles in this department that we want to settle this agreement once and for all so that the electricity situation in Gibraltar is up to scratch and we have no further troubles from this direction.

HON G T RESTANO:

My question was, does not the Minister consider that over a long period of time for the cost of one person to be £400 a day, the cost to the taxpayer, to be somewhat high?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Hon Member mentions the figure of £400 a day. Let me say that these figures are the figures we have been given by the Industrial Society. Let me also add that the estimated cost of the Chairman from the 1st April is £2,190 per week. This takes into account the fact that from that date the Industrial Society is charging a flat rate of £1,250 per week instead of the daily rate of £250. The previous average weekly cost of the Chairman was £1,940 per week. It should also be noted that the Industrial Society fees charged to the Gibraltar Government are considerably lower than the rates applicable to those in the United Kingdom for similar consultancies.

HON G T RESTANO:

Yes, but nevertheless, Mr Speaker, it is still from the answer that the Minister has given £71,499 covering a period of 178 days and that is £400 a day and the question is, and I will repeat it once more, does not the Minister consider this to be high?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I tend to agree with the Hon Member opposite that it does look slightly high but when one considers the professionalism of the Chairman of the Steering Committee, the amount of work he has to do, the complex problem which he has to solve and not only the basic money paid to the Industrial Society but also the fares to and from Gibraltar and the expenses here, I think it is a fair figure in order to solve a very difficult problem.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since it was envisaged, and I can understand the very high costs over a short period of time, but since it has been extended so considerably would it not be a case to try and get the figure paid to the Industrial Society lowered?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact we have done this and we have managed to reduce the figure from £1,940 per week to £1,250 per week as I mentioned in my previous answer.



HON G T RESTANO:

And for how long more, Mr Speaker, does the Minister expect that these payments will have to be made?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe there is a question subsequent to this which deals with this matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say whether he is trying in any way to influence the Chairman of the Steering Committee?

MR SPEAKER:

May I have this question again?

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state whether or not he is trying to influence . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Whether he is trying to influence?

HON A J HAYNES:

Bringing pressure to have the matter resolved since it is being so expensive? My question is, is the Minister trying to accelerate the process of the Steering Committee by any means?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I can in no way influence the Chairman . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I have called him to order precisely on that. All you have been asked is are you trying to see that the process of the Committee is accelerated in order that the cost is mitigated, that is the way I have understood the question and that is the only way I will accept it.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Let me say that the Steering Committee is a body of men which has been formed constitutionally out of different sections of the department, it has an independent Chairman, it has got staff and management people in it and I think they themselves know only too well the need to resolve this problem as early as possible.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does that answer the question, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 198 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what has been the cost of demolishing the walls at the old skid generator site in Line Wall Road?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the cost of demolishing the walls at the old skid generator site in Line Wall Road is approximately £2,800.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 198 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Who was responsible for undertaking this work, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The ancillary section of the Electricity Department, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

Was this carried out during normal time or overtime hours or on a job price contract, on what basis?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, initially we had to give them a period of overtime so that the skid generators could be taken back and shipped on the day necessary and in fact we got them back to UK at a very early date thereby saving us a considerable amount of time. We have got about four or five men working on this but usually we have got about two men. We have given them the occasional Saturday overtime and sometimes week-days to try to hasten up the process. I am happy to say that the walls are now demolished. In fact, it presented a problem because it was not only a wall it was a double wall filled with concrete and it presented a problem in bringing it down to the ancillary section but for all the work that has been put in by the ancillary section I think a figure of £2,800 is relatively cheap.

HON W T SCOTT:

Will the Minister not confirm that it was only when he received notice of this question that there seems to have been a remarkable acceleration in the demolishing of the walls?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The answer is obviously no, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would the Minister for Municipal Services outline the areas where agreement has been reached in the Electricity Department's Steering Committee and also the areas where agreement has not yet been reached?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, though substantial progress has been made, it is not considered that it would be in the general interest nor indeed of assistance to the work being carried out by the Steering Committee at this stage of its proceedings to give the information asked for in this question at this particular meeting of the House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 199 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Minister now say when he expects the Committee to finish its work?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards the work of the Committee we have now advertised senior posts at Waterport, in fact, they have come out, the five system engineers at Waterport, and the PTO.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not enlarge. The question you have been asked is a simple one. When do you consider that the Committee will be in a position to make its report?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is because of what I was going to say which also includes the PSC, it is difficult to give a definite answer to this question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, has the Minister no idea, no indication, are we going to continue paying £71,000 and will that figure increase for three months, six months, a year, has he no idea at all?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, one has an idea but if one mentions an idea one is then chastised here for the idea but what I would like the Opposition to remember and I repeat paragraph 2 of the previous answer: "The new Station at Waterport has cost £7m. It is essential that we get the working arrangements absolutely right from the very start,

particularly against the background of the troubles in this department in recent years. The Government considers this money well spent and is conscious, as is the Chairman and the Steering Committee, of the need to bring about early agreement".

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I did not ask him to repeat the answer he gave last time, what I am asking is, has he no idea how long this is going to take? Is it going to take three months, one month, six months? I think it is a very important area for Gibraltar where Gibraltar is paying a lot of money for this, Mr Speaker, and I think it is only fair that the Minister should give an indication for how much longer Gibraltar is going to continue having to pay this.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said before and I will say again I cannot state categorically and I cannot give the answer categorically to that question. May be in the next House of Assembly I shall be able to provide the Hon Member with a far more reasonable answer than the one I have given now.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will the Minister give a time limit once and for all or are we going to be paying this forever?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Ah, Major Peliza, you are here. No, I am afraid I cannot give that undertaking.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister realise that the one who does not seem to be here is himself?

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state on what he based a statement he made to the House in answering questions on this point in March when he said he thought the work of the Committee would be completed by the end of April?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I thought at the time that the work would be finished at the end of April. Unfortunately, as I mentioned during the budget session of the House, several things have delayed the work of the Steering Committee and one of them has been the advertisement of the senior posts within the Waterport. These senior posts were advertised a few weeks ago and we are waiting for the results of the PSC which I hope will be available this week. This has meant a slippage, one may call it, or a loss of time of a few weeks and this is one of the reasons why it will extend beyond the date that I mentioned initially.

HON P J ISOLA:

But is the Minister not aware that slippage not for weeks but for years is the situation in the Power Station and does the Minister not agree that the public who foot the bill are entitled to know the facts with regard to this situation without the Government making a judgement as to who is right or who is wrong or who is delaying or who is not delaying but is the public who pay not entitled to know the facts and is it not time that we had a little more open Government from the Government and they told the public what is happening?

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to have any more questions on this one because we are not going to get any further.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I have an answer to that? Mr Speaker, I believe that my question involves . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question?

HON P J ISOLA:

My question is a question of very great principle and that is, does the Government not believe that the public who are footing the bill are entitled to be told the facts round a situation where the Government is being extremely secretive?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the public will be told the facts.

HON P J ISOLA:

When, after they have paid?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

When the whole arrangement has taken place and then it will be up to them to decide whether the Government has acted in a manner which is correct and whether the Opposition has acted in a manner which is incorrect.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I just ask one question? At what point of time will there be a change in the Chairmanship of the Steering Committee?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have explained to the Hon Member before that the Steering Committee is really a Committee which will lead on to the Works Council, to the full Works Council, to which if I remember rightly, there will not be the present Chairman therefore the present Chairman of the Steering Committee will remain as long as it is necessary to conclude the business of the Steering Committee.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, can Government state the total charges to date that have been made by the contractors of the Waterport Generating Station for running the Station since the commissioning of the engines there?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the total charges that have been made to date for running Waterport Power Station since the commissioning of the engines amount to £686,812. This figure includes £353,573 being funded under the contract.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 200 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

When will Government take over the Station?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

When the Steering Committee finishes.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the aside from the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza, I will ignore it. I think the answer to the Hon Mr Restano, I was going to say Learned but obviously he has not got that far.

MR SPEAKER:

No, he is not Learned because he is not a member of the legal profession and no other reason.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

He is learning fast, Sir. Obviously the answer is contained in the answer to the next question, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

How much does the Minister expect the Government would have to pay at the end of the day for not having taken over the engines when they were ready for commissioning? So far it is £686,000, will it get to £1m, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid I cannot realistically give the Hon Member a definite figure but I will again quote the second paragraph . . . . .



MR SPEAKER:

No, you won't. Order. That is the answer and we will go to the next question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could I have an answer?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, I have no idea, that is the simple answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that in allowing the contractor to remain at Waterport Generating Station and therefore be in charge of the engineering and mechanical side of the Station and in the continuing existence of the Steering Committee which is charged with management, he has effectively made himself redundant?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No answer.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 201 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Does Government have a deadline for the official opening of the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, no firm deadline has been fixed for the official opening of Waterport Power Station, but it is now likely to be sometime in the autumn.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 201 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state how he can make that prognosis having regard to the determination with which he has parried any question asking for conclusion dates of the Steering Committee? Are we to understand from this that whether the Steering Committee comes to a decision or not the Government has decided that by the autumn it is going to govern and have an official opening of the Power Station, is that the position?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, with due regard I have said nothing of the kind that the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition is saying.

MR SPEAKER:

You have been asked a simple question. Will the Station be officially opened in the autumn irrespective of the fact that the Steering Committee may not have finished its recommendations, it as as simple as that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

There have been consultations between the Chief Minister and myself and we have decided that it is now likely to be sometime in the autumn.

HON P J ISOLA:

But is that whether agreement is reached between the Steering Committee and everybody else who has to agree or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

HON P J ISOLA:

If the answer to that question is yes what is the objection, Mr Speaker, to opening the Power Station now and not waiting for the autumn, a month before the general election?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

For the very simple reason that the Steering Committee has not completed its work.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean that the Minister is saying that by the autumn he is confident that the Steering Committee will have completed its work, is that correct?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

So how much is that going to cost if the Steering Committee . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I will not have it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask, it is an important question of principle here. If the Minister is able to say that he expects by the autumn the work of the Steering Committee to have been completed, why wasn't he able to say that in answer to questions precisely on that point earlier on in these proceedings and on what does he base that information?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. With due respect to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition what the Minister did say is that he did not wish to give a fixed date for the finishing and he is now saying that it could be before the autumn.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if the Minister is redundant what makes him think that anybody will give him back his department?

MR SPEAKER:

That is another matter which does not arise from this question. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Have consultations been carried out with the Chamber of Commerce and the TGWU on the question of the Shop Hours Ordinance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, it has been the Government's intention to hold consultations with the Chamber of Commerce and the Unions on this matter pending the reconstitution of the Labour Advisory Board, which is the appropriate forum for discussing matters of this nature and on which both sides are represented. This intention was overtaken by the fact that the Labour Advisory Board has recently been reconstituted and it is proposed to hold a meeting in the very near future to discuss the matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 202 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Minister be discussing the possibility of allowing shops to remain open on Sundays?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, that is one of the things that we will discuss. I can tell the Hon Member that pending consideration of the above the Commissioner of Police is exercising his power under Section E(2) of the Ordinance to allow Sunday opening, etc.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state if they have given any consideration to collect social insurance contributions in conjunction with the PAYE system?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, this possibility was considered some years ago in the context of a study of the possible introduction of an earnings-related social insurance scheme. As a result of this study, which was carried out with the assistance of an adviser from the Department of Health and Social Security in the United Kingdom, it was decided that the proposal for an earnings-related scheme should not be proceeded with and no further consideration has been given to the collection of contributions in conjunction with the PAYE system.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 203 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister state on what grounds this was rejected?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It was a bit before my time, it was in 1971 if I remember but I think that the grounds were that it just was not worth it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has consideration been taken of the amount of extra work required, say, on the people who make the contributions who obviously have to go out, queue up to buy the stamps and so on and so forth which obviously all costs to the concern engaged in doing that? Could the Minister look into the whole question again bearing that side in mind as well?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I am convinced, in fact, that the suggestion by the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza will not be positive but I will promise him I will study it again. I think one should bear in mind that under the present system the Government gets in the money quicker this way than under PAYE.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

That is what I say, but the Minister must also consider the other side, the people who make the contributions, and also perhaps I should make him aware that at one time PAYE was rejected in the same way as this is being rejected today and then it was found that it collected quite a lot of money for the Government very well, very tidily and very effectively?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, this is why I have said that I will study the matter again.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 204 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government amend the Control of Employment Ordinance to further protect resident workers?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, Government is currently considering what amendments require to be made to the Control of Employment Ordinance and to other relevant legislation to give further protection to resident workers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 204 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, can I have an assurance from the Hon Minister that this will be dealt with with some priority by his Department?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I can give that assurance but I will also point out that it is not only my Department that is involved.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does the Government not agree that it is becoming increasingly important to act with speed in this direction?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, having regard to the ever increasing youth unemployment figures does Government have any new plans to stem this flow?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the unemployment figures for juveniles stood at 104 as at 30 April, 1983.

The Gibraltar Government will be offering a total of twelve apprenticeships during 1983 and it is also taking on about thirteen boy labourers (ten PWD - three CEE), which is in excess of the numbers taken on last year. As this House is already aware the Ministry of Defence stopped recruiting apprentices when the defence cuts were announced. The Department of Labour and Social Security will once again be offering training facilities at the Construction Industry Training Centre to those candidates who are successful in the Official Employers Apprentices Board 1983 Entry Examination but to whom it is not possible to offer any apprenticeship. Training in the Construction Trades will be given for a period of one academic year and they will receive an attendance allowance of £2 per day.

The Government is continuously looking at areas of employment opportunities for school leavers and, in this connection, the quota established under the Control of Employment Ordinance is constantly reviewed to take into account the unemployment situation. In the meantime, the Department of Labour and Social Security and the Youth and Careers Service of the Education Department continue in their efforts to help young persons find employment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 205 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

One is glad to hear, Mr Speaker, that there has been an extra intake of young men both in apprentice training and in boy labourers but that to me really does not represent a new initiative and what I am asking Government to do is what we have been asking them to do on our side of the House for a long time now and that is to take a new initiative and come up with at least a pilot scheme in the nature of a youth opportunities or a youth training programme at a local level before it becomes a really bad social problem. Can I have an answer to that, Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it all costs money and the situation is that we haven't got the money.

HON W T SCOTT:

By that is the Minister saying that investigations have been carried out and that it is found to be too costly to Government?



HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON W T SCOTT:

Can we have some details of what Government has done in that direction because I have been continuously asking that question and all I have been told is no?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am saying no again, Mr Speaker.

HON W T SCOTT:

No to what, we cannot have any details?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No.

HON W T SCOTT:

Why not?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Because I do not want to give the details at this stage.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, on the question of the cost, could the Minister endeavour to try and get his colleague in the Electricity Department not to waste so much money on that Department and perhaps he could find some money for the scheme?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government not consider that the manner in which the monthly unemployment figures are now compiled do not represent a true picture of the unemployment situation in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the Government is satisfied that the monthly unemployment figures compiled by the Department of Labour and Social Security reflect the best possible picture of the unemployment situation, given the information available to the Department. The figures are based on those persons who are registered as unemployed and available for work during that particular month and are much more realistic than the figures produced under the previous system whereby every person who had established a claim to unemployment benefit was included irrespective of whether they were available for work or not.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 206 OF 1983

HON. W T SCOTT:

In accepting that perhaps the figure is a little bit more realistic now rather than the old scheme, does Government not agree that not every unemployed individual available for work in Gibraltar is contained within the monthly figures?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I would like the Hon Member to repeat the question.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does not the Minister agree that there are far more people unemployed in Gibraltar than appear in the monthly return?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

We cannot know that, Mr Speaker, because if a person has not registered for a month we do not know whether he is in Gibraltar, whether he has taken up employment and he has not reported back to the Employment Exchange. I will give you an example. If a civil servant retires or he leaves the service at 55 and he does not even bother to register in the Employment Exchange he is unemployed but he might find a job without even registering or he might register the first day as unemployed and then not bother to come back if he has found employment. Now it is as realistic as possible but if other ideas to make it more realistic can be put forward which does not cost the Government more money I would be prepared to look at it.

HON W T SCOTT:

I did not say whether the figures were realistic or not, I asked the Hon Member if he did not agree that the figures are in fact actually higher, by what proportion or not we do not know but they are higher? The present figures do not represent a true picture of the unemployment situation in Gibraltar, that is what I am asking him.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

They represent a picture of unemployment as we in the Labour Department know it by the information that we have available.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether they keep separate lists for housing applicants from Catalan Bay and will Government confirm that proportionately more funds are spent on housing for the inhabitants of Catalan Bay than for applicants from elsewhere in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, separate lists are kept for applicants from Catalan Bay Village. As regards the second part of the question, consideration of comparative expenditure on housing does not give an accurate indication, due to fluctuation in building costs during the post-war years. However, taking into consideration the number of units built at Catalan Bay and in the rest of Gibraltar in relation to population it works out at 1 unit per 4.76 persons at Catalan Bay and 1 unit per 5.57 persons in the rest of Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 207 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

The answer is that there are proportionately more funds spent on housing for the inhabitants of Catalan Bay.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

One cannot say that in terms of money, one can say that in terms of units but not in money.

HON A J HAYNES:

Do units cost money, Mr Speaker? Mr Speaker, there is one other point. Can the Minister tell us . . . . .

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I did not get it.

HON A J HAYNES:

I think it does not really require an answer, Mr Speaker, I think units do cost money so if the Minister accepts that there are more units then I think I can take it there is more money. Can the Minister give us the extent of applicants on the waiting list on this separate list for Catalan Bay?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, that does not form part of the question.

MR SPEAKER:

No, it has nothing to do with the question, with due respect to you.

HON A J HAYNES:

I asked if there was a separate list for housing applicants in Catalan Bay and the answer is now yes, and I was trying to make an enquiry into this separate list.

MR SPEAKER:

What enquiry are you trying to make now?

HON A J HAYNES:

I would like to know the figures of those on the waiting list in this separate list.

MR SPEAKER:

But in fairness to the Minister he would require notice of a question like that, you cannot expect him to have that information available now.

HON A J HAYNES:

Perhaps it is part of his brief, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

If it is and you want to answer it you can do so.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, if he had asked me about separate lists and what are the numbers involved I would have brought the answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, having said that, I know the Minister is new in the post and perhaps he is not familiar with it but can he tell us without giving the exact figures, whether these are more than 20, more than 30 or what?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No idea, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will the Minister state how many persons have been housed as a result of being classified as "social cases" since 1st January, 1983, and will Government state how many persons classified as "social cases" are still waiting to be rehoused?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, eleven social cases have been accommodated since the 1st January, 1983, and another forty-four social cases are still waiting to be accommodated on availability of accommodation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 208 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES: ,

Mr Speaker, can the Minister give us an idea how long has, for instance, the longest of these forty-four been waiting for?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the impetus which was achieved last year in the housing of social cases has been totally lost this year?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I will need to look at the figures but obviously the problem is related to the accommodation available. If there was more accommodation available for social cases last year it was easier to move them if there is less now it is more difficult but I will look into it.

HON A J HAYNES:

There are over 200 empty houses, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that people are not classified as social cases lightly?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I hope they are not classified as social cases lightly otherwise it would make a farce of the whole Allocation Committee.

HON A J HAYNES:

I take it then that the Government view social cases as genuine and accord them the importance that the Committee do in their recommendations?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The Government does not do this, the Committee does this.

HON A J HAYNES:

But does Government accept at face value the appendage of being classified as a social case or do they go behind the Committee's representations and say they are not as serious.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Why have a Committee then if Government is going to go behind their backs?

HON A J HAYNES:

That is what I would like to establish. The Government therefore accepts at face value, and it is only fair that they should do, that the classification of a social case is as per the description of the Committee and in those circumstances, Mr Speaker, will the Minister undertake to eradicate this number of forty-four who are waiting as soon as possible?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It is not up to me, Mr Speaker, it depends on the accommodation and I do not allocate anything. My mission is to try and find the accommodation.

HON A J HAYNES:

That is what I am asking him to do, Mr Speaker, find forty-four houses and let the Committee decide who they go to.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

My mission is to find the extra accommodation especially under the present financial situation in Gibraltar.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, again the financial situation we have in Gibraltar. The point made by my Learned Friend must be valid, Mr Speaker, will the Government consider saving and making themselves more efficient in order to do more worthy acts?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a general question. Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will the Minister for Housing explain his policy for interviews in respect of housing applicants?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that allocation powers have now been delegated by the Minister to the Housing Allocation Committee, the Minister's role will now be to exercise political responsibility for policy matters affecting the provision of housing and formulating the policy governing allocations. I will not therefore be granting interviews. Applicants will continue to be interviewed by members of the Housing Department.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 209 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister say whether he has sat in on any of the deliberations of the various Committees that now service the allocation and other parts of housing?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker, because since I have taken over responsibility the Committee has not sat.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will not the Minister propose to sit in on any of these Committees whether on an introductory basis or in any other capacity?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I have made arrangements with the Housing Manager for me to be notified for the next Committee meeting so that I can attend and introduce myself to the members.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister consider extending an invitation to me, Mr Speaker, I have been waiting four years now?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, I am afraid not but my office is always open so that he can discuss anything with me.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am obliged.



HON P J ISOLA:

Do I understand the position to be that an applicant on the housing list who feels an injustice has been done to him will no longer be able to see the Minister and complain about it, is that the position?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, that is the position.

HON P J ISOLA:

So that means that it is now the policy of this Government that no Minister of the Government will grant an interview to any person who feels he has got a housing case and who feels he is in great hardship, no Minister of the Government will now grant an interview, is that the position?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, that is not the case. I am going to answer because I have something to do with that. Anybody who has any injustice claim against the administration is given an interview by any Minister and if necessary by me but we have done precisely what we have been accused of not having done before, of passing the responsibility of the allocation to the Housing Allocation Committee. Surely, the Housing Allocation Committee will never do an injustice it is only the Minister who does the injustice. Now they are with it, now they have to stick it out in the same way as the Minister has been sticking it out for so many years. If there is any blatant injustice because the system has not been properly followed then of course he will be interviewed and I see people at least the ones who feel that they have not been treated justly and I see that they are put on the proper rails to get the treatment that they deserve if they have not done so but not otherwise.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Chief Minister for the answer but I would have thought that if a person feels that an injustice has been done to him, the proper person to go to in the first instance to redress that injustice is the Minister for Housing and not the Minister for Education or the Chief Minister or anybody else but I understood from the answer given by the Minister for Housing that he will not see anybody who feels aggrieved, is that the position?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition, he said that the Minister will no longer carry out interviews for the allocation of houses.

HON P J ISOLA:

That is not the question I put, Mr Speaker. I asked the Minister a direct question, would he see an applicant on the housing list who felt that an injustice had been done to him, that was my question

and he said no. What is the answer? We do not disagree with the policy of the Government, we think it is high time an Allocation Committee gave houses but now, of course, there are not many houses to give so there is no point in Ministerial patronage but I asked the Minister to give us an answer on that because if a policy is going to be promulgated it should be known clearly to the public.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I am not going to get myself involved in the allocation of any houses, we have a Housing Committee. If an applicant thinks that an injustice has been done by the Allocation Committee . . . .

HON P J ISOLA:

Or anybody else.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, it cannot be anybody else, it is the Allocation Committee who does the allocations, he will be seen by members of my department first. If members of my department feel that an injustice has been done then I will deal with the matter but I will not make myself that readily available to be accused of interfering in personal matters as we know Gibraltar is so small and they say: "Oh yes, he did this because it is his father-in-law or his cousin lent him his car" and all the rest. I will be seen to be doing justice because I will not involve myself in the Allocation Committee because I think the Allocation Committee is composed of honourable people.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer has been clear now.

HON P J ISOLA:

No, Mr Speaker, it hasn't. So what the Minister is in fact telling the House and the people is that he will see an applicant who feels an injustice has been committed if members of his department decide that he should see them, this is what he has answered, Mr Speaker, this is what the Minister has answered.

MR SPEAKER:

No, will you please sit down. The answer has been very explicit. He will not get involved with interviews, he will not get involved with the allocation of houses. If there is a genuine case of complaint it will be investigated by his department and if necessary he will see the person.

HON P J ISOLA:

With respect, Mr Speaker, this is a very important point because what the Minister has said in the answer and I have heard him very clearly is that if the members of his department share the view of the applicant then he will see him but what I am asking the Minister is

does that in effect mean that a person who is aggrieved will no longer have an interview with the Minister unless his departmental staff thinks that he should have one?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I will go one further with the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition. I will ask my Housing Manager for every interview that has been given what the grounds are and then I will follow it through.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister not agree that in the circumstances that he has answered to me under which he does not see anybody unless his department advises him, that it would be highly undesirable for any Minister in the Government to see an aggrieved person on his housing situation, is that his view in view of the format that he has given to us for the future?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

My view is that I shall not get involved in the allocation of houses. What I have just said is that applicants are interviewed by my department, I will keep a check on what the interviews are for, what the grievances are without being told by the Housing Manager, I will ask him every month how many interviews have you done, what were the basis of the interviews and if I see any irregularities I will deal with it with the Housing Allocation Committee but I will not interfere with any allocation, I will not listen to people because otherwise I would spend all my life listening to people. If they have a genuine complaint they can always write to me.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister this question? If an applicant, an elector, an aggrieved person, goes to see the Chief Minister or the Minister for Economic Development or the Minister for Public Works and those Ministers telephone him and say: "I think you ought to see this person", will he break the rule then and see them?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many units of Government housing at present have communal sanitary facilities and how many units do not have running water?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, according to the 1981 Census Report the number of Government units sharing flush toilets is 381 and 106 have no running water.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 210 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Government going to do anything about improving that, Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, this will be part of my general housing policy but there must be a bit of caution in this that if in trying to improve the sanitary facilities of a building we create a bigger housing problem I have to be cautious. I will look into the scheme where we might be able to provide this service without creating bigger problems of overcrowding etc by losing living space.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, whilst I welcome the statement of the Minister that something will be done, in the same way that he treats the matter with caution I treat his statements with caution, Mr Speaker. If one goes back to the 1976 AACR election manifesto it is quite clear they were going to do something about it then.

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect to you, what is the question you are asking?

HON A J HAYNES:

The question, Mr Speaker, is will the Minister confirm that this has been the alleged ambition of his party for over ten years and that very little if anything has been done in that time?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Part of the scheme has been modernisation but modernisation improves the general housing stock of the Government but it also has a slight effect in that because of the improvement it reduces the number of living spaces that there is available. This is why I am saying that under the present stock that we know we have I will move with caution to see that we do not provide these facilities at the cost of having more overcrowding.

HON A J HAYNES:

For the sake of Government's convenience they are not going to reduce these figures, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

We are now debating, with due respect. It is hypothetical in any case. I would be delighted if you asked a supplementary and I will not interrupt if it is to seek information and nothing else. Next question.

NO. 211 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government inform this House as to the results of the enquiry dealing with the escape by a prisoner from Moorish Castle Prison?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, I wish to make clear that there has not been an official enquiry, by that I mean an administrative enquiry, dealing with the escape by a prisoner from Moorish Castle Prison. There were however disciplinary charges brought against the two Prison Officers on duty at the time.

The case against the Senior Officer was not proven and accordingly the charge against the second officer was withdrawn.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 211 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Hon and Learned Attorney-General explain how that is the case, if there were disciplinary offences against two and the senior was found not proved why was the case against the junior withdrawn?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the charge against the senior officer was fully investigated before a tribunal that was appointed for the purpose. In view of the findings in respect of the senior officer it was considered that it would not be appropriate to proceed against his junior because after all the senior officer was responsible overall.

HON P J ISOLA:

Who made these considerations, if I may ask?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

This was a decision taken by the public service.

HON P J ISOLA:

By the Public Service Commission sitting as a Commission?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, the responsibility for the decision was that of the Deputy Governor.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is that usual when there is a disciplinary offence? Isn't the Public Service Commission the body that deals with this?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think the Public Service Commission's role is to advise the Governor on policy matters, on the general policy on appointments. What happened was that the Governor appointed a tribunal of three people, a very senior Head of Department, a lawyer and an engineer. The Establishment Officer put his case against the senior officer before that Committee and when they reported their findings, as I say, because the other officer was more junior it was thought that it would not be appropriate to pursue this matter against the junior officer.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Attorney-General, will there in fact be an enquiry into how a prisoner was able to escape considering the nature of his escape which was not merely running away, it was having to saw through two bars of the prison cell which must have taken more than a day, how he was able to acquire all these sheets which he knotted together to form a rope? This is not a simple case of a chap sort of running off whilst the prison warden's back was turned, this was a very well thought out and well planned escape and will there be an enquiry into how it was possible for this man to acquire the hacksaw, acquire all the sheets, in fact, a thorough enquiry into how an escape of this nature was possible? Will there be an enquiry?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, to my knowledge it is not intended to hold an enquiry at the moment of that kind. This matter was investigated from a disciplinary point of view and other enquiries were made by other authorities to see what had happened, it was investigated very thoroughly. So far as disciplinary matters are concerned it is not intended to proceed further. I think the point raised by the Hon Member really goes to the question of the general administration of the prison and at this stage I think I am correct in saying it is not intended to pursue an enquiry.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, it is not in the interest of who to proceed with this enquiry? I would think that this is a very serious thing and if an enquiry is not gone into it makes a mockery of the whole system whereby you have a prison where offenders are consigned to and yet if they can manage to get away nobody seems to care one way or the other.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

This is not true, with respect to the Hon Member, it is not true that nobody cares.

MR SPEAKER:

It is not quite correct.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, with respect, Mr Speaker, it is not true that nobody cares, the matter was taken extremely seriously. It was investigated at the level, if you like, of a particular incident and to my knowledge it is not intended to have a more detailed enquiry because of that.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would it be possible to supply Members of this House with the report of the occurrence?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think, I am speaking off the cuff, but I think that it would not be normal practice to disclose the detailed report. I can certainly find out and supply further information.

HON W T SCOTT:

It is surprising, even astonishing and most unsatisfactory, Mr Speaker, because this could happen again as far as we understand, it could continue happening. Hacksaws could be taken up, sheets and God knows what, aiding other prisoners to escape.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there is always a possibility of a break from a prison. It has not been taken lightly at all, it has been taken most seriously and I think the enquiry that was set up, as I say, was headed by a very senior Departmental Head. The Civil Service takes the view that it was believed there was a case for investigation, in the event the tribunal came down with its findings and those findings were accepted. It does not mean that one will look at the situation complacently, obviously one will take note of what has happened.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Government, as a result of that enquiry, whether there have been any security measures implemented at the prison?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I will find out but I am quite sure that what happened there has been taken note of and that appropriate measures will have been taken or are being taken to prevent or to minimise the risk of a similar account but you cannot possibly guarantee that it won't ever happen again.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, during the course of this enquiry was it established how often searches of cells are carried out and whether these are carried out on a regular basis or on a spot check basis?



HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

My understanding, Mr Speaker, is that the officers on duty do an hourly round. It may be that there is a case for a spot check in addition. The documents I saw; and I did see them at one stage, indicated that there had been an hourly surveillance.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, obviously I did not phrase my question correctly. I did not want to know about the hourly patrol, what I wanted to know is if as a result of these enquiries has it been established that in fact the prison staff carry out searches of the different cells without prior notice to the inmates that their cells are going to be searched to find out whether there are an extra number of sheets in a cell or there is a hacksaw hidden under a mattress, was this established?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I cannot possibly myself say yes but I am sure that this is a standard technique in a prison, from time to time to carry out a spot check, but I will find out and tell the Hon Member.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

24.5.83

NO. 212 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many receptions for visiting and local sportsmen whether as teams or associations have been given by the Minister for Sport since February, 1980?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, twenty-eight receptions have been held.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider embellishing and improving the amenities at the Apes Den in the Upper Rock as this is one of the main touristic attractions with which Gibraltar is associated the world over?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, although I agree that some improvements would be desirable, financial considerations rule out the possibility of carrying these out at present.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 213 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister realise that this is one of the most important amenities in Gibraltar from the touristic point of view and shouldn't he attach some urgency to this particularly in the terrible state that our tourist industry is in? Isn't this a way of improving our product which everybody in the tourist trade is clamouring for here in Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have held discussions with representatives of the military authorities in charge of the Apes Den and tour operators on ways to improve the site particularly to ease the flow of traffic. It was suggested that traffic wardens under Police supervision could be employed to exercise traffic control of this and other sites in the Upper Rock area especially St Michael's Cave. The Commissioner of Police was consulted and he stated that it is not possible at the moment not only from the financial point of view but also because of the difficulties in negotiating the necessary conditions of service for that which would be a new grade in Gibraltar and there were objections from the Trade Unions last year, as is known, about the case of Police Reservists. We are quite aware, Mr Speaker, that we should do what we can to improve that particular part of Gibraltar and there are plans but it is very expensive and I am afraid to say that this particular year is not one of the golden eras of Gibraltar's existence.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But doesn't the Minister realise that if he wants to improve this second industry in Gibraltar, tourism is one of our main industries in Gibraltar, the Government has got to invest?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer has been given.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am going from there now. Isn't it possible, without going into the more expensive side of car parks and so on and so forth, in actually improving the amenities in the place itself, say, put some things for the monkeys to run about, a see-saw, a piece of rope which they can climb, a little attraction there so that when tourists go up there they can enjoy themselves not only be feeding nuts to the apes but also to see the monkeys perform for them, as it were? Couldn't the Minister give some thought to that, it won't cost all that money?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I don't know how long it is since the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza has been up the Apes Den but there are ropes and there are see-saws and there is a lot of monkey business going on up there, I assure you, with the monkeys. From the particular question that the Hon and Gallant Major has asked I got the impression that his idea was of improving the product there. One is not talking of parking areas but talking of flow of traffic and try to improve the product and I agree, Mr Speaker, it is a vital industry to Gibraltar tourism but I must make this very clear and let the people understand it, if the Opposition or the Hon and Gallant Member doesn't, we do not have this year the financial resources and therefore you cannot invest unless we further tax the people of Gibraltar which, as they already say, are well over-taxed.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister know that there are plenty of funds in the reserve and that is what the reserves are there for to invest them in matters that will produce more money and not just leave them there idle?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism and Sport state if he intends to convene any more meetings of the Gibraltar Tourist Board and, if so, when?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Yes, Sir, of course. Meetings of the Gibraltar Tourist Advisory Board will be called as soon as the Air Europe application and its subsequent appeal is resolved which should not be long now.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 214 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Minister got to wait for that to happen, surely, there are other matters connected with tourism which I am sure he is concerned with discussing. Why should one item completely invalidate the function of that Board?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Because, Mr Speaker, there are conflicting interests.

HON MAJOR R.J PELIZA:

The conflicting interests are there all the time, this is what the Minister is there, I think, to smooth over. If he is incapable of doing that he should look for somebody else for the Ministry.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I do not think that I am incapable, Mr Speaker. Since February, 1982, there have been ten meetings of the Tourist Advisory Board and I do not think that Gibraltar's tourism will collapse dramatically because we have not held a meeting since last August.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism and Sport state what tangible things he has done to improve the tourist product in the last six months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, due to financial constraints, it has not been possible to carry out any of the desirable major improvements to the tourist product.

A list of touristic projects was submitted to the ODA for consideration in connection with development aid, but, regrettably without success. However, Government is giving sympathetic consideration to the possibility of funding from our own resources improvements to St Michael's Cave and to the creation of a Military Museum at Willis's Magazine.

NO. 216 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government produce a list of those buildings which it intends to fully or partly modernise in the next 12 months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it is intended that the following buildings be modernised during the next 12 months:-

Castle Ramp/Road to the Lines - PHASE II (22 units)

4 Bedsits  
 2 - 1 Bedroom flats  
 6 - 2 " "  
 8 - 3 " "  
 2 - 4 " "

Tank Ramp - PHASE II (11 units)

3 New 2 Bedroom flats  
 5 modernised 1 Bedroom flat  
 3 modernised 2 " "

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 216 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

There is no list for parly modernised buildings in that.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think if the Hon Member has meant rehabilitation rather than modernisation his question should have said so, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, on the information that I do have, will the Minister state the number of units which actually existed before the Government concentrated on modernisation in respect of Castle Ramp?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I would need notice of that question.

HON A J HAYNES:

They always seem to need notice, Mr Speaker.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because you ask questions that are completely out of context.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would the Minister confirm that there were more units before the Government proposed to do modernisation here than there will be now?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Usually in modernisation there is some loss of the housing stock, yes, because you often change four very unsatisfactory flats into three satisfactory ones.

HON A J HAYNES:

If you are Minister for Public Works that is alright, if you are Minister for Housing the fact that you are losing units is a consideration for not giving them, is that the way Government works, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



24.5.83

NO. 217 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LOEDO

Mr Speaker, what measures does Government propose to take to combat oil pollution problems on the beaches on the East side of the Rock?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, all the beaches are cleaned daily during the bathing season by the beach cleaners. Should the beaches become polluted with oil, the City Fire Brigade is properly equipped to combat this problem.

NO. 218 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will the fencing of the pool at Varyl Begg be completed before the Summer season?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, it is hoped that it will be completed before the 1st July.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 218 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, Summer season the 1st July? Why did he answer yes, the 1st July is right in the middle of it, surely?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Therefore this question is out of time because the Summer season started on the 1st May, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Why did the Minister answer yes and tell us then the 1st July?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, we take the second phase of the Summer season when the schools break up.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 219 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, when does Government hope to have the new parking bays opposite St Peter's School completed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the car park bays are in constant use. A small measure of work is required to finish the job and this is being deferred pending a decision whether to widen the road.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 219 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but if I remember correctly I was told last year that they would be completed in time for the season last year and absolutely nothing has been done. Can the Minister say whether in fact anything will be done before 1st July?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER: .

Next question.

24.5.83

NO. 220 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Public Works say whether the surfacing works on Tank Ramp have now been completed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the final wearing surface at Tank Ramp was laid on 19 November, 1982.

NO. 221 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Public Works say what the present position regarding the protection of windows at Hargraves Barracks is?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the protection screens to one flat at Hargraves Barracks are being manufactured at the Workshop and will be fixed very shortly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 221 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, what about the other two flats?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They are being demanded by the two tenants, so far no decision has been made on them.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, why is it going to be a case of one tenant and not the other two when the three tenants are equally subjected to flying footballs and in one case one of the tenants is an elderly lady who lives on her own?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We are not yet convinced, Sir, that the line of fire of flying footballs is equally the same with all tenants.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister whether he would care to go and visit this lady? I believe that she has already repaired the broken panes of glass but I am sure she will be able to tell him exactly how the ball goes in through her kitchen window. Will the Minister please investigate and do something about it, this is an old lady on her own who has no one in the world to look after her interests? If he has a social conscience, and I am sure he has, would he please take this matter up seriously?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am willing to give it sympathetic consideration.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 222 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, why are Police vehicles not maintained at the PWD Garage?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Police vehicles, including ambulances, are repaired and serviced under contract usually by the garage of origin of the vehicle, and are given priority over all other vehicles. This has been found to be both the most economical and efficient way.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 222 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

If they are maintained at the source of origin why is it put out to tender?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is a difficult question. The normal regulations are that they should be put out to tender and it usually occurs that the garage of origin wins the tender partly, I suppose, because they have got the spare parts available.

HON W T SCOTT:

I suppose by accident rather than design but it still does not really answer my original question. Isn't there a case to be made now that we have a new Public Works Garage for those vehicles, all Government vehicles to be maintained at the Government Public Works Garage?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There is a case, Sir, perhaps I might like to speak to the Hon Member privately.

HON W T SCOTT:

And perhaps whilst doing so and if the contract does go out to tender I see no reason why the Public Works Garage itself cannot go out to tender on it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the average cost per unit (distinguishing between the different types of units ie 4 rooms K/B - bedistters) at the new Estate at Catalan Bay?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, the average cost per unit of the new building at Catalan Bay is -

Bedsitter	-	£20,630
2 Bedroom	-	£37,555
3 "	-	£44,845
4 "	-	£45,230 (Handicapped flat)

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 223 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

How do these figures, Mr Speaker, compare with modernisation units?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think such comparison would be completely invidious.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, I was going to say there is no need to answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

What is the estimated cost of the Rosia Dale Phase I, in units?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Rosia Dale Phase I worked out about £27,000 to £30,000 per flat.

HON A J HAYNES:

And of these figures that have been given in respect of the average cost per unit, the estimated average cost per unit or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Very reasonably close to the estimate, yes.

HON W T SCOTT:

I see a remarkable difference between the figures for Rosia Dale Phase I and Catalan Bay, something like between £27,000 to £30,000 and on occasions £40,000 and £45,000, is there any valid reason because the timing was almost the same, a year's difference perhaps a year and a half?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think that more than a year's difference, Sir, I think Rosia Dale has been in actual occupation for at least three years when we are talking of the first phase. These compare much more closely with later works that we have done such as St Joseph's and St Jago's.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, what is the proposed rental cost for these units?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is not my department to decide, Sir, I do not know the answer to that one.

HON A J HAYNES:

Surely, his department must advise on the figures, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the Public Works Department does not normally make any advice available on what they consider should be the rent, I think that is a prerogative of the Housing Department. I am informed it is about £120 per square.



24.5.83

NO. 224 of 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider increasing the car parking potential at the new USOC car park by making use of the gravel pavement on the west side?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the USOC area was constructed as a coach park for 40 coaches in an open frontier situation but since this has not materialised it is being used as a temporary car park. Since there is still ample parking in Queensway at the Romney Huts site, which is close by, it is not considered necessary to alter the existing layout which was designed for coaches.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many zebra crossings have been repaired in accordance with Question 34 of 1983 and how many remain to be seen to?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, since the 22 February this year, when Question 34 was answered and the subject of zebra crossings was introduced in supplementaries, a total of 76 lamps have been replaced both in the spot lights and the beacons at the 14 pedestrian crossings which are fitted with this equipment.

At present there are 4 flexiglobes and one spot light missing. These will be fitted once a consignment of spares, which were ordered on the 16 December, is received. The consignment is expected to arrive this week and work will proceed shortly.

NO. 226 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, with regard to Road to the Lines Phase II, what new steps has Government taken to ensure there is no repetition at final account stage of what occurred in Phase I?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Hon Member's question is not clearly understood. The final account for Phase I will not be settled until January, 1984. If the question refers to the application for additional funds, the explanation is that there was an increase in accommodation area over that at tender stage and an upgrading of specifications of finishes to reduce maintenance costs. Allowances have been made in Phase II to try to avoid the need for supplementaries.

NO. 227 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government give the reasons and the projected cost of the work undertaken by the PWD in Governor's Lane?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, with the reversal of the traffic flow in Governor's Lane/Cathedral Square/Main Street it has been decided for improved safety to provide a small footpath for pedestrians on the north side of the road.

Since the road was closed for these works, it was also considered opportune to resurface the road. The total cost of the works will be approximately £4,000 but I would add, Sir, this does not include the cost of the resurfacing.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 227 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Was this an initiative of Government or was it brought to their notice?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was a mixture of both, Sir. We did have a request from the tenants in the area that they considered that a certain amount of danger did appertain especially on the northern side because of the very narrow curve that was there. When they came out their house they were stepping almost straight into the road but it was also partly one of the considerations of Government when the scheme becomes permanent to make the road itself improved. One of the improvements is to extend the pavement on the south side so that we can do away with any parked cars in that area at all.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is Government satisfied that the width of the new pavement on the north side will improve the safety requirements adequately?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, it is quite wide enough to walk along safely and the main safety measure when you come out of your house is that you are not stepping straight into the road.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I notice that these pavements have been continued all the way up to the garden opposite the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Has Government taken into consideration the fact that by doing these bits of pavement there they are doing away with a number of parking sites and do they propose to make other sites available?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is appreciated that a number of parking sites have been lost. However, there are now ample parking sites on the USOC area and there is a walkway through to USOC which does not make it a very great hardship to walk an extra fifty yards.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but is the Government going to put some bollards or something on these pavements because I can see cars parking on the pavement anyway?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

I thought the USOC car park was going to be temporary and in any case for coaches anyway, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

You are still hoping that the Lisbon Agreement is going to come through.

HON A J HAYNES:

If it does become a coach park where will the cars park, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When the Lisbon Agreement comes through we will see what the situation is.

HON W T SCOTT:

Can I ask the Hon Minister when we can expect that project to be completed and again open to traffic?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It should be completed within the next ten days, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will the Minister for Public Works confirm or otherwise if the litter in Jumper's Bastion has been satisfactorily removed and, if not, whether action has been taken against the tenants as intended by the Minister as stated in his answer to my Question 146 of 1983?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, an inspection of the area was conducted by officers of the Lands and Surveys Department and has shown that the majority of the offending articles have been removed. It is not therefore felt that legal action is warranted at this juncture although the situation is being monitored both to avoid a recurrence and to ensure that the clearance is completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 228 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will the Minister take my word that the first thing I did on coming to Gibraltar on this occasion was precisely to go there and there it is, all the muck is still there, and will the Minister please investigate why he has been given that incorrect information?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If the information is incorrect I will definitely investigate it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I suggest to the Minister that perhaps he could go there and look for himself.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider pruning overgrown bushes and trees on the west side of the roads on the Upper Rock which unduly obscure the spectacular view of the bay and surrounding scenery from people taking walks and recreating generally in the area?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the pruning of overgrown bushes and trees on the Upper Rock will be carried out when the labour force becomes available after the vegetation at the Upper Rock Fire Breaks has been removed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 229 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister give an idea of when this is going to be, will it be in time for the summer season tourist period when we hope we shall be getting more tourists coming to Gibraltar and so endeavour to improve the product?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

In about six weeks time, Sir, but we will try and improve on it.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Public Works state if there is any person responsible to ensure that such things as clocks in Government public buildings are kept in working order and names of Government houses are properly maintained?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, there is a private firm which undertakes the maintenance of the clocks (three) and PWD assist in winding up and providing technical support. As to the other part of the Hon Member's question, Housing wardens and foremen are generally responsible for reporting defects within their districts. Names of Government houses are frequently vandalised and when reports are received every effort is made to replace the defective or missing letters if in stock. If not available orders are placed from time to time and a time-lag can occur.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 230 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that the clock opposite the Market is almost always giving the wrong time and that even the one here in this building on the east side has been out of order, not now it is working now I notice, have been out of order for months on end? Can the Minister state whether the person responsible for that was the company engaged in winding it up or whatever it is or the persons in his department who are supposed to look after them?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think there has been some difficulty with the mechanism of the clock outside here which is being remedied. The one at the Market Place I will have it looked into.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister keep an eye on things like that because it gives a very bad reputation to Gibraltar of neglect and couldn't care less attitude of the Government which we all know in this House but we do not want it to be made public? As to the other bit of the question that I asked regarding the letters that cannot be found, is the Minister aware that Referendum House in Glacis the letter wasn't there for months on end and that now Portmore House has three letters missing? When does he expect to get those letters?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Unfortunately you don't place an order for one letter at a time if one letter goes missing. We have replaced on certain occasions but unless you have an extremely large stock of spare letters there must be times when letters are missing and are not replaced immediately.



HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I think they are more time missing than they are there and replaced but could the Minister have a couple of A, B, C's handy in his office to be able to replace them when one is lost?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I believe the frequency of which the letter E is used is greater than any other letter.

HON A T LODDO:

Now that we are on the subject of clocks could I ask the Minister to have a close look, or his department rather, have a close look at the clock opposite the Market because I fear that the cupola over the clock is now leaning at a very dangerous angle and if that were to fall down heaven help whoever it catches underneath. It would be no consolation to say: "We did warn you about it", if there is a car damaged or personal injury occurs?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As far as I remember I answered a question about that last year in which I assured the Hon Member and my department assures me there is no danger of it collapsing, it is perhaps becoming a challenger to the leaning tower of Pisa.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how much revenue is derived from the advertisements displayed on pavement barriers and do they not think that they cheapen the atmosphere of our historic city?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the revenue derived from the advertisements displayed on pavement barriers is approximately £1,000 per annum so far. I would add that it does increase as more are put on. The cost of manufacturing, erecting and maintaining these barriers falls on the company which has been awarded the concession, as is the case with the directional signs and coat of arms on these barriers which the company supplies free of charge to Government.

Government does not think that this form of advertisement in the locations which have been selected, cheapens the atmosphere of our historic city. On the contrary they provide a necessary service to the trading community which is coordinated very satisfactorily. The quality and design is good and very professional and is strictly controlled. I am sure that it has not escaped notice that the majority of these pedestrian-barrier advertisements are concentrated largely on the northern outskirts of the city with only a limited number at Casemates Square at the entry of our shopping area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 231 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Minister ever visited Germany and Austria where obviously they take great care particularly in their historic cities to make sure that the character of the city is not in any way blemished with plastic signs and signs like the ones we are putting up now and isn't that destroying the image of Gibraltar and certainly much more counter-productive to the industry, generally, than the benefit that the advertisements can bring either to the Government purses or to the traders themselves who are advertising there?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have visited many places in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France and I have seen quite a number of these places where they do have this type of sign and, as I said before, these are done quite tastefully and they are serving a useful purpose.

HON W T SCOTT:

Who has the contract, Mr Speaker, what country of origin are the directors or who has the contract for this advertising and was it put out to tender?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was not put out to tender, Sir, but a number of firms were approached to see what they could offer. The firm which has been given the concession is a Gibraltarian company, I think the directors are an Englishwoman and her Spanish husband.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 232 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, did Government consult with the Unions before the purchase of the street cleaning vehicle and if so why is it not being used?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Trade Unions were fully aware that Government was going to purchase a street sweeping vehicle before this equipment was ordered. The vehicle has been blacked by one Trade Union because the Staff Side claim that after the reduction of overtime worked by the sweepers, the vehicle was operated in a section of the town which previously had been swept by hand. However, since there was no loss of jobs, Government feels that the flexible use of the vehicle to assist the sweepers in any area is quite reasonable.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 232 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

So in fact he is saying that the street cleaning vehicle since the industrial action has not been used at all?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I wouldn't say it is not being used at all but it is not being used with the flexibility with which Government would like to see it being used.

HON W T SCOTT:

What I am saying is that, for example, in Main Street once the sweepers have gone through and litter accumulates again, before the next shift the following morning there could be a situation where the street cleaning vehicles could well be used to maintain a clean Main Street, at least.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I couldn't agree with you more.

HON W T SCOTT:

What action is Government taking then?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

At the moment we are negotiating with the Unions to see if this flexibility can become a feature of the use of the vehicle.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make a statement on its dispute with the street sweepers and does Government intend to take any action to ensure that the filthy state of our streets does not become a health hazard?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, there is no dispute in strict legal terms.

Because of the current economic situation, the financial provision made for sweeping in the estimates was reduced. Consequently, evening and week-end overtime was cut. A result is that the amount of unswept litter, particularly after a week-end; has been considerably greater.

The sweepers, who, the Union maintains, are not in dispute with Government, have alleged that as the amount of litter is greater, they cannot at all times sweep the whole district allocated to them. Government has the impression that there is a certain measure of 'go-slow' tactics involved to try and force Government to restore the overtime to previous levels.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 233 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister not agree that if there is no dispute there is nothing that looks more remarkable like one as the present one and can the Minister confirm that in fact the streets are not being swept satisfactorily during the week, never mind week-ends?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I have said Government has the impression that there are 'go-slow' tactics by the sweepers. The Government has, I won't say gone along with this situation but has tried not to exacerbate it over the past week or two but Government now intends to take much stronger measures against those sweepers who do not give an honest days work for an honest days pay.

HON G T RESTANO:

He has the impression, does he not know? Cannot he come out with something concrete? He says he has the impression that there is a 'go-slow' tactic and that is why the streets are not clean, why is he hiding behind impression?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is euphemistically speaking.

HON G T RESTANO:

What in fact does the Government intend to do from now on?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, we know they are definitely going slow but we are trying to be pleasant about it.

HON G T RESTANO:

I said what in fact therefore is Government going to do about it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We have tried to be reasonably tolerant for the time being to avoid a proper dispute. We are now going to take, as I said, stronger action, if that leads to a full dispute with a strike the streets will not be swept but I expect the Opposition to back the Government up against the men who are trying to be bloodminded.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am asking what the Government intends to do about it, quite simple, this is the third time I have asked?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have just said, to take stronger measures. The first measure is to put the men on a charge, the second one is to put them on a second charge and the third phase is to dismiss them and I expect the Opposition to back the Government fully in such a measure.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is that a request?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is an answer.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask something that seems to have pressed into industrial dispute or industrial talks or whatever it is the Government calls them, and this is references to the men. Are we to understand that the Trade Union is not in negotiation in this matter, that there is some sort of direct talking between the Government and the men?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When one talks about the men, the situation I think as the Hon Member must know very well, is that the Trade Unions state that they have to support what the men themselves have decided. In this instance it is the men who have decided what they want to do and the Trade Union is supporting them.

HON P J ISOLA:

But is the Trade Union actually leading negotiations or talks or is the Government dealing with the men alone? What is the position?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They are dealing with the representatives of the men one of whom is a Trade Union official.

HON P J ISOLA:

So then the Trade Union itself has no policy on this, it takes no part, is that the position?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Trade Union policy, as I have already stated, is to do what the men wish.

HON P J ISOLA:

So they are superfluous to requirements really, is that the position?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

You should tell your friend that.

HON G T RESTANO:

What in fact is the Government doing about the possible health hazard?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The possible health hazard, in spite of a certain gentleman who was on TV the other day and talked about bubonic plague etc, is at the moment still very low indeed.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I do not know whether he has walked but I certainly have done one or two evenings down Main Street and there is a proliferation of mosquitoes.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, that has nothing to do whatsoever with the rubbish that is around. The rubbish that is around is basically waste paper and this does not create a considerable health hazard. It is when there is remainders of food that are around that it is dangerous and when there are remainders of food which is not happening at the moment but when they are they are sprayed by the health authorities.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Minister saying that there is no health hazard then, that the whole thing is being coped with effectively?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

At the moment, yes.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that the Public Health Authority as reported in a statement that they made to the Chronicle last Saturday, are very seriously concerned indeed and it is not a question of dismissing it lightly?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Of course they are very seriously concerned that it could get out of hand if it was not dealt with it on a reasonable basis but as I have said at the moment the rubbish that is being left around is mainly litter and paper and is not constituting a health hazard. A health hazard would occur should the rubbish being left around contain remnants of food and things like that and this of course is always a possibility if industrial dispute might escalate.

HON G T RESTANO:

If there is no remnant of food, Mr Speaker, and the rubbish is not being collected and there are piles of rubbish, shall we say, at Devil's Tower Road, does that not constitute remnants of food at Devil's Tower Road?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The pile of rubbish at Devil's Tower Road in the main was not household waste but waste by traders who were indiscriminately dumping large quantities of wood and cardboard in the road because they found the door shut.

HON G T RESTANO:

In that case where is the remnants of food, the household rubbish which includes food, where is that being collected and where is that being dumped?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Some of it is being dumped over the ash chute and the remainder is being burnt. Remember they are working 39 hours so you are getting 39 hours of burning, the remainder is being dumped at sea.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 234 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has Government now resolved its dispute with the staff at the Refuse Destructor and if not can Government make a statement on the position?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

There is no dispute in strict legal terms. The funds provided to operate the refuse incinerator were reduced with the result that the weekly operational time was cut from 71 hours to 60½ hours. When put to the men this offer was rejected and they maintained that either they continued to work 71 hours or they would opt to work a 39 hour basic week. Government then proposed to introduce two shifts based on a 5 day 39 hour working week. This second offer was also rejected.

On 17 May, 1983, Government proposed a new offer giving a slightly enhanced working week. The Staff Side, however, turned down the offer.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government inform this House as to the hours of operation of the Refuse Destructor two weeks before and two weeks after the commencement of the industrial dispute?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

There is no industrial dispute in strict legal terms. Prior to the recent cuts in overtime, the hours of operation of the incinerator were as follows:

8 am to 6.30 pm Mondays to Saturdays

8 am to 4.00 pm Sundays

This represented a total of 71 worked hours equivalent to 88.8 paid hours.

Two operatives started at 7 am in order to receive the initial refuse collection vehicles and to start up the plant.

For the following two weeks the hours of operation were as follows:

8 am to 4.00 pm Mondays to Thursdays

8 am to 3.00 pm Fridays

This represents a total of 39 hours, worked and paid.

NO. 236 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, following the undertaking given in answer to Question No. 149 of 1983, will the Minister responsible for Public Works now inform this House with the information requested?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the previous question related to the lifespan of the Ford Escort motor cars that were replaced in 1980; the Mazda patrol car was purchased in 1982 as an additional vehicle made necessary when the Police moved from a three shift to a four shift system. It was necessary to revise the shift system when the working week was reduced to 40 hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 236 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

But there was, in fact, in answer to supplementaries dealing with a Mazda car which still has not been mentioned today and that is I think the information I am trying to find out.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I said the Mazda patrol car was purchased in 1982.

HON W T SCOTT:

I beg your pardon.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 237 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government approach MOD for the release of the Fortress Officers' Mess in Bomb House Lane?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, an approach has already been made. In fact, the Fortress Officers' Mess in Bomb House Lane was included in a list of properties and land areas which the Gibraltar Government would like to see transferred from the MOD as early as possible. This list was prepared in 1979 in consultation with the MOD.

The whole question of the release of Crown Lands held by the Ministry of Defence and no longer required for defence purposes is being considered in consultation with the United Kingdom Government and the Government hopes that important progress in the arrangements for such release will be made shortly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 237 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, should we be successful in obtaining the release of this land would the Government look favourably upon handing over the Fortress Officers' Mess in Bomb House Lane to the Museum to form a very much needed Annex to the Gibraltar Museum?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think, Mr Speaker, that the Hon Member, with all due respect to him, has got his facts slightly wrong. He is referring to the Fortress Officers' Mess which is the one, in fact, opposite the Museum. The request for that particular building was made by Government in connection with an extension to the Hebrew School. I think that what he is referring to is 20, Bomb House Lane, adjoining the Gibraltar Museum, and it is in respect of this latter building that I am aware that an informal approach was made by the Museum Committee for the release of these MOD quarters. I am not aware of any request having been made for the building opposite the Museum in connection with an extension of the Museum but in connection with an extension to the Hebrew School.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I did not know about the request for an extension to the Hebrew School and the Museum have not asked me to put this question forward. It has come from me purely because I know that inside the building to which I refer, which is the Fortress Officers' Mess opposite the Museum, there is a protected monument, namely, a Moorish arch, and I believe that this building would be a very welcome extension to the Museum and incorporate the Moorish arch which is a protected ancient monument. I have not been put up to this question by anybody, I can assure this House.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not suggesting for one moment, Mr Speaker, that the Hon Member has been put up to it at all but in any case even if that particular building were to be used as an extension to the Hebrew School and there is a serious problem there of accommodation, that does not in any way preclude affording the necessary protection to this Moorish arch that the Hon Member is referring to. I think, perhaps, I could inform the House that one of the main problems in pursuing the matter further has been the high cost of reprovisioning, in other words, the standpoint of the Ministry of Defence is that they require these buildings and they can only give them up if they are reprovided elsewhere and at our cost and reprovisioning is a very expensive affair.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, in pursuing this would the Government consider making a bid for the old Line Wall School which could very easily connect with the Hebrew School?

MR SPEAKER:

We are now extending the scope of the question.

HON A J CANEPA:

That does not belong to the Government.

HON A J HAYNES:

Assuming you could say in the near future the Fortress Officers' Mess is released to Government, is there going to be any debate as to the user to which it is going to be put or is it going to be automatically given to the Hebrew School?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think the use of that is a matter certainly for consideration within the Government and in particular the Development and Planning Commission. We are also pursuing at the moment concurrently the question of the provision of further space for the Hebrew School notwithstanding this building in a separate scenario, as it were, and if we are able to make progress with that then there would be no need to earmark this Fortress Officers' Mess for the school.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the Minister also said that in 1979 a list of buildings were submitted to the MOD for transfer. Has the Government also got views as to what the user for all these other . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, I am not going to have that question. Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state if a scheme to embellish Market Lane submitted by enterprises in the area was rejected and if so can they state the reasons for so doing?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Government is not aware that any such scheme has been submitted by enterprises in Market Lane. I wonder whether the Hon Member is referring to an informal approach made to the Chief Planning Officer by these enterprises signifying their agreement to the pedestrianisation scheme of Main Street and particularly that of Market Lane. The position today is that Market Lane has been closed to traffic as part of the trial period on pedestrianisation and would ultimately be pedestrianised in the context of the overall project.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 238 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am pleased to hear that answer from the Minister, obviously I hope they have something in mind for that, but could he say if other Lanes are going to be treated in the same manner?

HON A J CANEPA:

In due course, yes, as part of the general pedestrianisation scheme of Main Street other subsidiary Lanes abutting, as it were, Main Street would also be considered in the overall context of the project.

NO. 239 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government confirm that it has received the Dockyard Project Study Report and can Government state when it proposes to make the same available to the Opposition?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. The Report comprises a number of documents prepared by the consultants to the Government, by A & P Appledore International Limited and its civil engineering advisers. These documents and the Report will be made available to all Members of the House once the Government of Gibraltar has formulated a view and well in time, I should add, for them to be able to take a view well ahead of the proposed meeting before the end of June on the commercialisation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 239 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Is there any particular reason why the Opposition should not have the Report before the Government has formulated a view? May it not be useful in helping Government to formulate a view if the Opposition should have it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, we are quite near that stage so that there is really not much difference on that, we may be formulating our own views pretty soon. Certainly I will make them available to Hon Members as soon as possible and well in time for them to make up their minds. Members will have the opportunity, I would rather not give it another adjective, but I think they will have an interesting presentation. There will be as there was on the previous occasion two representations, one by A & P Appledore for Members of the Opposition and one by the Government consultants themselves in the first place and I think the timing of that should be in such a way that Members should have had the Report a little ahead of time so that it is more meaningful when they see the presentations which are useful, very helpful, in a general way.

NO. 240 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has Government been provided with a copy of the answer of the Secretary of State for Defence to the representations of the Gibraltar Trades Council that the Dockyard should be kept open and if so will Government make the same available to Members of the Opposition?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. I was informed by the Governor of the contents of the reply after it had been received by the Gibraltar Trades Council. I would refer the Hon Member to two Reports which have appeared, one in the local press and one in The Times, in which there is reference and part of it appears to have been informed by the recipient of the letter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 240 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does not the Chief Minister agree that as a matter of courtesy a British Minister in a letter that is so important for the general public and more especially for the Government, should as a matter of courtesy have sent a copy of the reply to the local Government and will he try and obtain one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether that has not been done, what actually has happened is that it was a letter reiterating the decision of the British Government to close the Dockyard by the end of the year, it was a courteous letter, a rather longish letter, stating the reasons why they could not change their mind a copy which was received by the Governor. The Governor showed it to me across the table, I read it and there is nothing in it that we did not know before and it is no departure from anything that we knew, there is nothing really new except that he went out of his way to explain the matter in more detail to the Unions that had been done before, presumably because he has just taken office.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Chief Minister that may be so but on a matter of such importance does he not agree that it would be desirable that Hon Members of this House should see a copy of the reply so that they can be filled in on current thinking even though there may not be much difference and will he try and procure a copy of that letter so that it can be circulated to Members of the House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether I can go that far but I certainly will be prepared to ask for a copy to be made available for Hon Members to look at, that I will do.



THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider further increasing the number of Gibraltar Government Tickets as they appear to be selling out on some of the draws?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Government is normally guided by advice from the Government Lottery Committee whenever a restructuring of the lottery is considered necessary and the indications are that tickets are obtainable very late in the week for the following weekly draw. The Government, therefore, does not propose to increase the number of tickets at present. I should add that at this moment there are two sets of tickets on sale, the tickets for the June draw and the ordinary weekly tickets and the tickets for the June draw have been increased in price and in numbers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 241 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Hon and Learned Chief Minister say whether since the increase in numbers there has been any appreciable number of returned tickets at the end of each week?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think there are any returned tickets. The Hon Member has been in the Lottery Committee long enough to know that the virtue of it is that there should be sufficient for the demand and a little short. There was an initial bigger increase than there is now because of the very severe penalties that have been imposed by people who were casually or deliberately found with tickets on crossing the barrier.

HON G T RESTANO:

But despite these restrictions and despite the increase of 1,000 tickets a week there have been no returns.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There have been some small returns.

HON G T RESTANO:

Very small returns perhaps smaller than what they used to be before so would that not indicate that there could be an increased revenue for the Government in increasing yet a little bit more?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will have a talk with the Chairman of the Lottery Committee and they are considering the matter again once the June Draw is out of the way.

NO. 242 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government make a statement on the resignation of the Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation and does Government not consider it advisable that the new Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation should be appointed by the Governor after consultation with the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The last Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation has authorised me to say that he relinquished his appointment because he found he had to devote far too much time to the task.

With regard to the second part of the question, I would recall that, in answer to Question No. 361 of 1981, I pointed out to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition, inter alia, that the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation acts in accordance with the Directions issued by His Excellency the Governor-in-Council which requires the maintenance of strict political impartiality and that the Government was satisfied that the present procedure for appointing members to the Board of the Corporation was adequate. In answering supplementaries I said that in any doubtful case I would be quite prepared to have a word with the Leader of the Opposition before an appointment was made.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 242 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, if I recall correctly, the Hon and Learned Chief Minister agreed that he would go into the question of consultation with the Leader of the Opposition because is it not a fact that the Chief Minister himself is consulted on the person who should be Chairman and on a Corporation that we are anxious should be independent does he not agree that the same courtesy should be extended to the Leader of the Opposition by the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

First of all, the parameters of the Chairman, according to the instructions, makes it obvious that he has to be independent. If there were any candidates whom I thought might be likely to be controversial certainly I will. I am not at this stage prepared to go beyond that and particularly at this time because we want to see how the matter develops. If there is any suggestion of any appointment that might be controversial I will certainly bear that in mind.

HON P J ISOLA:

But, Mr Speaker, surely it is not possible to know whether a particular candidate is going to be controversial until one knows what the other side thinks about him.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will have to exercise an element of judgement and stand on my judgement of it and be criticised if necessary.

HON P J ISOLA:

In other words, Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Chief Minister intends to keep that appointment to himself.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not my appointment, Mr Speaker, it is the appointment of the Governor and I intend to continue carrying out my constitutional duty to advise the Governor on matters like this.

HON P J ISOLA:

But does not the Chief Minister agree that if the Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation is to be shown publicly to be an independent person, he should be appointed after consultation not just with the Chief Minister but also with the Leader of the Opposition?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not necessarily.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I also ask, Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the present Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation finds the task an onerous one, whether it should not be considered to have a paid Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation who could then devote the necessary time and effort to ensure that the Corporation remains an independent body and is not in any way biased or partial?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We are at a crossroad on the question of the Corporation and I would not like to anticipate anything that might happen if there is a change in the management by the retirement of the Manager and perhaps in different circumstances the task of the Chairman might become less if the nature of the appointment of a future Manager would be much more wideranging than the present terms are in which case, of course, the task of the Chairman would be considerably less. The question of an honorarium to a Chairman is one which I have considered but there again if we come here even if there is consultation and we come here for money to pay a substantial amount to the Corporation it will be an increase in the subvention and then when it comes to increasing the subvention we are severely criticised about the way the Corporation is run so really there is a difficulty there which we are trying to see whether we can solve in another way and of course as I often say and my colleague has just told me, it is rather a

dangerous precedent. There are many people doing sterling work as Chairmen of various statutory boards and committees completely free and voluntary and unless it was on terms that they are very necessary, this could set a very bad precedent and do away with a considerable amount of social work being performed by a number of public spirited people in Gibraltar at present.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would not the Hon and Learned Chief Minister agree that the job of Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation must inevitably be a very demanding one and that he would find no difficulty in getting support from the Opposition for paying an honorarium to a Chairman of that Corporation if as a result of that we are to get a person who will be able to devote the time that is necessary to devote to that Corporation? What he will not get support from us I am sure, will he not agree, is if he comes to us purely and simply to vote more money to keep things like Spanish television advertising or advertising of Spanish products on television and other things but on a question or the issue of payment of an honorarium to the Chairman when such a payment would result in him being able to give the time and attention that is required, I can assure the Chief Minister he would find no lack of support on this side of the House to vote the funds.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am glad to note that latter remark with regard to the other reference. There is a question in the Order Paper to which I will be referring.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 243 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has the Chief Minister now been provided with detailed information of the extent of advertising on GBC of products in Spain and will Government make a statement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, talks have recently been initiated between GBC and Government officials to discuss the application of the cuts the Government has made in the subvention to GBC following consideration of the Corporation's estimates for 1983/84. This matter will be taken up as soon as those talks have been concluded.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 243 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

But does Government have any policy on the matter, this is what we are interested in hearing on this side of the House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think I have stated that I do not particularly like some of the advertisements. I think we ought to be a little less parochial about some of them but until we know what the amount involved is and the final results of these talks regarding the cuts we will not be able to make a proper assessment. It may be that we will have to cut here and say: "If you want those advertisements cut we will have to vote more money".

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government make available at the Gibraltar Government Tourist Office in London Information Leaflets on the British Nationality Act 1981, for Gibraltarians who may wish to inform themselves of their rights under the Act, and provide personal advice on how to proceed to register for those who may need it?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. The processing of applications is, of course, done in Gibraltar and advice on individual cases or problems, as distinct from advice on the procedure for submitting applications, will have to be obtained from here.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 244 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Chief Minister also provide the Gibraltar Group with leaflets who have been told by them that they are prepared to distribute this through their normal mailing list? Is the Minister aware that recently, in fact the case is still going on, of a Gibraltarian who was served with deportation papers and in fact he has written to Albert McQuarrie and through me to Lord Bethell and in fact the matter is being discussed, perhaps because of ignorance at source?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

My information on that matter is that there was no attempt at deportation at all. In fact, I do not want to be diverted from the question but the very strong evidence that we have is that there has been no attempt, the only point is that the person applied on the basis of five years residence, it was short of it and he was told to come again and no difficulty was put in his way with regard to his continued residence and he has not appeared again after the period had elapsed. With regard to giving copies of this to the Gibraltar Group, no difficulty at all, I can provide the Hon Member and perhaps he can pass it on and we can avoid postage.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is there any monitoring being carried out at the frontier in order to detect the number of Spanish nationals who enter Gibraltar on a daily basis?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. This information is supplied to Government by the Police on a weekly basis.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 245 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Does Government have any indication then that any of these nationals who do come in on a daily basis come in for the purpose of taking up employment without going through the Department of Labour?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think this is a completely different matter arising from this question. We monitor that, we know the difficulty with regard to some of those who come who may wish to work here, that was said earlier by my Hon Colleague and it is a matter on which the Unions have made representations and a matter on which we are trying to see whether we can plug the difficulties but perhaps in order to know the nature of the undertaking in this respect or whatever it is or the incidence of it may be related if I say that between the 15th December, 1982 and the 15th May, 1983, the figures are as follows: Spaniards into Gibraltar - 310,957 and British into Gibraltar which of course meant that they had gone out before or the few that live around - 350,814.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think perhaps the Chief Minister did not quite get the intention of the question. The question was those who enter on a daily basis and that is why I asked whether there was any monitoring being done in order to check any who might be coming in every day in order to perhaps take up employment without going through the Department of Labour?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly there are no figures that I know of or rather no particulars are kept of the people, only a question of numbers who cross and by nationality. No doubt the Police are carrying out their duties if in fact there are people who seem to be pretty regular and stand out from the rest may become well known to the Police in the future as they were known when there were no identity cards and people were known by their faces but the recording that is done is the ins and outs by the two nationalities that can cross and in future perhaps there will be a separate one for the Portuguese but they are not identified, no records are kept of the numbers.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that it might be a good thing to have further particulars identified at the frontier in order to curb the problem that I was talking about and would he not think it is a good suggestion that the Police be asked to keep further particulars or more detailed particulars?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that that would not help the problem and probably we would find that the Police would say that they cannot cope and in fact the queues would be considerably increased if names were to be recorded of people who enter Gibraltar. It would be an endless queue if particulars of people that entered or left Gibraltar were to be taken apart from the fact that no doubt the Police would ask for much more and I see that this could be too big an exercise to discover what may be a question of a handful of people who are doing this and in any case you would have to prove later on that they were carrying out work so we are trying to plug that hole in another way as the Unions have been informed and in fact there was a question earlier and which was answered by the Minister for Labour.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since, obviously, it is going to be very difficult to carry out any detection in this way, would it be possible for the Government to amend the relevant Ordinance or Ordinances to ensure that any person working without a permit who is not a Gibraltarian is committing an offence?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is the case now and persons who come into Gibraltar are given permission to reside here by the stamp that is put in their passport.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if they are taking any action to reduce the cost of £750,000 that Gibraltar taxpayers contribute to provide land frontier services 24 hours a day?

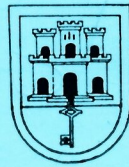
ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the manning levels of the Police and Customs at the land frontier are dictated by operational requirements and security consideration to which I was referring just now, and in the case of Customs, by agreement with the Staff Association.

The Staff Inspection of the Customs Department has now been concluded. The Staff Association has been informed that the Official Side is ready to start negotiations and hopes that meaningful progress is made to enable recommendations to be made to Government for its implementation.

# GIBRALTAR

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

6 July 1983  
247 to 307

6.7.83

NO. 247 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state their policy as regards general rates and will Government state their proposed time-scale for increases, if any, in the general rates?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the rating system in Gibraltar is prescribed by Section 310 of the Public Health Ordinance. This provides, inter alia, that domestic premises are to be rated by comparison with the rents at which dwelling houses owned by the Government are let to members of the general public. The same section stipulates that the assessment of commercial premises shall be based on the estimated rent at which the premises might reasonably be expected to let from year to year, that is to say, at market value.

It has been the policy to cushion the effect of rent increases for domestic premises on the rates by providing that the effect of these increases should not be reflected in the rates for a period of two years. Thus, the Government rent increases of July, 1981, were reflected in the Valuation List from April, 1983.

The criteria for the assessment of commercial premises is determined by the state of the property market, without any Government interference. Future increases are a matter for decision in the light of the Government's overall financial strategy.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 247 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Hon Financial and Development Secretary confirm that as regards the raising of general rates, that levy on people, that the burden is not equally distributed and that those in Government dwellings are better off?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I won't agree.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 248 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many vehicle licences for the year ending 31st May, 1984, were uncollected as at 30th June?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, 1,924 licences of vehicles which had been licensed during 1982 had not been collected by the 30th June, 1983.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 248 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, what does Government intend doing to collect the monies owed from these licence fees?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Well, Sir, it would be a little difficult for some of them because over 1,000 have disappeared; 821 have gone over the chute into the sea having been collected by the Police and dumped and about 250 motor vehicles have left Gibraltar and are unlikely to return so it leaves about 800-odd which we have got to pursue.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does this in fact take into account vehicles that are being sold from Gibraltar duty free or is it merely vehicles that were registered in Gibraltar because I notice that there is now a scheme whereby vehicles are sold duty free, they can be collected in Spain so are they registered in Gibraltar or will it mean less revenue for the Government in that when they come back they will not be new and they will have to pay less duty?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If they are in Spain and are purchased and don't come into Gibraltar, a person will not have to pay Gibraltar duty on them. If they come into Gibraltar at a later date they will pay duty on the value assessed by Customs at the time of import.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Financial and Development Secretary confirm that a number of these vehicles which are unlicensed are in fact cars which have been sold or are supposed to have been sold as second hand cars by car dealers?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I couldn't say.

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, that is not the sort of information that Government can give. The Government can give you information as to how many cars have been licensed and how many licences have been collected. The reasons why they have not been collected is not their responsibility.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary confirm that a number of second-hand car dealers have cars on the public highway without valid licences?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I would have to look into that, Mr Speaker, but they have probably got a dealers licence running under trade legislation plates.

HON A J HAYNES:

The question is will the Member confirm that the facts are as I have stated without any dealers licence or any other thing and that the highway is being used as a storeroom-cum - front window without the payment of taxes and the inconvenience caused to other users of the highway?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm it, I can merely undertake to look into the statement or allegation.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state how many instances there have been at the frontier of detected attempted illegal importation of meat products and what action has been taken in those cases?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, there have been 631 detections in connection with the attempted illegal importation of meat products since the partial opening of the frontier. In all instances the goods have been seized and destroyed under Customs supervision and no further action taken as the quantities detected have not warranted prosecutions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 249 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Have these been isolated individuals or have there been people repeating the offence?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No one has repeated, all have been different individuals.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, are in fact, destruction certificates obtained by the Customs Officers?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, if I may answer, by agreement with the Financial and Development Secretary. I did undertake at an earlier meeting of the House to look into this. I am sorry I should have taken so long to do so but the answer is that when meat is detained by the Customs officials, the name and address of the person concerned is recorded in the Station's Detention Book and a description of the goods seized is also recorded.

HON G T RESTANO:

Are destruction certificates obtained when the goods are destroyed?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, the officer supervising the destruction certifies that the goods have been destroyed in the Detention Book.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.7.83

NO. 250 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state the total amount of revenue derived from import duty at the frontier since the partial opening?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the total amount collected up to and including 29th June, 1983, was £26,087.19.



THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has Government given consideration, as the Financial and Development Secretary said they would, to exclude the CIF element from the amount for which duty is charged on imports and if so, could they state their conclusion and the reasons for arriving at them?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, Government has given consideration to charging duty on the FOB rather than on the CIF value of goods imported and have decided to continue charging on the CIF value as this follows EEC Regulations. All members of the EEC collect duty on the CIF value.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 251 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But since we are not within the tariff barrier, does this regulation strictly apply to Gibraltar and if so could the Financial and Development Secretary look into the question and see if this can be excluded?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

We have looked into the question, Mr Speaker. It is true that we are outside the EEC for the common customs tariff. On the other hand, we try to follow EEC Regulations where we think they are of value and in this case they are of value. Under the EEC Regulations this will need an amendment to the Ordinance and we are going ahead in preparing the papers on this to provide that where the insurance and freight is calculated from, say, London to Gibraltar and it is coming by sea and stopping off at a European Port en route, an EEC port, then the proportion of the total distance covered is only the last leg of the journey from the borders of the Community into Gibraltar so that we could charge very much less for freight than we are doing at the moment and this could meet the point of the Hon Member about the cost of goods from England or from Northern Europe and it would obviate problems which I explained last time that it would make, if we charged on FOB it would put goods from South-East Asia on a par with goods from Europe which we were not anxious to do.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I think this is an important point of principle. Surely, if under the protocol for Gibraltar, Gibraltar is excluded from the Customs Regulations of the EEC, it is wrong in principle, surely, to accept that we should be bound by an EEC Regulation relating to the way you assess duties, because if we accept this, Mr Speaker, we will be accepting a lot of other things which have nothing to do with revenue. We have had the problems of the Companies Ordinance, a lot of other problems. Surely, if we start accepting this one which is clearly not applicable to Gibraltar we are running into trouble.



HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I just do not agree. We look at the EEC Regulations, it doesn't apply to us, we decide whether it makes sense in the circumstances of Gibraltar. If it does we apply it, if it doesn't we don't. In this case it does and we apply it, if it didn't we wouldn't.

HON P J ISOLA:

But surely, Sir, is the Government not aware of the recession that exists in Gibraltar and that the measure proposed by my Hon and Gallant Friend was a measure to try and make Gibraltar more competitive? Is it not the Government's policy to do this?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, and I said what the Government is going to do to make Gibraltar more competitive. We are going to change the Ordinance so that we can apply what is an EEC Regulation to limit the freightage costs from the nearest European port.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, what happens in the case of ships that do not call at European ports and what happens in the case of ships which, for example, take stuff from Spain and go to European ports, are they to be benefitted as against people who import directly from the United Kingdom to Gibraltar? Mr Speaker, I just cannot see why Government is making this distinction.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 252 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, is there any valid reason why 20p coins are not freely circulated in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the number of 20 pence coins in circulation is small because local banks have not detected a demand and have not therefore indented for these coins from the Royal Mint.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 252 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Does Government not think it advisable that 20p coins should be circulated in Gibraltar?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the circulation of both notes and coins is a function of demand and any Government has a passive role in the supply of those coins. If any coins or notes are required, if people go to the bank and ask for them, the bank will indent for them and get them. It is no good our saying to the banks: "We think people should have 20p coins therefore indent for them", we do not know whether people will want them. At the last meeting of the House I undertook in reply to a question by an Hon Member across the floor, to look at the possibility of introducing a Gibraltar coinage and as part of that exercise we are going to discuss with representative groups, including housewives, traders and the like, what sort of coins they would like in a Gibraltar coinage and the possibility of a demand for a 20p coin and indeed for a one pound coin would come out of that survey.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I do not quite understand. How can the Hon Member say that there is no demand or that it had been gauged that there will be no demand when there have never been 20p coins circulating freely to enable the banks to make a judgement, surely?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

There is no demand because people have not asked the bank for them. If a trader wants 20p coins he will go to the bank and say: "I want so much money, so many in £1, £5 and £10 and in coinage I want this, that and the other" and he can ask and he will be given it and if they have not got it they will indent for it.

HON G T RESTANO:

My understanding is that they do not ask because they think that they are not available.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 253 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many prosecutions for speeding and reckless or dangerous driving have there been since 1st January, 1983, and how many of these have been against motorcyclists?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, there have been 49 prosecutions and this includes 17 motorcyclists.

In addition a further 118 alleged offenders have been reported and their cases are pending; this includes 74 motorcyclists, 36 of whom were reported in the past ten days.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 253 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would the Attorney-General know perchance if some of these are persistent offenders?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, no, Sir, my statistics do not go into it to that extent but of course the law does provide that persistent offenders run the risk of disqualification.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 254 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say whether anything is being done to minimise the smoke and fumes nuisance from the ventilation shaft below "Castle House", as I requested in my letter to him of 20th April, 1983?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, the ventilation shaft in question is the property of the MOD and, as such, does not come under Government control. I am informed, however, that the smoke and fumes exhausted via this ventilation shaft is closely monitored and every effort is already being made to minimise the nuisance which is not a daily one, but occurs mainly when the diesel pumps are used under certain weather conditions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 254 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister what in fact are the measures that are being taken because from where I see the ventilation shaft they do not seem to be very successful?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the matter at present is being pursued with the Ministry of Defence but I have to say that any long-term solution such as extending the ventilation shaft or re-cycling the exhaust outlets would require very careful consideration since the actual working conditions of the pumps, exhaust pressures, etc, would have a bearing on the design and success possibility of any such long-term measures. Let me add by way of further information that as far as these pumps are concerned all the information is of a restricted and of a highly confidential nature because it controls all the fuel depots within the Rock which go to submarines etc, but the matter is being at present pursued with the MOD to see whether in fact the nuisance can be lessened as it exists today.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I do not believe I have had an answer. My question was what, in fact, are the measures that have been taken?

HON J B PEREZ:

The only measures that we have been taking at present as far as my department is concerned is in fact as a result of a letter we have been monitoring the . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

I think you are being asked what measures have been taken to minimise the nuisance.

HON J B PEREZ:

We are just monitoring the situation and we have put a request to the Ministry of Defence to see whether ways can be found to minimise the nuisance but as yet nothing has been done.

HON A T LODDO:

Nothing has been done.

HON J B PEREZ:

As yet no.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, is it still the governing Party's policy to include full dental treatment in the Group Practice Medical Scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, present financial constraints prevent the Government from extending dental treatment under the GPMS. The matter will be kept under review.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 255 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

What would the cost be, can the Minister tell us that?

HON J B PEREZ:

The estimated recurrent expenditure for one year is in the region of £349,000, that is recurrent expenditure which does not include any capital and for reprovisioning or finding them a suitable site for the setting up of a dental clinic.

HON G T RESTANO:

I take it then that the Government party has gone back on its policy to have full dental treatment, is that correct?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir, I think if the Hon Member had listened carefully to my answer, I said "present financial constraints prevent the Government from extending dental treatment under the GPMS".

HON G T RESTANO:

As it appears that these financial constraints will continue for quite some time I take it that there is no likelihood of this being implemented, is that not correct?

HON J B PEREZ:

I did also add, Mr Speaker, to my answer that the matter is being kept under review.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 256 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would Government explain who is entitled, under the Group Practice Medical Scheme, to dental treatment?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, dental treatment is not included under the provisions of the Group Practice Medical Scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 256 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Who is entitled then to free dental treatment?

HON J B PEREZ:

We do provide a dental scheme for school children under the provisions of the Education Ordinance. Persons on supplementary benefits receive dental treatment and we also provide an emergency extraction service.



THE HON G T RESTANO

Would Government consider including under the Group Practice Medical Scheme items essential for diabetics as is done in the UK?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, Government is already providing essential items for diabetics in the same manner as for persons suffering from other illnesses.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 257 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not the case that in the United Kingdom the items which are essential to diabetics are in fact given free, such as insulin and so on?

HON J B PEREZ:

Insulin is provided free of charge here in Gibraltar as well.

HON G T RESTANO:

Disposable syringes, surgical spirit, that sort of thing which is essential for the use of the insulin?

HON J B PEREZ:

It is a matter, Mr Speaker, of defining what is meant by essential items. As far as syringes are concerned what the department does is we have a means test and people whose salary or whose income is below a certain amount do in fact get the syringes free of charge but there is a means test for that.

HON G T RESTANO:

So therefore the Group Practice Medical Scheme is not in line with the United Kingdom, is that correct?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, but in the United Kingdom you pay £1.30 per item and here you pay much less.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is the Minister for Medical Services now in a position to make a statement, as promised in the last meeting of the House of Assembly, regarding the preferential treatment of private as apposed to G.P.M.S. patients when obtaining appointments with consultants at St. Bernards's Hospital?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, I did not promise at the last meeting to make any statement on the general issue of private or GPMS patients.

I did however, agree to make a statement on a specific case about which the Hon Member spoke to me. The answer is as follows:-

The case referred to me following Question No 25 of 1983 has been thoroughly investigated by my department. The patient concerned requested an appointment under GPMS on the 26th April 1983 and was seen by the Consultant Ophthalmologist on the 19th May 1983. I do not consider this waiting time to be excessive given it was not an urgent case.

I am also satisfied that the patient concerned was not informed that she would be seen quicker if she elected to go privately.

The Consultant concerned only has one weekly private clinic. This is normally held on Thursdays or Fridays and on average only 1 or 2 private patients are seen. Contributors of the GPMS are not encouraged in any way to go privately.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 258 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that the particular patient concerned asked for a GPMS appointment on the 26th April, was told at the time that she would be seen some time in June and then going privately was seen two days later?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Mr Speaker, that allegation has not been confirmed by the information I have received from my department.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I do not know to what extent this is a cover-up.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, you have asked for information and you have been given the information. Whether you want to do something about it is another matter but I do not think we can go beyond that. In other words, if you want to challenge that information and you have the evidence to challenge it, it is another matter but you should be able to confirm. If you say it is a cover-up you are entitled to say: "Don't you believe that this is a cover-up for

the following reasons," and you give the evidence but I do not think one must make allegations and not substantiate them.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, I have given the information.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have been told exactly what has happened and you have been given a full answer.

HON G T RESTANO:

And I am saying that that is not exactly what has happened.

MR SPEAKER:

Fair enough, you do not accept it.

HON G T RESTANO:

I do not accept that. What actually happened was as I have just stated.

HON J B PEREZ:

All I can say, Mr Speaker, is that I undertook to investigate the matter. I am satisfied, as far as I am concerned, that the information I have been given which I have given to the House is in fact the correct one.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

ORAL

Will Government state what are now its intentions with regard to enforcing legislation, passed by Government majority, compelling householders living in private accommodation to have fire extinguishers in their dwellings and furthermore has Government decided whether the cost will have to be met by the landlords or by the tenants?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, Government does intend to enforce legislation requiring householders living in private accommodation to have fire extinguishers in their dwelling. The necessary briefing instructions for the Attorney-General are now being prepared to make regulations. It is still to be decided upon whom the cost is to fall.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 259 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Minister know when he is likely to bring the legislation to the House, the reviewed regulations to the House?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I wish Mr Haynes would not provide any asides. Having said that, we hope and in fact I think the Attorney-General hopes, to bring the regulations to the House after the summer recess. In fact, the Chief Minister said he would bring the regulations to the House so that the Opposition would have a chance to see them, study the regulations and put any points they wish on the regulations themselves.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since the process now seems to be in its final stages, how is it that Government cannot say and have not taken the decision as to who is going to pay for this?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are three items left outstanding as a matter of policy. One is the cost to the landlord or the tenant, the other one is enforcement and the other one is the inspection of premises. These points have to be finally decided by Government in order that the Attorney-General can bring the appropriate regulations to the House. It is a matter of policy, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I have not had an answer to that. If it has progressed so much how is it that they have not taken a decision yet?

MR SPEAKER:

Because the question as to who is going to be charged is a matter of policy on which the Government has not taken a decision yet until the regulations are ready.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is it still the position which the Minister I think informed the House at the time that legislation was brought to the House, that it would not cost any more under the Head of the Fire Service to do the inspection for this?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

It will not cost any more and there will be no extra staff required?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

It won't cost any more.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, on a point of clarification. Is my understanding of the answer given by the Minister for Municipal Services correct in that a brief has been sent to the Attorney-General to prepare regulations when in fact Government also admits not having finalised their policy issue, is that correct?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I do not think we are going to go through the issue. I am very clear-minded on what the Government has said. The Government has said that they have now progressed and decided that the matter will be put into operation, that the Attorney-General is preparing the relevant regulations, that there are certain matters of policy on which they still have to take a decision and that in those matters the regulations are not being prepared, it is as simple as that, I have no doubt in my mind as to what has been said.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, did I not understand the Minister to say that a brief for the Attorney-General was being prepared to draft the regulations and how can this brief be prepared without the essential policy decision as to who pays for the thing and the other points that he says are outstanding? Is it not in truth and in fact the fact that the Government does nothing about this until a question is asked in the House?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think the Minister has no objection to my answering because this is really a matter of administrative detail, if I may say so, Mr Speaker. The position is simply that the departmental officials have met with me, they have put forward various proposals which we have talked about, there are points that I have to refer back to Government, the points already mentioned, for a decision to be taken, the officials do not trouble Ministers until such time as the matter is ready for a final decision to be taken.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Attorney-General give an indication of how long it takes Government to take decisions because it seems to me, Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect to the Hon and Learned Attorney-General, that the legislation was passed some considerable time ago, over a year ago if not more, and it seems to me that if this is an indication of the time it takes Government to make decisions we will never have a decision on the Naval Dockyard either.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 260 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is it Government's intention to remove those telephone booths that have been vandalised, are an eyesore and will no longer be required in the future?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Yes, Sir. The Department has already removed vandalised telephone booths at Varyl Begg Estate, Laguna Estate and RAF New Camp, and it is Government's intention to remove the following vandalised booths:

- (1) 2 at North Mole
- (2) 1 at Red Sands Road (to be re-sited)
- (3) 2 at South Barracks
- (4) 1 at Europa Flats (to be re-sited)

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 260 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, in the same way that they are removing vandalised telephone booths, are they going to increase public telephones, for instance, at the beaches? I know it is not written in his brief but perhaps the Minister knows.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I need notice of that question, Mr Speaker.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, are those vandalised telephone booths that are going to be shortly removed or the ones that have been removed, are they going to be replaced with others less subject to vandalism?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, the ones that are going to be re-sited are going to be refurbished and they are going to be put into working order. This leaves a substantial number of booths which will be required and put back into operation within Gibraltar.

HON W T SCOTT:

Are there any other areas to be covered by telephone booths other than replacing the ones that have been vandalised, that the department will shortly be removing?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, one is as I mentioned in the budget debate, I mentioned that several telephone booths would be put up along Main Street and the others are in the Estates, like Varyl Begg and Laguna, Sir. Unfortunately, the amount of vandalism at Laguna Estate and Varyl Begg has reached such a high proportion that we can no longer have telephone booths there and now we are discussing the problem with the Committee from Laguna Estate and Varyl Begg as to where we can put booths or telephone kiosks of some form so that they can be looked after and that vandalism does not occur and therefore public money is not expended unnecessarily.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister think that rather than give way to vandals and therefore deprive the tenants of that Estate of a public service that I think the Government should provide, he should try and get the Police to find out who are the vandals prosecute them and stop that sort of thing going on in Gibraltar?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, that is a hypothetical question which I am afraid is beyond my capabilities to answer.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I cannot see what the hypothesis of that is. Doesn't the Minister think that there is no hypothesis in this in that (1) the Minister has just stated that the booths are being vandalised and (2) that he is going to take them away? The question is a perfectly reasonable one, would he try to get the Police to stop vandalism and therefore by keeping the booths there, carry on providing a service to the tenants in those Estates which I think is very necessary for those who do not have telephones? There is no hypothesis about that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, this is a law and order problem. We have contacted the Police on various occasions to try to prevent vandalism and really it is up to them to prevent the vandalism but we can go no further than that, it is a law and order problem.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What the Minister is saying is that he has already been pressing the Police to stop this sort of happening and notwithstanding the great size of the Police Force in Gibraltar they are incapable of stopping them. What other things then are they incapable of stopping and could the Chief Minister then . . . . .



MR SPEAKER:

No, order, we are getting beyond the orbit of the question. I think the Minister has given an answer, he has said: "We have reported the matter to the Police and it is up to the Police to enforce the law".

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, it is very, very important for the members of those Estates to have a public telephone.

MR SPEAKER:

In fairness to the Minister he has said that he is in contact with the Tenants' Associations in order to be able to find appropriate sites for the purposes of providing the service without the telephones being vandalised. I think we have had the answer, in fairness to the Minister.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

If the Minister is happy that he is going to provide a service and he is therefore going to give way to vandalism which I think is very unfortunate that we should do that, then it is up to the Government, I certainly would not behave in that way.

HON A J HAYNES:

I know that he has not had notice of this matter, but will the Minister look with some urgency into the introduction of public telephones at beaches at least for the duration of the summer months? Prior to now, Mr Speaker, people who wanted to make a phone call were entitled to do so at bars, etc, because the cost was nil. Now this is not the case and I would like the Minister to look into the matter.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have already looked into that. At 99% of beaches there is an emergency telephone for the Police and the life-guards which could be used in an emergency. Apart from that, as the Hon Member has just said, there are telephones at the bars and on payment you can get through without any problem at all. The problem has already been looked into by me to make sure that in case an emergency arose somebody can ring for an ambulance straight away without any problem.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am quite confident that there are emergency telephone facilities, I am more concerned with much more mundane telephone facilities to mothers who want to find out what is going on at home or whatever, that sort of thing.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, on that one, Sir, if you have a public telephone booth you have to put in money. If you go to the bar you have got a little portable telephone which you have got to put money in the same way so obviously the answer is still the same, the facilities are there whether it is a booth or just a little instrument, the facilities are there.

HON W T SCOTT:

One final one, Mr Speaker, arising from the last but one answer that the Hon Member made. Does the Government not consider or agree, in fact, that if there is an emergency telephone there, as the Minister said, it is held within the confines of the office or the workroom of the life-guards and that determines that the life-guard has to be there? Where there are no life-guards present because it is before the start of the official bathing season, such an emergency telephone is not available to the public and under those circumstances I feel that the Minister ought to look at it in the light of the recent drowning at Catalan Bay.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I will do that, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Minister saying that every bar in the vicinity of beaches has one of these telephones, that is not my experience?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

He glibly tells us that there are these telephones with an apparatus attached thereto, can he state where these are situated? Has he requisitioned or made the enquiries to put them in or what?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the requisitions come from bars and we put them in. It may be that a particular beach has not got this type of telephone but as the Telephone Department is developing and big strides have taken place since I have been Minister for Municipal Services, I am sure that this problem will be overcome.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, this is beyond the orbit of the question. I think we have ventilated the matter. Next question.

NO. 261 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

What has been the extra revenue to Government since October, 1982, resulting from the metering of telephones broken down into trunk and local calls?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the extra revenue to Government from 1st October, 1982, to 31st March, 1983, has been in the order of £64,000, broken down into £50,000 due to local call metering and £14,000 due to international traffic.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 261 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since the 31st March.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sorry, 31st March, 1982, I beg your pardon, I said 1983.

HON G T RESTANO:

What about since March, 1983?

MR SPEAKER:

But that is not the question you have asked. You have asked: "What has been the extra revenue to Government since October 1982, resulting from the metering of telephones broken down into trunk and local calls?"

HON G T RESTANO:

Since October, 1982, there is a whole quarter which has not been included.

MR SPEAKER:

Fair enough, the quarter has just finished but in any event if the Minister is in a position to reply he can, by all means.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

If the Hon Member will forgive me I do not have figures beyond March, 1983.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, why is that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Because they were not asked for.

HON G T RESTANO:

Surely these meters are being read all the time they are in the department, how is it that it cannot be checked? A whole quarter has gone, two months, three months.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, if the Hon Member wants to know the answer to a specific question he should frame it accordingly. He should not raise it as a supplementary because obviously I try to find the answer to his question and this question does not arise from the original question.

MR SPEAKER:

In any event you are not in a position to give the answer.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry, I cannot accept that. I think it is quite clear; what has the extra revenue to Government been since October, 1982?

MR SPEAKER:

And you have been told that they have figures up to the 31st March, 1983, and that they cannot give the figures beyond that date.

HON G T RESTANO:

But the Minister is saying that it does not arise out of the question, I do not think that he is correct at all.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the last quarter happened to be April, May and June and I certainly have not got the figures for that quarter, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

I think that is reasonable.

HON G T RESTANO:

How long does it normally take to process those figures and when would the Minister have those figures at the end of a quarter?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, again this is a matter for accounting and not for me.

MR SPEAKER:

I think we are wasting time now. The quarter has just ended, he has given you the figures that are available and that the figures for the last quarter are not available, it is as simple as that. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government explain why it has been found necessary to reallocate £4,900 under the Electricity Undertaking for an initial investigation to pay for a preliminary visit by a team of the British Electricity International Company Ltd?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the preliminary visit by a team from the British Electricity International Ltd took place late last year and it was envisaged that the cost would be met from savings and paid before the 31 March, 1983.

In the event the invoice from BEI was not received until the 12 May. To meet this invoice it was decided to reallocate the cost of £4,900 from within Head 4 to a new Subhead 26, Consultancy Services.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 262 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

I think I heard the Minister say that he thought there would be some savings, can he elaborate on that? What savings was he talking about?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, it would be savings from within the vote before the end of the year.

HON G T RESTANO:

In what areas?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Reallocation from within certain sections in Head 4, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

These gentlemen come here for an initial investigation, what have their findings been?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, though I feel it has nothing to do with the original question, let me say that the British Electricity International Ltd is a company formed by the Electricity Council in Britain to deal exclusively with matters concerning overseas Electricity authorities and who provide a consultancy service. This company belongs entirely to the Electricity Council which is a nationalised body but beyond that I am afraid this does not form part of the question, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, these gentlemen have come out to gather data for the proposed revision of the existing form of productivity agreements in the department. Don't we have, Mr Speaker, a Steering Committee in the Electricity Department looking at precisely this area?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, the Steering Committee is looking into a lot of areas. As the Hon Member has said, the purpose of the visit was to investigate the feasibility of introducing productivity schemes on the lines of those operated by the Central Electricity Generating Board and the Area Boards in the United Kingdom. If this takes place then the present productivity scheme will not continue and the productivity scheme produced by the Central Electricity Generating Board will be the order of the day, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, that is going at a complete tangent from the question that I asked. There is a Steering Committee which is costing a lot of money, the Chairman is costing a lot of money, which has been set up in order to cover areas, I believe, such as productivity agreements. Why is it necessary, if the Steering Committee is looking into that, to bring in somebody else, this other company, to also look into the productivity agreements, is it that the Steering Committee cannot do it?

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked a simple question. If the Steering Committee is dealing with productivity why has there been a need to bring these gentlemen to advise on productivity, it is as simple as that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Essentially, Mr Speaker, because they need further advice on this problem.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it then that the Steering Committee cannot reach agreement and these gentlemen are out as sort of mediators?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, not at all, Mr Speaker. All that is required is data for the Steering Committee and this data is supplied by BEI.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will they be coming again and if so for how long will they be coming and what is the eventual cost?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

How long can a question be stringed along further and further on immaterial matters which arise from the question?

MR SPEAKER:

Well, I think it is fair enough to ask are they coming again, to your knowledge. If you do not know of course you do not have to reply.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, they may well be coming along, Sir, because this is difficult to say. As far as I know, should they come, the visits would be for a limited amount of time and very short.

HON G T RESTANO:

He doesn't know what it would cost?

MR SPEAKER:

No.

HON G T RESTANO:

I must say, Mr Speaker, as far as the Chief Minister is concerned, when he says that we are stringing questions along . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not going to have a debate as to whether the Chief Minister has made a statement.

HON G T RESTANO:

He has made a statement.

MR SPEAKER:

And I have allowed the question to be asked and that is the end of the matter. Next question.



THE HON G T RESTANO

What plans do Government have to train staff of the Electricity Department in advance in order that their training is completed by the time the Department is in a position to take over and run the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the training which will be provided can be categorised under three main headings:

- a. Training at the Manufacturers Works
- b. On-the-job training at site
- c. Off-the-job training at site

While no final decision has been taken on the actual nature and extent of training, primarily because manufacturers of key plant items are in the process of up-dating courses, it can be said that training will be provided in the following subjects:

1. General Design Principles

A short series of lectures aimed at ensuring that the selection of plant, materials employed and layout adopted are understood.

2. Maintenance Techniques and Practices

A short series of briefings and informal discussions with the sole purpose of explaining the approach that is generally required in these areas.

3. Diesel Engines Principles and Practice

A combination of a period of training at the manufacturers works, on-the-job training under the guidance of representative(s) of the manufacturer and off-the-job lectures/discussions specifically designed for the Major Mk III engine.

4. Steam Raising Plant and Equipment

Talks by a manufacturers representative explaining the principles of operation.

5. Fuel Treatment

Lectures and films on the techniques employed and parameters to be maintained for efficient operation.

6. Plant Operation

A period of local on-the-job and off-the-job training allowing employees the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the nature, layout and procedures necessary for the safe and efficient operation of the Station.

It is obvious that the nature and extent of training under Item 6 above will require a certain overlapping between operation by Hawker Siddeley Power Engineering personnel and Electricity Department staff and, furthermore, that staff cannot be trained until they are selected to fill posts at the new Station. Priority has therefore to be given to training directed at ensuring safe and efficient plant operation in order to allow the earliest possible release of the contractors personnel.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 263 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Since it appears that there is going to be this overlap, Mr Speaker, what period of overlap does the Minister envisage there will be?

MR SPEAKER:

Overlap of what?

HON G T RESTANO:

Overlap between the contractors being on site and the department taking over.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, this is impossible to say. Until the people are selected no training can be put into effect and the training will be initially aimed at releasing the contractors' personnel as soon as possible. Certain candidates will be interviewed shortly and this will be put into hand as soon as possible. Obviously, the sooner we release people from the contractors and we put on our own people the more money we are saving.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, have the people not been appointed yet because the Steering Committee has not reached decisions on certain areas, is that the position?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir, if you look at your Chronicle you will find out that certain posts are being advertised and in fact following another question, and I have got the answer here, certain posts have been advertised initially within because this is Government procedure, and outside Government service, and interviews are expected to be held shortly. Therefore this has nothing to do with the Interim Committee at the present moment, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask then, Mr Speaker, why have they taken so long to select people because after all the engines have been ready since the beginning of this year and one of them since November of last year. Why are they taking such an awful long time to start advertising for posts?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Because, Mr Speaker, discussions were being held in the Interim Committee as to the manning of the Station and the requirements of personnel to man the Station.

HON P J ISOLA:

How can the Minister tell the House that the Waterport Power Station will be opened in the autumn when he has not even started to train the people who are going to man it?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I did answer a question like this previously, in fact, I think it was from the Hon Member himself. I said that the Mark III engine is very much like some of the engines we have got at Waterport and that training, though we want extensive training, can take place on-the-job in a matter of weeks and I assure the Hon Member that the opening of the Waterport Power Station will take place in autumn as planned.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it the intention of the Government to open the Waterport Power Station with Hawker Siddeley in command and if so, why not open it now since they are already in command or in charge and running it?

MR SPEAKER:

With respect to the Leader of the Opposition, we are now widening the scope of the question. We are dealing with the training but nothing else.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, he also asked this question last time. What we want to do is to put there people of our own choosing and chosen by the Government of Gibraltar and this is one of the reasons why the Generating Station will be fully opened in September. Let me say that the official opening of the Generating Station is really a formality.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, why hasn't that formality been carried out before then if it is a formality? It is there, it is operating, why should it await the training of these people?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, because Government considers that the best time to open this Generating Station is in the autumn.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not an unwise principle to do training on brand new machinery? You would not expect a learner to start learning with a brand new car. Is it not unwise, if they are going to start learning on these machines, shouldn't they be sent, perhaps, to UK?

MR SPEAKER:

I do not think it has been suggested that they are going to employ new personnel, I think what has been suggested is that they have advertised within the service and the Minister has said that they are qualified enough to be able to operate the machines and that the training will take a few weeks of exercising the machines.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think he said that in some areas but not in others.

MR. SPEAKER:

No, he said that now, most certainly, I have heard it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I correct my Hon Friend. For him to refer to the machinery as new, is that not actually wrong? Have the machines not been there and working for a good many months, running almost into a year?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 264 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, will Government inform this House of the number of personnel used by the contractor, at any given time, since the latter took over the running of the new Generating Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the total number of staff used by Hawker Siddeley Power Engineering Ltd for the continuation of the extended testing of Waterport Power Station has been eighteen.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 264 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I am not asking for the total number, I am asking at any given time since the latter took over the running, not the testing, that was the question.

MR. SPEAKER:

I think, with respect, it is impossible to give an answer to your question. At any given time could be at any minute of the day and unless you specify what you want I think the answer has been given.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I am saying the running of the Station, not the testing of it.

MR SPEAKER:

That is another matter, if you wish to ask whether that is for the running or for the testing.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said the total number of staff used, I have not said running or testing or anything else.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, you have said testing, "the continuation of the extended testing of Waterport Power Station".

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The extended testing of Waterport Power Station has been eighteen, or the extended running.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I find that whereas a few months ago we were given a cost of something like £19,000-plus that it was costing the Government for HSPE to run that Station, I see now on the Schedule of Supplementary Estimates that figure is now £26,000. Am I right in assuming, Mr Speaker, that if one divides £26,000 which is the weekly cost to Government of HSPE running that Station, that we are now looking at a figure of almost £1,500 per employee that HSPE is charging the local Government?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think the Hon Member could ask this supplementary at the next question.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, I think we are anticipating. Next question.

NO. 265 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state whether the cost to date for the contractors operating the Waterport Power Station since the commissioning of the engines there owing to Government's inability to run the Station has increased from the £686,812 stated in the last meeting of this House and if so what is the latest figure?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the cost to date for the contractors operating Waterport Power Station is £765,518. This figure includes £353,573 being funded under the contract.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 265 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

This is an enormous sum, Mr Speaker, what is the Minister doing to try and obviate having to pay already over £<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>m for a Waterport Power Station which is there, which is running and which should have already been taken over by the Government?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, here really we again refer to a later question on the Steering Committee because this has got to do with negotiations within the Steering Committee which I believe is the last question on the electricity which is asked by the Hon Member. What I am doing is I am trying to hasten the process so that as little money as possible will be spent by Government in providing a first class service. I would not like to repeat what I said in the last House which the Hon Member took exception to about the Waterport Power Station costing a lot of money etc, etc, but certainly I am doing everything in my power to make sure that Waterport Power Station when it comes on stream we can be proud of, it is run properly and according to present practices and that we do not have any problems that may arise that may lead to the detriment of the running of the Station. One of the questions asked by the Hon Mr Scott, I have got the figure here, the figure is £19,676 per week.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, would the Minister not agree that in days where we are continually being told by Ministers that the money is in short supply, for the Government to have spent £<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>m already and perhaps going on for more for that sort of a service, has been throwing money down the drain and complete and utter mismanagement.

MR SPEAKER:

What is the answer, yes or no, that is about all you can answer? Does the Minister intend to answer?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker. I certainly cannot agree that Government has been throwing money down the drain, Sir, I am sorry but I cannot agree with the Hon Member.

HON A T LODDO:

Could I ask the Minister, in this sum now which has gone up from £686,000 to £765,000, does that amount take into consideration the cost of flying out the wives of the engineers operating the plant and is Government paying for this, is it entitled to pay for this?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, if I can revert to Question No. 264 on the eighteen people manning the Station. This is a skeleton staff and these are the people we are paying for. Replacements eg, illnesses or leave are not a contractual expenditure.

MR SPEAKER:

No, let us not expand the orbit of the question. You have been asked whether it includes the cost of flying out the wives of the staff, yes or no?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Similarly expenses about wives or children coming to Gibraltar etc, are expenses not borne by Government.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, presumably you applied some liberality because we moved from Question 264 to 265 without me having had a chance to progress a little bit on the argument. Mr Speaker, am I right in assuming that the new Generating Station is being run 24 hours a day and on most occasions both engines are running?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, the Waterport Generating Station is being run 24 hours a day. As to whether both engines are running it really depends on the load factor.

HON W T SCOTT:

Under those circumstances, Mr Speaker, will the Minister not agree that King's Bastion is working at a very low capacity and there are occasions when King's Bastion does not work at all?



HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I agree with the Hon. Member, there are times when King's Bastion is working at a low capacity or King's Bastion is not working at all but he must realise that the engines at Waterport Power Station will need overhaul and when they need overhaul then the engines at King's Bastion will have to take over.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, there is one final question. Would the Minister not agree therefore if that is the case that we would have expected to have seen a very substantial decrease in the cost of running King's Bastion?

MR SPEAKER:

No, this is completely out of order. The question is very clear, the question is on Waterport and not on King's Bastion.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, Mr Speaker, I do not want the information now but if the Minister would like to circulate it to me at a later stage. Could I have a breakdown in broad headlines of how this £765,000 has been spent, in broad areas?

MR SPEAKER:

Will the Minister make that information available in due course?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, yes, it depends how long the House lasts and obviously I have to contact the Financial Secretary but as soon as I am able I shall write a letter to the Hon Member explaining how the sum has been broken down.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, am I right in thinking that in effect Gibraltar's power needs are presently being supplied by eighteen men from Hawker Siddeley?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has just said to my Hon Friend Mr Scott that King's Bastion is working at a very low capacity.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir, Gibraltar's power requirements are being provided by the two engines at Waterport and when necessary the engines at King's Bastion. The question of men I do not think has any bearing with the amount of power that we obtain from these Stations.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have got the breakdown of the £686,442 if the House wants that now. Operation costs - £594,553.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is it a long list?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, perhaps, it could be photocopied and circulated, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has told us he hopes to open Waterport Power Station as an election gimmick, will he be running the department at that time?

MR SPEAKER:

No, next question.

NO. 266 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what has been the cost of clearing the debris caused by demolishing the walls of the old skid generator site in Line Wall Road?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the cost of clearing the debris caused by demolishing the walls and generator foundations at the skid generator site amounted to approximately £400.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 266 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, is this in addition to the answer the Minister gave me of £2,800 as a result of Question No. 128?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, otherwise I would not have allowed the question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

Doesn't the Minister think that having regard to the question I put he might perhaps have been less than fair in not including that figure of £400 at the time that he gave me the original answer?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, obviously because I did not have it.

MR SPEAKER:

It had not been cleared at the time. Next question.

NO. 267 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is Government in a position to state what were the total costs for the hire of the skid and trailer-mounted generators?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

No, Sir. A final account for hire charges for the skid generators has as yet not been submitted by the plant hire firm. The trailer-mounted generator had a total cost of £120,020.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 267 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

But, surely, the Minister knows how much hire he was having to pay, he should know how much the total costs are?

MR SPEAKER:

No, in fairness, you have asked for the total costs and the Minister has said he has not got the total cost, well, he has not got them. Whether he should have them or not is another matter because otherwise we go on endlessly.

HON G T RESTANO:

With all due respect, Mr Speaker, he has said that he does not have the total costs because he has not been charged by the hirers but surely he knows what the hire charges are and therefore he must know.

MR SPEAKER:

No, because there may be elements, with respect, and I am not going to answer questions, but it is very obvious, there may be elements of the costs which have not been disclosed yet by the contractors, it is as simple as that. If you had not been asking for the total costs then perhaps you would be entitled but you asked for the total costs and he has said that until such time as he is invoiced he does not know what the total costs will be. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Government state whether the cost to date of the Chairman of the Electricity Department's Steering Committee has increased from the £71,499.93 stated in the last meeting of the House of Assembly and if so what is the latest figure and furthermore how many more days has the Chairman spent in Gibraltar on official business?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the cost of the Chairman of the Electricity Department's Steering Committee has increased by £15,732.87 from £71,499.93 to £87,232.80 covering the period 16 May to 30 June, 1983.

The Chairman has spent a further 28 days in Gibraltar in his official capacity, during the same period.

In addition to the number of days spent in Gibraltar in his official capacity, the Chairman has undertaken work in the United Kingdom with Messrs British Electricity International Limited, in connection with the Steering Committee's work.

This was done on 2 and 3 June, 1983, at a cost of £718.40. These figures are reflected in the total cost of £87,232.80.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 268 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I noticed last time that we asked a question on this it was worked out that the Chairman was getting in the region of £400 for every day that he worked. Now I see that the figure on the £15,732 that has been given, has gone to over £550 per day, why is it costing more now?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, first of all let me answer one thing, that the Chairman of the Steering Committee is not getting paid, we pay the Industrial Society and as I mentioned in Question No. 197 of 1983 and I repeat: "This takes into account the fact that from that date the Industrial Society is charging a flat rate of £1,250 per week instead of the daily rate of £250. The previous average weekly cost of the Chairman was £1,940 per week. It should also be noted that the Industrial Society fees charged to the Gibraltar Government are considerably lower than the rates applicable to those in the United Kingdom for similar consultancies". The Hon Member has suggested that the cost has gone up but if he would allow me to have a look at the figures because I do not have the figures broken down, I can break down the figures and this afternoon or tomorrow morning I can provide him with the answer he requires. I think the question that he asked was why had the figures gone up, wasn't it?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the correct question is why has the average spending gone up because I do not think it has even been said in this House that the paying by Government is based on a fixed amount and it is a question of an average going up, is that correct?

HON G T RESTANO:

In May when this was aired it cost the Government £400 for every day that this man was used and since that meeting there has been an extra added expense of £15,732, forget the £732, that is covered by something else, for 28 days of this man's time and that is nearly £550, that is a 25% increase.

MR SPEAKER:

We will leave it at that and you will get the information. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would the Minister for Municipal Services now outline the areas where agreement has been reached in the Electricity Department's Steering Committee and also the areas where agreement has not yet been reached?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Electricity Department's Steering Committee has now commenced consideration on the draft document of agreement. I trust that the Hon Member will agree that outlining the contents of the document would not be in the general interest of the public at this crucial point in time nor of assistance to the Committee at this stage. However, I am satisfied that very substantial progress has been made.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 269 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Did the Minister say the drafting of all the agreed points is being done?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The draft document.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it being prepared or it has been prepared?

MR SPEAKER:

It is considering the draft document so the draft must have been prepared.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean that the Committee has made its agreements, has it come to final agreement if they are now preparing the draft document?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The Hon Member must remember that the Steering Committee consists of the Staff Side and the Administration Side. What has been put forward is a draft document of agreement and this document of agreement will now be perused by the people involved in the Steering Committee and I am extremely hopeful that very great progress has been maintained and that substantial progress has been made. Let me say as well that negotiations, obviously, on the draft document of agreement will continue since the draft, obviously, is not the final document.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask, first of all, Mr Speaker, who in fact has prepared the draft, is it one side of the Committee?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, it is very obvious who has prepared the draft. The Steering Committee has met umpteen times, they have produced a draft document with a view to discuss, I have not been there myself but I think it is obvious that they are not considering the draft agreement for the purposes of coming to a consensus. I think it is clear.

HON G T RESTANO:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not think so.

MR SPEAKER:

I do not think we should get involved with the particular workings of the Committee.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, I would like to know, Mr Speaker, there are two sides to that Committee, there is management and there is staff.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, there is one Committee consisting of different representation and the Committee has prepared a draft which it is considering. As I say, I am not privy to anything that has happened in the Committee but from what has been said in this House it is very obvious and clear.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, if it comes from the Committee then does it mean that they have reached agreement in all areas?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, I am not prolonging the agony and that is what we are doing.

HON P J ISOLA:

If this is a draft document of agreement then it does not matter who draws it up but the fact there is a draft document of agreement surely implies that agreement has been reached on everything and a draft document embodying those agreements is being prepared and that is what my Hon Friend wants to know.



MR SPEAKER:

With due respect to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition, the answer has been that the Electricity Department's Steering Committee has now commenced consideration on the draft document of agreement which they have prepared, I think that is obvious, and they are considering now whether they have included in this agreement what has been agreed upon by all parties, I think that must be obvious because otherwise we are going round in circles.

HON P J ISOLA:

The trouble is, Mr Speaker, with respect to the Minister, we have never had a straight answer on what the Steering Committee is doing and what it has agreed on. We are fobbed off in every meeting with progress and so forth. The latest fob is this one, a draft document of agreement. Normally, if I make an agreement with somebody and we get to the stage where we are agreed on everything, then we do a draft document and there you decide whether in fact we have put in everything that we have agreed.

MR SPEAKER:

And that is what is happening.

HON P J ISOLA:

We are asking the Minister, and he has not answered that, Mr Speaker, with the greatest respect. What we are asking the Minister is, is it his view because the draft document of agreement is being put forward, that there has in fact, subject to approval of the agreement, been agreement on all outstanding matters?

MR SPEAKER:

With respect to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition what the Hon Mr Restano asked is who has prepared this agreement and that is where I interrupted but in any event let us have an answer to your question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, one thing I would like to point out to the Hon and Learned Mr Isola is that talks between staff and management on this problem are confidential and have to be kept confidential. Therefore, press me as he may in this House to let him know what is going on and what is not going on I cannot in honour tell him exactly what is happening or what progress the Steering Committee has reached. I am sure that he, as a very intelligent man, is able to appreciate this fact and I am very sorry but I can only go as far as saying that progress is being maintained. One day, possibly in the near future, I will be able to give him details of any agreements that they have made but until then I am limited to what I can say and I think that really explains my answers in the last House and in this House to the Hon Member in a nutshell.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, will not the Minister agree that he has a very big responsibility to this House especially since he has now asked us to vote close on £1m to keep that Steering Committee in being and does he not think that this House deserves some explanation, and through this House the public, of this enormous public expenditure of monies on this secret cabal, if I may call it that, this secret committee, which seems to have no answers to any questions but continues to spend public monies to the tune of nearly £1m?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have an enormous commitment to the House and I have always shown it. Let me go back to an answer which I gave him previously when he asked me . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, we must not extend the question, let us leave it at that. We have ventilated the matter as far as we can at question time.

HON J BOSSANO:

I would like the Hon Minister to state quite categorically, Mr Speaker, that the Steering Committee is not responsible for spending one penny of public money and has not spent one penny of the million pounds which the Hon Leader of the Opposition said the Steering Committee has spent.

HON P J ISOLA:

No, the Minister has.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am asking the Hon Member to state that quite categorically because I certainly think the people in the Steering Committee will not accept responsibility for spending public monies.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that, I think Mr Bossano has clarified the point he wanted to clarify.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to clarify from this side of the House. I am asking the Minister to confirm whether it is correct to say that the Steering Committee has not spent one penny of public money.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I imagine the Hon Mr Bossano is referring to Waterport and Hawker Siddeley and there I completely agree with him that the Steering Committee has not spent even a halfpenny of public monies.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister confirm that as a result of the prolongation of the discussions in the Steering Committee as a result of the sheer inability of management and employees to come to an agreement, the cost to the Gibraltar taxpayer is almost £1m?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, if I may, the only thing I can say is that, as a result of the Steering Committee, in future years we may be saved a lot of further millions of pounds due to the proper running of Waterport Power Station.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the average waiting time for those applicants classified as "social cases"?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, waiting time by social cases is determined by availability of pre-war accommodation and by the order of priority awarded on its merit to each case by the Housing Advisory Committee.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 270 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I want to know whether the impetus that was achieved in attending to social cases last year has been maintained or not?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, if I could have worked out the average waiting time I would have given it. It is impossible to work out the average time because there are two factors involved. First is the factor of merit and then the factor of availability. You could have top grade merit and not have any house available so it could take a year. You could have merit and availability of housing and it could take a matter of weeks so it is impossible to arrive at an average.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, surely the average is what is the length of time that the longest classified social case has been waiting and what is the time that the quickest one has been housed?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

That is the average of two, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

If that is done with slightly more than one but with a few of them would give you the average. Mr Speaker, the point is will the Minister confirm that fewer social cases have been housed in the year 1983 than last year?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Possibly so, the thing is that there are not so many houses available at this time. The more social cases you fit in the less housing you have available.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, we will have to start off another campaign in order to get priority given to social cases again. Will the Minister confirm that there are in excess of 200 empty houses in Gibraltar?

MR SPEAKER:

You do not have to answer that question.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Was that no he won't confirm it, not it is not true or no what?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, I will not confirm it.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would the Minister want me to send him the list that I was given by his predecessor or not? Mr Speaker, I think the Minister is being obstreperous.

MR SPEAKER:

With respect to the Questioner, the question you have just asked has no relevance to the original question.

HON A J HAYNES:

But surely if there are over 200 empty houses . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

You wanted to know the average waiting time for those applicants classified as social cases and the Minister has told you that he cannot give you that average because it is unworkable. Whether it is correct or not is another matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, last March I asked a question in relation to social cases again: "How many have been housed as a result of being classified as social cases"? If I deviate one iota from that I am told to give separate notice. Does that mean I have to write

an essay instead of a question? Surely the Minister all he wants to know is the subject on which I have to ask a question and not continually hide behind the little prerogative of notice.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government publish the waiting list for housing applicants scheduled under the Catalan Bay waiting list, and will Government state the average waiting time for the first ten applicants in any category as compared to the waiting time in the general housing list?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, up to now no waiting list has been published in respect of Catalan Bay. However, such a list has been in preparation over the last quarter and will be published in the future on a quarterly basis. The first such list will be published shortly showing the position at the end of June, 1983.

It is very difficult to compute the comparative average times requested.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 271 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Again, surely, Mr Speaker, it is a matter of mathematics. The first ten may have been waiting two years, one year, three years or whatever. Isn't that the case, Mr Speaker? Will the Minister confirm that the computation is a simple mathematical calculation?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is that he cannot give you the average. Whether he should or he should not is another matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that in previous years we asked for the list to be published of the general housing list and we were told that it required fourteen secretaries and it was impossible to do and that subsequently a Minister came in and did it?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will Government confirm that the average waiting time for the first ten in the general housing list is far greater than the average waiting time for the first ten in the Catalan Bay list?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is that no he won't confirm it or no it is true?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will not confirm it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether or not they have completed their survey to determine the number of tenants who are overhoused?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the survey on overhousing has not yet been completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 272 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister nevertheless give us any indication as to the amount of transfers it is hoped to achieve as a result of this survey?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir, obviously, because I have not got the survey.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has he got any figures in relation to the survey?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the survey being well responded, are people writing in giving any information?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The main cause for the delay has been the lack of cooperation of a great number of tenants by not answering the questionnaire sent to them and also the fact that the staff of the Housing Department were recently involved with the preparation of the rent increases.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sir, may I remind the present Minister what one of his predecessors said in March, 1983. In relation to this he said: "I think the response has been quite good so far". So which is it, one Minister says it is a good response and the next one says it is awful?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The initial response was good, afterwards it petered out.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister state what percentage of replies . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, he has given an answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

I won't ask another mathematical question, Mr Speaker. Can I have a date question? Can the Minister tell us when he anticipates the survey will be produced?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, no Member opposite will ever get me to give a date and then be accused that the date has not been met so I will not give a date.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Is Government satisfied with the administrative organisation of the Industrial Tribunal and will Government consider appointing Justices of the Peace to the Tribunal or in some other way facilitate the administrative organisation of the Tribunal?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

No, Sir. The Government is not satisfied with the existing administrative arrangements for the Industrial Tribunals and is looking into ways of improving the situation with a view to getting appeals dealt with more quickly.

The Government would not consider appointing Justices of the Peace to the Tribunals for the following reasons:

- (a) No difficulties are encountered with the appointment of a Chairman for the Tribunals and the delays in dealing with appeals do not arise in this respect.
- (b) It is the practice in the UK to appoint legally qualified practitioners to chair Industrial Tribunals and it is intended to continue to follow this practice in Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 273 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am glad that the Government has accepted that it is not functioning satisfactorily but there does seem to be a discrepancy. My information as to why it functions or malfunctions is that in part there is difficulty as regards the availability of a Chairman. Will the Minister, having said that that is not the case, outline what he considers to be the main problems in respect of the Tribunal?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will repeat that there is no difficulty with the present Chairman. The main difficulty lies in getting all the parties concerned to agree to dates for hearings despite the fact that the Chairman has the power to fix such dates arbitrarily. Pressure of work within departments which leads to delays in preparing cases for submission to the Tribunal, recent increases in the manning levels in the department should lead to speedier action in the future, difficulties in obtaining a suitable venue for holding public hearings despite full cooperation received in this respect from the Director of John Mackintosh Hall.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that one of the Chairmen of the Tribunal at his last or one of the last judgements he gave indicated in the end there was a requirement for alternative Chairmen and an increase in the Tribunal to be made?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister for Labour and Social Security also confirm that the Tribunal whilst having a lawyer does not mean that the Justices of the Peace are excluded from it since they also have lawyers in their number?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is a different matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

The question is, will Government consider appointing Justices of the Peace?

MR SPEAKER:

They have said no.

HON A J HAYNES:

They have said no on the basis that they are not legally qualified.

MR SPEAKER:

They have said no and they have given some reasons for it.

HON A J HAYNES:

My understanding of the answer is that in part the reasons for including Justices of the Peace is that the Government require a legally trained person to be the Chairman.

MR SPEAKER:

No, the reason is that they have followed the practice in the United Kingdom whereby the Chairman is a legally qualified practitioner and they are satisfied with that system. It is as simple as that, that is what you have been told.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will Government reconsider their decision as regards the use of Justices of the Peace especially where a Tribunal or a Bench of Justices could be made up which includes legal practitioners?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

My favourite word, Mr Speaker, no.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Government tell us when they expect the Tribunal to be functioning properly or to their satisfaction?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No date, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the present waiting time for an application to the Tribunal is in excess of two years?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that the Hon Member wishes to introduce the question of Justices of the Peace. I think it is a very salutary thing for members of the Bar with a certain amount of years practice, eight or ten years practice, to take on as they have done, to take on this assignment to Chair Tribunals and it is spread out in the Bar reasonably evenly, those who want to do it, (a) because first of all they get paid, not very well but they get paid, and (b) because it gives members of the legal profession an element of judicial initiation and practice which I think is very helpful, generally, for the administration of justice.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, we already know that it is not functioning, there is a two year waiting list for anybody who has a claim of being unfairly dismissed.

MR SPEAKER:

I think in fairness to the administration it has been made very clear that if it is not working it has been through no lack of finding a Chairman.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I have already pointed out to the Minister that one of the Chairman's ruling . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

We are arguing now. If you wish to ask a question you are free to do so.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am reminded by my Hon Colleague, I have not received an answer yet to the question I asked last which was what is the average waiting time for an application to the Industrial Tribunal, is it two years?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I have no idea, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

For a Minister who is not satisfied with the way that something is functioning he seems to be remarkably ill-informed, how did he take the view that it was not functioning well, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 274 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government make a statement informing this House of the investigations it has carried out on the possibility of introducing a Youth Opportunities or a Youth Training Programme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the possibility of introducing a Youth Opportunities or Youth Training Programme is tied to the setting up of the College of Further Education and a statement on the matter will be made once the arrangements to set up the College are finalised.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 274 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, does the Government not think it advisable that that pilot scheme at the Construction Industry Training Centre, the training scheme which unfortunately has not met with the success originally envisaged, should not be further extended to cover areas normally covered by Youth Opportunities or Youth Training Programmes before the College of Further Education starts working because it seems to me, Mr Speaker, that we now have the highest ever figure of youth unemployment, I think the last figure is 116, at a time when the school has not broken up for the summer?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, as a matter of fact as at 11 am this morning the applications received for the Youth Training Scheme is 35 and the closing date is the 15th July so I think this year the scheme is getting off the ground quite well. I still look at this type of scheme as a proving ground for types of youth careers training. I would like to see this working properly before I can venture out into others.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I am saying again, is it not advisable for Government and it already has waited two years and one is glad to hear that the reaction this year is now substantially greater than last year but is it not time, after having waited two years, that we should have some initiative in some other direction of youth employment for the benefit of our youth in Gibraltar?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think, Mr Speaker, that if I have this kind of encouraging reply I can move into other directions, I am not prepared to move into other directions until I know that the attitude of the young people is changing and they are prepared to deal with other aspects of training which they have not looked at before.

HON W T SCOTT:

I would agree with that, Mr Speaker, in part, but how can we have a change of attitude if the opportunities are not there? We can certainly blame them for not taking up the opportunities but unless the opportunity is offered to them we can hardly blame them for having that attitude and will the Minister comment on that?

MR SPEAKER:

No, not comment, it is a question of information.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, all I have to say is that the whole question is tied up with Further Education. We are going ahead with Further Education and when this comes up I will in fact ask the Hon Member, if we are still both here, to come to my office and we can discuss programmes because I know he has shown a great interest in this and I am very willing to cooperate with him at all times.

HON W T SCOTT:

One point, Mr Speaker, and that is that I disagree with the Hon Member when he talks about Further Education. We are talking about youth unemployment.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, Sir, why has Government not brought the appropriate amendment to the Control of Employment Ordinance to this meeting of the House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the Hon Member has evidently not read the Agenda for this meeting before putting his question. A Bill to amend the Control of Employment Ordinance will be submitted to the House at a later stage in the proceedings.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 275 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, it was precisely because after having received the Agenda three or four days before notice of questions had to be given and I waited three or four days and by the time the notice for questions came up, Mr Speaker, the Bill had not been published, in fact, we only got it yesterday and I am asking the Government and I did this knowingly and very purposely, Mr Speaker, whether again they are going to seek the suspension of Standing Orders?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I am glad he did it on purpose, he obviously reads his Agenda. We are bringing a Bill and we do not intend to rush it through without due consideration by the House.

HON W T SCOTT:

I do not know, Mr Speaker, because we have the whole Bill in its entirety in this meeting, First and Second Readings and Third Stage, the whole Bill.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

We intend to suspend Standing Orders.

HON W T SCOTT:

With one day's notice.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

If I may just clarify. It is not intended to take this Bill through all stages and I will explain why it was not published earlier when it comes up.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 276 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Have consultations now taken place with the Chamber of Commerce and the TGWU on the question of the Shop Hours Ordinance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, a meeting of the reconstituted Labour Advisory Board was called for Monday 27 June specifically to discuss the question of the Shop Hours Ordinance.

The meeting had to be cancelled at the last moment because of the inability of certain members to attend, and a further meeting has been called to discuss the matter on 13 July, 1983. I must add, Mr Speaker, that this meeting has also now been postponed because of different representations to the Committee made by the Union side.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the costs involved in the Trade Promotions of the Tourist Department incurred this year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the Gibraltar Tourist Office has conducted three Trade Promotions this year, two in UK and one in Morocco. The cost incurred in these promotions was £8,599.48.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 277 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Can we have a breakdown of that, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the breakdown is quite lengthy but I am prepared to give it. January 31st - February 3rd - visiting Swindon, Stockport, Huddersfield and Wakefield. Swindon - accommodation £189.85, buffet £475.97, a total cost of £665.82. Stockport - accommodation £160.01, buffet £698.21, total £858.22. Huddersfield - accommodation £150.62, buffet £497.77, total cost £649.39. Wakefield - accommodation £301.53, buffet £390.54, total £692.07. The Minister's passage and allowance £523. February 28th to March 3rd - visiting Newcastle, Middlesborough . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Is this going on for long?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

There is not very much more, Mr Speaker. Visiting Newcastle, Middlesborough, York and Nottingham. Newcastle - accommodation £229.48, buffet £773.94, total £1,003.45. Middlesborough - accommodation £173.22, buffet £840.01, total £1,013.31. York - accommodation £160.40, buffet £350, total £511.39. Nottingham - accommodation £174.55, buffet £992, total £1,166.55. Minister's passage and subsistence allowance £523 and the audio visual equipment was £684.54. Regarding Morocco, Mr Speaker, between January 18th and 21st, visiting Fez, Kenitra, Rabat and Casablanca total cost was £309.77. Subsistence allowance was £258.61 for the Director, passage £23, incidental expenses £28.16. total £309.77.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say how many people were involved in these promotion trips from the department?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I can from memory; Mr Speaker, say that invariably about 100 to 130 people turn up to our trade promotions in the UK, that is travel agents, tour operators.

MR SPEAKER:

I do not think that is the question you are being asked. The question you are being asked is how many people are involved in these promotion trips from the department.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, the only person who travels from Gibraltar is myself. I do not go to Morocco, the Director does Morocco. The team consists, of course, of the London Office Manager and a young Clerical Officer, our projectionist from Lonsdale, our public relations person Mr David Berrill from the advertising agents and then we are joined up by a representative of Cadogan, Exchange Travel, Both Worlds, Yorkshire Travel.

MR SPEAKER:

Again I am going to have to interrupt you. You are being asked how many people are involved insofar as the expenses and costs are concerned.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We only pay for our advertising agents, our public relations, the Office Manager, the Clerical Officer and the projectionist. My allowance, of course, covers my own hotel accommodation.

HON A J HAYNES:

These costs are for about four or five people, is that correct?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Or five or six.

HON A J HAYNES:

The Minister said, Mr Speaker, that on average he would be received by 130 travel agents, is that correct? At every function, at every speech you give or whatever there is about 130 representatives of the tourist trade, is that correct?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, on average, of course it depends on what area one is visiting but if one is doing Newcastle or Nottingham then one would expect in that region, our turnouts are very, very good indeed.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, in the light of what he experienced in these presentations, could the Minister say whether he is now optimistic, pessimistic or in despair about the chances of Gibraltar progressing as a tourist resort?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think, Mr Speaker, there is a question coming up from the Hon Member later on on this. Certainly in the immediate future I think we can do no better than what we are doing, quite honestly, with the present recession that tourism in general is suffering.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What I am asking for is his reaction. What sort of reaction did he find from the people, most of them I suppose are people who keep coming back again to these presentations and what sort of hope did he get from what he heard from those representatives?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the reaction one gets is the reaction one has always been getting (a) the cost factor of Gibraltar makes things difficult, the departure of our aircraft from England does not help us . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to go into that aspect of it. You are being asked what reaction you get from your promotions.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That is the reaction we get from our tour operators and travel agents that they do send people through but they could send more through if our price structure was more in competitive lines with other destinations, if our planes had a different departure time, the strength of the pound. That there is an interest in Gibraltar, of that there is no doubt.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services state how many tourist operators in the United Kingdom have been visited by his department in the last six months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the number of tourist operators in the United Kingdom visited by the Tourist Office during the last six months was 283, covering 65 towns.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 278 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I just wonder whether the Minister has got the question right. I was not referring to travel agencies but actual tour operators.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

These are travel agents and tour operators which we have visited. I should say, Mr Speaker, that for the last year, although the question does not ask it, we have taken on a Mr Berrill from Lonsdale to work for Gibraltar to visit tour operators and travel agents and the figure, of course, since he started off is 405 tourist outlets.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I think perhaps he has not got my question right. What I mean by tour operators is people who organise tourism as such like Thomson Tours and firms like that. How many of these, 400? Or are they agencies which is a different thing altogether?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well, Mr Speaker, tourist operators are not tour operators. Tourist operators are Exchange Travel, all those people, and the answer is that we have visited 283 over the last six months. Well, not all tour operators, tour operators and travel agents.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could he say how many tour operators as distinct from travel agents?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, I could not say that is the figure, Mr Speaker, because I took it as how many outlets or tourist operators.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister find out and let me know?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Certainly.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

(3)

NO. 279 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism and Postal Services state what the hotel occupancy is likely to be this summer?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, it is rather risky to attempt forecasts in what is a volatile industry. However, the hotel occupancy expectation for this summer is not encouraging unless there is an improved response in late bookings from the traditional UK market. It is calculated that this summer hotel occupancy would be approximately 50%.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 279 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

And that compares with last year, higher or lower than last year?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It is slightly lower than last year, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 280 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, has Government any plans for the opening of the Nun's Well as a tourist site?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Government agrees that this historical site could well be very attractive to tourists, perhaps as part of a "Southern Tour", which would also include the 100-ton gun, the Lighthouse and the Shrine of Our Lady of Europe.

However, the cost involved in making the Nun's Well into a tourist site would need to be considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 280 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, will the Government consider this but as a matter of urgency considering or taking into account that our tourist industry is in such a bad way?

MR SPEAKER:

Could we perhaps be enlightened, where is the Nun's Well?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Nun's Well, Sir, is an area near Europa Lighthouse. It is very attractive, it is a chamber below ground level which was an old well and it has mosaics going back to the year dot, a very attractive area but again it is certainly being considered together with other historical sites.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, my last question was will the Government, considering the crisis which the tourist industry is going through and considering the potential there is for the development of this whole area taking into account the old whipping post which is a national monument, will the Government look into the development of the Nun's Well as a matter of urgency?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, we are looking into a number of areas of Gibraltar's heritage as a matter of urgency but I cannot say that the urgency will be three months, six months or a year.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister say when they are going to stop looking and doing something?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, next question.

6.7.83

NO. 281 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make a statement on the agreement it is reported to have entered into with the Gibraltar Taxi Association detailing in that statement matters that require legislative authority?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Answered together with Question No. 282 of 1983.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, in view of the fact that the issue of licences for taxis is within the absolute discretion of the Transport Commission under the Traffic Ordinance, can Government state under what authority the Minister for Public Works could make an agreement with taxi drivers not to increase the number of licences and is this agreement not clearly outside the law?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Mr Speaker, it should be noted that over the years the Transport Commission has sought Government's advice and guidance as to the number of licences which should be available for taxi drivers. It recently became necessary to review the overall position and to establish ceilings which would meet the requirements of both the Government and the trade and, subsequently, to arrive at a reasonable and realistic policy. In pursuance of this policy the Government then decided to enter into a formal agreement with the Gibraltar Taxi Association which, inter alia, included a limitation on the number of taxi driver licences which should be on issue at any given time.

The relevant legislation is being amended, precisely in the course of these proceedings, in order to provide specifically that it is a proper function of Government to establish the number of licences which may be issued. It will, however, still be a statutory function of the Transport Commission to process applications for the granting of such licences, within the policy and ceiling laid down by the Government. Regarding the agreement between the Government and the Taxi Association, I am circulating a copy of the agreement for information. Since there is agreement between the two parties, there is no need at the present moment for any legislation to put the terms into effect other than what I have previously stated.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 281 AND 282 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister confirm that the reason for the rushed piece of legislation that has been brought to the House with notice of a supplementary Agenda and therefore not thought of last Friday when the House was circulated with the Agenda, that the real reason for bringing this rushed piece of legislation, and I use the word advisedly, Mr Speaker, is that the Transport Commission has threatened to take the Government to Court for a declaration that the agreement is outside the law and therefore illegal? Is that the reason why the legislation has been brought?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

If that is the case, Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister why the draft legislation does not include other matters that require legislative authority and which the Minister does not seem to have realised or those advising him?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Hon Member one or two meetings ago pressed me that we should have a look at the situation of the Transport Commission and that we should make amendments. This went through Council of Ministers, it was agreed that amendments should be made in certain areas, briefing instructions were given to the Attorney-General, the Bill has now come before the House or will be coming before the House.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm to me that he has received a letter from the Transport Commission threatening legal action because of this particular provision of the Government purporting by an agreement to limit the number of licences?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Minister has not received any letter from the Transport Commission.

HON P J ISOLA:

But has the Administrative Secretary of the Government of Gibraltar received such a letter?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not to my knowledge, it has not been brought to me.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I have seen a copy of the letter and the letter gave the Administrative Secretary or the Government until Wednesday, today, I think it was. Has the Administrative Secretary brought the contents of this letter, may I ask, to any Minister of the Government or the Hon and Learned Attorney-General?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Well, I am slightly taken off balance by the last part of the question, Mr Speaker. The point I wanted to make which is not directly answering that last part of the question, is that the Government can make an agreement with whomsoever it likes.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am asking if the letter written to the Administrative Secretary has been brought to the notice of any Minister of the Government? I cannot believe, Mr Speaker, a statement from that side of the House that a letter threatening legal action in respect of an agreement signed by a Minister of the Government has not been brought to the notice of any Minister of the Government, I cannot believe that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If it is any help to the Leader of the Opposition, I can tell him that I know nothing about it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, this is an extraordinary way, Mr Speaker, of the Government carrying on its business. Can I ask the Attorney-General if the contents of that letter have been brought to his attention?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I have not received a letter to that effect at all.

HON P J ISOLA:

The contents of the letter to the Administrative Secretary from the Chairman of the Transport Commission, has that been brought to the notice of the Attorney-General?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I cannot recall such a letter, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the letter was written to the Administrative Secretary. I have seen a copy.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am aware, myself, because of conversation, that the matter has been on the mind of the Transport Commission. I have seen no letter, I am not aware of any such letter and I may say I think it is an inappropriate course of action for the Transport Commission to take.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would tell you that I have heard of such a letter but not of any threat by this Wednesday of being taken to Court.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, that is what the letter says, Mr Speaker. This explains a lot of what happens within the Gibraltar Government.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, will you ask a question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, many people who write letters to the Government are more interested in the Opposition receiving them before the Government receives them.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I asked the question advisedly whether the legislation that is being brought to the House has been brought about because of that letter and I have been told no. Now I carry on. Can I ask the Hon and Learned Attorney-General whether he drafted this agreement between the Government of Gibraltar and the Gibraltar Taxi Drivers Association?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I do not think it is appropriate for me to give details on what I advise the Government.

MR SPEAKER:

It is not for me to direct how you should answer your questions, it is for you to decide whether you can or cannot give an answer.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I hope the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition will understand that I really do not feel that it is proper for me to go into the details of how I advise the Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am really flabbergasted by all this. The Hon Minister for Public Works gave us notice yesterday, that all the Standing Orders of the House are going to be suspended so that the Bill can be taken, a Bill drafted by the Hon and Learned Attorney-General and I will ask the Minister for Public Works did he show the Attorney-General a copy of the agreement that he signed with the Gibraltar Taxi Association to enable him to draft the appropriate legislation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the draft of the agreement with the Taxi Association went through Council of Ministers, various alterations were made and the draft was agreed by Council of Ministers and was subsequently signed. The Attorney-General had been briefed before because of a commitment I gave here to the Hon Leader of the Opposition that we would look at the question of the Transport Commission's powers, I think it must have been at least five or six weeks ago that Council of Ministers considered this matter and that it was agreed that the

Attorney-General be given instructions to draft the amendments to the Transport Commission's powers in the Traffic Ordinance and such has now been the actual Bill that is before the House.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, my original question to the Minister was, what parts of the agreement required legislative authority? The Minister has answered that any parts of the agreement that required legislative authority is enshrined in the Bill that is to be brought before the House and I want to ask him who decided whether legislative authority was required for any other part of the agreement, the Minister or the Hon and Learned Attorney-General?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The agreement simply states that insofar as the Government is concerned it agrees to the maintenance of taxi licences at the present level. This is following established practice that the Transport Commission has always asked the Government what level they should work to. The idea now is to enshrine that in actual legislation so that the prerogative for determining the number of licences for all road service vehicles should rest with Government as it has hitherto been the practice, will now be enshrined in law.

HON P J ISOLA:

But, Mr Speaker, that is why I asked the question. Did he not agree with the Taxi Association to introduce a second assistant driver and does he not realise that that also requires legislative authority and can I refer the Minister to section 64(a) of the Traffic Ordinance which specifically states that there will only be one driver to one taxi and therefore will he not agree that the reason for this rushed legislation is in fact the threat of the Transport Commission based on that paragraph (f) of his agreement and that that legislation is being done but that it requires legislative authority for the other parts of the agreement too, and why is he not bringing that legislation and why is he running on an agreement that is illegal on the face of it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If you wish to put an amendment to put that in as well we can soon do so.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it not the responsibility of a Minister not to enter into agreements that are outside the law without at least seeking the advice of the Hon and Learned Attorney-General? Why aren't there amendments in that Bill before the House in relation to the display of licence numbers, identification discs, approved signs on the roof? All these matters, Mr Speaker, require legislative authority and I suggest to the Minister that the reason why that has not been brought before the House was in their rush to avoid the legal action from the Transport Commission for acting outside the law.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There has been no acting outside the law whatsoever.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, can the Minister state how he is going to introduce a second assistant driver in Gibraltar when the House adjourns for the summer recess tomorrow or whenever it is, how is he going to introduce that without amending the law and how is he going to enforce the other parts of the agreement without amending the law or is it his intention not to enforce them at all?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am sure you do not need to change the law to make most of the parts of the agreement necessary, they can be done by regulations such as having a disc in the tax and what have you, etc.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, but we have the legislation here to freeze the number of licences immediately and we have not got the legislation to enforce the other parts of the agreement that are equally necessary and which were, I suppose, the good points from the Government side, why not?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Can I clarify the matter? The agreement was an agreement between the Government and the Taxi Association and of course that cannot change the statute law as it stands for the time being but of the matters in this agreement, Mr Speaker, with the exception of paragraph (c), there is no reason why they cannot be achieved by agreement and with the exception, of course, of the limitations of the maximum number of licences available as a policy matter, there is no reason why these matters cannot be achieved by agreement at all and I would just like to reiterate, Mr Speaker, that the Bill that is before the House which deals with the point of enabling the Government as a matter of policy to limit the number of public service licences, was not brought in reaction to a threat from anybody at all, it was brought because it is legally necessary and it is brought because of the desire to implement that part of this agreement.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Hon and Learned Attorney-General telling the House that it is not intended to implement the other parts of the agreement that requires legislative authority, the introduction of a second assistant driver? Is the Government going to rat on that agreement, why isn't there an amendment to that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I do not believe the Government will rat on anything. All the matters apart from that one other matter, do not require legislative amendment.



HON P J ISOLA:

I beg your pardon?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

All the matters, Mr Speaker, apart from paragraph (c) which you will have a look at, do not require legislative amendment necessarily.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, I think the Hon and Learned Attorney-General will see that under paragraph (c) he requires it - I have given him the section in the Ordinance - it is very clear to me and I am sure it will be very clear to him but how does the Hon and Learned Attorney-General propose that the Government enforces an agreement to display licence numbers, identification discs, approved signs on the roof, if it is not by regulation? Aren't all matters relating to traffic in Gibraltar governed by regulation or is the Taxi Association in fact going to be kept outside that ambit, is that another new digression?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not saying that one could not have legislation for it, I am saying this is an agreement between an Association and the Government and as the parties are ad idem there is no reason why it necessarily needs legislation. I may say that I do not agree with unnecessary legislation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon and Learned Attorney-General tell the House why this particular amendment has come in and no other, why the rush?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

The reason this particular amendment has come in, Mr Speaker, is because I was asked to prepare it. It clearly does need legislative authority.

MR SPEAKER:

I do not believe that this matter can be taken any further at question time.

HON P J ISOLA:

I think this is very important.

MR SPEAKER:

I have no doubt that it is and if you have a question on which you seek information I will be delighted to hear it but we are not going to do what we have been doing for the last twenty minutes which is debating the question.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am going to ask the Hon and Learned Attorney-General this question, whether in preparing this legislation and advising the Government to implement it and to pass it without Standing Orders and so forth, did he take into account the right of persons who have presently applications pending before the Transport Commission for a taxi licence and who have been pressing for the application to be heard, has he made any enquiries as to how their rights might be affected by a rush into legislation without notice to the House, with twenty-four hours notice of the legislation and going through all stages in this House? Is that democracy, Mr Speaker, does the Attorney-General subscribe to that?

MR SPEAKER:

Order, we will not make speeches at question time. Do you wish to answer the question?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I took account of the present position so far as the law is concerned and what people may do to apply for a licence, I also took account of Government policy and I drafted accordingly. I am not aware of people pressing for an application to be heard. I know there are applications outstanding, I have been told there are applications outstanding but I am not aware that there has been great pressure to have them heard.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked whether you have taken into consideration the circumstances of possible applicants? You say you do not know, but if there are possible applicants which will be affected by the change of legislation, you are being asked have you taken these applications into consideration when you drafted the Bill? That is what you are being asked.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have taken two things into consideration (a) the position of those applicants and (b) Government policy on this matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

And is the Hon and Learned Attorney-General aware of the provision in the Traffic Ordinance which vests squarely on the Transport Commission determination of these matters and is he aware that by passing this amendment he might as well do away with nearly all the paragraphs of section 63 of the Traffic Ordinance which vests this particular discretion on the Transport Commission and would it not have been more honest on the part of the Government or of the Attorney-General to advise the Government to do away with section 63 altogether in view of the proposed amendment which is implementing an agreement that freezes licences and therefore

gives the Transport Commission no more discretion as to whether they can listen or carry on hearing applications actually before them. Is this not scandalous, Mr Speaker?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am aware of the very first part of the question, Mr Speaker, and I do not agree with the rest.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There is no question of being scandalous. It has been the attitude of the Transport Commission over many years during which time they have had considerable numbers of pending applications, not to grant those applications but to come to Government and say: "What is the ceiling of the licences?", and to follow the position that Government has informed them.

HON P J ISOLA:

One last question, Mr Speaker, on this. Is it a fact that the Government entered into this agreement by duress under threat of a strike?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is absolute rubbish.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, in the absence of the Minister away in London I made arrangements myself on the previous Wednesday to take the matter to Council of Ministers and the draft agreement was approved the Wednesday of the week before this unnecessary threat of industrial action was taken, over a week before.

NO. 283 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, in view of the fact that the Government prohibited the use of radio cars in Gibraltar only a few years ago, can Government state what new facts have occurred that justify a change in this policy?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, I take it that the Hon Questioner is referring to radio taxis. If this is so I should inform him that the Government policy in consonance with the advice tendered by Mr G W Barns in his report on the Taxi Service in Gibraltar of 10 May, 1976, was that the number of taxis in existence, in the special circumstances prevailing in Gibraltar at that time, could give a reasonably efficient service without the introduction of two-way radios.

The situation which existed when the report was submitted did not alter materially until the partial opening of the frontier in mid December, 1982. In the light of the changed circumstances and in order to assist in providing a better service the Government decided to change the policy and allow radio taxis.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 283 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that at the time of the report mentioned by the Hon Minister in May, 1976, it was precisely because radio cars were providing a more efficient service that the Government had a confrontation with the Gibraltar Taxi Association who did not want them to be used, and why does it become more efficient now when asked for by the Gibraltar Taxi Association and not when asked for by a small group, a small taxi firm, which as a result of the Government action went out of business?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think there are four questions contained within that, Mr Speaker. One is that it was not a question of the likes or dislikes of the Taxi Association at the time, it was the recommendation of the then adviser to the Government on the taxi service, Mr Barns, who suggested that we should not allow that and the Hon Member may recall that in fact the small firm that he refers to was in fact provided of a licence in anticipation of Mr Barns' report and it was subsequent to that that the licence was withdrawn. I do not know that the small firm concerned went out of business, I understand and I think I am absolutely right in saying that they continue to be in business without, of course, radios.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister saying that in fact it is the view of the Government that taxis should now be provided with radios in order to make them more efficient in what way, is that to ensure that taxi stands that are entirely unmanned as, for example, at the air terminal and at other places, will now be manned by radio and there will be no taxis there, is that the idea?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it is not just the air terminal. It was obvious that because the frontier was opening or did open on the 15 December that a number of vehicles, be it three, four or five taxis, would make it their desire to be at the frontier to pick up possible tourists on Rock tours and therefore the number of taxis in other taxi stands around Gibraltar were being diminished. It was therefore thought that because of the distance involved in taxis circulating around Gibraltar that the radio situation would be an improvement to the taxi service in general.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does not that indicate, Mr Speaker, that as a result of the opening of the frontier partially and making very increased demands on the taxi service, the Government decision to freeze taxi licences makes it necessary for them to have to have two chaps for one taxi, have radio licences, radio cars and deprive people who are full-time taxi drivers and out of work from applying for a licence?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think that has nothing to do with the question that I have been asked, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

It has very much to do with the question, Mr Speaker, because I am asking why this has been introduced. Has the Minister not answered, in effect, Mr Speaker, that because there are not enough taxis to stand everywhere, they are going to be allowed to have radios and how does that, Mr Speaker, compare with another part of the agreement which states, paragraph (b), the only one I have not mentioned, which states that at least six taxis would be available at the airport? I think that is the province of the Minister for Tourism.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, it is not, Sir. The position of radio taxis is that the request from taxis to have radios was brought up at the time of the Lisbon Agreement and it was considered and it was agreed to and they came into effect when the partial opening of the frontier happened, with the purpose of making taxis more flexible and more in consonance with the taxi service which appertains in the United Kingdom where taxis can be called up by radio to go to any area where there is an increased demand. Should there be an increased demand at the frontier or at the airport then through the radio system taxis can be called up to go to that area and a demand in any specific area can be serviced not by having more taxis which is not necessary because it simply means that taxis which would be standing idle in one place go to a place where they can be of use.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, how does the Minister justify that remark or that statement that there are enough taxis already with the actual facts? Does it not fly in the face of the facts? How many complaints has

the Minister for Tourism had of people sitting at the air terminal, tourists, new arrivals to Gibraltar, with not a single taxi in sight and Gibraltarians have had to give a lift, how does he reconcile the statement he has just made with the complaints that have been received by the Minister for Tourism?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That has just been covered by the agreement we have made with the taxis that there will be six taxis available and the radio can call up others if required. There are many instances in which a plane arrives at the airport and the majority of people are taken away either in private cars or in special buses by the travel operators and the taxis are left without any fares whatsoever so what the Hon Member is saying is not justified.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister not agree that he is talking nonsense. Is it not a fact that in fact there have been previous agreements under which the taxi drivers have agreed to provide taxis at the air terminal and other points in Gibraltar and have these been kept and what reason has the Minister got for saying that it will now be kept unless there is statutory backing to it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, if you are aware of these previous agreements perhaps you will let me know of them because I am not aware of them.

HON P J ISOLA:

Perhaps the Minister for Tourism can enlighten us as to whether there have been agreements in the past with the Taxi Association and indeed arising from the abolition of the radio taxis under which they agreed to man all taxi stands?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of any agreements but equally I have received, and I am being absolutely truthful in this, Mr Speaker, I have received no complaints from any tourists, not at my Tourist Office as far as I know, received any complaints of tourists being stranded and left at the airport through lack of taxis.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, then I suggest to the Minister that he picks other people to serve the Tourist Department in the airport because personally I have seen this on a great number of occasions and I am sure all Members of this House have seen tourists waiting for taxis, having to telephone in the airport for taxis and being left without taxis and local Gibraltarians having to give them lifts in their own cars and if the Minister is not aware of that, Mr Speaker, the Minister is not aware of what goes on in the airport terminal and he should make way for somebody who does become aware of these things.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, the question of people being stranded at the airport is not what the Hon Member has said. He said that I had received complaints. I am just informing this House and him that I have not received any complaints. That people are there, I think he has seen them and I have seen them but I have not had any complaints from any tourist or from any operator or from anybody at all.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister believe me if I said that at least on two occasions I myself have been unable to get a taxi to come to town?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Of course I would believe the Hon Member, Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that he has not complained to me.

HON P J ISOLA:

And in what way, Mr Speaker, is the existence of radio cars going to help the person who is at the airport terminal waiting for a taxi?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

In a very simple manner, Mr Speaker, which is obvious. The whole fluidity of the taxi service is obviously going to improve.

HON P J ISOLA:

How?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Because if you want a taxi and you ring up a central organisation that knows exactly where taxi one, two, three or four is in close proximity of, he would just divert the taxi and say: "Instead of coming in from having dropped somebody off, for instance, at RAF North Front, go to the air terminal and pick somebody else up", or Europa Lighthouse. They would know exactly where the whole fleet of cars are, they are reporting in and therefore they know exactly who to pick on to serve a particular area, it is obvious.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, that would depend entirely on whether the intending taxi hirer has the use of a telephone.

HON P J ISOLA:

And knows about it.

MR SPEAKER:

You are debating now, with respect.

HON W T SCOTT:

Am I right in assuming that?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, what I am saying is it is bound to have great fluidity and a better service because of the obvious advance in technology that you know exactly where your fleet is and it will be less time consuming and a better service.

HON W T SCOTT:

But the Minister has said, has he not . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, you are debating. Will you please ask a question. We are getting out of hand and I am not allowing that.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I understood the Minister to say that an intending passenger from the airport can phone up there to a central place and that central place then uses the facilities of radio to get in touch with a taxi and that pre-supposes that the intending hirer must be near a telephone.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

There is a telephone in the air terminal, Mr Speaker.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, but if we are talking about the Lisbon Agreement and the partial opening of the frontier . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, no, order.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, this is an important one.

MR SPEAKER:

If it is important you can debate it if you want to. This is a matter of asking questions at question time and we are debating the subject and I am not going to allow that. Any further questions?



HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Minister put a notice in the air terminal telling tourists that by ringing a particular number, for which the Tourist Office will pay, a taxi will arrive at short notice because it is all very well for the Minister to talk about what Major Peliza should or my friend here but a tourist who arrives in Gibraltar does not know any of this, how is he to know how he can get a taxi?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If he goes to the Tourist Office there and he says: "Where can I get a taxi?" they will tell him straightaway. What I am astonished at is that here is an Opposition which is always wishing that the system in Gibraltar should be similar to the UK, here is a move towards getting closer to the UK and they seem to be decrying it at every opportunity.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Minister has said, Mr Speaker, that my complaints have never reached him. Isn't it the duty of the Tourist Office to find out things that are going wrong and they put it right before there are complaints?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think it is the duty of the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza, as Shadow Minister for Tourism, to bring this to my attention.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Minister knows that I do bring lots of things to his attention.

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. We are debating.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I will say it again, I have received two letters from the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, I will not be interrupted when I am calling the House to order and you will sit down when I say so. That is the end of the matter. Next question.

NO. 284 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, when does Government propose to amend the law so that holders of 'B' licences are entitled to drive mopeds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government is studying all the ramifications of such an amendment. It is hoped that an early decision can be made.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 284 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, am I right in assuming that the Government agreed to look into this urgently when the Opposition in its turn agreed not to impede the passage of legislation in December of last year because it was in the interest of Gibraltar to have legislation in consonance with EEC legislation passed at the time and did not the Government agree then, in December, 1982, to expedite this minor point in exchange for our agreement to agree to the legislation going through?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There was an agreement by Government that they would look into this question at the time and Government has been doing it but there are a number of interested parties some of which have conflicting views. We are trying to reconcile all these different views before the actual amendment takes place.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask who are these interested parties and what are the conflicting views because, the way I understand it, all I simply asked for at the time was that holders of B licences in Gibraltar be allowed to drive a moped as is the case in the UK. Perhaps I could have an answer?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

One of the interested parties are the Police, one of the conflicting views is should they wear crash helmets.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, as I said, I wanted the legislation to be as in the UK. I did not bring up the question of helmets but merely could they be allowed to drive mopeds as is the case in the UK where they have to wear helmets. If we are going to go into that contentious area, Mr Speaker, then we could think in terms of European law when even at

the age of fourteen they are allowed to drive but, Mr Speaker, all I am asking for is the law to be amended to that which exists in the UK, namely, that a holder of a B licence be allowed to drive a moped without the necessity to take a competence test on a motor cycle?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I have said, it is hoped that an early decision can be made possibly by the next meeting of the House.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 285 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, will Government take the measures necessary to ban ball-playing and cycling in the Piazza and ensure that these measures are enforced?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government intends to place signs at the Piazza informing the public that ball-playing, cycling and roller-skating are not allowed.

However, at present the Police Department can only enforce this ban on receipt of a complaint or if there are blatant acts of hooliganism.

There would be need to look at the question of amending the law to make these activities an offence in the area of the Piazza.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 285 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Sir, does Government in fact intend to enforce the law once it brings it out?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Government always tries to enforce laws when they bring them out.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister explain why it is necessary for somebody to make a complaint about ball-playing if a Policeman is actually in the Piazza and sees an offence being committed? Is the Minister seriously saying that a member of the public has to complain to a Policeman who is in the area before he will do anything? What are they paid for?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would think that that question should be directed to the Commissioner of Police.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, I am sorry the Hon and Learned Attorney-General is not here to answer that question because it is quite clear that this is a law and order question.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.7.83

NO. 286 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government aware that two of the five bus stops along Devil's Tower Road, and the terminal stop at Both Worlds have no sign to indicate them as such, and will Government correct this before the bathing season comes to an end?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, these signs together with the bus time-tables have been frequently vandalised and new signs will have to be made as the stock of original signs has been exhausted.

6.7.83

NO. 287 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make a statement as to its proposed measures for the implementation of pay-parking at the frontier and can Government explain why there have been no consultations with the Opposition apart from a preliminary meeting some time ago?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Mr Speaker, I shall be making a statement on this matter later on in the proceedings of the House.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, when does Government intend to install the pelican crossing in Queensway?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, funds were requested in the 1983/84 Draft Estimates but owing to financial constraints, it was not possible to provide funds for this project this year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 288 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does this mean that in fact it is cheaper to have a full-time constable four times a day manning the crossing than buying the pelican crossing itself?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have not gone into the mathematics of that, Sir.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister please find out the cost of a pelican crossing and will he also find out the cost of having a full-time policeman doing duty four times a day at the crossing and let me have these figures, please?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will look into it but of course that policeman is on a certain time of duty and therefore if he is at one place or another you cannot specifically say that the cost is absolutely applied to that. Had it been a policeman specifically recruited for that job then the costing might have been more possible.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but am I not right in assuming that policemen are paid by the hour and if he works so many hours at the pedestrian crossing it will amount eventually to so much money spent merely taking care of a pedestrian crossing when an ordinary lollipop man could be doing the job cheaper and just as effectively without the need to have a full-time constable with all his training to do a simple job like that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will look into the matter, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 289 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, when does Government estimate that the protective grills to the windows of the houses in Hargraves Barracks will be put up?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the protective screens to one flat at Hargraves Barracks were made and supplied for fixing on 10 June, 1983. The tenant however refused to accept the framed expanded metal screens and demanded decorative steel grilles. It is not proposed to accede to this demand as it is considered that the screens which have been supplied are suitable for the purpose for which these were requested.

The screens refused by this tenant will be fixed to the flats of the other two tenants who have requested similar screens.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 289 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, if these screens were ready on June 10th why has it taken so long for Government to decide, in view of the fact that this other tenant refused the screen, why has it taken Government so long to decide to install it in the other two houses?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because an opportunity was given to the first tenant who was first on the list to reconsider the situation. He was given fourteen days but he does not wish to accept it and we will now go to the other places.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, then could I repeat my question? When does Government intend that the protective grills to the windows of the houses at Hargraves will be put up?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, I should hope within the next fortnight on the other two.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government aware that certain parts of the Alameda Gardens are in an absolutely filthy state, and what does it intend doing to correct this?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government is aware that certain parts of the Alameda Gardens and also other planted areas are now becoming very dry and therefore unsightly as these green areas are not being regularly watered during the dry season.

Owing to the shortage of potable water Government considered it necessary to curtail the use of this water for the purpose of watering plants.

A limited amount of water stored at the Humphreys Building underground tank is being pumped out daily and used for the watering of plants in certain areas as this water is unfit for dietetic use.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 290 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I do not think that the Hon Minister has understood my question. I was not talking about dry vegetation, I was talking about filth. The Alameda Gardens are in an absolutely filthy state. There are tin cans, papers, bottles, you name it, they are strewn around, that is what I am referring to. What is Government doing to clean up our only park which is not only used by the inhabitants of Gibraltar but by tourists? What is Government doing to correct this state of affairs?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The information given to me, Sir, was that there were a number of odd tin cans or bottles around but they did not give rise to the phraseology 'absolutely filthy state' and the only area which my department felt was being referred to were areas which were really so burnt up of plants etc, which looked very derelict and very scruffy.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I assure the Minister that whoever has given him the information has given him incorrect information, that the area is absolutely filthy particularly Lovers' Walk, that is one of the worst areas, absolutely filthy, and will the Minister ensure that the Alameda Gardens department cleans up the area?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will see that they do a clean up in the area so that lovers are not distracted from their normal pursuit by tins, cans and all the rest of it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 291 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government make a statement on its policy with regard to the safety to swimmers in beaches and lidos against the background of the recent drowning at Catalan Bay?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, there is obviously a limit to the possible safeguards that Government can reasonably provide for the safety of swimmers in the beaches. In recent years beach guards have been provided at all our beaches during the school summer holidays. There are also boats and safety lines during this period. It has always been the practice during the bathing season to fly the red flag if the state of the sea is considered dangerous. There are clearly no practical means by which safety facilities can be provided for swimmers at all times.

The recent tragic accident at Catalan Bay was an unfortunate incident which occurred when it was not considered necessary to fly the red flag as the state of the sea was not deemed to be dangerous.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 291 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

I will leave the last part, Mr Speaker, to a subsequent meeting of the House. But does the Government not consider it not only advisable but very necessary to put at least a skeleton lifeguard system into operation before the school holidays commence because we advertise through tourist brochures and so forth our sun, sea and sand and we are attracting tourists to the beaches and does not Government think it advisable that we should have some form of a system?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

This is a point which bears a certain amount of consideration insofar that if one is going to have a skeleton type of lifeguard service, is the skeleton service going to be on one beach yes and one beach no because then there would be complaints as to why should not all the beaches have it. Also why do we not provide such a service on good days in the winter when swimming is possible. The Government has to limit its lifeguard service within the financial constraints that are upon it and it was felt that the service should be given during the main period of time which is the school summer holidays.

HON W T SCOTT:

I am asking Government to reconsider that, that is what I am asking, to perhaps avoid a similar occurrence happening again.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Perhaps the simplest answer would be to put the red flag up every day, 365 days a year.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, that comment against the background of the recent drowning is a bit sickening.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think one should not talk about the recent drowning as there has not yet been a result of the inquest, one does not even know that the person drowned.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government make a statement on the implementation of the 2-shift system at the Refuse Destructor and the new hours of working of street cleaners including the projected costs thereof?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

The vacancies for the new posts arising from the implementation of the 2-shift system have already been advertised within the Government service. The closing date for applications was Friday 1 July.

Once suitable applicants have been selected the 2-shift mode of operation will commence as soon afterwards as possible.

The new 2-shift system will give 73 hours of burning time compared with last year's burning time of 53.5 hours. Costs are in the region of £185,000.

All street sweepers work a basic 39-hour week, Mondays to Fridays.

On Saturdays 12 sweepers and 2 supervisors work 8 hours overtime and on Sundays 5 sweepers and 1 supervisor work 4 hours overtime.

On Public Holidays 5 sweepers and 1 supervisor work.

Costs are within the figures given in the Estimates.

Sir, will Government inform this House if there have been any applications from companies of Spanish origin for inclusion in the PWD List of Approved Contractors in different categories?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, to date no applications from Spanish companies have been received for inclusion in the PWD List of Approved Contractors.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 293 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, the question was not Spanish companies, the question was from companies of Spanish origin, I think there is a distinction.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not quite sure what is meant by of Spanish origin. If, and this is only a hypothetical point, if you have a Gibraltar registered company in which the shareholders happen to be Spaniards, would that be classified as Spanish origin? I don't know. However, as far as the answer goes, we do not know of any Gibraltarian companies that have Spanish shareholders that have applied.

HON W T SCOTT:

Presumably that is after the relevant search has been made of the Companies Register otherwise how can the Minister answer in that way?

MR SPEAKER:

May I come to the rescue of the Minister and say that that of course is information which is easily available by making a search in the Registry of Companies, anyone can make a search.

HON W T SCOTT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, but the Minister has said no presumably, I am assuming, after having made that search. Has that search been made?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, we have not made such a search but I can tell the Hon Member that we have not had any new applications for inclusion in our List from anybody.

Mr Speaker how much revenue does Government derive from the advertising on boards fixed to tubular rails at the Sundial Roundabout and at the entrance to Main Street?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as I said in answer to Question No 231 of 1983 the revenue derived from the advertisements displayed on pavement barriers is approximately £1000 per annum.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

ORAL

Can the Minister for Public Works inform the House if he can now make a categorical statement that the litter at Jumper's Bastion has now been removed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, following the action taken by the officers of the Crown Lands Department most of the offending articles deposited by the tenants of the vaults at the North Jumper's Bastion have been removed.

The remaining accumulation of litter and old domestic appliances will need to be removed by the Government's cleansing Section, as soon as the labour force resources become available, as the tenants disclaim ownership of these articles.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 295 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that he has been asked this for the third time and it is the fourth month or more that the matter was first raised in this House and that in fact this morning I have looked at the place and there is still litter there, litter which I think cannot be claimed by anybody to be his and could the Minister look into this and could the Minister also arrange for someone in his department to go round looking at Gibraltar, finding where all this litter is and making arrangements to have it picked up without Members of this House having to keep asking question after question to have it removed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the position is that this accumulation of rubbish etc., was as far as Government appreciated the situation, the property of the tenants of that area and they were therefore requested and told that they had to remove the offending litter. Some of it was removed but the balance they claimed does not belong to them. There has been a considerable amount of argument between the Government and the owners of the works in that area as to whether this is true or not. Since it seems that we cannot fully lay blaming this litter onto their shoulders, the position must be that Public Works sooner or later will have to clear it up. At the moment Public Works is rather short of men, it is Ramadam, and that has been why there has been a certain amount of delay.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister not agree that this is not the way of keeping Gibraltar clean and tidy?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

ORAL

Will Government take action to clear the litter at Wellington Front in an area directly overlooked by the windows of the Government Secretariat?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Wellington Front premises have been vacated and other users are taking over.

The new users are necessarily carrying out building works internally to suit their needs and these factors have led to an accumulation of unwanted goods and debris.

As is usual in these cases litter is also likely to accumulate. Until such time as these works are completed and all the new users are permanently installed this situation is likely to continue.

Government is using its best endeavours to keep these accumulations to the minimum, but for all intents and purposes Wellington Front at present could be deemed to be a site where construction works are being carried out and until these operations cease it is obviously not possible to keep the place neat and tidy.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 296 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister perhaps believe me if I told him again that there are items lying around right in the middle of the area which are old cookers and nothing to do with a construction but just litter and that I think that in a place where it is being overlooked by Government offices that should certainly not be allowed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am fully willing to believe the Hon Member. If you care to get a small bucket full of builders debris and place it in the street you will find within ten minutes it becomes a heap of all types of litter from old mattresses and old cookers to what have you.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Perhaps the Minister would like to believe me again that this particular cooker that I am referring to has been there for three months, Mr Speaker, lying on the floor for three months and I am sure that if the Minister had some inspector going round making sure that the places were kept clean perhaps Gibraltar would look much more attractive to tourists.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, how often does the Public Works Department go down to Wellington Front to clear rubbish?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The situation as I have already <sup>102</sup>said is that as far as Public Works



is concerned there are building operations going on at Wellington Front. It is not Public Works' job to remove builders debris under any circumstances, the onus is on the people creating the debris to remove the debris themselves. If, however, other rubbish gets put on to it, it is rather difficult for Public Works to be blamed for such accumulations mounting up.

HON G T RESTANO:

That wasn't the question at all. The question was how often does the Public Works Department go down to Wellington Front to clean rubbish?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They don't go there, they have no need to go down there, it is not an area that should normally have any need for anything.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean that if somebody dumps rubbish in Main Street because they shouldn't have dumped it, that the Public Works Department does not collect it, it doesn't recognise any of it because it is not normal, doesn't recognise any responsibility?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 297 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state the present position as regards the refurbishment of the old Mackintosh Square fountain?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the refurbishment of the old Mackintosh Square fountain has been considered by Government and it has been decided that a replica of the old fountain cannot be approved as this would be extremely costly.

It is intended that a new fountain, which would include the main bowl and two of the original base panels sculptured with lion heads of the old fountain, is to be designed and costed.

The new fountain will be smaller and of a more simple design. A firm decision will be taken by Government once the cost is known.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 297 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I do not have the Hansard unfortunately with me but I do remember telling the Minister to incorporate the old fountain into a new fountain about a year ago, that means we have lost a year on this as another tourist amenity. As I understand it also, Mr Speaker, perhaps the Minister will confirm, the decision to incorporate the old fountain into a new fountain was accepted some time ago and yet no action seems to have been taken, is that correct?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, what was considered some time ago was to try and reproduce a replica of the old fountain using the actual pieces that were still available but to produce that replica would cost a very high figure indeed and therefore a more modest type of fountain still using as much as we can of the old fountain is what is projected.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state when he expects this more modest fountain to be commissioned?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When the gentleman who is possibly likely to get the job can give us some idea of the costings involved.

HON A J HAYNES:

The other thing, Mr Speaker, is it going to be sited in the same location as the present fountain in Mackintosh Square or not?



HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, I think the location is going to be closer to the City Hall.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there any other plan afoot in respect of the Piazza in its embellishment which is going to take place at the same time or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There is a long term plan for a total embellishment of the Piazza and a remodelling of the Piazza but I do not think this will occur at the same time.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister undertake to consult Members of the Opposition and the public at large in respect of the final and further refurbishment of the Piazza?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think in May this year there was an exhibition at the John Mackintosh Hall in which actual plans and drawings of a proposed new Piazza were actually exhibited and the public were asked to make any comments they wished. I am not sure if any Member of the Opposition visited that but of course their comments would be appreciated. I think the idea is also when the new plans are finalised they will once again be exhibited for public exhibition and discussion and comment before any definite decision is made to go ahead with the works.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister state when he thinks that these plans will be produced again?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not like to give a date but I should say it would take another six months at least.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, does the Government have any intention of removing the existing fountain because it seems to me to be a terrible eyesore?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, possibly when the new fountain is put in hopefully reasonably soon, then the present fountain will be covered over so that it is less of an eyesore.

HON W T SCOTT:

But is there any reason why that cannot happen earlier because it is not operating as a fountain, it hasn't for quite a while now?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Basically the expense.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has the Minister for Economic Development, Port and Trade got any comparative statistics of ship arrivals at Gibraltar and Ceuta?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir, comparative ship arrival figures between the two ports cannot be given, as figures in respect to the port of Ceuta are not available.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Economic Development, Port and Trade state if fewer tankers are making use of our Port facilities?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Port Department classified deep sea ship calls into their main purpose of call as follows:- Passenger, Cargo, Bunkers, Repairs and Others, and does not differentiate between cargo vessels and tankers. The question cannot therefore be answered directly.

In order to give the Hon Member the pattern of shipping the following figures show the break-up of the deep sea vessels during the last three years:-

	<u>Passengers</u>	<u>Cargo</u>	<u>Bunkers</u>	<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Others</u>
1980	87	225	364	108	727
1981	65	195	414	104	701
1982	102	174	390	64	633

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 299 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it fair to assume then that although we see more tankers in the bay those tankers that are seen there are not necessarily coming to Gibraltar but lots of them are utilising the other port at the other side of the bay in Algeciras?

HON A J CANEPA:

Many of them are waiting for orders particularly in the bay and on the East Side.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

And when they are waiting for orders do they make use of the Gibraltar port in any way?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that those in the bay within our area of jurisdiction certainly pay certain dues. On the East Side I do not think that they do.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 300 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will the development of the area between the Viaduct and Waterport Wharf involve the resiting of the refrigeration plant at Waterport Wharf?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the recommendations in the Port Study are that the area between the Viaduct and Waterport should be reclaimed and developed as a Roll-on/Roll-off Ferry Terminal. In such an event the Study envisaged that the refrigeration plant at Waterport Wharf would probably have to be reprovisioned in order to improve the road access to and from the proposed Ferry Terminal.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 300 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask has this been known to all and sundry in Gibraltar or is this being revealed today?

HON A J CANEPA:

On the 28th October last year, in 1982, an application was received to assign the unexpired residue of the lease to Central Cold Stores Limited. The landlord approved this assignment on the 13 December, 1982, on certain conditions and in approving this condition of assignment the applicants were informed that there was a possibility of redevelopment at some future date and the Government could not guarantee the renewal of the lease upon expiry. However, I should add that in fact this refrigeration plant was leased to Prescott Limited in April, 1977, for a term of 21 years but in approving this condition of assignment, it was made clear that there was the possibility of redevelopment and then the question of reprovisioning would arise.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I then assume that the Government accepts the responsibility of finding alternative accommodation for the refrigeration plant there?

HON A J CANEPA:

Not necessarily, Mr Speaker.

HON A T LODDO:

Can I then assume that the Government accepts responsibility for refunding this lease?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, I think what happens, Mr Speaker, is that the Government has got certain responsibilities as a good landlord and even though the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance in respect of business premises are not binding on the Government, the Government nevertheless acts as if they were and does act as a good landlord so it does take into account these considerations when a tenancy has to be terminated because there is the public interest demand that that should be the case in respect of redevelopment or what have you.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 301 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government specify the cost of the Peida Reports, and of A R Belch Associates, and Coopers and Lybrand Associates, and of any other Reports not known to this House in connection with the closure of the Dockyard?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. The cost of the Reports is met by the Overseas Development Administration and it is not their practice to inform overseas Governments of the costs of Reports carried out on their behalf.

NO. 302 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has Government got any information on the breakwater or jetty being constructed to the north of the Airport runway, in Spain?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, according to Spanish sources, the breakwater has been built to provide protection for vessels using the San Felipe Jetty.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 302 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could it also be assumed that perhaps this could lead to another Marina in that area?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It could be, I have no information about that but I believe there have been some suggestions that it could be used for fishing boats and other commercial purposes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider proposing to His Excellency the Governor the formation of a Police Committee to ensure that such non-security matters for which the Police are responsible are satisfactorily undertaken?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, in the United Kingdom, Police Forces are established area by area. The general function of a Police Committee, under the Police Act 1964, is to secure the maintenance of an adequate and efficient Police Force for its area.

In Gibraltar, as Chief Minister, I meet regularly, and have done so since April 1980, on a monthly basis with the Governor and the Commissioner of Police, who reports generally on matters of police administration and responsibilities other than, of course, enforcement of the law in particular cases. I have found this practice most useful and helpful for the purposes set out in the question.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 303 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Chief Minister satisfied with the way that the Police are discharging their responsibility towards the dumping of rubbish in Gibraltar which apparently is not being enforced and should be?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I looked at the question in a much broader sense than rubbish but at these meetings complaints are made to the Commissioner by me on any matters that have been brought to my attention by Ministers. Questions which are asked and answered here are referred to the Commissioner through the Attorney-General and at these meetings the matter is aired. I have not hesitated to express the regret that many Ministers express to me as to sometimes the lack of cooperation particularly in respect of the litter laws in Gibraltar.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could he perhaps, Mr Speaker, take up particularly the enforcement of the litter laws?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state if they have given consideration to move the House of Assembly or the Museum to the Garrison Library under a possible arrangement with the Trustees?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

As with other sites in Gibraltar, the Government has considered the possible use of the Garrison Library complex were it no longer to be used for its present purposes. One of the favoured uses would be to house the Museum but no decision can be taken as there is little likelihood of obtaining vacant possession in the foreseeable future. My own personal view is that the House of Assembly should not be moved unless there were to be some very compelling reasons.

NO. 305 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, have Government reached a decision with regard to the restoration of the Gustavo Bacarisas painting and the murals in the Convent and the Collection Department?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as the DOE is responsible for works maintenance, furniture and fittings at the Convent, the Government is of the view that the DOE should assist financially towards the cost of the restoration of the murals at the Convent, as well as with the practical arrangements. This has already been taken up by the Chief Minister through His Excellency the Governor, and I will inform the House as soon as the outcome is known. When this is settled the Bacarisas painting and the mural at the Collection Department can be dealt with at the same time.

NO. 306 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can the Chief Minister state whether the talks announced between his Government and GBC have now been concluded and can he now inform the House whether the Government has now been provided with detailed information of the extent of advertising on GBC of products in Spain and will Government make a statement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the discussions to which I referred in answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question have now been concluded.

I understand that the Board of GBC has accepted the Government's reasons for cutting the subvention and is confident that GBC will maintain an adequate service, though some curtailment in due course may become necessary. However, as the Hon Member will no doubt appreciate, a great deal will depend on whether GBC's revenue projections are met.

Advertising by Spanish firms on GBC represented 13% of the air time available to advertisers in April last year. In May it was 17.4% and it is expected that the figure will reach 17.8% in June.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 306 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, how can that be accurate? Is the Minister aware or has he been given information as to why the advertising of Spanish products is done at peak times because it is too continuous certainly as far as I can see from watching television, it still constitutes on television over 50% of the advertising space?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Either the Hon Member is wrong or the television are giving free time to Spanish advertisers. I would rather think that the latter is not likely to be the case. The April figures show that out of £8,793 worth of advertisements £1,168 were advertisements of the nature referred to and in May out of £12,761, £2,213 were advertisements from those sources.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Chief Minister joining television and radio or is he just giving the television adverts?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am sorry, I do not know. I do not think there is much advertising on radio and it would not be worth very much, anyhow. I think it is general but in any case it would not make much difference because the advertising on radio is cheaper than advertising on television.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could it also be that the advertisers of products in Spain are getting a better deal than local advertisers and that explains the financial results?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am quite certain that that is not the case.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Chief Minister state whether in his view it is desirable that the matter of advertising of Spanish products should be put on GBC and has Government considered giving directions in this respect?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think that they would be covered under directions, I said that I did not particularly like those advertisements but it has a proportion of the revenue, we have cut the subventions, I am advised and I will say no more than that, that a considerable amount of the advertising is geared for English speaking viewers of Gibraltar television in the Costa del Sol otherwise they would not advertise the service for Rolls Royce, there is only one in Gibraltar, and in any case the amount that is got out of that advertisement would have to be made up if we were to decide to give them directions that those advertisements should not appear.

HON P J ISOLA:

How does this situation and the continuation of this situation, Mr Speaker, how does that help the Government policy announced in this House about not encouraging people to go to Spain? Is not the Government with a service that is heavily subsidised by the public, not allowing that service to be used precisely to do that which the Government does not want it to do and has Government got a policy on this?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government has a policy but GBC has the need to obtain funds and the Government would have to be minded to make up the difference on the advertisements if in fact having regard to the very severe cuts we have made to the Station they have been trying to absorb them without affecting the service substantially. I do not like those advertisements myself but that is purely my own view. I think that before we decide whether we should cut or rather give directions, we should be in a position to make up for the revenue that they will lose by that and at this stage I am not prepared to consider that unless, of course, there is a general view that that should be the case. I am prepared to consider it with my colleagues but at this stage I was answering the question on the discussions that have taken place. I would like to state and pay tribute to the members of the Board who have gone into the cuts that were made at the time of the budget and have endeavoured to approach them without affecting the service rendered by television.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I gather from that answer, Mr Speaker, that GBC now has got an absolutely free hand to take as much advertising on Spanish products in Spain as they can get their hands on with the blessing of the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They have always had a free hand to take advertisements so long as it is moral and within the standards set out in the directions. They have not been given any special licence, they have accepted the offers of, I suppose, agencies who have put these advertisements in. They have not been given any charter, they have not had taken away any rights that they had before.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, nobody in the House seems to like the adverts, quite rightly so, but I think it is misleading to be given a figure of 13%, that cannot possibly be correct. The question says quite specifically 'of products in Spain' and I think that that 13% cannot possibly be accurate, it cannot be accurate . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Please ask a question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could the Chief Minister undertake to make further investigations as to this percentage?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Let me put it this way, if I find that the figures are not correct I will write to the Hon Member informing him.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could we ask that the Auditors of GBC report on the accuracy of these figures, let us have an Auditor's report on this.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Let me say that if these figures have been given to me by the administration and by the Board I must accept them, I am not going to send an auditor around. Whether it includes radio or not is another matter but I think it would be most improper, apart from checking the figures in case there has been error, to suggest that these figures have been in any way cooked for the purpose of this answer. Certainly it is not my understanding nor would I think anybody at GBC would be minded to do that.



HON G T RESTANO:

Could the Chief Minister find out if in the figures that have been given are included advertising for Spanish products put in by Gibraltar companies?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, of course.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 307 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government explain why no Chairman has yet been appointed to the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation and can Government outline the difficulties it is encountering in the appointment of one?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, I have made one or two soundings and am considering other possibilities. I have, of course, had to deal with other pressing matters recently.

We are fortunate in that the Board has a very experienced Acting Chairman - and experienced members to assist him - who is prepared to hold the fort while a suitable successor is found.

The main requirements are that the Chairman should be, and should be known to be, politically impartial and that he is able to devote the time required for carrying out the duties of the appointment. There are no other special difficulties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 307 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

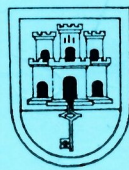
Mr Speaker, how can the prospective Chairman be politically impartial if it is within the patronage of the Chief Minister?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would rather not answer that question.

# GIBRALTAR

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

18 October 1983  
308 to 384

NO. 308 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state why no tender was awarded in respect of the proposed change of user for the ex-Port Office at Waterport?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, the closing date for tenders for this project was last Wednesday.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 308 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will a tender be awarded in this case or is it another one that is waiting for November and for development?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, the tenders received have been referred for a technical appraisal to the relevant department. We are now on the 18th of October, I would imagine that a decision on the award of the tender can be taken concurrently with the negotiations on this loan. The sum involved is not very great, I think in this case it is of the order of £90,000 or £100,000 so perhaps there should not be any difficulty if a satisfactory tender has been received.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, are tenderers warned that Government may not have the money to award a tender?

MR SPEAKER:

No, no.

HON A J CANEPA:

Are they awarded if we do not have the money?

HON A J HAYNES:

Are the tenderers warned . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Order, we are not going to go into the system of tendering now, not under this question. Next question.

NO. 309 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what is the position regarding the recommendation a year ago by the consultants who selected Appledore that employees of Blands should be paid the same redundancy terms as Dockyard employees?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the consultants' report dated September 1982, dealing with the selection of the preferred operator recommended, inter alia, that the possibility be considered of making redundancy payments to those Blands employees engaged on shiprepairing on the same basis as those available for the workforce in HM Dockyard.

Earlier this year, the firm involved wrote to the Chairman of the Project Study Group which was set up to consider and examine proposals for commercialisation and related matters. It was subsequently agreed that discussions on compensation would be held, without prejudice to any party, between the firm's financial advisers and the project study financial consultants. A meeting was held in February, 1983. The project study financial consultants sought certain information regarding Bland's shiprepair operation which, to date, has not been forthcoming. In the event, by May 1983, the consultants deferred further consideration pending the outcome of decisions on commercialisation between the British and Gibraltar Governments. Following Bland's announcement to close its shiprepair operations, the Union involved has made certain representations to the Gibraltar Government. The matter is currently being considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 309 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the position then that the Government accepted the recommendations of the consultants or not or was it rejected? Was the decision taken in principle at the time one way or the other?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I think the matter has to be looked at in its time-scale. The recommendation was made in September, 1982, against the background of the Dockyard closure in 1983. There has been, obviously, deferment of closure and there are a number of aspects to the problem which have to be examined before the Government itself can consider whether or not that recommendation should be accepted or rejected but it has not taken a decision on that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, surely, the Government having had the recommendation that this particular group of workers should receive the same compensation as Dockyard employees had to decide in principle whether it accepted the principle involved irrespective of when the payment would be due or what the amount would be, surely, one precedes the other?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I recognise the point of principle which the Hon Member is trying to make but I think that the problem has to be examined at the time and one would have to examine, for example, what were the reasons for closure of Blands Shiprepair Yard.

HON J BOSSANO:

But if in fact the recommendation of the consultants was conditioned initially on the basis that if Blands shiprepair facility was closed as a result of the Dockyard's commercialisation by a different firm the people concerned should be compensated on the same terms as Dockyard employees, did the Government on that basis accept the recommendation if that was the recommendation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Government, as I say, Sir, cannot take a decision on the matter. For example, if I may refer to another recommendation in the consultants' report because the question has to be looked at as a whole and not in terms of individual recommendations and one of the aspects which was raised by the consultants was the extent to which Bland's employees could be re-hired in the new venture, the extent to which Blands could be involved with the new operator and so on. These were matters which were being considered in the project study so, therefore, a decision on a recommendation in September, 1982, could not be taken and events subsequently have shown that there are other features to the situation which also have to be considered, for example, deferment of closure of the Naval Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Government then saying, Mr Speaker, that the possibility of the redundancy payment being made available to those involved and being funded by the Government has not in fact been excluded?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is correct.

HON J BOSSANO:

And can I ask in that case whether it forms part of the £28m package or whether the Hon and Learned Chief Minister will be making another visit to Mrs Thatcher to get money for Blands?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If I may clarify this point which I think is a very important one. I think the question of the Dockyard and its commercialisation and its funding was examined in terms of the new activity and therefore the funding that was negotiated was in respect of the funds required for the new operation. The question of Blands as with other issues was referred to by the consultants in their report as an outstanding issue and it was placed outside the context of that particular negotiation so it does not form part of the £28m.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, did the Government not accept that by granting the commercialisation contract for the Dockyard to Appledore it was inevitable that the Blands shiprepair yard would close and discontinue as an independent operation?

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to go into that because it is not relevant to the original question.

HON P J ISOLA:

But the redundancies are only coming because of closure.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, but we could go on forever.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I then ask this question? Having regard to the fact that it was inevitable that with the grant of commercialisation of the Dockyard to Appledore that Blands shiprepair yard would close and consequently put a lot of people out of work as well as putting a business of long standing in Gibraltar out of business, has Government no policy to announce in respect of redundancies and other things related thereto?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the matter of the closure of Blands shiprepair yard and the redundancy of its employees is a matter which is in the first instance obviously a consideration for the company itself and one would have to examine, as I said before, the reasons for that closure. Whether or not the closure was inevitable and whether the timing of that closure was inevitable in the light of commercialisation plans announced by both the British and Gibraltar Governments, it is not the Gibraltar Government that is solely introducing commercialisation, is another matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

But did not the unpublished report of the consultants clearly indicate that that would occur and has Government no policy on this?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Before forming a policy, Mr Speaker, I think that the Government would need to consider all the aspects relating to the issue and as I said in answer to the question consultants were engaged by the Project Study Group which comprised officials of both the British and Gibraltar Governments to discuss the possible grounds, without prejudice, for compensation and I think that the matter has to be



seen in that particular context until such time as you can define what the problem is and what are the parameters then you can take a decision but you cannot take a decision in principle without having regard to the more detailed but certainly more important aspects relating to the problem and timing in this respect I think is an important consideration.

HON P J ISOLA:

One last question, Mr Speaker, can I ask the Financial and Development Secretary that in view of the fact that the closure was due to take place in December of this year, I think that is the date that was announced, will Government be in a position to announce their policy before then or do we have to wait another twelve months?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I cannot give any commitment on that, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that if the productivity targets assumed by A & P Appledore for the commercial shipyard are not achieved additional funds will be required over and above the £28m provided by the British Government?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. That is the view of the consultants who reported to both the British and Gibraltar Governments.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 310 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

And is that view accepted by the Government of Gibraltar, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

And if the Government of Gibraltar accepts that view what provision has it made for that eventuality?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, this was obviously a point which concerned the Government when it received the consultants' report, in fact, the consultants' assumption - and it is an assumption - basically referred to a slower build-up of productivity, in one particular case a rise into 87% of the 1988 target and identifying the need for additional funding. Obviously funding could take various shapes, it could be in the form of finance, it could be in the form of extra naval work, it could be in the form of other adjustments to the operation. One could even, I am not advocating this but one could even see employment levels being affected as well, this is being purely hypothetical. It is precisely because of this problem which was very clearly identified by the consultants that the Gibraltar Government did make representations to the British Government. We could not secure an open-ended agreement in terms of actual pounds and pence but I think that the statement made by Mr Ian Stewart on the 27th July regarding future economic assistance in respect of the economy and obviously timed in conjunction with the Dockyard decision, from the Government's point of view covers that particular point.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say in fact which of the productivity increases suggested by Appledore the Government is now working to, is it those in the tender document, or those in the project study?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Neither, Sir, the Government hopes that the operation will get off the ground as quickly as possible and test the situation on the ground and it would then have to respond to the outcome as it sees fit.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Sir Speaker, whatever that hope may be - and I hope it won't - but will the Hon Member not confirm that every report beginning with the PEIDA Dockyard Study and ending with the Casey Report, every report has stressed that the realisation of the productivity target is the crucial element and if that is the case what is the target that the Government is considering to be attainable?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Government, as I said, hopes to see APA's target achieved. I think that in fairness to all the views expressed they do consider that this might be optimistic but it cannot work precisely on a figure, it cannot say we agree with 87% or we agree with 60% or we agree with 100%. There are many factors that come into play on productivity, I think too much has been made of the question that the Dockyard workers should work harder, fullstop. I think there are other elements such as equipment, management organisation, new working practices and the fact that it is doubtful whether one can really compare existing productivity in a naval yard which is essentially high quality . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, we are getting involved. Either you have a target or you do not have a target.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

We do not have a target, Sir, but the point I am trying to make is that . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

But at question time we must not try and make points, that is what I am trying to say.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am not in fact trying to obtain the information of the mechanics of how productivity may or may not be achieved. Is the Government aware, for example, that there are vast unexplained differences between the measurement of productivity in the tender that Apple-dore submitted and in the project study report, is the Government aware of that?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Basically all the projections have been devised this is why we went into a project study stage, we looked at the matter in much more detail but we are conscious of what the productivity targets are, we are conscious of what the consultants have recommended or have advised could be a situation and we will pursue the matter.

HON J BOSSANO:

If the Hon Member says that he went into much greater detail then presumably what he is telling the House is that after going into more detail he has become more optimistic about the feasibility of . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, we are beginning to debate. I do accept that you are trying to obtain an answer to a specific question but in trying to achieve that we are beginning to debate. I think you must press for the answer or leave it at that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, he has just introduced a new element, if I may point out, Mr Speaker, in the supplementary answer that after much more detail the figures were revised but in fact will he confirm that they were revised upwards, does he accept that?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, I accept that, they were revised upwards but I think whether or not one is more optimistic is another matter. That is a target and one would expect that all the necessary conditions will be prevalent to enable that target to be achieved but that is something that is implied in the future.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon Member telling the House that the Government has decided to support commercialisation which implicitly must mean that they are convinced that the productivity targets are attainable since every consultant says it is crucial and he does not know what the productivity targets are?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

What I am saying, Sir, is that we do not necessarily accept a particular target. We know what the targets are, what the consultants' view on those targets are and I do not think anybody can say whether or not they can be attained at this point in time.

HON J BOSSANO:

And I am asking then can he explain if it is as uncertain as that, can he explain why in the project study the targets have been substantially increased? There must be a reason, what happened, Mr Speaker, between the tender accepted from Appledore and the project study accepted by the Government to make Appledore believe since it is not explained anywhere, that it was possible to increase productivity even beyond the original figures substantially more and does the Government accept that or is he aware of that, has he in fact analysed that point?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, I do not wish to speak for A & P Appledore but I imagine that the revision of the figures was possible because Appledore were able to undertake a much more detailed analysis of the projected position, in fact, they went into the matter in great detail and were able to produce more accurate figures according to them. Those are the figures that they put to us and those are the figures that we have.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I just ask one question on that, Mr Speaker, could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary is it not a fact that the productivity aimed for by Appledore in the workforce and accepted by the Government is in fact beyond anything achieved in any United Kingdom Dockyard or shiprepair yard? Is that not a fact?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I invite the Hon Member to read more carefully one of the consultants reports where that is stated?

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Government, in fact, if the detailed study produced improved assessments of possible achievement of productivity, can the Government explain why this in the project study materialises in the second and the third year and in the first year the productivity attainment is unchanged, does he know why?

MR SPEAKER:

If you do you do and if you don't you don't.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I don't.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Government not think then that if in fact the success of the operation crucially depends on the accuracy of the productivity element in the projection then the Government should have examined this in detail before committing itself?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I do not necessarily accept that, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Hon Member accept that the consultants have said that if the productivity targets are not attained the consequences would be disastrous - to quote from their report?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The element of disaster will depend on the extent to which the target is or is not achieved.

HON J BOSSANO:

Precisely, I agree entirely with the Hon Member, therefore, if the target is totally unrealistic the disaster is equal in magnitude, would he not agree?

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are assuming now.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, it seems to me that he is unable, in fact, to satisfy the House that the accuracy of the targets on which the viability of the operation depends is something upon which the Member is satisfied, is that the case?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

It is very difficult, Mr Speaker, to be satisfied on an assumption.

MR SPEAKER:

And it is very difficult, precisely, to answer the sort of questions you are being asked at this particular stage. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would not the Government agree that the figures for the 1982/83 financial year of £3,184,490 for Supplementary Estimates and £1,856,857 in Reallocations reveal a very unsatisfactory state of affairs with departmental estimates being wildly inaccurate at the beginning of the financial year and has Government any explanation to offer?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, when producing an estimate a judgement is made on what a given situation will be at a date in the future. It cannot be an exact science. Nevertheless for reasons I will give, the Government does not accept that departmental estimates are wildly inaccurate. Some £3m voted by Supplementary Appropriation were for services that could not have been foreseen when the estimates were prepared or were the result of the adoption of new policies during the course of the year.

With respect to the sum of £1.8m quoted for Reallocations, I think the Hon Member may agree with me that it is not entirely fair to include the sum of £987,000 which is the total amount reallocated to the departmental salaries and wages votes from Head 27 - Pay Settlement. The mechanism for increasing these departmental votes from a central Head is of long standing and is not a matter of accurate or inaccurate forecasting. Of the remainder of the Consolidated Fund Reallocations some 40% has been reallocated as a result of the new policy adopted in 1982/83 as stated in paragraph 22 of the Principal Auditor's Report on the 1981/82 Accounts whereby I now approve re-allocations of funds between sub-heads after the close of the financial year to enable Controlling Officers to comply with section 43 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 311 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Am I to understand that the Hon Member is saying that the Government is quite satisfied with departmental estimates?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

One is never satisfied or happy when supplementary expenditure has to be incurred but there are circumstances which are unforeseen or there are policies which the Government will wish to adopt during the course of a particular financial year which have to be met from funds and therefore to that extent we are satisfied that the purpose is being achieved.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Hon Member said he was not satisfied just earlier and now he says that he is satisfied. If he is not satisfied what is the Government doing to improve the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have not said that I am not satisfied.

HON G T RESTANO:

So he is totally satisfied and there is no room for improvement, is that what he is saying?

MR SPEAKER:

No, you don't have to answer that question, that is not seeking information.

HON G T RESTANO:

What I am seeking, Mr Speaker, is an improvement in the system and I am trying to find out whether the Government is in fact trying to make some improvements.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think that the answer to the question itself highlights two aspects which are in themselves improvements in the system and therefore the Government will continue to pursue any improvement in the system so that it can be more satisfied or less dissatisfied.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is there nothing specific the Government is doing about it?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is a continuing process, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 312 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government anything further to report on the unfair discrimination practised against Gibraltar registered yachts in French Ports and has Government taken any action on the matter since its answer to Question No. 262 of 1982?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, as a result of advice received from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the end of February, 1983, it was decided not to pursue the proposal to accede to the 1967 Convention providing for mutual assistance between EEC Customs authorities. We were advised that since Gibraltar does not form part of the EEC Customs Union, participation in the Convention would be largely meaningless, and it is questionable whether a territory which does not form part of the Union is entitled to participate in the Convention. Furthermore, the extension of the Convention to Gibraltar unilaterally is at this stage considered to be questionable. In the event, doubts have been expressed as to whether the extension would have the desired effect of lifting the French tax. It was therefore decided to approach the French Government and formally ask how they reconciled the tax with Article 95 of the Treaty of Rome and Article 2 of the Convention and Statute on the International Regime of Maritime Ports, 1923.

The British Embassy in Paris approached the French authorities on the 22 March this year, and have sent several reminders. It is now understood that some indication of the formal reply from the French authorities will shortly be available.



THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state Head by Head actual expenditure in the Improvement and Development Fund from 1st April, 1983, to 30th September, 1983?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, recorded expenditure on the Improvement and Development Fund to 30th September, 1983, presently stands as follows:-

Head 101 Housing	£436,249
102 Schools	168,914
103 Tourist Development	101
104 Miscellaneous Projects	368,418
105 General Service	92,753
106 Potable Water Service	579,675
107 Port Development	118,457
108 Telephone Service	75,208
109 Public Lighting	2,500
110 Electricity Service	749,664

Total - £2,591,939

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 313 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that this represents about 25% of the amount that Government expected to spend over a full year of £10m and would the Financial and Development Secretary give us any encouragement to think that by the end of the year the Government will have spent the £10m it promised this House it would spend during the course of the budget in April, 1983?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, this level of expenditure is for six months and therefore one would have to examine it in the context of how the corresponding expenditure for a similar period in previous years have fared but I accept that it does indicate a reducing level of expenditure over the estimates of £10m. The extent to which we can pick up the slippage by the end of the year will depend largely on how quickly we can start the local projects which the Hon the Minister for Economic Development and Trade referred to earlier and how progress is achieved on two major projects in the Improvement and Development Fund, namely, the distillation plant and the causeway project. The first one has just started and the second one is still not ready for tender.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask one question, I won't trouble the Financial Secretary too much, how is it that in the only vote that there has been excess expenditure - Electricity Service - the Government has spent more in

six months than they were going to spend in a whole year? Can the Financial and Development Secretary give an explanation for this, what is this due to, an ultra-efficient electricity service or a lot of money thrown down the drain?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have not got the precise information with me but I imagine that the increase in expenditure is related entirely to the increased expenditure on the Waterport Power Station project.

HON P. J ISOLA:

You mean having to pay Hawker Siddeley money to run the Station and having to pay for this famous Chairman who is going to solve our problems?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the payments for the Steering Committee do not come out of the Improvement and Development Fund so that expenditure does not arise here. I would presume that the increase in expenditure is as a result of increased costs associated with the project, the capital side of the project.

HON P J ISOLA:

I don't know whether the Minister for Municipal Services can throw any more light.

MR SPEAKER:

He is not here.

HON P J ISOLA:

I thought he might not.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 314 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state what the Consolidated Fund Balance will be as at 31st March, 1984, on present economic trends and will it exceed the £8,483,920 estimated in the official Government estimates for 1983/84?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the accounts for 1982/83 will be finalised soon and it is expected that the Consolidated Fund Balance as at 31st March, 1983, will be £11.98m, an improvement of £0.27m on the revised estimates shown in the Financial Statement for 1983/84.

Given present trends for the major revenue items and the supplementaries requested by Departments this year, it is now expected that the Consolidated Fund Balance will be about £7.8m on 31st March, 1984.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if there has been any noticeable adverse effects on the progress of Gibraltar as a financial centre as a result of the bad British press on the registration of certain insurance companies and can they say if this matter has now been settled as far as Gibraltar's good name is concerned?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, there have not been any noticeable adverse effects on Gibraltar's progress as a financial centre as a result of certain reports in the British press, regarding the failure of two locally registered life insurance companies.

Investigations by Department of Trade appointed inspectors are still in progress in the United Kingdom and until their report is published it is not known how it will reflect on Gibraltar. The fullest co-operation is being provided by Gibraltar Officials within the limitations set by the secrecy provisions of the Companies (Taxation and Concessions) Ordinance.

I should mention, Mr Speaker, that we have already gone some way in redressing the situation locally. No new certificates under the Assurance Companies Ordinance are being issued other than to branches or agencies of authorised United Kingdom and other EEC Insurers, or their subsidiaries.

The drafting of new insurance legislation is in hand and it is expected that proposals will be ready by the end of the year. However, as the Hon Member will no doubt appreciate, the matters to be covered are somewhat complex but it is hoped that draft legislation could be ready in early 1984 for appropriate consultations with interested parties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 315 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It is gratifying, Mr Speaker, to learn that so far there have been no adverse effects but is the Hon Member aware that only as recently as last Saturday there was an article in The Times in which it reports that a Signal Life Investors Action Group has been formed and that a coordinator of John Porter will be suing . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect to the Hon and Gallant Member, we are not going to get involved in specific instances and what action has been taken.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I think it is relevant because it appears that they are going to sue and I was wondering whether in fact there is any company based in Gibraltar that is likely to be sued by this Action Group which will bring the name of Gibraltar out again in the press as in fact it did last Saturday?

MR SPEAKER:

That is not within the responsibility of the Government to answer.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But can they say if there are any trustees in Gibraltar who are likely to be sued? If there are, Mr Speaker, making sure that this does not happen again, surely they must have made an investigation as to which companies here in Gibraltar are likely to be sued if there are any?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of the report.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what has been the value of imports from Spain, broken up by categories, since 1st January, 1983, and how this amount compares with the three previous years for the same number of months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. I hope the House will bear with me as I read a host of figures but I will provide a photocopy of this quickly to Hon Members. The value of imports from Spain up to July, 1983, and the corresponding periods in 1980, 1981 and 1982 are as follows:

	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
Foodstuffs	£181,000	£325,000	£295,000	£151,000
Beverages & Tobacco	89,000	112,000	135,000	139,000
Crude Materials	54,000	34,000	64,000	38,000
Animal & Vegetable				
Oils	17,000	19,000	6,000	16,000
Chemical products	39,000	51,000	42,000	44,000
Manufactured goods	28,000	61,000	62,000	62,000
Machinery & Transport				
Equipment	56,000	88,000	268,000	267,000
Miscellaneous	266,000	551,000	353,000	442,000
	<u>£730,000</u>	<u>£1,241,000</u>	<u>£1,225,000</u>	<u>£1,159,000</u>

18.10.83

NO. 317 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has Government made an assessment of the loss of income and of any other financial repercussions to Gibraltar as a result of the withdrawal of the car ferry to Tangier?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, although the announced withdrawal of the car ferry to Tangier will affect both tourism and trade between Gibraltar and Morocco, it is difficult to quantify the impact in money terms since it will have been overshadowed by the effects of the recent introduction of the Moroccan departure tax.

NO. 318 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many road licences for the current year remain unpaid, and what does this represent in cash terms?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, as far as I am aware no vehicles are being driven on our roads without a valid licence. The Police are constantly on alert so that the law is not contravened on this account.

However, 1,086 licences have not been renewed. This does not necessarily mean that these licences remain unpaid but that the vehicles have either been re-exported from Gibraltar or disposed of.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 318 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, that does not quite answer my question. I would like to know what is Government doing to collect licences which they know are unpaid for vehicles which are no longer in Gibraltar but which have Gibraltar registration?

MR SPEAKER:

With respect to the Questioner that is not the question you have asked. You have asked: "How many road licences for the current year remain unpaid" - and you have been given that answer - "and what does this represent in cash terms?" - you have not been given the amount.

HON A T LODDO:

I have not been given the amount.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, but you have not asked what is Government doing to collect.

HON A T LODDO:

Well, can I ask then what is this amount which I have not been given? What does this represent in cash terms?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the answer was clear.

MR SPEAKER:

Not insofar as cash involved is concerned.



HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If we take the number of licences that have not been renewed as 1,086 and we believe or we assume that there are 1,086 cars around Gibraltar without a valid licence then . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I do not think you are being asked that. What you are being asked is for whatever reason 1,086 licences which were taken out last year have not been taken out this year, what in money terms does that represent? It is as simple as that.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, it is very difficult because it is understood that all these licences are in respect of cars which have either been re-exported or have been disposed of.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government undertake that the payment of leaving gratuity to civil servants who joined the service after 1968 will be restored and put into effect this year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, every effort will be made to conclude action on this matter before the end of the year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 319 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

What is the problem, Mr Speaker, with doing it?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

At the moment, Mr Speaker, there is discussion continuing between Government and the Unions as to the date from which it would be effective.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member agree that if the discussions were held more frequently then it would be possible to do it before the end of the year but if there is a lapse of weeks and sometimes months between one answer from the Government and another answer from the Government it would be very many years before it is implemented?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I would not agree with that, I am not in a position to agree or disagree with that, I would say that if agreement could be reached between the parties the matter will be expedited.

HON J BOSSANO:

What is in fact the Government policy on this matter?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Government has already indicated that on principle it is willing to pay gratuities for permanent and pensionable officers who resign early.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 320 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government undertake that the necessary legislation to provide pension rights for part-time employees will be brought to the House this year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, on 8 December, 1982, in answer to Question No. 280 of 1982 from the Hon Mr Bossano I said:

"The conditions under which part-time service should become pensionable have been finally decided and the Government is now in a position to make the details available to the staff representatives.

The Industrial Relations Officer will initiate discussions with the Staff Side during the course of next week".

Several meetings have since been held between the Industrial Relations Officer and staff representatives but progress has been slow. Every effort will be made to settle this matter as soon as possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 320 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not accept that in fact the House approved a motion to carry out this some four years' ago and to say that it will be done as soon as possible is in fact to give no commitment at all that it will ever be done?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I cannot remember the exact date but I do accept that it was some time ago that the House did consider this matter, yes. All I can say is the matter is being considered by way of discussions between the parties.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member in fact in quoting from his previous answer of eleven months ago said that negotiations would start within a week, is he aware that they did not start within a week?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not aware, but they have started nevertheless.

HON J BOSSANO:

But is he aware that in fact discussions on this takes place two or three times a year? Is he aware of that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of that either but I am quite happy to make enquiries as to how often discussions do take place. I am sure that there may be reasons why they take place when they do or when they do not but I am quite prepared to look into it and see what the position is.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Government accept, in fact, that since the House has approved a unanimous motion on this subject several years ago there is in fact no reason in principle why it should not be implemented?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

That is so, Mr Speaker, but there are points of detail of the scheme which must be settled if the scheme is to be able to be presented to the House in workable form and that is what the hold-up is but, yes, the principle has been accepted long ago.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon and Learned Member give some indication of what is the complexity involved in providing a pension for a part-timer on the same basis as the UK departments do, that is, for anybody working eighteen hours a week which in the case of the UK departments takes up a paragraph of something like four lines? Why is it that it takes us five years to produce a four line amendment to the law?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the matter ought to be capable of resolution. I do not want to go into the details of the negotiations but my understanding is that there are arguments going on as to the proportion of pensioners that arise in the case of part-time working, discussion as to what the position is in the UK and what the position is here. I must say I am bound to agree it ought to be capable of fairly prompt resolution.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the position as regards the publication of the index of the Laws of Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Yes, Mr Speaker. The index is and has for some time been in proof form. It has however proved necessary to make a number of alterations to it. Despite the commitment I earlier gave to the Hon and Learned Member, I regret that it has not yet proved possible to deal with these. It is now proposed to update and publish the index with effect from 1 January, 1984.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 321 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

When will the index for January, 1984, appear, Mr Speaker?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am aware that I have given a commitment to the Hon and Learned Member and it has not been possible to deliver on that and I apologise to him for it but I can assure him that this index is in draft, it has been in draft a long time and I see no reason why it should not be ready promptly as soon as one can get time to correct it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon and Learned Attorney-General not agree that it would be more helpful for those who require to consult the index if he were to publish it as from 1st January, 1983, because with 1984 it would mean four years of legislation have not been indexed and is that not a very unsatisfactory position? Would it not be helpful to everybody who has to use it to have it published as at 1st January, 1983, if it is in proof form why not get it out?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think the answer to that, Mr Speaker, is that for every additional year that passes the index is more complete so if it is published as at 1st January, 1984, you have got all the information up to 1984.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, that may be so but it was in proof form the last time the Hon and Learned Attorney-General answered a question to my Hon and Learned Friend and will he forgive us if there is a slight suspicion in our minds that by saying 1st January, 1984, he is really postponing the evil day for everybody including himself and I would ask him to reconsider this and consider publishing 1st January, 1983, which I think will be helpful to all those who have to consult them and I think there are a great number, including Judges and things like that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am bound to say that I cannot see the advantage of publishing it at this stage as at 1983.

MR SPEAKER:

May I perhaps as a man who is also affected say that the advantage would be that at least we would have an index up to 31st December, 1983, and to that extent we would be able to use it even though we may not have an index for the year 1984. At least we would be having an index up to 31st December, 1983.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I take the point, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Hon and Learned Attorney-General saying he will?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am saying I will try.

HON P J ISOLA:

We are very grateful.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Attorney-General confirm that even if an index is published as for the 1st January, 1984, that that index itself will become obsolete as soon as the revised laws are introduced also in 1984? The proposal was to have the revised laws produced for 1984, Mr Speaker, and that will of itself mean that the index needs revision.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think not. The index simply states all the laws that are in force at a given date. I think not and I also think there is a point in having a separate index from the revised edition of the laws because even though if you have a set of the laws you can look at the introductory pages and see the index, there is also a point in having a separate document or booklet that practitioners and other people can use as a convenient ready reckoner, as it were.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 322 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how many qualified teachers have resigned from the service this year and how many have completed their training and joined the service?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, ten qualified teachers have resigned from the service this year. A total of twelve students completed their initial teacher-training courses in the UK and eleven have joined the Department.

18.10.83

NO. 323 OF 1983

ORAL

(Question withdrawn by Hon A T Loddo)



THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, have non-British Passport holders or non-residents of Gibraltar been allowed to enrol for evening classes run by the Department of Education?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, Enrolment for evening classes run by the Department of Education is restricted to persons who are resident in Gibraltar irrespective of nationality. Non-residents of Gibraltar have not been allowed to enrol. It has however come to light that there are three doubtful cases and these are being investigated.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 324 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

So, Mr Speaker, what the Minister is saying is that if it is established that these people who have already been enrolled presumably taking the opportunity of having evening classes, if it is found out that they do not qualify they will not be allowed to continue their classes?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I think it really depends on the particular circumstances of each individual case. We will have to consider the whole matter when the matter has been fully investigated and see what we shall do.

HON W T SCOTT:

But if it is established, Mr Speaker, that they are non-residents presumably they will not be allowed to continue?

HON J B PEREZ:

It may well be that that may be the case, on the other hand it may be felt that we would allow them to finish the course.

HON W T SCOTT:

Would not this be setting a very dangerous precedent, Mr Speaker, because you are compounding the original mistake?

HON J B PEREZ:

The point is, Sir, that until we have examined each case individually I do not know.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Education say:-

- (a) How long the painting of the Boys' Comprehensive School has been going on?
- (b) How many classrooms have now been painted?
- (c) What is the cost of the painting so far?
- (d) When does Government expect the jobs to be completed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

- (a) Internal painting of the Boys' Comprehensive School commenced on the 28th June, 1982.
- (b) Twenty-three classrooms and workshops have now been painted including common areas, corridors, toilets, stores, etc.
- (c) Separate accounts are not kept for expenditure incurred at each school but rather as expenditure incurred under Maintenance for Buildings under the Education Department. It is considered that approximately £40,000 has been spent at Bayside School to date.
- (d) It is not possible to assess completion with any accuracy as progress is entirely dependent on the areas which can be made available for painting at any one time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 325 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, roughly I work it out at £1,739 per classroom and the school has yet not been completed. Would the Minister not agree that it is an appalling state of affairs that with the Government trying to effect economy in the present climate that it should be costing Government £1,739 per classroom including corridors, common rooms and what have you, does not the Minister consider that this is an appalling state of affairs?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do I take it that the Minister is quite happy with the progress and the costs of painting classrooms at the rate of £1,739 per classroom? Is the Minister happy with this state of affairs?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I am not satisfied with the progress that is being made as Minister for Education.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, as Minister for Education what is the Minister doing (1) to expedite the completion of this project before we have another strike by the teachers saying that they cannot work in these dreadful conditions, and (2) what is he doing to see that the costs are kept to a minimum?

HON J B PEREZ:

The Minister is constantly pressing the Public Works Department to get on with the job.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has the Minister given any thought, Mr Speaker, to the sort of time that it is going to take all the Government schools? Will they be painted during this generation or the next if it takes sixteen months not to complete one school out of the twenty-three-odd schools in Gibraltar?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

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HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, may I revert to Question 325 in which part of the question asked: "What was the cost of painting so far?", and my Hon Colleague gave the figure of some £40,000. I have looked into this figure which apparently on the surface appears to be exorbitant but I would like the House to know that the ceilings of the school have because of instructions from the specialists who enquired into the school needed to have six coats of paint and the painting has worked out at an average cost of about £1 per square metre which is not an exorbitant figure by any means.

18.10.83

NO. 326 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will the Minister for Education make a statement on the problems being encountered by the Commercial Section of the Girls' Comprehensive?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, I am not aware of any serious problems being encountered by the Commercial Section of Westside School, based at the John Mackintosh Hall, other than the normal administrative problems encountered annually, in running a complex school time-table involving an annexe at some distance away from the main building.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 326 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, am I not right in believing that some of the teaching staff at the Girls' Comprehensive are refusing to go back to teaching in the annexe?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am not aware of that, Mr Speaker.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister care to find out and let me know whether I am correct in my assumption?

HON J B PEREZ:

I will of course undertake to do that. Let me just add that before preparing the reply to the question the department obviously contacted the Headmistress involved and no serious problems were put to us but nevertheless I will undertake to do that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 327 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many times has the Boys' Comprehensive School been broken into, and why have Government not taken preventive measures?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, the number of reported break-ins at Bayside School since January, 1983, is nil. The present security arrangements are considered satisfactory.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 327 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, if my reading of this question is correct I did not ask how many times has the Boys' Comprehensive School been broken into since January, 1983, I asked: "How many times has the Boys' Comprehensive School been broken into?" - since it was built? Mr Speaker, I have not had an answer.

MR SPEAKER:

I do not think you are going to get one.

HON A T LODDO:

I have asked: "How many times has the Boys' Comprehensive School been broken into?"

HON J B PEREZ:

Let me say how I interpreted the question, Mr Speaker, in order to prepare the answer.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is none.

HON A T LODDO:

None since January, 1983, Mr Speaker, but I have not asked since January, 1983, I have asked: "How many times has the school been broken into?"

MR SPEAKER:

Have you an answer to the question?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have an answer really for the years 1980, 1981 and 1982.

HON A T LODDO:

Can we at least have those?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, you will get those but let me first of all explain that my interpretation of the question was whether we were taking further preventive measures in view of a number of break-ins and that is why I said since January, 1983, there have been nil.

MR SPEAKER:

No, the question is couched in general terms.

HON J B PEREZ:

During 1980 there was one reported break-in, during 1981 there were two reported break-ins and during 1982 there were four reported break-ins. As a result of the 1982 break-ins the preventive measures enforced were the normal ones of ensuring that the minimum cash is left at the school and that this is locked up in a strong box and that windows and doors should be properly locked and secured after working hours.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, so other than these very, very minimum measures Government has not taken any other measure like installing burglar alarms of any description?

HON J B PEREZ:

That is why I said that in view of the fact that since January, 1983, there have been no reported break-ins we were quite satisfied with the measures that have been taken.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 328 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has No. 1 engine at the Waterport Power Station now completed its reliability run?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 328 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say when it completed the run?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The thirty days reliability trial was completed at the end of June, 1983.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say why it took so long from November when the engine first started to run, why it took so long for it to complete the thirty days reliability run?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I answered this question in a previous question to the House, No. 128 of 1983, in which I said and I quote from Hansard: "As a result of the investigations carried out at both the manufacturers works and their sub-contractors, minor modifications have been introduced and the modified pumps are already back in service with set No. 1. This particular engine has now run over 3,000 hours and has just recently been serviced and thoroughly inspected. No problem has been identified and all items inspected have been found in excellent condition. The engine has now recommenced its reliability run and over the whole period has produced in excess of 12 million units to the system". This answer was given on the 28th March, 1983.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, that answer was on the 28th March, 1983, but the reliability run did not end until June, so that was a further three months. Is the Minister satisfied that the engine is in good and proper working order?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the reliability run is really to see whether the engine will work for thirty days under certain conditions and it is really to make sure that the engine is capable of working this amount of time. Let me say that the reliability run started at the beginning

of June so the timing between the 3rd March and the 1st June was a mere six weeks which were probably used to make sure that the engine was totally alright and that the reliability run could start on the set date which was the beginning of June.

HON G T RESTANO:

What I am trying to clarify, Mr Speaker, is that we have not been sold a dud engine, that we have been sold a good engine that will last for many years?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to reassure my Hon Friend on the other side that we have not been sold a dud engine, in fact, we have been sold an extremely good engine and I am glad to say that everything is proceeding as it should.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, is Government now prepared to disclose what are the areas of disagreement in the Electricity Department's Steering Committee, which has now been deliberating for over one year, and which prevents the take-over of the Waterport Power Station by Government?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, what had been considered to be the final draft of the agreement, resulting from the discussions in the Steering Committee, has been with the Staff Side for ratification for some time. Resulting from the Staff Side consultations management have been informed of a number of areas of disagreement.

All major disagreements have been resolved with the exception of one, namely, the working arrangements for the introduction of mechanical maintenance on shift, on which agreement has not been possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 329 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Minister give us some details about that disagreement?

HON DR R G VALARIKO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, yes, this is a disagreement where the mechanical section wants a system of rotation to be introduced whereas we feel that for the good of electricity in general we want a set team to be able to look after the engines and this is the particular area in which we have differences of opinion.

HON G T RESTANO:

So what is the Government going to do now about the situation?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, consequently management have advised the Staff Side of the Steering Committee at a meeting held yesterday morning that after the prolonged deliberations that have taken place, management will be taking steps to advertise all industrial jobs in accordance with normal practice and in line with the conditions contained in the draft agreement as from the 19th October, 1983.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can Government say the number of staff involved on the Staff Side?

HON LR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I do not have the number of vacancies at this very moment but I shall communicate it to my Hon Friend as soon as possible. I think it must be something in the region of ten.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Sir, how much time and what has been the cost incurred in apportioned wages in relation to Government employees involved in the Electricity Department's Steering Committee?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, the Steering Committee has formally met on thirty-one occasions. The length of meetings has varied from an hour to two-and-a-half hours. The number of Official Side representatives has varied between four and five, while the number of Government employees released from their normal duties in order to attend meetings has varied from three to seven. In addition to these a secretary has been present on each occasion.

Furthermore, sub-committees involving two officers from the Official Side and between two and five Staff Side representatives have met on approximately twenty-five occasions, each meeting lasting between one and two hours.

There have, of course, been a similar number of meetings involving representatives of the Official Side.

The amount of time spent is estimated at over 1,000 man hours at a cost of approximately £4,000 and indicates the extent to which Government has allowed the Steering Committee the opportunity to carry out the task with which it was charged.

18.10.83

NO. 331 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Is Government now in a position to state what were the total costs for the hire of the skid generators?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the total costs for the hire of the skid generators was \$359,068.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 331 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Plus, I suppose, the installation costs and so on?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, but obviously this part of the question is not included and I cannot answer.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

What numbers of staff have been employed in the overhaul of the engines and electrical plant equipment at the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the total personnel involved in the present overhaul of the two engines at Waterport Power Station is seven; namely, an engineer, a foreman and five craftsmen. Additionally, two craftsmen are carrying out the servicing of the ancillary electrical and mechanical plant.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 332 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Are these persons other than those who are running the Station at the moment? Are they extra or are they from within the sixteen or eighteen that are employed to run the Station continually?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, they are.

HON G T RESTANO:

They are what, extra?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

They are extra, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

So altogether then there are twenty-five members of the staff who have been able to run the Station and overhaul the engines, is that correct?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, let me put it another way. We needed the 6,000 hour overhaul of Waterport engines 1 and 2. The job was contracted out to Mirrlees Engineers, they have come, they have done the first engine which was completed in three weeks and two days and they are not tackling the second engine but really these are people who have been contracted to come to do a specific job and when the specific job is done will be leaving.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

What has been the extra revenue to Government for the 2nd and 3rd quarters of this year resulting from the metering of telephones broken down into trunk and local calls?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the extra revenue to Government from the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 1983 has been £85,158 broken down into £67,625 due to local call metering and £17,533 from international traffic.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 333 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Is that combined? So that means, Mr Speaker, the 1st quarter of 1983 was £64,000 and now the Minister is saying two quarters combined, 2nd and 3rd, are about £85,000, so that would be about £40,000 odd per quarter as opposed to £64,000 in the 1st quarter. Is the Minister saying then that there has been a radical reduction in extra income?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I see that the Hon Member has got his sums wrong. If he refers to the answer to Question 261 of 1983 in which I said: "The extra revenue to Government from 1st October, 1982 to 31st March, 1983, has been in the order of £64,000", he will have realised that the time that I answered that question I took it over a six months period so I am comparing a six month period with a like six month period and to help him in this the six months period last time was £64,000, the six months period this time is £67,625, the six months period on international calls was £14,000 and the six months period this time is £17,533.

HON G T RESTANO:

Surely, Mr Speaker, that amounts to one call a day as an average, surely that cannot be correct? Surely the extra revenue to Government on average must be more than 1½ calls per day?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I am afraid, Sir, that I cannot work out the sum that the Hon Member has mentioned but I would suggest that we get together after the House and we have a look at the figures that you think and we think and then we can clear this matter up.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G.T RESTANO

Will Government state what is the total cost to date of the Chairman of the Electricity Department's Steering Committee and how many working days have been involved?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the cost to date of the Chairman of the Electricity Department's Steering Committee is £101,906.05.

The Chairman has spent a total of 244 days in Gibraltar in his official capacity as Chairman of the Steering Committee.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 334 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

For how much longer will the Chairman's services be required?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a difficult question to answer. We would probably expect him to remain as little as possible but I would like to mention that there has been an area of disagreement which could hamper things a little bit.

HON G T RESTANO:

But since the Minister earlier gave us to understand that the Government were acting in a certain manner on that area of disagreement, is there any requirement for the Chairman to continue in his work, and costing Gibraltar over £1,000 a week?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, because the Chairman who is an independent person could help to smooth things over for the next few weeks until we solve this problem.

HON G T RESTANO:

The Minister says the Chairman will smooth things over but surely by the Government taking the action that it has taken it no longer requires the services now of that Chairman, surely?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I am not the one to say it but there could be a reaction from the union in which case the Chairman may want to consider that but we have reached a point in time which is very fluid and I just cannot give the Hon Member, much as I would like to do so, the categorical answer that we would not need the Chairman of the Steering Committee within the next few days.

MR SPEAKER:

Fair enough, that is a matter of policy.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does not the Minister agree that this is a matter that should be given very urgent consideration in view of the fact that the Chairman of the Steering Committee is costing the Gibraltar taxpayer £417 per working day? Since there is nobody in Gibraltar who enjoys that standard of living perhaps he could give this matter urgent attention.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, the Hon Mr Isola has a very good point. I am very conscious of that, in fact, the Government is very conscious of that as well and believe you me we shall do all in our power to make sure that the position does not continue beyond any reasonable time.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



18.10.83

NO. 335 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Mr Speaker, will Government state how many 'social cases' which have been recommended for pre-war accommodation are waiting to be allocated a dwelling and will Government state whether any of the forty-eight approved social cases referred to in October, 1982, in answer to Question 194 are still outstanding?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, there were forty-eight social cases recommended for pre-war accommodation as on the 11 October, 1983.

Twenty-three out of the forty-eight approved social cases referred to in October, 1982, are still outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 335 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, does the Government consider that someone who is an approved social case is given a priority rating and is Government satisfied that someone who has been given a priority rating that a year's wait is warranted?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, anyone who has a genuine social case and has to wait more than one day does not give me any satisfaction but I think the Hon Member opposite must be aware as everybody in Gibraltar is that housing is one of the biggest social problems that we have and I am certainly not going to solve this in the short term that I have been Minister. Anything that causes delay over a day is not of satisfaction to me but the more social cases that we deal with the less housing stock we have available.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister state when he expects these forty-eight presently approved social cases will be housed?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

There are twenty-five of the old ones. I cannot give you<sup>a</sup> date, I can only give you the assurance that we will try and do it within the limited stock that we have available and other related problems that we will do our best because it is only human that we will try to do our best.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister state whether he has earmarked any old buildings for pre-war accommodation of the type for social cases and if so, how many dwellings and if so, when will they be ready?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, we have not earmarked any particular buildings.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many 'social cases' have been awarded accommodation in the last three months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, four social cases have been accommodated during the last three months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 336 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

These flats which have been awarded in the last three months, are they dwellings which had been earmarked by the Minister at an earlier date and which were prepared or are they a thing that just occurred, that just cropped up?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I cannot answer that question because it does not form part of his original question. He has asked me how many have been awarded accommodation and I have answered.

MR SPEAKER:

In any event in the previous question you have said that you do not earmark you just house them.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is it correct to assume that the policy of the Government is just to express concern but not to prepare or provide houses, is that the right position?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The right answer is to express concern and to be able to do something about it. I don't know how long the Hon Member has been a Member of this House but he must know that the ODA for some time now has refused to give us any aid in helping us with the social side of our economy and everything that is built now is built with our own funds and funds are limited and the question of the whole future of the economy of Gibraltar is very much at stake and we try to make the best use of the limited funds available to deal with all the other problems that we have in Gibraltar and housing takes, I think, one of the priorities.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister state how much money is allocated to the refurbishing of pre-war dwellings for social cases?

MR SPEAKER:

You have been told that Government has not got a policy of putting aside houses for social cases, they just try and solve the problems as and when they come therefore they cannot put aside any money to put houses right for social cases.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I have accepted that the Minister has stated that no houses are earmarked for refurbishment for social cases but the Minister will confirm that a number of pre-war dwellings which are made over for social cases require refurbishment, refurbishment obviously is done in part by the Housing Department team. What I would like to know, Mr Speaker, is given that they do not earmark houses for social cases do they nevertheless earmark any money to be spent on the refurbishment of houses for social cases?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The whole thing comes from the same vote and the idea is that we have our own team, if we can tackle something by ourselves we do it as soon as possible, the sooner we do it the better. If there are things which we cannot cope with the PWD give us a hand, the money is still the same.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 337 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state how many applicants are awaiting consideration by the Housing Advisory Committee to establish whether or not they are social cases and will Government state the average time taken in processing an applicant's request to be considered as a social case through to the Committee's decision?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, there are seven cases awaiting consideration by the Housing Advisory Committee.

Investigation reports on four of these have already been received from the Family Care Unit and will be tabled at the next meeting of the Housing Advisory Committee.

It takes from six to eight weeks from the time that an applicant requests to be treated as a social case for his application to be processed through the Family Care Unit and to be considered by the Committee.

18.10.83

NO. 338 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A. J. HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the number of persons known to be squatting in Government buildings and sites as at the 10th October, 1983?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, there are, at present, seven families squatting in Government owned buildings which are incorporated in the rent roll of the Housing Department.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 338 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister state how long the longest has been there for?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, I cannot but I can ask, Mr Speaker, and I will give him the information.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I accept that he does not know how long but can he state, for instance, whether it has been years or months?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I have no idea, Mr Speaker, but I shall ask and I will give him as detailed an answer as possible.

NO. 339 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government release the figures of applicants on the Housing Waiting List as at the 10th October, 1983, giving the number in respect of the various categories, ie 4RKB, 3RKB, etc?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, the figures of applicants on the Housing Waiting List as on the 10th October, 1983, are as follows:-

<u>B/S</u>	<u>2RKB</u>	<u>3RKB</u>	<u>4RKB</u>	<u>5RKB</u>	<u>6RKB</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
188	451	668	452	69	4	1,832

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 339 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that in the last four years the numbers on the waiting list have not gone below the figure of 1,800?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think when I took over that was more or less the figure.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state whether his department has any policy to reduce that figure substantially and if so by what time do they expect the reduction to take place?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Sir, the Government has a building programme which comprises modernisation and new buildings and this is tied up with my Hon Colleague's answer to the Member opposite on the question of tying up the necessary funding because everything is funded locally.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that in the Chief Minister's opening statement to this House he indicated that his Government's top priority would be to housing?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

That is so and I will happily give the Hon Member a list of the projects that are awaiting funding.

HON A J HAYNES:

And how many units or how many families will this alleviate,  
Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I cannot give the figure now.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many houses have been provided since January of this year giving a breakdown of their location and size, ie 3RKB, 4RKB and stating whether new or modernised and give the figures for the next 2½ months, ie up to the end of the year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, twenty-six modernised flats at Castle Ramp/Road to the Lines and ten new ones at Catalan Bay were provided respectively as follows:-

	<u>B/S</u>	<u>2RKB</u>	<u>3RKB</u>	<u>4RKB</u>	<u>5RKB</u>	<u>Total</u>
Modernised -	3	7	13	2	1	26
New -	4	-	3	3	-	10

No more new or modernised flats are expected to be completed during the next 2½ months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 340 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, ten new houses this year, I do not think it needs much comment. I would note, Mr Speaker, that last year I was told that forty-three would be completed this year apart from the ODA numbers, what happened to those forty-three?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I cannot remember who gave the figure of forty-three.

HON A J HAYNES:

If the Minister will give way.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Thirty-six have been built instead of forty-three so far.

HON A J HAYNES:

So far but none expected before the end of the year, Mr Speaker. I have no comment other than to say ten new houses, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state what meaningful action has been taken to give the tourist industry the significant support the Chief Minister promised in his statement on the closure of the Naval Dockyard at the last meeting?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, since the statement by the Chief Minister on the 27 July, 1983, rapid action has been undertaken in that:

- (1) a special presentation was convened to emphasise to all Heads of Civil Service departments and senior officials the importance of tourism to the economy and the need for all departments to assist the development of tourism in every possible way.
- (2) a general study to assess the cost of municipal charges especially insofar as it concerns the hotel industry.
- (3) encouragement has been given to Intasun to launch their Gibraltar brochure.
- (4) action to clean up Gibraltar has been and is being intensified.

In pursuance of the Government's policy that tourism must now assume a greater importance, the Chief Minister has directed that the Administrative Secretary should take a special interest in the work of the Tourist Office on his behalf and assist with coordination among departments. Consultations are taking place accordingly and I will report further to the House in due course.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 341 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister satisfied that well over a month since the statement was made that that is sufficient to give the impression to Gibraltar that something significant is going to happen during the coming year or is this just talk and more talk and no action?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am very satisfied that the attitude as to the importance of tourism to our economy is being recognised not just by the Government but I think by every single person in Gibraltar and I do find there is some concern in this field. As I said I will report later on, Mr Speaker, not in this meeting but in the not too distant future on possible developments that I think will ensue particularly because of the involvement of the Administrative Secretary in ensuring that departments which hitherto, I am not saying they have not helped or assisted but may not have been geared towards or should I say have not had the mental attitude towards tourism that should have been there.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister agree that tourism has been in fact the second pillar of Gibraltar's economy?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not debate. If you want to seek information you can but not confirmation of what has been said before.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, isn't the Minister surprised that he hasn't got a plan up his sleeve to put something into action, Mr Speaker, on what has always been the second pillar of Gibraltar's industry and to me it seems that he hasn't got a plan at all not even at this late hour.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We have a plan, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm whether there is any distinction in the action to be taken to improve tourism in Gibraltar as between day tourists and overnight tourism?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the Tourist Office main approach is towards tourism that stays in Gibraltar over a period. Obviously for the economic activity of Gibraltar it is an accepted fact and acknowledged fact that tourists who occupy hotel beds the distribution of the money left behind is across the board as opposed to day excursionists so we do give much more importance to the hotel occupancy or, should I say, all-inclusive tours which require hotel accommodation.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm, Mr Speaker, that there has been an increase in day tourists to Gibraltar since the partial opening of the frontier?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I don't know if I can call them tourists, Mr Speaker, there have certainly been more people crossing the frontier but as to the expenditure I am afraid I do not know how much they spend or how vital or how important they are to our economy at this stage.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister state whether there is in fact any appreciable increase in day tourists and I do not mean Gibraltarians crossing back and forth, I mean day tourists to Gibraltar and if so, if there has been an increase in day tourists, Mr Speaker, will the Minister state whether these day tourists are interested in visiting the Upper Rock?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect. We are not going to go into the whole sphere of tourism under a particular question.

HON A J HAYNES:

But the question does ask meaningful action taken in respect of the tourist industry.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, precisely, but you are asking now for an analysis of what is happening. With respect, I will not have it. Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state if he has convened any meetings of the Tourist Advisory Board since the last meeting of this House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, since 24th May, 1983, which is the last date on which this question came up, one further meeting of the Tourist Advisory Board was held on 1st September, 1983. The next meeting is scheduled for the 27th October, 1983.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 342 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So in fact he has not called a meeting since the last meeting of this House?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, we held a meeting on the 1st September and we are holding another one which is scheduled on the 27th October.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister state if anything constructive came out of that meeting?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can he give us an idea of what it was, what suggestions were made and so on and so forth and to what extent the Government may be able to act on that?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The matters discussed were trade promotions in the United Kingdom, the question of municipal charges which I made reference to in the previous question, the departure tax from Morocco which I think the Hon Member knows will be later laid by the Hon Financial and Development Secretary. We discussed such things as tunnel tours particularly with regard to Princess Lines, cleanliness and litter is one that obviously came up and the question of the Mons Calpe pulling out, we were given the information that it was pulling out of operation for the winter period, amongst other things.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister optimistic that most of the points that were raised will be carried out or will it just be more talk and nothing else?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, one holds meetings obviously with the hope of being able to do something effective. I reiterate what I said earlier on, I find there is much greater sympathy and concern from all sectors towards tourism and that is why I say I am very encouraged and enthused about it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state how many Tour Operators as distinct from Travel Agents have been approached and or visited by his department since I last raised this matter?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, a special presentation was held in London on the 21 September, 1983, where five specialist tour operators attended (Cadogan, Exchange, Gibraltar Travel, Intasun and Marshall Sutton).

Tour operators are contacted by telephone regularly once a month and sometimes twice a week depending on urgent matters.

During late summer to early October Gibraltar Tourist staff have written or spoken to all six major tour operators at least once a fortnight, and a number of senior representatives called at the Gibraltar Tourist Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 343 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I suppose the Minister is referring to the tour operators who are now operating with Gibraltar. I am referring to other tour operators who have not yet done any business with Gibraltar.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I can assure the Hon Member, Mr Speaker, that we do attempt to get into the Thomsons of this world and the other big tour operators but I am afraid with very little success.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister say how he does that, is it by inviting them to presentations or literally trying to find ways through friends and influential people to get them to operate for Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, by every single method the Hon Member has mentioned.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 344 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state what has been the hotel occupancy during the present summer season up to the end of September?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, it is not possible to give statistics up to the end of September because hotels have not yet submitted their returns.

However, based on available statistics, average hotel bed occupancy for the period April to July, 1983, was 42.8%.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 344 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I have not got the figures with me but is that an improvement on the previous year or what?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, it is not an improvement, it is a slight drop. Where there is an improvement is in the duration or length of stay from 6.7 days it has shot up to 9.4, I think. In other words, people are coming for a longer stay.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But isn't that in fact not a good thing in that people who come spend less if they stay longer? Usually what is required is shorter periods and more people coming and also he said there was a slight drop, can he say what he means by slight?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am mentioning here April to July which borders partly on the beginning of the high season in summer, it goes up to normally 50% or 56% occupancy during the summer period so we have just got the tail end of it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So in fact you cannot tell me?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

A very slight drop because we may find that August was very high. I could report that at this very moment the Rock Hotel is full to total capacity for this week.



HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, perhaps I may assist the Hon Member. As I have responsibility for this area of statistics in my substantive post I can confirm that the statistics have not been submitted by the hotels but the indications are that visitor arrivals are lower than last year so therefore it is likely that the occupancy figures will be lower as well.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 345 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state what are the prospects so far for the tourist industry this winter season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, it is very difficult to predict prospects as the market in UK is very sluggish and the late booking trend continues. Opinion in the UK travel trade varies but the introduction of the Intasun programme will in all probability give a boost to traffic.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, what was the total cost of staging the Miss Gibraltar Show and what was the cost of the overtime element, if any?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the total cost of staging the Miss Gibraltar Contest 1983 was £21,275.86, which includes the sum of £3,132.96 in respect of overtime payments.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 346 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does this mean that the sending of Miss Gibraltar 1983 to London to participate in the Miss World and the subsequent sending of Miss Gibraltar 1983 to America to participate in Miss Universe and the sending of the first princess to Turkey to represent Gibraltar in the Miss Europe will have to be met from funds which will be required for the purpose?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker. In the case of Miss Gibraltar attending the Miss World Contest in London by way of donations I think Gibraltar Airways provides transport for the Miss World and chaperon. In the case of the first princess all expenses are paid for and in the case of Miss Universe all expenses are paid for. I should say, Mr Speaker, we do of course provide a subsistence allowance.

HON A T LODDO:

So, Mr Speaker, then I can take it that the £21,275.86 referred exclusively to the staging of the show at the Cave on the night? One night's entertainment has cost Gibraltar £21,275.86?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, it would be wrong to say that because the performance which the Hon Member saw himself is not something that can be organised, planned, prepared in one single night. There was one month's rehearsal for what I would describe as a very beautiful show and there were costings, of course, there which do not take part like the artists that we saw which have to be paid for. So it was a month's hard work and an awful amount of things and I would like to say, Mr Speaker, that an enormous amount of items are given to us on loan very kindly by a tremendous number of people in Gibraltar and firms, on loan.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I am sure we are all very grateful for these kind donations but I want to be absolutely certain in my mind that the £21,275.86 is the cost of staging the one night show of Miss Gibraltar.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON A T LODDO:

Then perhaps the Minister can split down this sum of £21,275.86 into the different areas where it has gone, I realise that there is £3,000+odd in overtime possibly for the ferrying of the contestants and what have you up to the Cave and down again during the month of rehearsal but apart from £3,000-odd the remainder as far as I can gather and if I am wrong I hope the Minister can enlighten me, refers to that one show a year?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker. It is not just ferrying girls up and down that costs £3,000. There are electricians . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

I think we are talking at cross purposes. I think it is a clear question. Of course it takes time and I think we all accept that, to produce the show but the net result was one night's performance. That is what you are being asked.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, it was a two-night show. The dress rehearsal, the Hon Member might recall, the day previous to the show is carried out from which a small fee is collected which goes into the Miss World Ward or whatever it is called, so there are two performances carried out and in addition of course, as the Hon Member knows it is televised so the whole of Gibraltar is able to enjoy the show sitting at home.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry to be labouring this a bit but the two shows which the Minister . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

I think you have been given the answer.

HON A T LODDO:

But, Mr Speaker, it is not two shows. Am I correct in assuming that the first dress rehearsal does not contain the full show because the main artists do not take part therefore I am correct in saying that there is one show a year which costs us £21,275.86?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it is absolutely correct that we do not have two shows with all the artists otherwise we would have to pay double the amount for their appearance.

HON A T LODDO:

£42,551.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, rubbish. We would pay whatever the artists collect.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister think that in these days that we are living it is fair to pay such an amount for one show a year?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Totally and completely, Mr Speaker, and if the Hon Member would like to come to my office I will show him the tremendous number of letters that we have received congratulating the Gibraltar Tourist Office for tremendous work in what was particularly this year an outstanding performance.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do all these people who write these congratulatory letters know what it is costing the people of Gibraltar to stage the show?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

If you analyse it carefully, Mr Speaker, it may cost per person 50p to see a two and a half hour show.

MR SPEAKER:

We will leave it at that. Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 347 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government give comparative figures regarding visitors from Morocco from January to September, 1982, and 1983?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the available comparative figures regarding excursionists from Morocco from January to August, 1982, and 1983, are:-

1982 - 21,538

1983 - 21,501

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 347 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask on this what the effects have been to the visitors from Morocco with the £50 duty or tax imposed by the Moroccan Government?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I have not got absolute details because, of course, I was not given notice of that question but I can say that it has hurt trade very badly indeed, we are getting very few visitors from Morocco.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am sure that the Minister will agree that this is a very serious situation and may I ask whether the Government is doing anything to try to rectify the position?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, we are aware of the serious consequences of the £50 obviously affecting Moroccan tourists leaving. I would like to just add a caution when we talk about open Government or giving away or holding things secret. One can assume that the Moroccan Government were not very pleased in finding that we were very free to give away that Moroccan excursionists were spending over £1m in Gibraltar and it might have been an embarrassment for their own customs so sometimes I think it is better to keep our mouths shut as to how well we are doing which might bring bad consequences on us.

HON G T RESTANO:

I agree entirely with the Minister and I think that perhaps the local pressmen may well have been highlighting things which they would have done better not to highlight. However, the position does exist and I heard this morning, I think the Minister's Colleague, the Minister

for Public Works, say how we should not antagonise on the question of the labour, how we should be very careful about not antagonising our friends across the Straits but they are certainly antagonising....

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, I have called your attention. What are you asking?

HON G T RESTANO:

What is Government doing about it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, it is no use saying what the Government is doing because this is the action of a sovereign state which applies not only to Gibraltar but generally. The Ambassador in Rabat has been asked by the Foreign Office to take up the matter with the Moroccan authorities and in particular add the fact that the Moroccan Government does gain a considerable amount of foreign exchange through their workers and through other means and therefore urging in aid of that a revision insofar as tourists to Gibraltar are concerned but we have not received a reply.

HON G T RESTANO:

But would the Chief Minister not agree that it might be a good idea for the Gibraltar Government itself, the Chief Minister himself to make representations to the authorities in Morocco or in Tangier in conjunction . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Order, we are getting into a stage where you are asking the Minister to do things which are not within his Ministerial responsibility.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, I was going to say in conjunction with the Foreign Office.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Let me say that I have done what I can personally.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, in relation to Question No. 285 of 1983, will Government inform this House as to why no action appears to have been taken in the erection of notices?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, there is only one sign writer employed in the Department and this man has been very busy with other more pressing jobs.

The signs for the Piazza however will be ready in the very near future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 348 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, could we have some dates? The Piazza has recently received a part refurbishing at least by the new occupier of the licensed premises and I think he ought to be congratulated, can we not ensure more speedy action?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, I am pressed to have all sorts of signs in all sorts of places such as down the beaches as warning notices, car parks, etc. As I say, I only have one sign writer and it is not a very quick procedure to make signs if they are going to, firstly, look good and, secondly, stand up to wear and tear but I will try and expedite the matter.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is it not a fact also, Mr Speaker, that Government do not restrict themselves to their own sign writer for signs, that they do sometimes go out to tender on them?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Very seldom do we go out to tender, Sir, unless it is a specific contract such as the signs that have been put up at the entrance to the city, etc but under the normal circumstances where we want a sign, say, a no parking here or what have you, that is done by our own sign writer.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 349 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government make a statement on the results of the implementation of the 2-shift system at the Refuse Destructor and on the new arrangements for street sweeping?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the arrangements at the Refuse Incinerator consist of two shifts working Mondays to Fridays from 7 am to 3 pm and from 3 pm to 11 pm. One shift also comes in on Saturdays (7 am to 3 pm) while a skeleton crew of two men operate the crane and receive the Sunday morning refuse collection. These arrangements enable the disposal of domestic refuse to be readily dealt with.

The new arrangements for street sweeping consist of a full complement of twenty-eight sweepers working a five day week; twelve sweepers working all day on Saturdays and five sweepers working half a day on Sunday. These arrangements permit the central areas to be swept seven days a week and the outer town areas to be swept six days a week. The remaining areas are only swept during week-days.

The accumulation of trade refuse, in part dating from the industrial action, is taking longer to deal with. PWD are currently designing new hearths to burn trade refuse more efficiently. Measures are also being taken to dispose of the accumulation of scrap.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 349 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I am very grateful to the Minister, in fact, basically other than his last few sentences, it is exactly what he said to us I think it was at the last but one meeting of the House when he introduced the new system. What I am asking now is what has been the result of the implementation of those systems because it seems to me that if one is to judge on the result by the look of Gibraltar and the refuse destructor, that it has had very little effect.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The results as far as the refuse incinerator is concerned is that it is running on a more efficient basis and all the normal household refuse is being burnt whereas before some was being tipped into the sea at the refuse chute. The question of trade refuse and metallic refuse is exercising our minds to a very great extent. The amount of trade refuse is getting greater it seems all the time, it is astonishing how much metallic refuse is taken down. Sir, I think later on I shall be saying that we will have to have a look at the position of metallic refuse to see if some new system can be made under which persons who wish to deposit, as somebody did the other day, sixteen typewriters at one go should take it straightaway and throw it over the car chute rather than deposit in the actual refuse compound and then we have to take it away ourselves and throw it over the car chute.

HON W T SCOTT:

But is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that in the refuse destructor site certainly, that yard has never been as accumulated with even combustible material as it is now and that in fact there are problems of an industrial nature with the refuse destructor personnel?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I do not know that there are problems of an industrial nature, Sir, but the position is that there is a vast accumulation of wood refuse. You cannot burn wood with the present hearths that we have all the time because when there are certain wind conditions there is a danger from sparks flying around and possibly causing a fire in the neighbouring areas. We are, as I said, designing new hearths which should mean that we could burn every single day and then this situation will not occur in the future.

HON W T SCOTT:

But what reasons . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to debate the working of the incinerator under this question in any manner or form. You have asked a question and I think you have been given quite an explicit answer but we must not prolong it more than we have to.

HON W T SCOTT:

I am not entirely satisfied, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, that is the malaise that the Opposition has to live with but if you feel that perhaps a debate is warranted then you can move a motion but not under this question.

HON W T SCOTT:

I will take the very earliest opportunity to move another motion.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say in terms of costs what is the comparison with the new system as opposed to the old system?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think it is costing about 10% to 12½% more, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 350 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government inform this House as to the problems with rubbish collection and disposal during the summer, which has given Gibraltar such a bad image and can only act to the detriment of the tourist economy?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the number of personnel reporting to work at the Cleansing Section was greatly reduced owing to the Islamic feasts of Ramadan and the Feast of the Lamb. These covered 11 July to 22 July and 19 September to 30 September respectively. In addition, the number of Gibraltarians who took leave this summer was greater than in previous years. As a result of this the Cleansing Section had a very depleted labour force over the summer season and there were many areas that were not swept. However, the collection of refuse during the early morning was not interrupted.

It has always been Government policy to grant leave or unpaid leave to its Moroccan workforce during these religious feasts, and though every effort is made to maintain the essential cleansing services, there have regrettably been areas in which the state of cleansing has been below standard.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 350 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, we are talking about two periods of eleven days each, that is twenty-two days, on a short staffing but that is not three or four months that the summer lasts and in any event, Mr Speaker, it seems to me that here we are in a situation where we have more personnel involved in cleaning and Gibraltar has never looked as dirty and has presented such a bad image for the tourists that we sadly need in Gibraltar and it seems to me from the Minister's answer that we have not had an answer to this question of the way that Government would hopefully want to look at it for next season and would the Minister comment on that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, Sir, we have not got more personnel than ever. We have a maximum of twenty-eight personnel in the Cleansing Section and as I say, there is sometimes a considerable number of persons away. The Feast of the Lamb and the Feast of Ramadan officially may be ten or twelve days but unfortunately some of the personnel go away and stay away for three weeks to four weeks at a time. The situation is, basically, that very often we have a labour force which is depleted some 50% and I think they have done reasonably well in keeping Gibraltar as clean as they have managed to do. I will state once again that the cleanliness of Gibraltar does not simply devolve upon the people who pick up the rubbish but on the people who throw it down.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister saying that the Government accepts the fact that people go away for three or four weeks, accepts the fact that Gibraltar must look dirty and untidy and yet spends a huge amount of money in trying to promote people to come to this place? Isn't that a sad reflection on the performance of the Minister?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

One could, of course, stop these people going away but that might cause a lot of other repercussions. We have to remain in decent relationship with our neighbours in Morocco. We do depend upon them for water and for various other things and we do not wish to precipitate a situation by curtailing the reasonably legitimate leave of these people to such an extent that something might happen which we would not like.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would the Minister agree that Gibraltar has been looking dirtier than ever?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I will not allow a debate on the question with due respect to you.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will agree that the Gibraltarians are a dirty lot.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, if you want to seek information on a supplementary you are free to do so.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, my question is, does the Minister confirm the premise on which the question is based?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a matter of opinion.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I heard the Minister say that he agrees that the Gibraltarians are a dirty lot, is that a statement that has the support of his Government?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The other day I saw a certain person throw something away, I picked it up and gave it to him and I said: "I believe this belongs to you", and I was told by the mother: "Who do you think you are to give this back to my child?"

HON P J ISOLA:

But does the Minister consider that justifies the statement accusing Gibraltarians in general of being a dirty lot? Is that what he is saying, is that what the Government thinks?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is not a statement but as the Hon Member will know, the dirt and the rubbish and the refuse must come from somewhere and as the Hon Major Peliza pressed me some little time ago to clean up Wellington Front which we have done, somewhere, somebody, somehow put twelve lorry loads of rubbish down there. Where does it come from?

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister stating that the situation of Gibraltar, the dirt in Gibraltar, is not due possibly to lack of proper sweeping and so forth of the streets, not due to lack of enforcement by the Police but due to the fact that the Gibraltarians are a dirty lot? Is that what he is saying?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

What I am saying is that if you look down Main Street at 9 o'clock in the morning when it has been swept it is really quite clean and if you look down Main Street by midday it is really quite dirty and somehow from somebody that rubbish seems to emanate, perhaps it is the tourists.

HON P J ISOLA:

So is the Minister now amending the statement . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. I will not have it.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Minister going to do anything about the rubbish, Mr Speaker? Is it going to be cleaner next summer, what is going to happen?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

What I would say is that perhaps the Gibraltarians are not as clean as we would wish them to be.

HON P J ISOLA:

I see, his statement is now being amended.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 351 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, having regard to the recent mass importation of fresh water and the costs thereof, will Government explain why no comprehensive campaign has taken place advising consumers of the absolute necessity for water economy?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, there have been several appeals, via the news media, throughout the summer to the general public advising them of the need to conserve water. Heavy users of potable water such as hotels have been written to directly asking for their cooperation and that of their clients in trying to conserve our stocks of potable water. The Water Engineer was also interviewed on television and radio on the potable water situation. At one particular stage when stocks were exceedingly low an advert was prepared at GBC, on the need to conserve water, and was televised.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 351 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, the operative word in my question was "comprehensive" campaign, not the odd spot of fifteen, thirty or sixty seconds on television, a comprehensive campaign running throughout the summer and even now because we have legislation here increasing the price of water I think up to next April and does Government not think that such a comprehensive campaign is indicated?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I wish to say, Sir, that a comprehensive campaign, a campaign which goes on continually all through the summer unfortunately such as a comprehensive campaign which was done on litter some time ago tends to become almost taken as a matter of course. I think short and sporadic campaigns at specific intervals do more good. We do not want to get into the stage of some of the shops in Main Street which seem to have a sale for eleven months of the twelve months.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 352 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, why has Government not made provisions, outside the official bathing season, for the advice, warning and protection of bathers in beaches?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, there are such warning notices displayed all the year round at Catalan Bay.

On other beaches when the seas are rough and it is considered that bathing is dangerous the red flag is hoisted during the period, and outside the official bathing season when the weather is warm, and these arrangements will continue until cooler weather sets in. It is not practical, in economic terms, to do this all through the winter season.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 352 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, since we are now hoping to attract tourists during our winter months in some numbers, wouldn't it be advisable to continue that system whether it is in warm days, what we consider warm days, rather than what an English tourist coming from the north of England might consider a warm day and to have at least the red flag facility available there when it is required throughout the twelve months, if necessary by his own department or perhaps by the Police Force?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am willing to consider that, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 353 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government take early action to remove the existing fountain at the Piazza, ridding Gibraltar of this eyesore in the centre of our City?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government intends to replace the existing fountain with a new one which will be made including parts of the original fountain which stood in that area prior to World War II. The sections of the old fountain which were salvaged require restoration and modification.

In the meantime the existing fountain is being filled with earth and suitable flowers will be planted. This interim arrangement will improve the general appearance of the Piazza.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 353 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

I am very much aware, Mr Speaker, of the intentions of Government with the new fountain because they had this in answer to Question No. 297 of 1983 but, Mr Speaker, just an aside here, it seems remarkable that it was the following day after I posed the question that the sand and the earth was put inside that fountain last week. But, however, Mr Speaker, my question does not really deal with the new fountain it deals with the old one and does Government not think it beneficial getting rid of that eyesore, even levelling it, without having to wait till the new fountain can be paid for?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, the credit to put in the earth or sand in the present fountain must go to the Hon Mr Loddo who suggested this to me, I should say, at least two months ago. The reason why it was not done more quickly is that we are very short of earth in Gibraltar and we have to sieve it and scrape it out as best we can so it was perhaps coincidental that this was done the next day because the instructions had been given well before. It could have been another ploy to have taken everything away and levelled it over but Mr Loddo's suggestion of making a little garden there was one that we thought was the better.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 354 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, who will foot the bill for clearing up the appalling mess left by the campers at Eastern Beach?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government personnel from the Public Works Department will clear the litter and debris left behind by campers at Eastern Beach. It is for consideration whether to change the conditions of permits to camp at Eastern Beach and to require campers to deposit a sum of money prior to their being issued with a permit. If at the end of the Bathing Season a camper has not cleaned the site allotted to him, he will forfeit the deposit. These monies will pay for the cleaning of the site.

Sir, as an aside to the question, may I comment that doubtless the Hon Mr Peter Isola who apparently gibes strong language would like to discuss the term "appalling mess" with his Colleague.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 354 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I will give the opportunity to the Leader of the Opposition to discuss strong language, "appalling mess", with me later but I do take it then that the Minister is in fact saying that the Public Works Department will foot the bill and do I take it then that in these permits which are granted to campers at Eastern Beach there is no provision made so that campers are obliged to leave the area in the same condition they found it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the Hon Mr Loddó is quite correct that Public Works will foot the bill. The condition under which campers are allowed to camp is that they should keep the place in clean and decent condition but unfortunately people seem to flout the law.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is there no possibility that these people be prosecuted as there is provision in the law for dumping rubbish and litter or are they going to get away with it scott free?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, why have the vehicle ramps behind Ince's Hall been made unusable by the erection of an iron post?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the general public has had access to the vehicle ramp behind Ince's Hall for many years and this practice has resulted in the area being left in a very dirty and untidy state, as many of the users leave unserviceable parts from vehicles, tins of oil, etc in the area.

In order to improve the cleanliness in that area it was decided to place posts in order to stop vehicles being driven onto the ramp.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 355 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister then not agree that perhaps it would be a good idea for the Public Works to collect the empty cement bags and other associated rubbish that has been left there above the ramp on the boulevard?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, I don't know who the clean people have been that have left the empty cement bags but we will of course clean them up in due course.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, as an aside, wouldn't it be better to do away with the two ramps and thus make one more parking space available? You would be killing two birds with one stone, do away with an area which is an eyesore and at the same time provide an extra parking, would the Minister consider that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

HON A T LODDO:

Thank you.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 356 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government responsible for the upkeep of The Europa Promenade and if so, why has the area not been swept for months?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, it is a Government responsibility.

The Cleansing Section of the Department does tidy up the area at intervals when there is the labour force available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 356 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I notice that five men were up there on Wednesday clearing the area, perhaps I could ask the Minister how long these intervals occur and have they anything to do with Ramdan and Feast of the Lamb?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would think they must do.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government publish a list of those Government buildings which have been reported by the Environmental Health Department as buildings which require to be repaired, giving dates when repair requirements were first reported and the dates of subsequent reminders, if any?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 357 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Why not, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, Sir, it is not that we are being difficult but should the Public Health Department write through and say that they have a complaint against just, for example, No. 16 Valiant House, then the file of Valiant House is taken out, the paper is put into it, it is put through for action etc, possibly action is not as quick as the Public Health Department would like, they send a reminder, it goes into the same file, eventually it is dealt with and the file goes away. Like that file for Valiant House, Sir, we have a file for every house on our housing list and it is an invidious position for any Member of the Opposition to expect that every single file in our department is going to be looked through to see when we have had requests from the Public Health Department: "Have you had a complaint about so and so?", etc, etc. If the Hon Member would like to bring my attention to any specific area then I shall be very happy to answer it but I cannot put the whole of my department onto looking through 300 or 400 files in a matter of three or four days to answer a question of this nature.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if I may remind the Minister, we were told it was impossible to have a housing list, it would take fifteen secretaries, 300 years and an impossible task and yet with a change of Minister it was easily possible. Will the Minister confirm that as regards Government buildings the state of progress is considerably laxer than as with private buildings?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, I would not agree with that, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask, what system is there? If a complaint from the Environmental Department is put into the file of that particular house what process brings that file out again for action?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When the complaint comes from the Department it is looked into, a priority is assessed to it, it is put down on our priority list. If the priority is such that it perhaps does not need to be looked at for a period of three months the Public Health Department which is very assiduous and sends a reminder every single month will possibly send two more reminders before the actual work is done.

HON P J ISOLA:

The Government has got an idea, the Minister must have an idea at least of the number of outstanding complaints, can he give us that figure?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not of the top of my head. I should think there must be about fifteen or twenty that are floating around but they are all in a list and they are all being dealt with as the priorities come up.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if there are only fifteen or twenty outstanding faults reported by the Environmental Health Department I think they are not doing their job.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, if you get a complaint from the Public Health Department that there is dampness in the wall of such and such a flat then its priority is not considered very high. If, however, you get from the Public Health Department that the sewer downpipe has broken in such and such a place it is dealt with within twenty-four hours. It is simply a matter of priorities.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 358 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government take the necessary measures to control motor cyclists from speeding along the highways and in particular those areas such as Devil's Tower Road, Winston Churchill Avenue, Rock Hotel Hill and Rosia Road where speeding has become a serious problem and has resulted in a number of accidents?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Police are well aware of and have taken positive steps to reduce this growing nuisance and danger. In the past five months 214 cases of speeding have been reported and close attention will continue to be given to the matter.

These figures relate to all categories of vehicles, but about half would be motor cyclists.

I can make the actual figures of the areas available to the Hon Member in due course.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 358 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state the position as regards Rosia Road? Does he know how many accidents have occurred in the last five months?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I don't know that, Sir, but there were seventy-one cases of speeding in that road.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm or deny that there has been over five accidents of a serious or semi-serious nature in Rosia Road in the last three months?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would neither confirm nor deny, Sir, obviously the Hon Member since he lives in that area is probably more acquainted with it than I am. It is very possible it has happened and as I say efforts are being made to contain this speeding. I agree that these motor cyclists are a considerable nuisance, they not only speed in Rosia Road they speed up Main Street.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I cite Rosia Road in particular because I have personal experience of actually attending at these accidents, it is extremely unpleasant as an experience.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can speak for Europa Road.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the Chief Minister and I who live in different ends of the motor cyclists circuit we are both quite aware. Mr Speaker, the Minister has stated that in the last five months a number of speeding offences are being brought to the Court and I am very pleased to hear that. It is partly for their own sake, Mr Speaker, the motor cyclists' sake that one would want to curb their enthusiasm. Mr Speaker, I do not think that those measures have been sufficient and this summer I have noticed more cases of speeding than ever before. Will the Minister look into other matters which could alleviate the problem?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will press the Police to see that they can be even more active in apprehending speeding and I think also noise is another point of motor cycles, some of them seem to rev their engines before they start off and make a tremendous noise. I will ask the Police to be a little more active in this matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister consider the introduction of a radar screen?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think it is expensive and somewhat difficult to work, I am not sure it would give all the results we want but perhaps another answer might be to put some bumps in the road.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister think of perhaps having small ramps like they do in Housing Estates?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is what I have said.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, just one question: Presumably these cases have all been taken to Court . . . . .

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, some of them are still awaiting Court.



HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Minister consider that perhaps the fine or the maximum fines that can be imposed on these offences are perhaps too low and perhaps higher fines might deter these offences?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, it is not for me, Sir, as I have said previously in this House, to tell the Court what to do but I would hope that they would take a reasonably serious view of these speeding offences as I would hope they would take a serious offence of depositing litter.

HON G T RESTANO:

I agree, Mr Speaker, that it is not up to the Minister to tell the Court what to do but it may well be the responsibility of this House to consider whether the maximum fines are too low and it is up to the House here if we consider that, to change the law to make the maximum penalties higher and would the Minister not agree?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I agree with you.

HON G T RESTANO:

And would therefore the Minister take this up, take this matter further?

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask, Mr Speaker, in view of the great number of prosecutions and cases under consideration there are at present, could I ask the Minister to use his good influence to impress upon the Commissioner of Police to use the same assiduity in respect of breaches of the litter laws?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I have done that on several occasions, Sir, I will do so again.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister tell us whether the prosecutions have a high proportion of success or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Offhand I do not know but I can try and find out for you.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that the prosecutions for speeding under our present system requires that a Police Officer in a vehicle should follow the offending vehicle . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not allowing that. That is information you can easily get by reading the law. You can get that information yourself without having to ask.

HON A J HAYNES:

I know the answer, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, then you should not ask.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, that is not the point of the question.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect.

HON A J HAYNES:

If I may put it in a different way. Given that to ensure a speeding offence is prosecuted in Court it is necessary for a Police Officer to follow what he suspects to be an offending vehicle for a period of time and over quite a substantial distance this, as the Minister will no doubt know, makes it difficult to ensure a conviction. That is the reason why, Mr Speaker, I asked him . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

What are you asking? The question must be within limits and you are making a statement. You will ask a question, that is the end of the matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

The question is, given those circumstances, Mr Speaker, will the Minister look into the viability of a radar screen?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, we will look into it, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 359 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what are Government's plans to decongest the traffic outlet from the Upper Rock into the town area?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, measures are being considered and these will include limiting or prohibiting parking in the area altogether. However, the prohibition of parking altogether could in itself cause even more annoyance and inconvenience to residents of that area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 359 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

When he is talking of plans, Mr Speaker, do we have some time-scale that the Minister might be thinking of?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, I would hope something would be done within the next two or three months. It is possibly likely to be on a temporary basis because, as I say, if you remove parking from there you are, firstly, creating a certain measure of annoyance to the people who are accustomed to parking there and, secondly, you have to find where you can remove them to. It is not easy in Gibraltar where we have perhaps more cars than the roads can adequately stand to find easily a situation where you can shift parking from one place to another and not create considerable difficulty.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 360 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government consider introducing a driving test at 65 years for drivers of public services vehicles?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 360 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister if the Government would consider this, when would they consider it? When will they implement the test at 65?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I should say within the next three or four weeks.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what is the present position with the development at Woodford Cottage?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it is understood that there are between eight to ten persons who are able to finance their share of the scheme. Government has therefore agreed that eight to ten dwellings may be built at the southern end of the site as an initial development. The plans are understood to be well advanced and a contractor selected.

The northern end of the site will be put out to tender for a further development in due course.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 361 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, wasn't it a condition of tendering that all tenderers should prove to Government that they have the financial resources capable of developing that site and I am wondering now why it is now only eight or ten out of those original fifteen or seventeen that were given that facility?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I do not think it was specifically that they had to prove to Government that they had the finance, they had to show Government that they intended to obtain the finance. Unfortunately, the mortgage arrangements which they had hoped they would be able to obtain have not been able to be obtained in practice partly because there is a certain measure of reluctance by the banks and the building societies to give mortgages on the terms which the persons applying require.

HON W T SCOTT:

But, surely, Mr Speaker, the way we had it put to us here in this House was that a condition of the tender was that the mortgage facilities would be granted in the event of that tender being successful. Was that not it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was the hope that mortgage facilities would be granted but unfortunately Government cannot compel the banks or the building societies to give mortgages if they do not wish to do so.

HON W T SCOTT:

So therefore what happens to the balance of the development, the second half as it were, does Government still have a commitment? Do the developers, the prospective house owners still have a commitment to Government to build within a certain period, does it go out to re-tender again? What is the position?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I have said, Sir, the southern site is going to be built up by the persons who have got the available funds and this, of course, is a good thing because it will give some measure of development and some work to the building industry. The other area will in due course be put out to tender, the people who initially had hoped to build there will if they are able to find the finance be able to tender for it or perhaps a builder who wishes to make a comprehensive development could also tender, these are possibilities.

HON W T SCOTT:

So the Minister is saying that that southern part I think he said, is going out to tender again?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The northern part, the southern part is going to be built on.

HON W T SCOTT:

And the northern part is going out to tender again?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, in due course; not tomorrow or the next day but in due course it will go out to tender. The terms of the tender have yet to be decided but it will give, possibly, the opportunity for single contracts or for a comprehensive development by one developer.

HON W T SCOTT:

But he also said, Mr Speaker, that successful tenderers who have not been able to acquire the mortgage facilities would still be asked to tender?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, what he has said is that those people who have opted out at this stage due to difficulties in financing would be entitled to tender again.

HON W T SCOTT:

Yes, that is what I am saying in other words, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Not successful tenderers.

HON W T SCOTT:

No, by successful tenderers I mean Government gave them the property to develop, they have not developed it.

MR SPEAKER:

Originally.

HON W T SCOTT:

But they have not developed it. I am asking the Government whether they think it is a wise move to allow people who have not developed the property to tender again for that same property?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have said that in due course the northern site will be put out for tender. The terms of that tender have not yet been decided but it may be that it will be put out in separate lots under which anybody who has not been able to build at the moment but does have the finance to do it will be able to tender and may be accepted or perhaps the tender conditions will say for a comprehensive development by a developer or a mixture of both. This at the moment is still undecided, it will come up in due course.

HON W T SCOTT:

And the Government itself presumably, Mr Speaker, as happened originally with this scheme, would entertain some element of participation itself?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

All that will depend on the conditions of the new tender and the successful tenderer. If it was a successful tenderer under a comprehensive development I do not think Government would take any part in it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has Government any information about those tenderers who have not gone on with the project about them acquiring, say, cheaper property in Spain or in Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I didn't quite get that, would you kindly repeat it?

HON P J ISOLA:

Has Government any information about those tenderers who are not proceeding acquiring either cheaper property in Spain or in Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir..

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Minister, is one of the difficulties in tenderers withdrawing, has one of the difficulties been in fact the high cost of the project as a whole allowing only those with substantial means to proceed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Not to my knowledge, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Hon Member state in this development what would be the cost of a single unit, does he know?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I do not know exactly but I think it is between £50,000 and £70,000 varying to some extent on the actual development that is being done.

HON P J ISOLA:

That is quite substantial. The other question I would ask the Minister, has the Government incurred any cost in this development in the sense that there were going to be seventeen units and now it appears there are going to be ten or eleven and is there any provision in the tender documents for Government to be indemnified any additional cost caused by the withdrawal of tenderers at this stage?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Government has incurred no costs to any extent other than perhaps the kind offices of the Director of Public Works in attending a few meetings, the Public Works Department in measuring the site but this is a negligible amount and there is no need to indemnify anybody on it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 362 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government give details of all sites and buildings that have been transferred to the Gibraltar Government by the British Government over the last ten years?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, it is only possible to provide a list of land transfers from the MOD to the Gibraltar Government since 1974. There is no register of transfers which took place prior to 1974. It is possible to search the files for details of a specific land transfer, but it would be a very exhaustive exercise, without any guarantee of accuracy, to endeavour to compile a register now.

I am circulating a list of 75 land transfers since 1974.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what is the present position with regard to the Casemates Car Park Project?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, the developer has now satisfied Government regarding their financial resources for the development of the site. They have also confirmed that they no longer wish to pursue their tender alternative of providing temporary accommodation in respect of the seven MOD Quarters. The MOD has been informed of this and they now have to supply details of an alternative site for the reprovisioning of the Quarters.

The developer is amending the structural design of the building due to the results obtained in a preliminary geological site investigation. Permission has recently been granted to them to carry out further site exploration which will enable them to proceed with the re-design of the structure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 363 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Isn't the developer, Mr Speaker, tied down to some time-scale for the development of that site and if so what is it?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not sure about that, Mr Speaker, I believe that that is the case but I am not sure of the exact details. I can look into them but I have not got them at my fingertips.

HON W T SCOTT:

And within that, Mr Speaker, whether they are keeping loosely to that programme?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think they are in the circumstances but nevertheless I think when geological investigations are involved and difficulties are encountered, I think that has got to be taken into account and there is power, I think, to extend a building period in the light of those difficulties or in the light of any other reasonable difficulties that may arise.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I am looking at it from the viewpoint that having taken the policy decision and rightly got ahead with that scheme, which Members on this side of the House agree with in the principle, generally, Government should apply every type of pressure to the developer to proceed apace with that scheme.

HON A J CANEPA:

Of course we are doing that and not just every kind of pressure but every kind of help, indeed, in respect of the arrangements that the Government was pressing for, for instance, on the temporary reprovisioning of quarters. We pressed the Ministry of Defence to try to waive that or to try to decrease the number of quarters involved, we were successful in getting it down to five on a temporary basis so if we were giving help on the one hand we are also pressuring them to get on with it. We are satisfied about their financial resources which was obviously a very, very big factor and now there is just this difficulty of a structural re-design as the only remaining obstacle.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that most of the abortive developments in Gibraltar have been due to not having had a time limit and could the Minister say why they did not do this in this case and would the Minister bear this in mind for any other developments?

HON A J CANEPA:

But there is a time limit, Mr Speaker, it is just that I have not got at my fingertips the period involved, I cannot recall at the moment what it is but I can find out and although the Hon Mr Willie Scott will be away this afternoon I can let the Hon Member know if he so wishes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

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HON A J CANEPA:

In respect to Question No. 363 and the question of time limits for this development, there is in fact in the tender conditions a time limit of three years from the date of execution of an agreement for a lease. An agreement for a lease cannot be executed until the site is formally transferred by the Ministry of Defence and this they have not done and we are pressing them requesting details of an alternative site and also the actual reprovisioning requirements.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what is the existing position with the envisaged East Side Development Scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, last March I explained that, following the submission of further detailed information from the two parties in question, the Land Board approached them with a suggestion that might well obviate the need for selection.

The difficulty lies in that much of the information requested by the Board cannot properly be provided without the aid of a detailed Feasibility Study. Because of the nature and magnitude of the reclamation scheme, this study is bound to be an expensive exercise and neither party is prepared to incur such heavy expenditure unless they are given an assurance that they will be successful in the selection.

The Board therefore suggested to the parties that, in order to break the impasse, both parties should consider the possibility of a joint venture either for the whole scheme or for the cost of the feasibility study alone.

The parties have replied that the latter suggestion is not acceptable since this would in effect be deferring a decision on final selection. They are, however, still pursuing the question of a joint venture to undertake the project from inception to completion.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Economic Development state if he has any specific plans for the MOD land due to be released at Queensway and Rosia areas, when he expects the land to be handed over and when he intends to put the project out to tender?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, preliminary plans for the MOD land due to be released at Queensway and Rosia areas were tabled by the Gibraltar Government team led by the Chief Minister at the talks held in Gibraltar with Mr Ian Stewart. These plans are now being finalised and, when completed, will form part of a brochure that will be made available to prospective developers; as a brief, by the middle of December. The Gibraltar Government will give this the widest possible publicity and prospective developers will then be invited to submit their own proposals within the general parameters laid down in the brief.

As stated by Mr Stewart in the House of Commons on the 27 July, 1983, the release of these lands "will take place when present facilities on these sites have been reprovided elsewhere and when the Gibraltar Government is ready to proceed with development".

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 365 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, Mr Speaker, there does not seem to be any final date there at all or any indication of dates since one seems to prevent the other from going on. Is there any indication at all from the British Government when they will have land to re-provision, is the Government pressing HMG to do that as soon as possible?

HON A J CANEPA:

They are conducting, Mr Speaker, what I am sure is a detailed and not easy exercise in which they are looking for alternative sites in which to re-site some of the facilities which they have on these sites and for which they may still have a continuing use. They are also at the same time looking into the question of the reallocation of the Naval Base as a result of the closure of the Dockyard, this is currently engaging the Ministry of Defence.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister agree that with the date for the closure of the Dockyard being the end of next year and unemployment obviously escalating by then, it is vital that we should have some other form of activity that will take up some of that unemployment?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is important that we should but it is not entirely necessary because there is a considerable amount of civil work arising from the re-conversion of the Dockyard and I do not think that we want to be in a position where we want to be providing work for the building industry with a view to employing necessarily the people who are at the Dockyard. I think we want to increase the size of the labour force in the building industry with people who traditionally are employed in the building industry but not necessarily to take away people from the Dockyard but obviously the provision of this development is a very important and a key plank in the policy that we have of economic diversification in the light of closure of the Dockyard. We ourselves, as I say, we think that we will be ready in the middle of December to have a development brief available and then the matter will be given wide publicity in the media in order to give an opportunity to interested developers to submit their own proposals.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister give an undertaking that if things at the Dockyard don't go the way that the Government hopes by, say, union action and so on, the question of the handing over of these sites will not be delayed?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not see why it should unless the unions were to delay any re-provisioning work which the Ministry of Defence is carrying out in respect of these two sites and I do not think that that should be the case because they are not directly involved with the Dockyard.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, is Government satisfied with the tender proposals employed in respect of the development at the Old Command Education Centre and what further steps does Government propose to take in respect of the said development?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, the tender proposals adopted in respect of the redevelopment of the Old Command Education Centre were the result of a detailed survey and report by Atkinson International Associates of a pilot study area of the Town Centre.

The development of the site was put out to tender following a public participation exercise carried out in May, 1982, in conjunction with the proposals for the pedestrianisation of Main Street. This exercise indicated that these proposals enjoyed wide support from the general public. They were therefore incorporated into the design brief.

Both the Land Board and the Development and Planning Commission consider that the scheme should not be abandoned and that tenders should once again be invited when there is a more favourable economic climate.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 366 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

It is put on the shelf sine die, Mr Speaker?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, not sine die, sine die means indefinitely, that is not the intention.

HON A J HAYNES:

Sine die means without a date, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

When we judge that there is a more favourable economic climate we will invite fresh tenders.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will it be with the same tender proposals or not?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think, broadly speaking, and I may remind the Hon Member what the main features of the development were. The central feature of the proposal is the design of a new square to the rear of the building,

the building is to be restored to its former qualities and house a number of users which would essentially incorporate a variety of shops and cafes supported by offices and residential development. We think that this is the right sort of mix for a prime site in that area.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister then feel that the only reason why there was no tender for the centre was that the economic climate was not right?

HON A J CANEPA:

The economic climate and the planning constraints put on the development.

HON A J HAYNES:

Which planning constraints?

HON A J CANEPA:

The fact that we are expecting the nature of the building to be restored and the fact that we are laying down the kind of development that we want to see. We are not just leaving it to prospective developers to put up a 20-storey office block.

HON A J HAYNES:

I commend the Minister for his firmness in the matter but has he tried to put it out to tender to another form of development by invitation?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, as I say, we are clear in our own minds what we want to see there. It has taken very long for Government to come to a conclusion as to the type of development that we wanted there. We have been criticised in the past on many occasions because nothing was done and nothing has been done because we did not want to do something which was wrong. The fact that the economic climate is not propitious to this sort of development does not mean that we should just put the site out to development and allow developers to make a quick buck or the only kind of buck that they can make in the present circumstances because of a very high density development that would be incongruous in that area.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I was asking whether he had thought of doing it by invitation rather than by tender? Has anybody made approaches to the Minister in respect of the development?



HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, when we put a site out to tender we are criticised because we do not consult the public. When we consult the public and there is support for the sort of thing that we do and it does not come off we are still criticised, we never seem to win.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am not criticising the Minister, Mr Speaker, I am trying to find out whether anything could be done to put into action the work of the group of advisers that came out only two years ago, nothing has happened?

HON A J CANEPA:

But this is the result of the advice that we had. This is the result of the work of Atkinson International Associates, this is what it is all about and now what are we going to do, spoil it?

HON A J HAYNES:

No, Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm whether the existing building is getting into a worse state of dilapidation?

HON A J CANEPA:

Of course it is, any building that is left empty deteriorates.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister also confirm that it is piling up with rubbish and rubble and debris?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I am responsible for economic development, I am not responsible for the matter the Hon Member is now raising.

MR SPEAKER:

No, the question asked: "Is Government satisfied with the tender proposals employed in respect of the development at the Old Command Education Centre and what further steps does Government propose to take in respect of the said development?", not the state in which the property finds itself in now. Let us be clear about that.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, on a point of clarification. Surely, it does affect the further development of the place.

MR SPEAKER:

It does not and you have to accept my ruling. You can ask any question you like on the future development of that site, you are free to do that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister what are the factors on which the Minister is relying for a change of economic climate?

HON A J CANEPA:

The proposals undoubtedly envisaged the situation in which we would be creating a centre of activity encompassing this variety of uses because there would be a demand and the demand would be created naturally by a full normal opening of the frontier, this is what Atkinson Associates had in mind. This is what pedestrianisation was all about because otherwise we would not be able to move in the centre of our city.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I suggest to the Government that they consider themselves giving a lead in investment, by themselves setting up the structure and then letting places?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member heard me say this morning that we were having difficulty in getting £6m for our own essential projects, what makes him think that we can get our hands on money to set up a structure there?

HON P J ISOLA:

Because will the Minister not agree that if the Government is relying on economic diversification for the development of the economy, the Government ought to be prepared to give a lead in this and is not the Old Command Education Centre a prime example or a prime opportunity for the Government to lead investment, to lead recovery in Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think, Mr Speaker, we either have the financial or the manpower resources to do that sort of thing.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister consider the increased costs which will result from not getting on with the development now?

HON A J CANEPA:

There may not be increased costs, Mr Speaker, if it were possible for materials to come, say, a lot of people have been adopting a wait and see attitude, I understand, on development because costs could go down by 20% or 25% if materials could be imported from across the border by land and not by sea as is happening now in some cases.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I would just like to correct the Minister on one statement that he has made and that is that a high rise building would be incongruous.

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to go into that.

HON G T RESTANO:

But he said that this is one of the reasons. I am talking about the future development.

MR SPEAKER:

No, he has said that his constraints are insofar as that development is concerned, to carry out something which is going to be for the benefit of Gibraltar and that he is not prepared to see a high rise building, he is not saying more than that and we are not going to go into this.

HON G T RESTANO:

That is what I would like to question him on, Mr Speaker, because it does seem to me that like in all small territories land in Gibraltar is at a premium and we are talking about the future development of a prime site . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

What are you asking?

HON G T RESTANO:

I am asking that with land being such a prime commodity in Gibraltar the only way to make development viable is to go upwards like all small territories, like Hong Kong, like Monaco have done and I sympathise with the Minister that artistically he would like to restrict the high rise building but would he not agree that in order that such a site should not remain vacant for a long time and derelict, that he might consider precisely a high rise development in that area which might at the end of the day provide development much more quickly and attract investors much more because there would be a high return?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think, Mr Speaker, that the Land Board or the Development and Planning Commission would particularly be enamoured with such a project. I do not think that the over 1,000 people who participated in this public participation exercise in May last year would particularly like to see that sort of thing. I think development is

important but there is a limit about what you do. I do not think you can just look ahead a year or two. In planning you have to look decades ahead and I think we could have something there that future generations would really be proud of and which could provide a new focal point of activity in the centre of the city.

MR SPEAKER:

I will not have any further questions on this matter. We have debated this long enough. Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 367 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state why no tender was awarded in conjunction with the proposed demolition of Engineer House?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, with your leave I propose to answer this question together with Questions 371 and 372 as they all relate either generally or specifically to the commencement and progress of locally funded development projects.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government undertake to issue free to all incoming yachts a pamphlet or some other Gibraltar Tourist Office brochure informing yachtsmen of such matters, inter alia, as customs regulations, medical facilities, shopping hours, duty free entitlements, etc?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, since its inception the Yacht Reporting Berth has had on display, and available to all visiting yachtsmen, brochures published by the Tourist Office.

Regarding the specific matters raised by the Hon Member, the staff at the reporting berth are well qualified to deal with Customs regulations, duty free entitlements, shopping hours, etc to all those requiring such information.

Recently, a very comprehensive information booklet called "Yacht Scene, Gibraltar" has been published, catering for the needs of visiting yachtsmen. This booklet, which costs 30p, is available at the Yacht Marinas.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 368 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

It seems to me absurd, Mr Speaker, that the Government has again been shown the way by people from outside. Is the Minister aware, for instance, Mr Speaker, that in Jersey and Guernsey all visiting yachts are given a pamphlet rather like "Yacht Scene", something specifically for yachtsmen? Is the Minister aware of that?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, because when I have visited Jersey it has been by air and not in a yacht but I think there is nothing to deprecate the fact that there are people with the initiative to do this themselves. I wish we were to see much more of that and not expect the Government to do everything. I still do not subscribe to a socialist state in which the Government is expected to manage every aspect of our economy.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am glad to hear that, Mr Speaker. The point I am trying to make is that . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, you are not making your point you are asking for information, I keep on saying that. What information do you want? I know you are trying to make a point but you must not at question time. Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, have the number of yachts calling at Gibraltar fallen since the setting up of the Yacht Reporting Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Yacht Reporting Berth became operational on the 14th May, 1982, and the following monthly figures for calls correspond to the respective years:-

	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983</u>
May	516	532	468
June	680	610	554
July	687	838	773
August	955	1,139	921
September	688	715	633
October	630	681	
November	509	539	
December	251	394	

The figures show that apart from the month of June there has been notable increase in arrivals during 1982.

The decrease in 1983 is attributed to the partial opening of the frontier, since local yachtsmen do not now visit Spanish ports with the same frequency.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 369 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, perhaps I should explain the reason why I asked this question and it is that I have been given to understand that the treatment to yachts arriving at the berth left quite a bit to be desired and that is why the number of yachts were falling off, that the hustle that they were put through in having to fill in all these forms was deterring them from coming to Gibraltar when they would rather go to Ceuta or Tangier and I wondered if the Minister would care to comment on that?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not accept that, Mr Speaker. About a year ago at the time when the reporting berth was set up, naturally, there may have been teething troubles which there are with anything which is new and I got suggestions, complaints from one or two people, I investigated them, I went down there myself, I saw what the procedures were and I was satisfied with the procedures. I have not had any indications in the last six or seven months of any difficulties or of any complaints and the drop in the figures has got nothing to do with that.

The drop is purely the fact that Gibraltar yachts have always been included in the figures and now because of the fact that people go over the land frontier and they do not go to Spain in a yacht, they do not have to report on the way back at the berthing station and therefore that element in the figures is no longer there but as far as visiting yachtsmen are concerned there has not been any real falling off.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister one more question? Has he had any complaint as to the suitability of the actual berth itself for bigger yachts that they find it difficult to moor alongside this particular berthing?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is difficult to moor in certain winds, when there are certain prevailing winds it isn't easy but there aren't many other places that we have. We are constrained in respect of space and therefore that would apply to bigger yachts but I think that measures are taken when there are such prevailing conditions.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 370 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, in view of the large number of vessels awaiting orders in the vicinity of Gibraltar will Government reconsider its position on the waiving of Port dues in respect of those vessels so as to enable them to avail themselves of the facilities of the Port and thus be of some assistance to the economy?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, Government has already waived Port charges in respect of vessels calling solely to take on bunkers and water. Regarding vessels awaiting orders this has not been considered advisable as the charges made, which are valid for a period of fourteen days, are negligible, namely, £37.50 a week for ultra large vessels of 100,000 tons or over.

Secondly, as the Hon Member is aware, the actual anchorage of the Port of Gibraltar is very limited. Consequently it would be detrimental to other Port users if vessels awaiting orders were permitted to anchor free of charge. Vessels awaiting orders do anchor in our Port and masters have been known to comment on the low rates charged.

Experience has proved that the waiving of the tonnage dues in respect of vessels bunkering has not led to an increase of bunker sales. In fact Government Revenue suffered a decrease of £20,227 in 1982 owing to this waiver.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 370 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister aware that on October 3rd, for example, there were seven vessels anchored on the east side of the Rock and has he any plans at all to encourage or give facilities to these vessels for their crews and so forth to come ashore on the eastern side if necessary?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that there is a difficulty there, Mr Speaker, because we do not have any jurisdiction over the waters on the east side. I am sure there would be difficulty in respect of the Port authorities in respect of immigration and so on for people to land from the east side. As regards the point made initially I think I monitor the situation with rather more frequency than the Hon Member since I patronise the east side of the Rock perhaps more often than he does and I am aware as to the number of ships that there are there but if we were to have them on the anchorage here free of charge, as I say, there would be a difficulty about allowing the other ships which want to come into the anchorage for business and there would be the difficulty in arriving at a decision as to what to do in respect of allowing those who are awaiting orders not to be charged anything as against the other legitimate users of the Port. What do we do for the others, don't we charge them at all either and if we don't that will entail substantial loss of revenue for the Port Department.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I have looked at the losses in revenue, I do not think they would be so substantial, would they, if as a result of waiving or having a very much reduced fee for all vessels in the area one were to get the facilities of the Port used much more because that would have, would it not, a greater impact on the economy and I am a bit surprised to hear the Minister say that we have no jurisdiction on the east side because to my knowledge vessels have been arrested on the east side by the Admiralty Court on the basis that they are British territorial waters.

HON A J CANEPA:

But the Captain of the Port tells me that he has no jurisdiction. They are not part of the areas defined which come under the jurisdiction of the Captain of the Port.

HON P J ISOLA:

That can be put right, surely?

HON A J CANEPA:

Perhaps I could say this, what we are looking into and encouraging is a scheme whereby it would be possible for ships in the high seas to be serviced from Gibraltar and we are actively pursuing that because there is interest in using vessels to go out and it would have to be in the high seas because we have to ensure that it is not vessels that would call at Gibraltar in any case but vessels that would bypass Gibraltar and who might be interested in being serviced in the high seas, this is something that an interest has been expressed and we are encouraging it at the moment. That should be of some benefit to the economy, I would imagine.

HON P J ISOLA:

But cannot the Minister use his efforts to allow ships, for example, anchored on the east side for crews to come ashore, for them to be supplied from the Port and all that? Wouldn't that generate economic activity?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is not part of the Port of Gibraltar, Mr Speaker, it cannot be done through the Port Department.

HON P J ISOLA:

But why not extend the Port waters, Mr Speaker, I thought we were living in a place which was our own and now moreso since the commercialisation of the Dockyard?

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I agree with the Minister when he said that £37 a week is negligible but is it not because they are not given the facilities to come into the west side of Gibraltar that they go out to the east, not only for the £37 but they are not welcome on this side?

HON A J CANEPA:

They are not welcome, why shouldn't they, why on earth shouldn't they be welcome on this side, Mr Speaker? They are there because it is a good anchorage for their purposes particularly at certain times of the year when the weather is good, they are awaiting orders, they have no particular need to do business, they have no requirements and it is a good and convenient place for them to be. It is one of the most important shipping crossroads in the world. Of course we welcome every ship, we give them facilities in respect of bunkering, we are subsidising the water even though water has been scarce for our own needs, of course we welcome ships to come here.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the reason why they go to the other side of the Rock and don't remain on the west side which is where perhaps they would generate more business is perhaps, it may be psychological, because of the £37 charge which I agree is absolutely minimal but because it is minimal they go to the other side where they do not generate . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

What are you asking?

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister reconsider this charge of £37 which is so negligible that it brings very little into the Government coffers and consider allowing them to await orders on the western side where much more business would be generated?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I have been reconsidering it because the Hon Mr Peter Isola asked me a similar question last year - No. 263 of 1982 - and you don't just draft an answer to a question without discussing the matter fully with the Head of Department concerned to see whether one can be rather more positive, one doesn't like to be negative just for the sake of it, it is of no benefit to me or to the economy of Gibraltar to be negative. Of course, if a question is put one goes over the ground again very carefully with the Captain of the Port and investigates every possible aspect of it and, as I say, it is the second time that we have had this question and we were helpful on the question of bunkers because we thought that at the very least it was a gesture that we should make so that the people providing the bunkers could give a similar gesture which they have been able to do, but we have still lost money.

18.10.83

NO. 371 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, will Government inform this House on the progress, or lack of it, of the projects in the existing Development Programme that are funded from local monies?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Answered together with Question Nos. 367 and 372 of 1983.

NO. 372 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state why no tender was awarded in respect of the Castle Road Phase 2 project?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Government could not proceed with local projects until it had completed its negotiations with a number of Banks for a £6m commercial loan facility.

The Government considered it prudent to await decisions on the future of the Dockyard and the economy before pursuing detailed negotiations on the terms and conditions of the loan. This inevitably had caused some delays for most of the new locally-funded projects included in the 1983/84 Estimates. Negotiations with a number of banks have been in progress and some new offers have recently been received. It is expected that negotiations will be concluded by early November. The Financial and Development Secretary will then be in a position to release funds to enable the Government to award not only the three tenders to which the Members have referred but also to commence the remainder of the locally-funded Development Programme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 367, 371 AND 372 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

What is the delay, what delay is this going to cause to development in Gibraltar? What period of time are we talking about, six months, a year?

HON A J CANEPA:

I would say of the order of six months, perhaps. I think what the Government had envisaged, had planned to do in the 1983/84 estimates is going to suffer a delay of about six months.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 373 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has Government taken any steps to arrest the deteriorating economic situation in Gibraltar following the partial opening of the frontier on December 15th, 1982?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, perhaps I should remind the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition of my answer to Questions 15, 18 and 75 of 1983 and to points which I have made on the matter in statements to this House in March, April and July of this year. A number of measures were introduced ie the change to the 72-hour rule for entitlement to duty free concessions, the quota on personal imports of bread, the reduction in duty on cigarettes and, later during the Budget, on selected goods. We have also introduced car parking fees at the frontier. In addition, legislation has been passed by this House to strengthen the effectiveness of trade licensing and import controls. I have also held meetings with Members opposite, the Trade Unions and the Chamber of Commerce to consider possible measures. As I said in my statement of the 27th July, 1983, the Government have concluded that no measures should be taken which might be seen as curtailing the liberty of the individual or imposing unpleasant restrictions. I repeat that the real remedy lies in the hands of the Gibraltarian individual and the pricing policies of the trading community as a whole. The Government nevertheless is closely monitoring the situation and will consider introducing measures as and when possible or necessary. Any practical suggestions from the Opposition will of course be carefully considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 373 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the position then, Mr Speaker, that the economic situation is deteriorating and in fact no steps are being taken to arrest it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Other than those that I have mentioned I do not know what steps the Hon Questioner has in mind but I have stated what we have done and I have said what we do not think ought to be done.

HON P J ISOLA:

How does the charging for parking at the frontier arrest the deteriorating economic situation, Mr Speaker, especially as one of the car parks is constantly empty? Does that not make it worse?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The question of parking is of course imposed because we have spent in money in order to have a holding area in anticipation of the opening of the frontier. If the Hon Member is referring to the park opposite the airport which seems to be not very much used, because it was restricted in order that there would always be facilities for those using the airport to use it, we understand that new procedures are being elaborated now in order that it be made the most use of possible. It came into effect last Saturday.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 374 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Gibraltar Government officials be involved in the new "technical talks" on Gibraltar allegedly agreed recently by the British and Spanish Foreign Ministers?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

It was agreed between the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary and the Spanish Foreign Minister at their meeting in New York on 26th September that contacts be continued through both diplomatic and expert channels. No specific arrangements were agreed. The Gibraltar Government will continue to be closely involved with the British side in any discussions with the Spaniards. Contacts between British and Spanish Officials about Gibraltar have continued for some time. The Gibraltar Government and the Leader of the Opposition are properly consulted and kept informed about these through His Excellency the Governor.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 374 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Government be informing the public if the position changes and there are talks in which there is going to be Gibraltar Government officials involved?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I should very much hope so, yes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, why has no Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation yet been appointed and can Government state what steps the Governor, on whose shoulders constitutional responsibility lies for the appointment of a Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation, has taken to secure the appointment of a Chairman?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the reason why no Chairman of the Board of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation has so far been appointed is that, although, over a period of months, I have invited several persons in Gibraltar to agree to be considered for appointment, none of them was able or prepared to accept the offer. I am, however, glad to be able to inform the House that Mr Victor Ghio, who has acted as Chairman for some time and who, with the support of his colleagues on the Board, has ably held the fort during this period, has agreed to continue to act for the time being. He is unfortunately unable to accept substantive appointment.

The House will wish to know that the Board of the Corporation have decided to appoint a Secretary of the Corporation as provided for in the Ordinance. The main purpose of this appointment will be to provide assistance to the Board whose burden of work has become progressively heavier over the years with the resultant increase in the demands on the time of its members. Names of other persons who might be suitable for substantive appointment as Chairman are under consideration.

Sir, while the statutory responsibility for this appointment, as in the case of many other appointments lies with the Governor, the initial step leading to an appointment being made are normally taken by Ministers or officials and a recommendation is then submitted to His Excellency. The sole reason for the delay in this instance has been the reluctance of those approached by me to be considered for the appointment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 375 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Government consider putting an advert in the newspapers inviting applications for the position because is it not very alarming that the Board of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation should have been without a Chairman for such a long period of time and is not the Governor concerned that this has not occurred?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Isn't not the what?

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Governor not concerned at the fact that there is no Chairman for the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, I am afraid that is not a question that any person in this House can answer.

HON P J ISOLA:

I beg your pardon. Is the Government not concerned that there is no Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation? Surely, there must be something wrong somewhere when there is such great difficulty in finding someone who has been approached by the Chief Minister and feels he cannot take the job?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer to that really is that the responsibility is a very high one, the work has increased considerably as a result of many factors. It will be recalled that some time ago there used to be managing agents who did a certain amount of work which now falls upon the Corporation and therefore some people are simply not prepared to give it the time and I think it is a credit to the members of the Board who are holding the situation very ably, if I may say so, in very difficult circumstances that they have an acting Chairman who is able to see the matter through. It is a difficult situation and they have thought that the appointment of a Secretary in the terms on which we are now discussing will service the Corporation in such a way that it will be much easier and less burdensome to accept the post of Chairman whereupon some people may be prepared to reconsider the appointment. I do not think that I can take the suggestion of the Leader of the Opposition seriously that we should advertise for names for an appointment, I am sure we would get the most undesirable offers.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, perhaps not, Mr Speaker, but could the Government if there is so much work involved in being Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation then surely we could get to the position where only a person will accept who is looking possibly for some advantage or hopes to get something from being Chairman? Would it not be much better, Mr Speaker, to recognise the fact that this is a highly responsible and demanding job and to pay a salary for doing it, the same way as Ministers and Members of the Opposition were not paid before but are paid today?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The present members of the Corporation feel that the matter could be much better dealt with and I tend to agree with them so far, in fact, there is provision in the Ordinance for them to appoint a Secretary and it is envisaged that it will be a paid Secretary. I would rather have a paid Secretary servicing unpaid officials of an independent body than a paid Chairman as Chairman of that body. I think we ought to give that a trial, discussions are going on now as to the sort of terms that would be expected and the knowledge and the information that would be required in order to fill that post and members of the Board have assured me that

with a Secretary to them and not a member of the management staff, it will be much easier for all of them including much easier to bring in a Chairman who will be prepared to do it on the basis as so many other Chairmen are doing excellent work for Gibraltar for no payment at all.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, isn't this an entirely different situation to other jobs? This is a Chairman of a Corporation that spends over £1m a year and in the same way as the Chief Minister was against having Members of the House paid many years ago and gradually came round to the view that they should be paid and paid the appropriate amount for the work that they do, is there not a really strong case for having a Chairman of the Board of GBC who does his job, who is paid for it and can be called to account which is the important thing, who can then be made accountable not in the situation that we have that as soon as the Chairman disagrees or is unhappy he resigns and we spend six months looking for another one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have nothing to add to what I have said regarding the appointment of a Chairman, I have expressed my views on that. With regard to my original reluctance for Members to be paid I would like to say that we are going back to the years 1956/57 where the work of Government was not the same and I felt that that was part of a social duty. It will be virtually impossible now certainly for quite a number of persons in this House to be able to carry out their duties without payment. I appreciate the situation has changed completely from the time when we started the House of Assembly and departmental duties were not what they are today.

HON P J ISOLA:

But is not the situation in GBC exactly a repetition of that? It started as a very small organisation just doing radio and now has a tremendous influence in the life of everybody in Gibraltar and yet the man who is responsible for that organisation is entirely unpaid and consequently a proper and fit person cannot be found to do the job?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have nothing to add.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Chief Minister confirm that the lack of an appointment of a Chairman has caused delays and general problems in the running of GBC?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not in the least. I would like to take this opportunity to say that the contracted Board by the lack of a permanent Chairman has in no way stopped, in fact, their work has been considerably increased and

they are doing considerably hard work since they had to face the rather severe cuts that were made on their budget at budget time and that is really a big headache which is giving them a considerable amount of increased work which they are discharging most competently and with great devotion.

HON A J HAYNES:

May I take it then, Sir, that the failure to broadcast the proceedings of the House are entirely . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I will not allow that, order. The broadcasting of the proceedings of the House has nothing to do with the appointment of the Chairman of the GBC. I will not have it and that is the end of the matter.

HON J BOSSANO:

I wanted to ask the Chief Minister (a) who was the acting Chairman and (b) who appointed him acting Chairman?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is a good question and I am glad that I am able to reply to it. He is the most senior, I think, of all the members of the Corporation and has acted as Chairman in the physical absence from Gibraltar of Chairmen in the past and he is considered to be the senior member and he has been acting by the consent of all the members and with my having informed the Governor about it and therefore I have his tacit acceptance to that and that is how the thing has developed. He is the senior of the members who have taken, or perhaps I will put it this way, one of the older and more experienced members of the Board who has more time to devote to the post than any other.

HON J BOSSANO:

And he is who, Mr Speaker?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I said so, I mentioned his name, Mr Victor Ghio.

HON J BOSSANO:

And can I ask the Hon and Learned Member in fact, does the acting Chairman act to Chair meetings of the Board or does he act in fact involving himself in the running of GBC?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know to what extent Chairmen involve themselves in the running of GBC but he is for all intents and purposes the acting Chairman doing whatever any other Chairman was doing before he

acted as Chairman. If that involves being the link between management and the Corporation I presume that he is doing that as well.

HON J BOSSANO:

So I can take it then that if people are unable to make progress in any matter with the management the man that is next responsible and to whom matters should be referred is the acting Chairman?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, yes, but it is not his function alone it is the Corporation, the acting Chairman is the head of the Corporation and the responsibility for the decisions is corporate and not individual.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, in view of statements made by the Chief Minister in the House about his commitment to the independence of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation can he explain why the Government threatened the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation on 22nd August, 1983, that it would consider the extent to which very substantial public funds are devoted to the running of the Corporation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the reply to the question is to be found in documents which have been made public. However, in order to be of assistance to the Hon Member, I will summarise briefly the sequence of events and the statements made on this matter by the parties concerned.

Government Press Release No. 90/83 of 22nd August, 1983, stated that three programmes on the commercialisation of the Dockyard were to have been screened by GBC Television on 23rd, 24th and 25th August; that on the evening of Friday 19th August the Gibraltar Government learnt that the staff of the Corporation intended to "black" the programmes, that the programmes were accordingly cancelled; that the planned "blacking" was an attempt to suppress freedom of information and to deny the right of the workforce and the public to know the facts; and that the Gibraltar Government was accordingly considering the extent to which very substantial public funds should continue to be devoted to a service which appeared to be subject to external agencies in deciding what might or might not be broadcast.

This was not of course a threat to the Corporation. Quite the contrary, the statement indicated that the Government would not be a party to external agencies deciding on what material might be broadcast and thus interfering with the independence of the Corporation. I trust that the Opposition would share this view in the interests of the fundamental right of freedom of expression.

On 23rd August ACTSS stated that there was no question of GBC staff interfering with news items, political views or advertising from any quarter. On 24th August the Government welcomed this statement.

Government Press Release No. 105/83 of 21st September, 1983, the terms of which had been agreed with the Board of GBC, stated that the Board had interpreted Press Release No. 90/83 as encroaching on the Board's independence but that, during the course of meetings held with me, the Board had fully accepted my assurance that no reflection on them was intended, that there was no intention of encroaching on their independence and that they continued to enjoy the full confidence of the Government.

While repeating that the information sought in this question is available in published documents, I am glad to have had this opportunity of reiterating the Government's concern for the independence of the Corporation.

As the House is aware, the television programmes on commercialisation are now being screened and I think the Corporation are to be commended on their initiative in introducing the "Access" formula in Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 376 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Chief Minister what did the Government hope to achieve by its statement that they would have to consider the extent to which very substantial public funds were devoted to the running of the Corporation? What did the Government hope to achieve by that threat, perhaps, or if you don't want to call it that, by that statement? What did it hope to achieve, to stop the staff continuing with a dispute they thought they had with the management or to influence the Corporation to play it tough with the staff, or what?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not suggest the answers, let us hear the answers.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government was stating the facts as they saw them, that they did not want a body which was being heavily subsidised to be subject to external influences if there were such. They were not attempting to achieve anything, they were just stating a state of affairs which they felt the people should know would not be tolerated. Fortunately there were denials of that and so much the better but the Government had very good information on the basis on which that statement was made.

HON P J ISOLA:

But was the Government hoping by this statement to indicate either to the Corporation that they had better get tough with their staff or else they would not have the money to run it, or to the staff that they had better toe the line or they would not get the money to get their pay? Surely, that can be the only interpretation to that statement?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I repeat that the Government was reacting to a state of affairs as they then saw it and stated what they felt about it. We were not making a metaphysical study into the exact words and intentions of the statement, we were stating facts which were to be brought to the notice of everybody and that was all.

HON P J ISOLA:

Was it that the Government was angry that they were not able to put their point of view over to GBC and reacted, will the Chief Minister agree, in a rather rash manner and contrary to his continued statements in this House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, and I have given a good answer and the Hon Member is not going to traverse the whole of the answer by putting devious questions. The answer is we have stated what we felt at the time was the situation and we stood by it and the Corporation, which is the subject of this question, have accepted that their independence was in no way threatened.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask just one final question then on that? Is it a fact then that the presentations that have gone on GBC on Appledore and consultants have been paid for as opposed to a programme and if so who are they being paid by?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether any payment is being made, I believe that the way of Access Television which is open in England is that people are given in matters of public interest access to the use of television so long as other people interested are given an opportunity of replying. I am not aware that any payment is being made, if in fact it is made, I cannot either admit or deny, I do not know whether any payment is involved at all. The point is that it was in the public interest that these programmes should be broadcast and we are glad to see that they are being broadcast.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, while not in any way decrying that, I think in a democracy it is right that points of view should be brought forward, will the Chief Minister use his good offices in view of the fact that there are three programmes of approximately 40 minutes going in relation to the commercialisation of the Dockyard, will he make representations to GBC to ensure that the other point of view is put with an equal length of time and not in a programme of 15 minutes in which thirty representatives of political party newspapers all being bunged in as a counter-balance or as an enquiry?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I thought the Hon Member was trying to secure the independence of the Broadcasting Corporation and that is one of the items in which they are the masters and I am not prepared to interfere in the way in which the Corporation carry it out, so you cannot have it both ways. You cannot criticise us for doing one thing and then tell us what to tell them.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is that an assurance that the Government will not have another outburst as the one they had when the GBC staff refused to put the programmes on again?



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether the Hon Member may not have to have some outburst in the near future different to the television so he had better be careful.

HON J BOSSANO:

I would like to ask the Government if the answer that they have just given means that it was the decision of the Board of GBC that the Government consultants who selected Appledore, that Appledore and the independent consultant that Members in this House voted for should be given in fact the time they have been given? The Board of GBC decided that these people merited this time and that nobody else merited an equivalent amount of time to answer them, is that the situation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The ways in which the programmes are being broadcast is purely the decision of the Corporation. The Government has had no interference of the manner of doing it except that they have expressed the desire that the views of the consultants and of the operators should be put across as was desired from the beginning, the rest has all been worked out by the Corporation without any interference, discussion or consultation with the Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

But the original position, Mr Speaker, when the Board did not, in fact, put out the programmes because the employees of the Corporation refused to be involved in preparing propaganda material for the advocates of commercialisation, wasn't that at the request of the Government that those programmes were being put on?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course the Government has been interested in seeing that the point of view was put forward. How it was put forward it has always been left to the Corporation, I think perhaps the Hon Member is bringing out something which is interesting to keep the picture clear. I think that as a result of the difficulties then found as to the manner of presentation and who was responsible for the presentation, that they decided to record them in England and bring them here. I think that was one of the hurdles that they had difficulties at the beginning as to how the thing was going to be presented. Once those two tapes were available they were given to the Corporation and how they handled the rest was a matter for them and they knew that those were the tapes which we were interested should be put across and we felt it was in the public interest to be put across. The decision of how they matched in the Access method which they have applied was a matter entirely for themselves.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Chief Minister confirm that Access Television has been invented for the purpose of putting on the Appledore presentation, that has never existed before?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What I understand and I really mean when I say I understand it - because I understand it, I have not been told in any document nor has it been the subject of any definite thing, is that the way the Corporation felt that this kind of programme should be presented should be in the process which is known in England as Access Television and I think they put that in their programme and we are not responsible for the way in which they put Access Television, programmed by the consultants or programmed by Appledore, programmed by ODA, whatever the rest of the consultants who are coming or the people who are going to be questioned. That is their privilege and that is the way they have done it and the Government has had no say in the people who are going to be invited, in the number of other sessions that are being made at all, Government has had nothing to do with that, that is purely a matter for the Corporation.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I take the Chief Minister's point about the balance that that is a matter for the Corporation, the Corporation may well think that it is well balanced at the moment but what I am asking for is, in fact, doesn't the Chief Minister think it is strange to have a situation where a firm that has obtained a Government contract from which it stands to gain £1m clear profit is allowed to spend half an hour telling the general public what a good idea it is to employ them free of charge, he does not even have to pay any of the £1m it is making in convincing people that they should get the £1m. He does not think this is an unusual manner in which to run GBC?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I think that it is very important, it is not just a question of a private enterprise at all, it is very important in the general interest of Gibraltar that there should be full discussion of what commercialisation is about, what some people think about it, what the consultants think about it, what the people think about it. I think that on the one hand one is being accused here about secret Government and once one tries to open the doors and make a complete public discussion of a matter of the utmost importance for the people of Gibraltar in years, whether they pay or they do not pay I do not know and I do not care. All I say is that it was in the interest of the Government and the Government was representing the interests of the people in this respect that there should be a fair debate on this matter and that everybody should have an opportunity of having a say in this respect and no doubt Appledore being the preferred potential operators had a perfect right, in our view, to put the case before the people.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does not the Hon Member think that if he wants a fair debate he should be going on television defending the decision of his Government to support commercialisation and I invite him to join me for half an hour on television and then we will debate it in the public eye.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I appeared on television immediately I arrived from the United Kingdom much to the chagrin of the Hon Leader of the Opposition who has not forgiven me for that since then.

HON P J ISOLA:

Forgiven him for what?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, for my appearing on TV for 25 minutes, you were even criticising me in a cafe in Tangier when your attention was called because they thought you were talking about King Hassan of Morocco.

HON P J ISOLA:

I know the Chief Minister is very well informed, Mr Speaker, but it is a well known fact in the House that the Chief Minister can go on television whenever he likes so there is nothing unusual about him going for 25 minutes when he returned from England.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is absolute nonsense. I went on television and I put the political side. The nitty-gritty of that is not ours, it is the people who have been entrusted of the results of the consultations and the decisions of the British Government and the Gibraltar Government to try and get the Dockyard going commercial and I cannot see that we should be spending more time here that the time that these people have had to explain their position should be the subject of such discussion. I cannot understand what is the fear, what is the concern that these people should have had access to the public through television and tell their story, whether it is good or bad the people will decide.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, surely, if the Hon Member is so keen that people should decide whether it is good or bad then perhaps he will tell the House how he expects us to decide what can be quoted and what cannot be quoted from the reports when the consultants quote from them. I mean, it is not confidential to them is it? The reports from which they quoted last night on television, on Access Television, is not confidential to the people who went on television, just to the Members elected by the people of Gibraltar, is that the situation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The report is their report. The people who went on television virtually gave away their report on television.

HON J BOSSANO:

Right, that is what I am telling him.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Chief Minister not agree that last night the consultants left out deliberately a very significant part of the report which dealt with the other possibility and all Members in this House know that but the public do not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I must say this. These are highly paid and very prestigious consultants, we have had nothing to say as to the way they have done it and any criticism should be addressed to them and not to the Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the consultants are presented last night on GBC television as the Gibraltar Government/ODA consultants, is it not reasonable that anybody seeing that will come to the conclusion that these people are defending a Government point of view and since we cannot in fact question the consultants on it here because they are not represented in this House and we certainly cannot challenge them on television because we are not given time, what else does the Chief Minister think we can do except ask him about it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

My understanding is that they are all going to be the subject of questioning on television.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, a 30-minute programme with 25 people in it and he does not want the House, Mr Speaker, to ask him on that because he says that is a matter on which he has not interfered, that it is a matter for GBC.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Absolutely.

HON J BOSSANO:

Right, so I am not questioning him on that. That is a matter for GBC what I am questioning him on, Mr Speaker, is on the content of the programme which is not a paid advertisement because in fact the Hon Member, perhaps he can clear up that little matter for the House. Can the Hon Member say whether in fact the position where the Government responded after the press release to which he has made reference in his answer to my Hon and Learned Colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, that the Government subsequent to that welcomed the fact that GBC staff were saying they were not interfering with news items or with political speeches but that in fact if it was an advertisement it should have been treated as a normal advertisement and treated commercially and that the Government welcomed this clarification? Is it then the fact that this is what upset the GBC Board because they had taken a different line and they have found the ground taken it . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

We cannot have such a long question.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I would just like to ask two questions. The Chief Minister has said (1) that he expressed a desire to GBC that they should allow the consultants to put across the programme, and (2) that he thought there should be a full and fair discussion on the matter. Will he now express a desire to GBC that the other side should be allowed to participate in this particularly Members of this House who are against the views expressed by the consultants?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will request an early Hansard and send it to the Corporation as I always do but I understand that there is a programme that is going to last 1 hour or 1½ hours of discussion and I think that should give people a considerable amount of time to criticise otherwise if the others do not go in how do you criticise what they have said except through a programme of discussion and all the consultants, including the consultant whose report has not been made available but access has been given to them, is coming here to answer, so they will be available.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, since he obviously must have authorised the consultants to make available information from those secret reports, will he also allow Members of the Opposition to be able to make statements on the reports on parts that, as he knows, are confidential?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Anything that was made public by the consultants last night and there are a few people in Gibraltar who I understand have videos, anybody who can get anything from the consultants, the people are perfectly entitled to question the consultants on what they have said.

MR SPEAKER:

No more questions. Next question.

NO. 377 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, have directions been given to the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation as to the amount of time that can be devoted to paid advertising and if so can Government state how much advertising is allowed in terms of time on an evening's showing of television?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Governor-in-Council's directions to the Board of GBC at Appendix A (3) Calculation of Time sub-paragraph (ii) states: "The time devoted to advertising matter shall not be excessive. The Board should endeavour to aim at an average of approximately five minutes in any period of thirty minutes of transmission time, excluding advertising magazines and sponsored live programmes." I have no evidence that that rule is being transgressed which means really, for the benefit of the Questioner if he wants to put in a supplementary, that on a viewing time of 4½ hours daily - assuming that it finishes at about 11.30 pm or a little more - 45 minutes of adverts on average would be the maximum shown. I am sure that they do not show 45 minutes, I wish they did and we would have more money.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 377 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, if the programmes by Appledore and the consultants has been as paid advertising, would the Chief Minister not agree that the instructions have been transgressed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If they have paid?

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, Sir.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I don't know, it may be that Access Television is something different, I don't know. I need notice of that question, I answered it honestly in the belief that the Hon Member was interested in finding out the facts.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, but I don't think it would have taken much imagination, Mr Speaker, to realise what was behind the question. If, in fact, the programme of Appledore and the programme of the consultants and the programme to come on Thursday is in fact being paid for as advertising and I don't know, will he not agree that the regulations have been transgressed and would the Governor-in-Council do anything about it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would say yes, that if in fact it has been paid and if it has been transgressed that the Governor-in-Council will be well advised to waive the rule for that purpose.

HON P J ISOLA:

So is that not another way of saying, Mr Speaker, that the Governor-in-Council does influence the running of GBC?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order, I will ask you to withdraw that, Mr Isola, because it does not in any manner or form infer that..

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, if the Chief Minister answers to a question that is a clear breach of the Governor-in-Council's directions to say that . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Will you please sit down. The Chief Minister has said that if in the context of the Access programme having been paid for and had it been an advertisement it would have exceeded and that he would advise that it would be a good cause by which the rule should be breached. That is what the Chief Minister has said and therefore it is not the Governor-in-Council who is doing it but it will be the advice of the Chief Minister and that is why I am asking you to withdraw what you have said.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, Mr Speaker, I don't know whether my statement has been quite understood. What I was saying is if he would advise that and the Governor-in-Council were to accept that advice, is it not a case of the rules set out for GBC being transgressed because it was in the interest of the Government to have these programmes come what may?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I understand there is a rule against hypothetical questions.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, there is indeed. Next question.



18.10.83

NO. 378 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government point out the reasons why it reneged on its commitment to consult fully all the political parties represented in the House before taking any final decision on the commercialisation of the Dockyard?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, this matter was dealt with fully in the debate on the motion which I proposed in this House on 27 July. I have nothing further to add.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 378 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

But does the Chief Minister not agree that the Government gave a commitment in the debate in the House on the 22nd February, 1983, to consult all political parties represented in the House before a final decision was made and does the Chief Minister not agree that he did not do that and was there any special reason for not doing it? I cannot compel the Chief Minister to answer, of course.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 379 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state or indicate the nature of the commercial considerations that preclude the publication of the Consultants' Reports on the commercialisation of HM Dockyard and does Government not agree that there are few secrets in the commercial ship repair business which other ship repairers would not be aware of?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. To do so would defeat the object.

Whether, and, if so, to what extent, ship repairers are aware of secrets in the commercial ship repair business, is not a matter of administration for which Gibraltar Government Ministers are responsible and I am therefore under no obligation to answer that part of the question even if I knew what the answer was.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 379 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, will the Chief Minister not agree as a person who has read the reports of the consultants, and we have on this side of the House, will the Chief Minister not agree that the presentation last night on television disclosed almost the entirety of the report except the section that dealt with the result of a lower standard of productivity that could be achievable and the result of Appledore not getting the business that they hoped for and is therefore that not the real reason why the Chief Minister does not want those reports to be published because he is afraid of the other side coming to the knowledge of the public?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, on a point of clarification I would like to draw the Hon Member's attention to the point which he has raised regarding the alternative scenario which the consultants had reported on. The presentation on television did show the alternative scenario which was a 10% of the productivity target and did say that additional public funding of £10m would be required if that situation were to arise and it described in detail the effects on the economy as well, it did. I have seen the video three times.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the matter could be solved very simply by publishing the reports. Will the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that the time spent on the alternative scenario was very minimal, was glossed over and the details, for example, of a loss for a period of 5 years and the graph which they did not show on television last night of the alternative scenario, if that had been shown and other matters had been shown a different impression might have been created in the mind of anybody who was trying to make an impartial judgement on the matter?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I cannot respond to what individual impressions might be but it is clear that that part of the presentation, I am not defending it whether it was right or whether it was wrong, but that part of the presentation did screen the actual figures, the £38m of public funding; it showed what would be lost to the economy; the effects on national income and so on and in fact I think that it went further by also highlighting the effect of that scenario with a partially open border. The full effects have been put across, whether they have been put across to the extent that it should have been that is a matter for the consultants.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Financial and Development Secretary stating that the consultants put forward all the arguments for and against commercialisation in a fair and understandable manner last night?

MR SPEAKER:

No, it is unfair to ask the Financial and Development Secretary because he has not said that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, the reason I am asking that is because if that is the case what is the objection to the publication of the consultants' reports? Can the Financial and Development Secretary tell the House why he objects to the publication of the reports?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think it is a fair question to the Financial and Development Secretary who has done excellent work on this matter and is holding the fort in difficult circumstances, to answer that. I take responsibility. The answer is, Mr Speaker, with regard to the substance of what was being discussed is that the consultants were given no instructions what to put in the tape at all, certainly not by the Gibraltar Government and that the consultants belong, one of them belongs to one of the biggest firms of consultants/accountants, Coopers and Lybrand and the other one a big firm of marine engineers and so on and that it is people of that calibre to whom you must leave an element of judgement of what they present. The point is that the consultants were unanimous in recommending commercialisation.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does not the Chief Minister think that the answer he has just given is large enough when there are two people sitting there telling us in a joint programme, jointly produced, that they are unanimous in recommending something and they do not go on to say that they have only recommended it in their report, Mr Speaker, on the basis that it is better than nothing doesn't he think that if he doesn't state that part of it that is misleading and that he has just done it himself and that the consultants did it as well on television, wouldn't he agree with that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It was the softest option, of course, and that is what they have always said that if you had to put anything in the Dockyard once you close it it was the best thing you could put.

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker, I have not said that. I am asking the Chief Minister whether he will agree with me that to say that the consultants unanimously recommended commercialisation and not to go on to say that they recommended it on the basis that it was better than nothing . . . . .

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

We have said that in the House.

HON J BOSSANO:

Yes, but he has just said it now and the consultants said it yesterday and what they did not say and what I do not think comes clearly to the public amidst all the jargon of technical phrases, is that clearly, Mr Speaker, in any situation where you have 1,000 unemployed even if you employ somebody for a year it can be argued that it is better to employ somebody for a year than to have them unemployed for a year but does not the Hon Member agree that to say things like that it is being unanimously recommended for acceptance and repeating it several times without saying that it is only recommended for acceptance because it is better than nothing is in fact to tell half the story?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am sure that the Hon Member will have ample opportunity of asking these questions to the consultants for whose performance on television I am not responsible.

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker, but I am asking him for the answer he has just given. I am not holding the consultants responsible, Mr Speaker. Having read the consultants' reports the same as he has I have rejected their recommendations and he has accepted so, Mr Speaker, doesn't he think that the correct thing is not to hold the consultants responsible for their recommendations but to hold the Government responsible for the acceptance of their recommendations and that is what the people of Gibraltar have got to ask him for?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I accept full responsibility for the recommendations and I defended it here on the 27th July and I made no bones about it. Is it that the Members are so concerned that the presentations are making some impact and showing something different to what they have been told all the time?

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, may I say on behalf of my side of the House that we have absolutely no objection at all, in fact, we encourage any sort of programme that informs the people of the real issues at stake, of the real problems at stake and so forth. What on this side of the House we cannot understand and we would like to hear it in confidence from the Financial and Development Secretary or from the Chief Minister, we cannot understand why it is that those reports cannot be made public because we can see nothing in those reports, Mr Speaker, that is damaging either to Apple-dore, to the public of Gibraltar, to the Gibraltar or the British Governments. It can be damaging if the results of it is that people take the view that we have taken on this side of the House that the commercialisation of the Naval Dockyard is not a viable economic alternative which is what the British Government promised the people of Gibraltar in their Defence White Paper of 1981.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state whether it has made available to the Gibraltar Trades Council the Consultants' Reports on the commercialisation of the Dockyard and if so on what terms it has done so?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Government was in the process of making the Consultants' Reports available to the Gibraltar Trades Council, under the same arrangements as they were made available to Hon Members of the Opposition, when the Trades Council announced that, in effect, they were no longer acting as such on the question of the Dockyard. The reports have since been made available to the IPCS at their request, on the terms I have described.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 380 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Hon and Learned Chief Minister say what is the justification for making them available to the IPCS, for example, and not to the Gibraltar Chamber of Commerce who are also affected by the result of commercialisation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They are not directly concerned as the IPCS is, they have a workforce in the Dockyard working there and affected by the commercialisation as in fact the CPSA, if they ask for it, they have not asked for it, if they ask for it they will be given it. I understand they are not interested because no jobs are going to be lost in that area.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Chief Minister state if any progress has been made in providing the Hansard of the House of Assembly with an index?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, I believe it is the general wish of the House that an index should be available for the convenience of Hon Members and others. When this matter was raised in this year's budget session I suggested that the task of compiling the index in respect of past years might be assigned to a suitable person and that it should be kept up-to-date thereafter.

To give effect to this suggestion it would first be necessary to establish the form that the index should take, assess the value of the work involved and engage a suitable person to carry it out.

May I suggest, Sir, that you should ask that these steps be taken?

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 381 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I did not hear the end. Could the Chief Minister repeat it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am asking the Speaker to take the steps which I think are necessary to have the index made.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Chief Minister aware that this matter has been raised in this House for a number of years now, I think the last time was last April. I think if we had an index perhaps we would not be wasting so much time in this House, perhaps the Government would not be there if people were able to read the Hansards and this is perhaps why the Chief Minister does not want to have one.

MR SPEAKER:

It is not for the Chief Minister to decide whether an index to the Hansard should be prepared or not, it is for the Chief Minister to express a view as any other Member of this House is entitled to express a view as to whether an index should be prepared or not, it is for the Speaker's office to see whether it should be done taking into account the wishes of the House and it is my responsibility and if nothing has been done up to now perhaps the blame should be placed on me and on no one else. May I say that I have now had a directive as to the wishes and the feelings of the House and that the necessary action will be taken.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Well, I am sorry, Mr Speaker, that it has taken so long for you to realise that that was the wish of the House.

MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps the answer might be that the Speaker himself is not all that convinced that an index would serve any useful purpose but, in any event since it is the wish of the House I will bow to their judgement.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will it be published before the index of the laws of Gibraltar or afterwards?

MR SPEAKER:

I have not the slightest idea. Next question.



THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Government state what action is being taken by them to get the British Citizens living in Gibraltar enfranchised for the elections of the European Parliament in June, 1984?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, when this matter was raised on the adjournment on 29 July, I made it clear that the pressures on the Government on more urgent issues was such that I could not give any undertaking that we would be able to pursue it at that time. I went on to suggest that, in the circumstances, Members of the two sides of the House in the European Movement might take the initiative and prepare a memorandum on the matter which I would then consider as necessary. I added that, while recognising the difficulties, I would support any move on this issue.

I have heard no more on this matter and have now given instructions for a memorandum to be prepared. Once I have considered this, it would be the subject of consultation with Members of the Opposition. I hope that it would be possible for me to approach the Opposition not later than the end of November. I think also that we should consult Lord Bethell who, as Chairman of the Gibraltar in Europe Representation Group, has taken an interest in this matter in the past and who would be in a good position to advise.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 283 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Chief Minister aware that only last Friday the Government announced that they were going to make provisions for British Citizens in the EEC to vote both for Parliament and for the European Parliament and could in the light of that the Chief Minister take the matter up officially since those arrangements are going to apply to British Citizens, the people of Gibraltar are British Citizens and unless the Government takes some action fairly quickly doesn't he agree that perhaps we may be left out?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I said that I think we could get a memorandum ready by the end of November.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

18.10.83

NO. 383 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has Government now come to its conclusions on the report of the Select Committee on Landlord and Tenant legislation and if so will Government make a statement on the matter?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, we will be dealing with this matter later in the proceedings of this House.

18.10.83

NO. 384 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that they will be introducing legislation to control rents of post-war properties prior to the temporary moratorium on rents lapsing?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The moratorium will only remain in force until such time as the new tenancy legislation can be dealt with by the House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 384 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

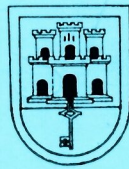
The answer then is that in fact if the new law is not ready the moratorium would be extended?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is in the supplementary agenda which has been circulated.

GIBRALTAR

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

6 December 1983  
385 to 491

6.12.83

NO. 385 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the consultants recommended a year ago that employees of Bland Ship Repair Yard should have the same priority of employment as workers made redundant from the Naval Dockyard in the event that commercialisation took place, and has Government accepted this recommendation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the consultants who evaluated the proposals for commercialisation recommended, in September 1982, that the possibility of affording Bland's Shiprepair Yard employees hiring rights equal to those for redundant HM Dockyard employees in the commercial yard be considered. The Government feels that this is a matter which, in the first instance, should be considered by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 385 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not true that the recommendation of the consultants was a recommendation to the Government and not to Appledore or the Shiprepair Company? If the Government is saying it should be a matter for the Shiprepair Company to consider are they saying that they will give a political directive to the directors they appoint to the Shiprepair Company?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the Government is saying it has taken due note of the recommendation as the employment of individuals will of course depend on a number of factors such as skill, qualifications and experience. It would not be proper to pre-empt managerial decisions by G.S.L. on these matters.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, is it in fact managerial decision by G.S.L. or managerial decisions already taken by Messrs Appledore before they are formally appointed as managers of G.S.L.?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the managerial decisions will be taken by those who are responsible for employing, the workers. The Government has taken note of the recommendations made by the consultants in 1982.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Honourable Financial and Development Secretary not agree that in fact by saying that Naval Dockyard employees themselves have no priority over anybody else, Messrs Appledore have pre-empted any note that the Government or the Shiprepair company may wish to take at the appropriate time?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member asked a question about the consultants and I think it is fair to say that the consultants recommended equal hiring rights and not priority of employment which is the phrase the Hon Member used.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member agree that if Bland Shiprepair employees have been recommended as having equal hiring rights with Naval Yard employees it presupposes that there is a difference between the right of employment of people in that category and the right of employment of everybody else?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as I said in an earlier answer to the Hon Member the Government has taken due note of the recommendations in the consultants' report.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask in view of the fact that commercialisation has been accepted by the Government and it is because of commercialisation that the Bland Shiprepair Yard has had to close down, does Government not consider that it has a responsibility to the workers concerned in Bland Repair Yard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think that is another question.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would have thought, Mr Speaker, that this does arise out of this question because the questioner is asking that the workers made redundant from the Shiprepair Yard should have the same priority. So, would Government not consider that it is its responsibility as well since it has accepted commercialisation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have nothing further to say, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state the criteria that will be used for the appointment of directors to the Board of Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited and can any indication be given of the names of proposed directors?

ANSWERTHE HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, may I refer the Honourable and Learned Leader of the Opposition to points made by the Acting Financial and Development Secretary on the Second Reading Speech on the Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd Bill. He explained that Board members should have suitable knowledge and background in commercial shiprepairing, finance, labour relations and management experience generally. One member would be a representative of Her Majesty's Government. The Board will not include Government Ministers nor any person whose appointment might give rise to a conflict of interests. It would not be proper to reveal the names of any candidates for appointment but in any case we have not yet reached that stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 386 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that it is a thoroughly unsatisfactory position to be in that the company has not yet got directors and yet it is this company that apparently should be instructing A & P Appledore Ltd, their managing agents, as to what terms to offer workers in all the matters in relation to the implementation of commercialisation? In these circumstances, is it proper to throw criticism at members of Trade Unions and others, who do not negotiate, when the Government apparently is itself not in a position yet to operate?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, there have of course been a number of circumstances which have given rise to delay in the establishment of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd and not all of these were under the control of the Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Financial and Development Secretary whether his statement that no Ministers will be appointed to the Board of Directors is indicative that the Gibraltar Government Ministers will not be allowed to interfere in the operation of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Government has made it clear—and the Acting Financial and Development Secretary made it clear during the Second Reading



speech on the Bill—that the essence of the operation is that the Gibraltar Shiprepair company should have freedom of day-to-day management (when I say "freedom of day-to-day management" I think that is consistent with the Hon and Learned Gentleman's remarks about interference; I think that answers that particular part of the question) but of course it is not to say that the affairs of the company, in general terms, will not be a matter of concern to this House, and indeed for the concern of the Government. As the Hon and Learned Gentleman also knows, there will be provision for the company's report and accounts to be placed before the House and afterwards will be the subject of some debate and discussion by this House.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Wouldn't the Hon Financial and Development Secretary agree that what he said previously, the way he answered the questions to my Hon Friend Mr Bossano, does not reflect that attitude from the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not agree with that suggestion in any respect whatsoever.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that, in view of the fact that the Government has decided to make Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd a private company with a Board of directors, that—if there are no Ministers on the Board of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd—the only control the Government can exercise on this company will either be through the terms of its lease with the Gibraltar Government; or by an extraordinary general meeting of shareholders of the company; or at the annual general meeting of shareholders of the company? In other words, the control the Government will be able to exercise on this company—apart from the terms of its lease—will surely be even less than the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation, which is subject to directions from the Governor-in-Council, and is that in the public interest?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if I may detach the latter part of the Hon Gentleman's question from the earlier part, the Government will—I have already indicated by the content of the Bill—have a 100% ownership of the company from the outset. I think that is sufficient assurance of the Government's concern, and will lead to (as I have already said) many opportunities for this House to exercise its overall control of the affairs of the company.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, it is not a question of the House exercising control, it is a question of the Government. Am I to understand that the Board will only be there as a Board of directors so long as they please the shareholders? Is any control going to be exercised,



not at the time of annual accounts when reports are laid in this House, but is any control going to be exercised by the Gibraltar Government on how the Board operates Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd during the year? Will the Board, in effect, not be merely dummies?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the terms and conditions of appointment of the directors is also another medium through which the Government will exercise control over the company.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 387 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether it has yet agreed the terms under which it will lease the Naval Dockyard to Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited and will it make a statement especially identifying any conditions which the Government proposes to impose on Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited in relation to the user of the premises leased to them?

ANSWERTHE HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the Government has not yet agreed the terms under which it will lease the Naval Dockyard to Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 387 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of an earlier statement, which I understand the Hon Financial and Development Secretary made in this House today, to the effect that goods imported for Shiprepair Ltd would be imported import-duty free, will the Financial and Development Secretary give an assurance that the terms under which it will lease the Naval Dockyard to Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will be couched in such terms so as not to create the situation under which Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will be able to compete unfairly with private industry in the private sector in Gibraltar?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the latter is certainly not the intention of the Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I have an assurance on that point, because it is of some importance, I think?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Articles of Association of the company will make clear what the purpose of the company is. Quite clearly that purpose is mainly shiprepair. I would not like to go further than that general statement at this stage except to say that obviously the Government will be very conscious of the importance of the activities of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd to Gibraltar in the very widest sense and will take note of all representations which are made on that particular point to it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Financial and Development Secretary aware that I think he means the Memorandum of Association—that the Memorandum of Association of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd affords absolutely no

protection at all? It is true we have been led to believe that Shiprepair Ltd will be controlled by its Memorandum of Association, but the Memorandum of Association has been couched in such wide terms that it offers and affords no protection at all to private industry in Gibraltar?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I fail to agree, indeed, I disagree with the inference which the Hon and Learned Gentleman has just drawn from his close perusal of the Memorandum of Association.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, Mr Speaker, all I can tell the Financial and Development Secretary is that when we come to the Second Reading or the Committee Stage of the Bill we shall have to go through each object clause of the proposed Memorandum of Association, where the point I am sure will be amply illustrated.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 388 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government explain why the anticipated cost of employing an apprentice in Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd is 100% higher now than it was in the tender proposals accepted by Government a year ago?

ANSWER

THE HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. Before presenting their report in 1983 APA were able to take a closer look at the cost of employing apprentices.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 388 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

As a result of taking a closer look, the Government is saying that they accept now that an apprentice will cost £6,000 a year and not £3,000 a year. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no, the Government is not saying that. The additional £300,000 is not a highly significant figure in the context of the total manpower bill of about £6½m. This was a forecast and forecasts do change from time to time.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it then the forecast that it will cost the same to employ an adult as it will cost to employ an apprentice?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member will know much better than I, the payscale for MOD apprentices ranges from about £40 a week at the minimum to over £100 at age 21, exclusive of efficiency bonuses, so there is a range there of 250%. In that context, I don't think that the earlier assumption and the correction of that assumption give rise to great concern, again in the context of the total manpower bill of approximately £6½m.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, I am not asking the Hon Member what he thinks is significant or insignificant in the context of the manpower bill of £6½m. I am asking him whether, in the context of the cost of training one hundred apprentices for £300,000, he accepts that it is now realistic that 50 apprentices will be trained for what was previously thought would be the cost of training 100. That is what I am asking?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have already explained the reason for the difference in

the two forecasts which is what the Hon Gentleman asked me. I don't think it is for the Government to get itself involved in the detail of the costs of employing apprentices which will be a matter for consideration and decision by the company which will be employing them. I would suggest to the Hon Member that, if he wishes to go into detail on this matter, he might like to contact the representatives of A & P Appledore who will be glad to discuss the matter with him further.

HON J BOSSANO:

There is no doubt about that, Mr Speaker. But what I am asking the Hon Member is in fact if the Government, having decided to support the proposals, is satisfied about the accuracy of the projections that are being made; and, in that context-if he is satisfied-then I would like him to explain why he is satisfied that the cost of training 50 apprentices is virtually the same as the cost of training 42 adults in the projections.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I said, Mr Speaker, I think this is a matter for the Hon Gentleman to take up with A & P Appledore if his concern is as intense as he suggests that it is.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, Mr Speaker, is the Government's position that they are committed to supporting the venture notwithstanding the fact that they themselves have not taken the trouble to contact those who have produced the figures and establish why the inaccuracies that apparently exist exist. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I certainly have taken the trouble to contact and also to reach an accord, as the Hon Member will know. The Government's position is quite clear on this. Insofar as the minute accuracy of every forecast is concerned, well, of course, the Government does not expect that. I have been responsible for the forecasts of various projects which at the feasibility stage have differed inevitably from subsequent suggestions, and one would expect that forecasts to be made so far in general will differ, and will certainly differ in particular, from the actual results which will be achieved by the company. So I suggest to the Hon Member, with great respect, that it is the latter-that is, the difference between the forecast and the actual results achieved-which he should be concerning himself with.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that it is a legitimate thing to ask the Government at this stage to in fact explain why they place credibility on the forecast if they are unable to explain the inconsistency in the forecast? In that context, can the Hon Member explain why it is that, having given us an explanation what is quoted in the report, that the figures have been looked at in more detail, the only figure on labour costs that differs between the original projection and the subsequent one is the one of apprentices? Can he explain why that is the only difference between the two?

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I really don't think I can add anything more to what I have said on the matter of minute comparisons between forecasts.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 389 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does Government accept that sales per employee in Gibraltar Ship-repair Ltd will go up by nearly 2½ times as much over its first 4 years of operation than provided for in the tender of A & P Appledore accepted a year ago?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. The Government estimates that the increase in sales per employee is in the order of 25% not 2½ times and that this is almost entirely accounted for by the difference in the numbers to be employed by the fourth year. Total sales figures in the original proposals and the final report are fairly close at some £20m. I think the Hon Member has made a mistake in his arithmetic.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 389 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, I think the Hon Financial and Development Secretary should not have said that, Mr Speaker. Is the Financial and Development Secretary aware that the figures in the two reports are worked differently in that the £20m which he has just quoted in the second report is as a result of an annual escalation for inflation of 5% per annum, whereas the figures in the original report, in fact, are worked out differently; and that if worked out on the same basis, the figure per employee in the original report in the first year comes out to £11,096 per capita, whereas in the second report it is £16,172 per capita?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I don't know which particular figures the Hon Gentleman is referring to but I do know that while in the former report there may have been a figure for cost escalation there was not in the latter. However, the numbers I am quoting, to help him, so that we can be talking about the same source, were those in table 8.2 of the earlier report and table 9.2 of the later report; and if I may trespass a little further on the patience of the House by quoting some numbers, they were 1505 in the earlier report and 1280 in the latter.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Financial Secretary not agree—using his figures—that if 1505 workers are expected to produce sales of £19.3m, and 1280 are expected to produce sales of £20.7m, that brings the per capita figures respectively to £12,824 in the original estimate and £16,172 in the second estimate, which I assume is the 25% differential that the Hon Member has quoted. In fact, if one gets the original figure of £12,800 and removes the 5% per annum cost escalation (which is not included in the £20m) then the difference

is between £11,096 and £16,172. That difference represents that, in the original projection, it is a 38.4% increase between year one and year four; and in the second projection it is a 100.2% increase between year one and year four. Would the Hon Member not agree that that represents an increase in per capita sales  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times higher, and this cannot be considered to be a minute difference of detail, I assume?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have listened as closely as possible to the Hon Gentleman's arithmetic and nothing that he has said convinced me that the figure was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member does not agree that 100 is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times 40, is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, that is a different question, to which the answer would be yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member not agree that if in the original projection the sales per employee is £8,019, and in the second projection the sales per employee is £8,079, we are talking about basically a difference per annum of £60 per worker which is negligible. Therefore, if those two figures that I have quoted, Mr Speaker, which is the sales of £6.8m divided in one case by 848 workers and the other one is the sales of £6.1m divided by the 755, that gives us the two comparable figures in year one. Would the Hon Member not agree that if in year four, using the same current costs definition, eliminating the inflation included in one projection and not existing in the other one so that we have got comparable figures, if in fact I am correct in saying that it was originally anticipated that sales per capita would go from £8,000 to £11,000, and it is now anticipated that sales per capita go from £8,000 to £16,000, they are now expected to increase  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times as much as they were originally expected to increase?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us have an answer to that.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Well, I recognise the two comparisons which the Hon Gentleman made and I am sorry but he has made an error in his arithmetic. It is one thing to compare sales of, shall we say, £6.8m in the first year with sales of £19m or £20m, and if my arithmetic is correct that is an increase of more than 3 times. But, it is another thing to compare ratios and I think that, with respect, would be the Hon Gentleman's error.



MR SPEAKER:

Well, we are going to have to leave this.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I accept if the Government doesn't want to answer; but I think, if you will allow me, if the Hon Financial and Development Secretary thinks that there is an error and I am unable to point out to him that it is not an error, then surely he may be in a position to give me an answer to the question. I am asking him, Mr Speaker, quite specifically whether the Government is aware that in fact the sales per man projected by Appledore in the project study is in fact considerably higher than the sales per man, that is, the increase in sales between year one and year four?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, and I have already said that the increase is of the order of 25% not  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is saying that the increase in sales is 25% on the basis that he is comparing a figure of £12,000 with a figure of £16,000. Am I correct in that? That is how he arrived at his 25%.

MR SPEAKER:

Do you agree that these figures which have been quoted is the calculation made on the basis that Mr Bossano has stated?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The calculations, Mr Speaker, are of sales per employee, that is, sales per capita and I don't recognise all of the figures that the Hon Gentleman has quoted. I recognise some of them and I have endeavoured to answer as best as I can by reference to those figures with which I am familiar. But again, I would urge him that in matters of this nature it would be more sensible and more fruitful and more profitable for him and myself as he has so invited me to discuss these with the representatives of A & P Appledore.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I don't agree with the Hon Member since A & P Appledore are not represented in this House of Assembly by him or by anybody else. I am asking the Government, who have accepted the projections, whether they accept that the figures which are in fact contained in the latest Appledore Report assume an increase in sales over a four-year period, and that that increase in sales is in fact progressing at a faster rate than they originally anticipated, and the differential in growth between the two rates is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us forget the differential in growth: the differential in growth I think has been cleared. You may have your ideas what the differentials in growth are, which is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times, and the Hon Financial Secretary has said that as far as they are concerned it is 25%. Is that correct?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Well, the Hon Gentleman is quoting sales of which I agree, Mr Speaker, But, his question was sales per employee, that is, sales per capita which is only 25%. If he asks me if sales per employee are expected in the second report to go at a faster rate than in the first report, the answer to that is yes: and there is no doubt about that, but not  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times which is the figure he quoted in his question, and he has made an error in his arithmetic.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member does not in fact accept then that the difference in the two reports is that sales per employee are now expected to grow  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times faster than they were originally expected. Is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no, I am sorry to trespass again on the good nature of the House by repeating the figures, and I have quoted the two tables and I can quote them again so that it is perfectly clear for the record: table 8.2 in the first report and table 9.2 in the second report. The first report, sales £6.8m in year one and in year four £19.3m, so that is an increase of about 300% in sales; and in the second report the figure is similar, sales £6.1m in year one and £20.7m in year four. But this must be taken in relation to the numbers employed, because it is a ratio: it is sales per employee and this particular figure, the ratio, has not increased between the two reports by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times, it has increased by 25%.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to get any further so we will call the next question.

6.12.83

NO. 390 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Have the recently published pay and conditions for hourly paid workers intended to be employed by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd been approved by the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos. 391, 406, 407 and 408 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 391 OF 1983

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government state what are the sick leave entitlements proposed for the employees of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.390, 406, 407 and 408 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 392 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government state whether the ratio of expatriate managers and supervisors to local production workers envisaged by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd is higher than under MOD management of the Naval yard?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the ratio of expatriate managers to local production workers envisaged for Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will in the first year be broadly similar to those under MOD management of the naval yard as far as one can ascertain. It will, however, be significantly lower from year two onwards. Of course, in comparing figures, account must be taken of the different organisational structures of the Ministry of Defence and the commercial operators.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 392 OF 1983.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if Appledore has claimed that under commercial management a significant contribution to output per man would be the result of lower management production worker ratios, how can the Hon Member explain that in the first year they are anticipating one of the biggest increases in output per capita, whilst-as he himself has said-the ratio of expatriate managers to local workers is virtually the same?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, that is a slightly different question, and I think invites the answer from me that A & P Appledore will achieve their results by good management. It was their record and their achievement in that respect which were influential with the Government in deciding upon them as the commercial operators for the Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Government have any policy as to what the ratio of expatriate managers and supervisors to local production workers should be at the beginning of the enterprise, whatever promises for the future may be then made?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 393 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the workforce from whom agreement on changed working practices is required by the British Government prior to the release of the £28m, is the existing Naval Dockyard workforce or the workforce that actually takes up employment with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, it is the workforce that will eventually take up employment with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 393 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that the workforce has got to be employed first and their agreement to changed working practices obtained subsequently?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I don't think that that is a sequence of events which necessarily follows from my earlier statement.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if one doesn't know who is going to be the workforce that takes up employment, how does one ask them whether they agree to changed working practices?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think I will have to say in answer to the Hon Gentleman that there are a number of issues which still have to be resolved before the workforce take up employment with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd, and details or a meticulous answer to his question-which is clearly what he seeks from me cannot really be given until it has progressed a little bit further and the people start taking up employment.

HON J BOSSANO:

I don't agree, Mr Speaker, that I am asking for meticulous answers: I am asking for a very simple answer to a very simple question. Which is the workforce that is expected to reach agreements with Appledore on new work practices? If the answer is the workforce that takes up the jobs, then am I correct in saying that to ask the existing Naval Dockyard workforce is meaningless, because the existing Naval Dockyard workforce may not be the people who will eventually work for Appledore? The people who will eventually work for Appledore may disagree with the existing Naval Dockyard workforce.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, there are certainly difficulties at the moment, as the House is aware, in reaching agreement with the workforce and their representatives. It is the wish of the Government that those difficulties can be overcome.

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not asking about the difficulties. I am seeking information as to what is Government policy in this matter. Is it the Government's view, is it the view of the British Government or is it the view of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd that the people who have to agree to new work practices are the people who are currently employed in the Naval Dockyard or the people who will eventually take up the jobs with Appledore, which we don't know yet who they are?

MR SPEAKER:

You have been given an answer to that.

HON J BOSSANO:

My supplementary to that, Mr Speaker, is that if it is the people who eventually take up employment, since we don't know who they are, does the Hon Member accept that first, people have to be employed and then they have to be asked to agree to new work practices? Is that the sequence of events?

MR SPEAKER:

On employment, I imagine.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

From the gist of the Hon Member's statement or question, it seems to me, Mr Speaker, that they will not take up employment with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd and therefore there will be no agreement with the workforce. Well, I don't think that is a hypothesis which the Government would accept in any way.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 394 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J. BOSSANO

Can Government state whether by "current" prices in the context of the proposed RFA programme planned for Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd, is meant the price charged in 1983 by the Naval Dockyard in Gibraltar, Naval Dockyards in UK, British Shipbuilders in UK, or private commercial shiprepair companies for a similar RFA work programme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.395, 396 and 397 of 1983.



6.12.83

NO. 395 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the fact that RFA work to the value of £14m at current prices has been agreed with the British Government means that the volume of work promised to Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd would be maintained even if prices in 1985 and subsequent years was higher than current prices and hence come to more than £14m?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos. 394, 396 and 397 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 396 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government explain why the £½m to £1m of naval work for the proposed commercial Dockyard is not at 'current' prices the same as the RFA work?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos. 394, 395 and 397 of 1983.

NO. 397 OF 1983

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the work, other than RFA's valued at £½m to £1m for the proposed commercial Dockyard would be charged for at the same hourly rate as the RFA work?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the price to be charged for RFA and other naval work will be broadly in line with that normally paid by the Ministry of Defence for the same work carried out in the United Kingdom. All work will be charged at the same hourly rate and will be set at July, 1983, prices but those prices, of course, will be subject to increases in due course in cost of labour and materials as one would expect. So, the £14m volume in 1983 is assured although the price may increase or the value of that may increase in due course. The non-RFA work, which is currently estimated at around £½m to £1m, relates to an expected workload which is subject to operational needs and has therefore not been specifically quantified in price term.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 394, 395, 396 AND 397 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, why is the fact that it may be subject to operational needs not linked to current prices? Is the Hon Member saying that in the case of the non-RFA work the price is fixed?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not saying that, I think one must distinguish between the non-RFA work, which is currently estimated at around £½m to £1m. This is a sum which will fluctuate depending on workload. What I am saying is that all work will be charged at the same hourly rate, and I would expect this to apply to the non-RFA work. There is no specific assurance as to the quantity of that, but then £½m to £1m is a relatively minor amount of work compared with the £14m of RFA work which has been assured.

HON J BOSSANO:

With reference to Question 396 then, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is saying that the non-RFA work would continue to be linked to the hourly rate for RFA work in the context of moving from current prices. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, this £½m to £1m is a very small amount of work. It is marginal in respect to the £14m. We cannot give an assurance in precisely the terms that the Hon Member has asked about this small amount of work. I have given the House the assurance about the much larger amount of work, namely, the £14m for RFA work.

HON J BOSSANO:

The situation is that they would both be charged at the same hourly rate: that has been confirmed has it, by the Hon Member?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is my understanding, Mr Speaker, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Hon Member, when he says that the charge will be that payable in UK in July, 1983, I suggested that there were in UK in fact three different rates being charged currently in July, 1983. Can he tell me which of the three he is referring to?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I said, Mr Speaker, that it would be that normally paid by the Ministry of Defence for the same work carried out in the UK, in a UK Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon Member aware that there is no RFA work being carried out in Naval Dockyards in UK?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Hon Member has the advantage of me by his superior knowledge of the operation; but merely because work is not being carried out at any given time does not mean that a price cannot be fixed for that work in relation to other activities.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is in fact the Hon Member aware that, according to the original PEIDA study, the Naval Dockyards in UK charge £6m for a work programme that a commercial yard would charge £3½m. Which of the two are we using as our base line, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am not using either of the figures in the PEIDA report; I am quoting the assurances which we have been given by the Ministry of Defence. I don't think that the PEIDA report is in any sense relevant to that. If he is making comparisons about the cost of carrying out work in RN Dockyards in the UK and commercial yards in the UK, then I am sure he will not need me to elaborate on the implications of that.

HON J BOSSANO:

But I do need the Hon Member to elaborate on the implications, Mr Speaker. What I am asking is precisely that he should elaborate

whether the 1983 price, which has been agreed will determine the volume of work, is the price that would be charged in a Naval Dockyard in UK which-according to the report in our possession-is almost 100% higher or the price charged in a commercial Dockyard?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer you have been given is clear: It is Ministry of Defence prices in the United Kingdom, whichever those may be, and they are not related to the PEIDA report.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member then is telling the House that if it is correct that the RFA work is being done now in commercial Dockyards in UK at a given price, that is the price that would be charged in Gibraltar to arrive at the £14m?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the MOD charging arrangements, as I know from personal experience, are very, very complicated. I don't think that the sort of difference which he has quoted is one which is in any sense relevant to the price which the MOD will be charging for RFA work in Gibraltar. There may be differences between the prices which the MOD pay and commercial yards pay to private firms who need their ships repaired. That is another matter.

MR SPEAKER:

I think that the most that the Hon Member can ask is to get an assurance from Government that whatever is paid should be the most advantageous as possible as far as Gibraltar is concerned. I don't think, in a question, you can get the sort of information and guarantees that you seek.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that the anticipated viability of the project is crucially dependent on the rate charged for the work?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If the Hon Member is talking about Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd, then quite clearly the prices which are charged by the company are of crucial importance.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if in fact the price that the Government has agreed to charge for the RFA work in the package is the price payable by commercial shiprepair companies in UK doing RFA work at the moment, will the Hon Member confirm that that is a fundamental departure from the original proposals of Appledore, where naval work was expected to be almost  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times what PEIDA was - however much the Hon Member may not like the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am not quite sure whether the Hon Member's  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times there refers to volume or price.

HON J BOSSANO:

In this case, Mr Speaker, I am talking about the difference between £6 an hour and £14 an hour, and £14 is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times £6.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I agree with the Hon Gentleman's arithmetic, but I am still not quite clear what question he is asking me.

HON J BOSSANO:

The question that I am asking is would the Government not agree that if we have now got £14m subject to charging commercial rates, and originally the projection assumed £11m charging £14 when we should be charging £6, the work we have got now is worth considerably less than the original?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think I now understand and apologise to the Hon Member for being slow in catching up with him on this question but he is referring to a figure of £14 on the one hand, and £6 in the 1982 proposals by Appledore. As I said earlier, many of the projections included in that report have been altered by the company on closer acquaintance. Amongst them was the cost of apprentices, about which we had an earlier exchange.

HON J BOSSANO:

I appreciate the ability of the Hon Member to avoid giving answers but if there were anticipated payments for RFA work, so many hours of work at £14 an hour, and now the rate is no longer £14 an hour, does the Hon Member not agree that the change in volume is determined by the amount that we are charging per hour if the total figure is fixed at £14m?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if all other factors in the comparison were equal and the only change were that between £14 and £6 an hour, then I would agree with the Hon Gentleman that that would have a dramatic effect on the forecasts. But many things have changed, and the figure of £14 an hour is one which is inevitably bound to be subject to change. As I said, the MOD are guaranteeing £14m worth of work for the RFAs at July, 1983, prices.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Hon Member whether the price that will be charged for RFA work and the price that will be charged for commercial work is now therefore the same?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, this in fact anticipates a question which is also down on the Order Paper and which the Hon Member is due to ask later.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 398 OF 1983

THE HON J BOSSANO

Would Government state whether the Naval Programme for the proposed commercial Dockyard described as work valued at £14m at current prices means 'charged for' at the rate of £14 per man hour as estimated in the tender proposals submitted by A & P Appledore and accepted by the consultants a year ago?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the understanding reached with MOD is that the £14m programme of naval work for Gibraltar will be priced broadly at the going rate for a UK Dockyard.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 398 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

That is the answer the Hon Member has given to all the other questions being grouped together, and he left this one out. Will the Hon Member say then what is the going rate in a UK commercial dockyard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I think that is a matter for the MOD and it is really in commercial confidence, if you pardon the expression.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will in fact the going rate for a commercial dockyard be applied for all commercial work done in year one as well as for RFA work, or only to RFA work?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Hon Gentleman asked me about MOD work: I think I have answered that question. I cannot really speculate in detail about the future prices for commercial work, other than the RFA work, which must depend on the judgement of the operators as to what the market will bear if they are to get business.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member is saying that, without knowing what the market is expected to bear, the Government is prepared to support the starting of a commercial operation in 1983 having no idea what their revenue will be. Is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Government has certainly received projections, and these are of course known to the Hon Member, about the future sales income.



That much is known, and the Government has reached its conclusions about the engagement of the operating company in the light of their projections and other proposals they made and other proposals made by others at the time.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member agree with me that in arriving at a rate above the competitive commercial rate in the first years of operation in all the previous projections and reports, the assumption was that it would take a number of years to be able to produce work at the rate commercial operations in UK were producing it. If the Government has now accepted that the charge will be the charge in UK Dockyards, does this not imply that RFA work will be taken at a loss?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If I may pick up the very last point, Mr Speaker, the Government is well aware, indeed the entire projections make it clear, that in the early years of operation the shiprepair company will make an operating loss and that is what in part the development aid from HMG is to meet.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Financial and Development Secretary then confirm that the position now, unlike the tender accepted a year ago, is that losses will be made in the first years on both commercial work and RFA work?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to answer that question in those terms, because the operating losses, and I am speaking now from some experience of accounting, are shown as being the outcome of the entire operation of the company. I think it would be misleading to go into greater detail and start saying: "Well, will you make a loss on this type of work or that type of work?"

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member not accept that the figures quoted in my question 398 were arrived at as a result of an approach to establishing a commercial facility where there would be a cross subsidy?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I must confess that I am not aware precisely of the sources of the information, the £14 per man hour which was quoted in the earlier report, but as I have already said to the Hon Member, I would expect that—and indeed other figures and other calculations in the report to change with time. Again, I must urge upon the Hon Member that he concentrates not on differences between forecasts, but on the difference between projections and the actual results which the company achieves. That is a more important thing to concentrate on.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree with me that, even behind this, there is a clear change of policy; and that the change of policy is that, whereas originally the RFA work was going to be charged at a higher rate to compensate for the lower rate being charged for commercial work- so that one would make money and the other one lose, and there was a cross subsidy- it is no longer the case, on the basis of his answer, that there will be a cross subsidy. Now, the RFA work will be charged a competitive commercial rate, even if that competitive commercial rate fails to cover costs. That is the case, is it not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Member is approaching this through his long experience in the Dockyard, and using phrases like "cross subsidy" which may be relevant in the case of a Ministry of Defence Dockyard, but I don't think really represents the way in which a commercial operator- whether in the Dockyards or indeed any other commercial undertaking- would approach his business. They must, as I said in answer to an earlier point, charge what the market will bear for commercial rates. They have certain assurances about the MOD business. We have already covered that, Mr Speaker. For the rest, they must charge what the market will bear.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to go much further in this question.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I think it is very important that we clarify whether there has been a fundamental shift of policy.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, I don't think there has been any fundamental change of policy at all, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

So then the Hon Member is telling the House that he is not aware that the original tender accepted by the consultants provided for the Navy to be charged for Naval work considerably more than the going commercial rate by the commercial operator?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have answered the Hon Gentleman to the best of my ability on the question of charging and his point about cross subsidy, and I have also made it quite clear that operating losses are expected by the company in the first years.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member aware.....

MR SPEAKER:

May I interrupt? Are you working on the assumption that the normal UK Ministry of Defence rates will not be a commercial rate?

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker. What I am saying is that the original proposals for a commercial yard provided for the MOD to be overcharged. If the Hon Member is telling me that there has been agreement that the MOD will not be overcharged now, then there has been a change of policy: the MOD have not accepted paying more than the going rate. Is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, "overcharged" is an emotive word, and I am trying to keep emotion out of my answers to the Hon Gentleman. I don't see that the MOD were overcharged, in any event, even if the forecast included a figure which was on the high side. As I have already said, these projections were made in a great hurry, in a matter of two weeks I believe, and of course they have been subject to revision-and will be subject to continual revision hereafter.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 399 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd would be expected to pay import duty on any goods or capital equipment, the same as any other commercial firm?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the £28m funding requirement for Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will be met from a development aid grant from the ODA. The rules governing ODA funding normally require that the monies cannot be used to meet the cost of import duties levied by the recipient country. Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will therefore be exempted from payment of import duty during the formative period when the operation is funded with ODA grants.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 400 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether in describing the Dockyard package as "up to" £28m it is the British Government's view that some lesser sum should be provided if the cost of any given component of the items of expenditure, should come to less than anticipated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.401, 402 and 403 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 401 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is there a time limit within which the £28m package must be spent?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.400, 402, and 403 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 402 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government say whether losses above those anticipated within the first two years operation of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd would be funded from within the £28m or from extra funds from the UK Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.400, 401 and 403 of 1983.

NO. 403 OF 1983

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what use it can make of any surplus of the sum provided to cover operating losses of the first 2 years of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd if it proves to be larger than required?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, I cannot speak for the British Government but, according to the statement made by HMG on the 27 July, 1983, the £28m grant will be available for the first two years of the commercialisation project. I have no doubt that HMG will accept the need for some flexibility in how the £28m is applied both as to content and indeed timing provided of course there are good grounds for changes in planned expenditure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 400, 401, 402 AND 403 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the answer the Hon Member has given mean that he doesn't know how much of the £28m is for operating losses?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker. I have ready an answer to a question which the Hon Member is due to ask shortly on that very subject. I am prepared to give it now.

MR SPEAKER:

You can if you so wish. You would have to give the answer again, but if you want to refer to it, you are free to do so.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say specifically if the items that are making up the £28m, the cost of each of those items, have been agreed with the UK Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Certainly, the £28m has been itemised and agreed with the UK Government, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

If there is a variation above or below, from the cost of the itemised components, what is the agreed policy?



HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I explained, Mr Speaker, one would expect some variation. It would be a matter for consideration at the time, if the variation is for large amounts. I am unfamiliar with the infrastructure of the Dockyard, but if some item of capital equipment had been estimated to have cost £3m and it is suddenly found that it is £6m, then I would imagine that some searching questions would be asked. But, as I already said, I expect that HMG will allow us some flexibility in the deployment of the £28m.

HON J BOSSANO:

But in fact the ceiling is £28m, is it not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The ceiling is £28m, yes, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 404 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how much of the £28m "package" is reserved for operating losses in the first 2 years of operation of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the operating losses of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd are expected to be £5.5m over the first two years. This sum is included in the £28m grant from Her Majesty's Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 404 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

If, Mr Speaker, the losses should be less, is Government free to use the money allocated for that purpose out of the £28m for some other purpose or not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think, as I said in answer to the earlier question by the Hon Member, Mr Speaker, this is something which will have to be judged at the time. If the losses are less, and if the entire range of capital equipment which is included in the £28m is also taken up, and on the assumption that there were no other need for funds, then I can foresee the situation in which the total amount would be less than £28m; but those are very wide assumptions. They are all hypothetical, Mr Speaker, at this stage.

HON J BOSSANO:

If the Hon Member has said in answer to a previous question that the ceiling is £28m, does that mean that if the only amount available to cover losses after meeting the cost of investment was five times £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m, any losses above that figure would have to be met by the Gibraltar Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If the Hon Member means, is it possible that the amount of aid could be greater than £28m, then certainly I would envisage that this is something which would have to be considered at the time. It is conceivable that HMG might also be called upon, in the light of their commitment about future economic assistance, but beyond that I really cannot say, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Hon Financial and Development Secretary confirm that the two statements to which he has referred us-or the Hon Mr Bossano-in answer to the question, namely, the statement made in the British Parliament and the statement made by the Chief Minister in July, are rather sketchy?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is a matter of opinion.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there a further document, which makes concrete decisions on those matters which were left nebulous and in the air at the time of those statements, which would entitle us to formulate our own opinions on these matters, which is available to Government and not to the Opposition?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I know of no document, Mr Speaker, that would readily illuminate these questions with more light than I have been able to shed on the subject for the Hon Member.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, we have been told, nevertheless, that there is an itemisation of the £28m. Will that be made available?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

This is the subject of development aid, and in due course I would expect that-as the aid is to be used for the purpose of investment in the operating company-it will be itemised in the balance sheet of the company. As the Hon Member knows, the accounts of the company will be laid before the House in due course, so they will have an opportunity to see how the money has been spent.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 405 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that in the projections made by its consultants of the impact on the economy of the implementation of the cuts envisaged in the June 1981 Defence White Paper, no account has been taken of the 40% reduction in Naval Personnel stationed here by 1986, recently confirmed by the Flag Officer, Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, it is true that no account was taken of any possible reduction in Naval personnel stationed in Gibraltar, other than those engaged in the shiprepair operation in HM Dockyard in the projections referred to by the Hon Member.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 405 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Was Government or the consultants aware at the time that this reduction was going to take place?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am afraid I don't know the answer to that question, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Has in fact the Government taken the matter up with the UK Government since?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I don't think it is for the Gibraltar Government to take this matter up with the UK Government. It is a fact which was not apparently available to the consultants when they produced their report. It is a fact which is now available.

HON J BOSSANO:

But would the Hon Member not agree that if the discussions between the Government of Gibraltar and the British Government have been in pursuance of the commitment in the 1981 Defence White Paper that alternative ways of sustaining the economy would be found, and in assessing the need this factor was not taken into account by the consultants, this is a matter that needs to be raised subsequently when the information becomes available?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, it is a matter which the Government is now fully aware of and therefore will be able to make such use of as it seems necessary at the appropriate time and in the appropriate circumstances.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Government is now in a position to confirm that the impact of the Defence White Paper is greater than anticipated by the consultants, and was not taken into account in arriving at the alternative package?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Member is referring to the impact on the Gibraltar economy of defence cuts, some of which were not seen. I accept that these were not foreseen at the time, and therefore they were not included in the consultants report. They are now known to the Government, but I don't think that this further fact would make any substantial difference to, for example, the £28m package of development aid for the Dockyard which has been negotiated. As I said, the Government will bear this in mind, and will use it as necessary in any subsequent negotiations when it seems to the Government meet and just and timely to do so.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Financial and Development Secretary not in a position to say to what extent these cuts will affect the Gibraltar economy?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, if the House would bear with me I have this information close at hand. The effect of a 40% cut in naval personnel we calculate on the basis of the 1979 Input/Output Study at 1983 prices would be an estimated loss of £1.3m in total expenditure; £0.6m in national income; £0.25m in Government revenue and there will be a potential employment effect of some 80 job opportunities.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, has Government any plans to overcome these reductions?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I think that is an unfair question to ask as a supplementary. It is not fair on Government to be asked a question like this at short notice.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since the amount has been evaluated, has in fact Government made any provision to offset these losses?

MR SPEAKER:

Is there any possible answer that Government can give?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think in short terms there is no answer the Government can give to this question at the present time, Mr Speaker, in the sense of what steps the Government will be taking for this particular tranche of bad news, if I may use that expression. Of course, the Government has to have regard to the overall impact of a number of measures on the economy, and I am sure the Hon Member will know we are giving very active consideration to this.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

/

6.12.83

NO. 406 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the rates of pay for industrial workers advertised by Messrs Appledore as applying in Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd for up to the first 3 months of 1985 have been agreed by the Gibraltar Government and to what grades of workers in UK they have been analogued?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos. 390, 391, 407 and 408 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 407 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does the Gibraltar Government agree with the statement issued by Messrs Appledore that the published terms and conditions of employment for hourly paid workers cannot be altered?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.390, 391, 406 and 408 of 1983.



THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government approved the policy that all the unemployed will compete on equal terms for the vacancies that would become available in the commercial Dockyard, if commercialisation went ahead, as stated by Messrs Appledore recently?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, in his statement to the House on 27 July 1983, the Chief Minister said that the question of work practices - which, of course includes terms and conditions of employment - was a matter for discussions and agreement between the commercial operator and the workforce and its representatives. He added that, though this was not a matter for the Government, the Government were of course ready, with their knowledge of local conditions to use their good offices to assist in the discussions if both sides wish them to do so.

The Government consider that all the matters raised in the questions to which I have referred are matters for discussions between the Union and Messrs Appledore. The outcome of that discussion will then fall to be ratified by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 390, 391, 406, 407 AND 408 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member explain how the matter of work practices determines who is employed, whether people have got sick leave entitlements, what is the basic rate of pay as to what rate of pay in UK that grade is analogued?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as I said in my answer to the Hon Gentleman these are in fact matters to be discussed between the commercial operator and the workforce.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, Mr Speaker, the Government itself holds no views at all on what people should be paid in the Gibraltar Shiprepair company, it is a matter of complete indifference to them?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I have said in my answer to the question that the Government is certainly prepared to use their good offices to assist in the discussions, if both sides wish them to do so.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say then whether he has got any inkling at all where the recently published pay and conditions for hourly paid workers have been obtained from?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, could the Hon Member just refresh my memory a little further on that? I am not quite sure to which recently published information he refers to.

HON J BOSSANO:

The Hon Member I don't think was in Gibraltar at the time, Mr Speaker but in fact shortly before his arrival Messrs Appledore placed public advertisements stating what the hourly pay for workers would be, what their annual leave would be and so on. Is he aware where that information was produced from, how it was arrived at?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon Member for his courtesy and his acquainting me with the information, which in fact I have seen. As he said, this was a broadsheet—I understand—produced by A & P Appledore. He asked me what the source of information is: well, that is where it came from, from A & P Appledore.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am aware of that, but I mean, is the Hon Member saying that that is a matter to be agreed by some unknown body and Appledore? I asked in Question 390, Mr Speaker, whether that has been approved by the Government or not. If the answer is that it has not been approved by the Government, where does it come from? Where did Appledore get it from? Who have they discussed it with?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the only part of that question which I wish to comment on is that no, of course it has not been approved by the Government in the sense in which the Hon Member mentions, for reasons which I gave in my answer to his questions on the matter. This is a matter for consideration by the company, and they must reach commercial judgement in the light of all the factors which they have to take into account if they are to run the commercial Dockyard successfully.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, Mr Speaker, then the Hon Member is saying that as far as the Government is concerned Messrs Appledore have got a free hand to determine unilaterally what is required in terms of pay and conditions to make the company a success. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I did not say that. I said that the Government is prepared to lend its assistance and its good offices to Appledore for purposes of determining such matters as pay, local conditions of service and so on, and one would naturally expect the company to listen to any advice the Government had to offer.

HON J BOSSANO:

But the company so far has not sought the advice of the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no, the company has not so far sought the formal advice of the Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the company has now come out with published offers of employment on terms and conditions which they have declared cannot be altered, without having sought the advice of the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as the House will be aware, the company have made it quite clear and also in their broadsheet - I think this may be what the Hon Gentleman is referring to - that at the outset the hourly rates of pay which they will bring into operation will in fact be those enjoyed by Dockyard workers now.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, as the Hon Financial and Development Secretary will be quite aware the Chief Minister has said that people would be paid parity in January, 1985. I am asking the Financial Secretary if in fact rates of pay applicable in January, 1985 have been published by the company (and the company has stated publicly in publishing them that they cannot be altered), can he explain to me how they have been arrived at?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Gentleman obviously has the advantage over me because his knowledge of the details of these matters is more extensive than mine, I would expect. I shall have to look into these particular references he has made. If I have been guilty of an error, in fact, then I apologise to the House, but I cannot say any more on this occasion.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, Mr Speaker, as a supplementary of one of my other questions - since the Hon Member answered them all together - is in fact the policy statement that the rates that have been published cannot be altered and that people who wish to apply will have to apply on those rates, has that policy been accepted by the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Government has certainly taken note of the statement which have been made. But, as I have explained in answer to earlier statements, the Government regards negotiations of wages and conditions of service as being primarily a matter for the commercial operator.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member explain how it is the Government regards negotiations as a matter for the commercial operator when the commercial operator has said that their rates cannot be altered. What does negotiation mean if the rates cannot be altered?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think these are, as I said, matters for negotiation between the company and the workforce.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I have got a question about that coming on. What I am asking the Financial and Development Secretary - since he is answering the questions is in fact what is the Government's position. Is the Government's position that if Appledore tomorrow says that anything that they have made public cannot be altered, is the Government position that because Appledore has said it that's it, the Government doesn't accept responsibility for that statement. Is that it?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Gentleman is now asking a number of hypothetical questions which do not arise out of his questions.

MR SPEAKER:

It is most certainly a follow-up on the answers that he has been given.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, it is in fact on the Order Paper, I cannot help it if the Hon Member has decided, having numbered them as he wished, to answer them all together. In fact I asked, in Question 407, does the Government agree that the published terms and conditions of employment cannot be altered? This is not a hypothetical question: this has been a statement published in the press.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, of course the Government does not agree that the published terms and conditions cannot be altered at any time. I am sorry if in my halting way I failed to recognise that that was what the Hon Member was asking. Of course the Government does not say that they cannot be altered at any time, and it would be absurd to make such a statement.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member then says that in fact Appledore was absurd in making that statement. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not concur in that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I don't think that Question 408 has been answered. Will the commercial yard in fact take their pool of employees from all the unemployed, and will no priority be given to those who become redundant within the Dockyard?

MR SPEAKER:

Question 408 reads: "Has Government approved the policy that all the unemployed will compete on equal terms for the vacancies that would become available in the commercial Dockyard?"

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think that question was answered in my earlier response to the Hon Member, I think in answer to Question 390. Will they compete on equal terms: I don't think it is possible to say that anyone will compete on equal terms, because no one is equal. As I explained earlier, the commercial operators will have to take into account matters of skill, experience and qualifications, personal qualities and so on as employers of personnel normally do.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would Government, Mr Speaker, agree that within the skills of the labour force priority should be given to those who become redundant in the Dockyard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I would certainly expect, Mr Speaker, that A & P Appledore - who wish to run a successful yard-will have very great regard to the claims of redundant Naval Dockyard workers.

HON G T RESTANO:

That is a hope, what the Hon Member is saying. But, is there any directive from the Government to the Shiprepair company-which in fact is going to be the managers for the Government-on these priorities? If it is just a hope, has Government discussed it with A & P Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no directive has been given on this matter. As the House will be aware, there are a number of difficult and delicate issues under consideration at present.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the matter been discussed with A & P Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have nothing to add, Mr Speaker, to my point that no directive has been issued by the Government. Certainly, there have been informal discussions with A & P Appledore about the sort of skills, qualifications and experience, and the trades and the crafts which they will need. Naturally there have been these discussions between A & P Appledore and the Government.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has it been established within these discussions that in fact it would be better for those working in the Dockyard to be given priority? Has the point been made by the Government, within the informal discussions, to A & P Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I have already said, Mr Speaker, the question of equality is one which is very, very difficult to answer without considering the claims in each individual case. The Government is very conscious of the expertise which resides in the Dockyard, and so are A & P Appledore.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in relation to Question 391, might I ask the Government if the sick leave entitlements of the future employees of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will be no less than those enjoyed by workers throughout Gibraltar, both in the public and the private sector, which I understand is done by regulation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I cannot give a positive assurance on that in the terms which the Hon Member has asked. But, as I have said in answer to the earlier questions, these are matters which A & P Appledore are fully alive to and they are aware of the terms and conditions—including sick leave—enjoyed now by Dockyard workers. I have no doubt that they will make note of that in coming to a decision, using their commercial judgement at the time.

HON A J CANEPA:

Insofar as the general conditions of sick pay, which are prescribed by law, which are applicable to the private sector, they will naturally apply.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would like to come back to Question No.408, on what we consider priorities of re-employment. What is to stop the Shiprepair company.....

MR SPEAKER:

That is a hypothetical question.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would like protection for Gibraltarian workers, Mr Speaker, and I would like to ask what the Government feels on this matter. What is to stop, within the ambit of the answer that has been given by the Hon Financial and Development Secretary, for the company to employ foreigners, shall we say, with the same.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, no.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I put it this way, Mr Speaker? Will Government establish with A & P Appledore that whilst there are Gibraltarians with sufficient skills they should have priority of employment?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Government's position on this is that all employees who have the necessary skills and experience will be considered. As I have said, those who are already working in the Dockyard including those who may be made redundant will clearly have a claim by virtue of their expertise and their skills and their experience. But, Appledore have made it quite clear that there will be a fair amount of re-training to be done, and that there are shortages in some skills and in some trades. They have made proposals as to how these might be cured. Within the context of that, I am quite sure that they will have regard to the claims of Gibraltarians, to use the Hon Member's own expression.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has that in fact been established between the Government and A & P Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

This is the understanding which we have from the company.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask, are the projections made by Appledore on what they are able to offer in terms and conditions determined by the accuracy of their projections on sales, to which I referred in an earlier question?

MR SPEAKER:

No, no.

HON J BOSSANO:

What are they based on then? What does the Hon Member mean when he says that the company will pay whatever they can afford in their commercial judgement?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is, I think, the one you gave to the Hon Financial Secretary before: that Messrs Appledore are not in the House. The Hon Financial Secretary cannot answer for Appledore. They have said, most certainly that they would be prepared to use their good offices.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the Government is saying that the terms and conditions offered by Appledore depend on what they, in their judgement, considered can be afforded, I am asking whether the Government then accept as a consequence of that that their projections from what they can sell determines their projections on what they can pay, because if one is inaccurate presumably the Government must accept that the other is inaccurate.

MR SPEAKER:

That is a supposition, isn't it?

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Government agree, then, that having accepted (as they appear to have done) that it is up to the commercial operator in their commercial judgement to determine what they can afford to pay, if it can be demonstrated factually-notwithstanding the answers given to an earlier question-that their commercial judgement is incorrect in one respect, would they accept then that anything that is on offer is suspect because of it?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no I don't accept that because there may have been variation between one forecast and another, although not of an order of magnitude of the variation that the Hon Gentleman has forecast, that it necessarily follows that any statement made by A & P Appledore exercising their commercial judgement is therefore fallible, which is what I take the statement the Hon Gentleman is asking me to endorse.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Financial and Development Secretary, if I was able to demonstrate to him that it is of the order of magnitude, be less happy with the other forecasts of Appledore?



HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, it is not entirely clear to me which order of magnitude the Hon Gentleman was just then referring to.

HON J BOSSANO:

The 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  times, Mr Speaker, which he hasn't accepted. I am asking him if I can demonstrate.....

MR SPEAKER:

That would be hypothetical.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, did Government anticipate-at the time when the Chief Minister made his statement in July of this year-that the two bargaining parties, namely Appledore and the unions, would not by this date in the year have come to any formal agreement?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am afraid that question is in the past future perfect, as far as I am concerned, because I was not here at the time. I would merely say that the Government is very conscious and concerned about the delay in progressing with this operation, which no doubt has serious implications for the Gibraltar economy. Therefore, I certainly for my part hope that the outstanding difficulties will be brought to a speedy resolution.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I quite sympathize and concur with the sentiments expressed by the Financial and Development Secretary mainly one of concern that four or five months hence there has been no progress but I would ask as a follow-up to the initial question, Mr Speaker, given that Government are concerned at the lack of progress between the bargaining parties what measures do they propose to take to ensure that a bargain is struck?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I won't accept the question: we are not going to debate. We have received a clear answer by the Financial and Development Secretary saying that all these matters are matters to be discussed between Appledore and the unions; that the Government is prepared to use its good offices if they are called upon to do so. It is as simple as that. You have been given an answer. Whether the answer is correct or not or acceptable is another matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, Government has the conduct of the project for commercialisation....

MR SPEAKER:

But we are not talking about the complete commercialisation, we are talking about specific matters from the questions which are being asked.

HON A J HAYNES:

My question is, Mr Speaker, for how long will Government allow the two parties to continue without meeting and discussing.

MR SPEAKER:

In other words, you are asking will Government at any stage interfere if there is no progress?

HON A J HAYNES:

Exactly.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think the Hon Member's question raises fundamental issues which go back further than July and indeed to the decision by HMG to close the Dockyard in the first place—which as the Hon Member will well know was a decision in which the Gibraltar Government had no part whatsoever.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does that mean no or yes?

MR SPEAKER:

You can take your choice. Next question.

NO. 409 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the original conditions of employment proposed by Messrs A & P Appledore in March, 1983, for prospective industrial employees of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd provided for 15 days annual leave and payment of 1½ per hour overtime worked on Sundays?

ANSWERTHE HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the costings in A & P Appledore's May 1983 report assumed 20 days annual leave and Sunday overtime at double time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 409 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

That is not the question, Mr Speaker. I am asking the Government whether they can confirm that in March, 1983, they were as the question says. Can they confirm that, or are they saying they don't know that that was the case?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am only aware of what was published in the May, 1983, report.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Government of Gibraltar was not given a copy of the draft conditions prepared by Appledore in March, 1983?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I have no knowledge of the document to which the Hon Member is alluding, if indeed it existed.

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, perhaps if I give the Hon Member a copy of it, he will admit of its existence then?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 410 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the presentation by A & P Appledore on Access Television, put on free by GBC, cost £14,000 to prepare in UK and who funded the cost?

ANSWER

THE HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the Government cannot confirm what was the cost of the A & P Appledore presentation on Access Television. It was paid for by ODA as part of the consultancy agreement with A & P Appledore. Individual payments under such agreements are not normally revealed by the ODA.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government state whether agreement has yet been reached between Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited and A & P Appledore International Limited on the terms under which A & P Appledore International Limited will manage the commercial Dockyard in Gibraltar on behalf of the Gibraltar Government and can Government state whether it proposes that employees of Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited, a Government owned corporation, will enjoy the same terms of service including pension rights as are enjoyed by other Government employees?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, no agreement can be reached between Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd and A & P Appledore International Ltd on a management agreement until the operating company has been incorporated and its Board constituted. I dealt at some considerable length this morning with the secondary question raised by the Hon and Learned Gentleman and I imagine the House will not want me to go over the same ground again.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 411 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Financial and Development Secretary tell us under what authority A & P Appledore International Ltd seeks to get people employed in the Dockyard when (a) it hasn't come to an agreement with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd on how it is to manage it, and (b) we have Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd unincorporated and without a Board of directors? Who is giving instructions to A & P Appledore International Ltd?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure what particular aspects of the activity of A & P Appledore the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition is referring to.

HON P J ISOLA:

Secretary

Well, if the Hon Financial and Development/ would give way I will tell him: all the adverts they have put out, the offers for employment, the conditions under which they are going to employ people, the working practices they require, all these things: under whose direction and under whose authority are they doing it? It must be the Government.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as the House is well aware, the activities of A & P Appledore are in fact covered by a consultancy agreement which is of some standing.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that it is the consultants-Mr Casey and company-who are deciding the terms and conditions under which Appledore can operate today, and not the Gibraltar Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, obviously before the company can be incorporated-and the delay in this is obviously a matter for regret on all sides-there must be some promotional activity, I think the House, and indeed Gibraltar generally, would be critical if the company which has been selected by the Government as the operating company were to say nothing at all about its modus operandi which, if I understand the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition, is the force of his recent comments.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am sure the Hon and Learned Chief Minister would deny any knowledge-but could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary with whom in the Government is A & P Appledore talking and reporting to, is it to himself?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

A & P Appledore are talking to anybody who will talk to them.

HON P J ISOLA:

As employer, I beg your pardon.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I said earlier in the session of the House this morning, it is regretted they are not in fact talking to more people.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am sure that that is a matter for the Government and for my Hon Friend here, but what I am asking is to whom is A & P Appledore International Ltd reporting to and taking instructions from: the consultants? Is the Government not involved in this process at all?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, I have been reminded, Mr Speaker, that I in fact Chair a Steering Committee which is engaged in a debate about formalities. The formal position is that the company has not yet been incorporated so there are bound to be some, should I say, quasi legal imperfections in the current arrangements which one hopes will be rectified as quickly as possible by the establishment and the incorporation of the company, a point I made at great length this morning in my answers to some of the other questions which were raised.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I suggest that the word 'Steering Committee' is not used, Mr Speaker? But, could I ask the Chairman of the Steering Committee to whom does he report: the Governor, the Chief Minister, Council of Ministers, Gibraltar Council?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am sure that the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition is even more cognizant of my duties under the Constitution of Gibraltar than I am myself as I have only just recently taken up office.

HON P J ISOLA:

So that means he reports to the Chief Minister because that is what the last Financial and Development Secretary told us usually?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I report to the Gibraltar Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Which is the Governor under the Constitution.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary to confirm that in fact the situation then is that once the company is incorporated, and once the directors are nominated, the company could well instruct the managers to produce conditions different from the ones that have appeared in the advertisements? Is that the case? There is nothing sacrosanct about the conditions that have been published?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, some of the Hon Member's suggestions suggest that the company will have quite diabolical intentions and I would like to assure the Hon Member that the company's intentions will be to run a successful commercial yard.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am asking a supplementary in relation to the terms and conditions of employment and I think that is a different aspect from the commercial success or otherwise. I am saying, is it correct to say from the answers that he has given, that in fact Appledore at present is offering employment on conditions which they presumably have conjured up themselves but which do not necessarily have the approval of the company—since the company is not incorporated—nor will it necessarily have the approval of the directors, as the directors have not been named?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Appledore have not yet in fact engaged anyone for reasons which the House will be better acquainted with than myself. So, as far that particular point is concerned, I cannot answer the Hon Member because no action has taken place. This morning I gave him information about the terms and conditions and I said that at the outset—as Appledore had made clear they proposed that the pay rates for Dockyard Workers should be at a level similar to those which now obtain. What happens in future will be a matter for determination by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

HON J BOSSANO:

But the point that I am trying to get answered, Mr Speaker, is it a fact or is it not a fact that the Shiprepair company, once established will be in a position to decide as a matter of policy what should be the conditions and terms of employment of its employees? Or does in fact Appledore have the right to decide, and not the Shiprepair company? Who determines this?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, obviously, the final say in these matters will be the Gibraltar Shiprepair company.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Financial and Development Secretary confirm that the lack of agreement between Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd and A & P Appledore may prejudice the starting date for the commercialisation of the Dockyard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think it is common knowledge that the starting date for the commercial operation of the Dockyard has been subject to some delay, and, in those terms obviously, I cannot dissent from the force of the Hon Member's comment.

HON A J HAYNES:

In the event that there has been some delay—which is confirmed by the Hon Financial and Development Secretary—will the Financial and Development Secretary say whether this delay is also an economic loss?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have certainly acknowledged, Mr Speaker, that any further delay could have economic consequences for Gibraltar.

MR SPEAKER:

But you are not going to expand on that under any circumstances; under this question we are most certainly not. You read the original question and you will see why.



HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary if he does not agree that if Government is throwing its full weight behind commercialisation, as it is said to be doing, the least the Government could do would be (a) to incorporate Shiprepair Ltd, (b) settle its terms of lease, (c) settle its terms of management of A & P Appledore, and (d) appoint its Board of directors; and does he not think that the Government's lethargy in this respect must inevitably raise questions about the Government's intentions on commercialisation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I certainly agree with the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition that these things should be done as soon as is possible. I find it impossible to accept the Hon and Learned Gentleman's suggestions that the Government has been lethargic: I think that is grossly at odds with the facts as I understand them and the situation as it has been.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 412 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that quarters owned by the UK departments but supplied with electricity by the Gibraltar Government do not pay the local tariff but a rate based on the price of electricity in UK?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir, quarters owned by UK departments but supplied with electricity by the Gibraltar Government are charged at the local tariff.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 413 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what are the municipal rates that would be payable by a commercial dockyard and state how these have been computed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, as Honourable Members are aware from the figures shown in A & P Appledore's May 1983 report, an estimated provision of £500,000 has been included in the costings of the commercial dockyard. This was computed on the basis of an approximation of the Net Annual Value of a modern shipyard in full operation. The actual assessment will however be eventually influenced by a number of closely related factors, mainly the state of the property market and the nature and use of the premises.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 413 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Government state how this compares with the rates assessed to the Naval Dockyard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the present NAV of the Naval Dockyard is assessed on 1978 values and represents an under-used obsolescent shiprepair facility. We do not normally disclose the information as it is confidential and relates to agreements between the UK and the Gibraltar Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

So then the Hon Member is saying that the Naval Dockyard is charged less than the market rate for municipal rates because it is obsolescent and under-used. Is that the case?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think that is a reasonable assumption for the Hon Member to draw.

HON J BOSSANO:

And is this a privilege granted only to the Naval Dockyard or does any other property owner in Gibraltar whose property is obsolescent and under-used also able to claim lower rates?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I have not got the information with which to answer that question which is slightly different from the terms of the Hon Member's original question about the Dockyard and which involves relations between Gibraltar and the UK.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am trying to establish how realistic is the rates the commercial dockyard is expected to bear. Can the Hon Member say what degree of magnitude there is in the difference between the two: are we talking about the commercial dockyard having to bear municipal rates twice what the Naval Dockyard does, three times?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member is now asking me what the commercial dockyard will pay in the way of rates, I would point out that the broad area is about £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m; but I would qualify that by pointing out that GSL will be eligible to apply for rating relief, under the Development Aid Ordinance provisions, which will significantly reduce that figure.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Hon Member if the difference which he has failed to point out between the commercial dockyard having to pay rates and the Naval Dockyard having to pay rates applied because of the dilapidated and obsolescent state of the Dockyard, whether other MOD properties which are in excellent condition pay the going rate or they also get a reduced rate?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, that information is not hidden in the answer I gave to the Hon Member. As I have explained, the broad figure which we assume that the commercial yard will pay is in the order of £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m; but this as I said, is a broad figure. In any event, GSL will be eligible to apply for rating relief which could mean that, at any rate, in the first year of operation they will be paying nothing compared with the figure being paid by MOD now.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am aware that that is the answer I am given, but that is not the question I am asking. The question that I am asking is if this broad figure is what the going rate should be if it was not reduced; and if the reason why the Naval Dockyard does not pay the going figure is because it is obsolescent and under-used?

MR SPEAKER:

So what you are asking is whether other MOD properties are charged the maximum rate?

HON J BOSSANO:

Are they charged on the Dockyard basis or on the commercial dockyard basis?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the MOD do of course pay rates here by law and the criteria under which the rates are fixed are fairly general ones.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 414 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state if the projections for the costs of the proposed commercial ship yard are to be revised to show higher electricity and water charges for the years from 1985 onwards?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the projections for the costs of electricity and water for the proposed commercial yard take account of increasing consumption and assumed differences in tariffs to be charged by the Ministry of Defence and the Gibraltar Government undertakings.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 414 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

I am aware of that, Mr Speaker, I am asking whether they are going to be revised from what they were in the May, 1983, projections.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think the answer I have given should satisfy the Hon Member, that is to say the current projections take account of increased consumption but not tariff escalations, except insofar as there is a difference between the tariff charged by MOD, who will supply the Dockyard in the first two years, and the Gibraltar Government's tariff, which will operate from year three onwards. As I recall from the projections, from years one, two, three and four, £0.3m, £0.4m, £0.4m, £0.5m, one would expect it to go £0.3m, £0.4m, £0.5m, £0.6m, but it is because of the lower tariff operating in the Gibraltar electricity service that there is that dip in the middle.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that if the estimated performance of the company is, as it is here, on fixed costs for electricity—subject to the Gibraltar Government being able eventually to supply cheaper than the MOD—would he not agree that if there is a reasonable expectation that the cost of this particular utility will be rising faster than the average rate of inflation, then that should be included in realistic projections?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, as we have already indicated during the course of previous questions, the projections of Appledore in their latest report have all been based on the convention of constant prices. The Hon Gentleman asked me about estimated performance. One cannot talk about performance until the company is in fact performing and in operation, which is a contingency we all look forward to at an early date.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, will the Financial and Development Secretary then confirm that the Government of Gibraltar is satisfied that this is viable; and if so how?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Gentleman is asking me, I think, if the commercial dockyard will be viable and I would refer him to the projections which have been made in the report.

HON J BOSSANO:

Precisely, Mr Speaker, and if in fact their viability is assessed on the projections from the report then can the Hon Member explain to me, when those projections are questioned, how he then goes on to say they have to be implemented to see whether they are realistic? Would the Hon Member not agree that it is Government's responsibility to be able to answer why they are satisfied on projections that on the surface do not appear to make sense?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Gentleman is talking about electricity charges which felicitously happen to be of the same order as the point about apprentices on which we laboured earlier. I do not think that increases in the price of electricity is a highly sensitive assumption in the context of the overall projections for the Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

But would the Hon Member not agree with me that if one goes through a series of items, as I have attempted to do, and shows that there appear to be margins for doubts about the accuracy of the predictions, that whilst individually one can argue as the Hon Member has done that each one taken on its own-if it was the only one-might not make a significant difference, collectively they could make a significant difference to the outset. Would he not agree with that?

MR SPEAKER:

You are asking for confirmation on conclusions. The conclusions that you arrive at, the use you make of the information, is a matter on which you don't have to seek Government confirmation.

HON J BOSSANO:

The position then, Mr Speaker, is that in answer to Question 414 the Government does not propose to revise the rates for electricity that they were producing in 1983: they are still going to go ahead supporting a commercial dockyard, starting in January, 1985, on the assumption that electricity is going to cost the same for the Naval Dockyard (if for nobody else in Gibraltar) as was anticipated in 1983. That is the answer to Question 414?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is a conclusion that you are entitled to arrive at; and that is what I have called you to order about.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am asking specifically are the projections going to be altered or not? If the answer is no, then my question is: are the projections going to remain the same or not?

MR SPEAKER:

Insofar as this particular item is concerned you may be given an answer.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The projections are projections, Mr Speaker, and all projections are liable to be amended in the light of experience. There are certain conventions which one adopts when one makes a forecast of the income and expenditure on any project, and Appledore have used certain conventions. To the best of my ability, I have attempted to describe these to the Hon Member as we went along, although I think he is probably familiar-if not more familiar with the facts than myself; which perhaps permits me to conclude, Mr Speaker-as I think I began at the beginning of this series of questions by expressing the hope that the Hon Member will in fact discuss these in a most meaningful way with A & P Appledore so as to satisfy himself the better about the viability of their operation.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it Government's intention that no further revised figures on the operation of the commercial yard will be produced between now and 1985, that is, what we have in the May, 1983, is the final draft?

MR SPEAKER:

You are asking for revision of electricity and water charges, ask a general question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the supplementary in fact given by the Hon Financial and Development Secretary prompts me to ask in different terms the question which I asked before. The answer given by the Financial and Development Secretary to the effect that he hoped that the Hon Member and Messrs Appledore should talk in the near future, on that point, Mr Speaker: can the Financial and Development Secretary state for how long Government will wait the holding of those talks, and if those talks do not take place by, say, February, whether Government proposes to take any decisions off its own bat?



MR SPEAKER:

I think you have been given an answer to that question, you are just repeating the same question. Next question.

NO. 415 OF 1983

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, does it take three men to read a water meter and if not why were three men so engaged in doing this on Saturday 26th instant?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, there are five meter readers employed by Government. Two are new recruits. They are still learning how to read the different types of meters and are not yet fully conversant with the locations of the meters.

On the occasion in question another, more experienced, meter reader, was showing the two less experienced meter readers the disposition of meters in Waterport Area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 415 OF 1983

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

May I just say, for the accuracy of the House, that this could not have happened as suggested by the Hon Member—because he says that it happened on the 26th instant.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, when I tabled the question it was in November and it was the 26th instant; and secondly, Mr Speaker, I would like to ask is it customary to train meter readers on a Saturday, when they have all week to be trained, considering the cost that is involved in having three men walking around on a Saturday to read water meters? Wouldn't the Hon Financial and Development Secretary agree that, in these days of economic restraint, it seems to be a bit absurd to have one trained meter reader with two trainee meter readers walking around on a Saturday morning?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, it would if the facts of the case were as stated by the Hon Member: but they were not all three of them walking around. It so happens that the two inexperienced meter readers asked for assistance and the more experience meter reader was, in the course of his duties, quite unconnected with training, himself visiting the Waterport area at that particular instance. In the interest of economy and efficiency, they went together: so three meters were read with the price of one visit.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 416 OF 1983

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government consider the waiving of Import Duties for consignments received by post valued at £10 or less?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, there are administrative arrangements for the waiving of import duty on packages received by post consigned to private individuals by persons resident abroad. The concession is not granted for wines, spirits or tobacco. Following UK practice the monetary limit applied when administering the concession is not disclosed. I can however assure the Hon Member that his suggestion will receive careful consideration.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 417 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government give a breakdown of the cost involved in the Chief Minister's personal security?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

No Sir. It is not in the Public interest to disclose information about security matters.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 417 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Hon Member confirm that there are certain security measures under way at the moment? Will he outline what those are?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Sir, I won't go beyond my initial answer.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 418 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, has Government taken a decision on the introduction of vehicle log books?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr Speaker, Government has accepted that vehicle log books should be re-introduced. Informal discussions with Staff Side representatives of several associations (ACTSS, IPCS and TGWU) were held by the Industrial Relations Officer and regrettably all his efforts proved fruitless. Formal discussions with the Unions concerned will shortly be taking place and it is hoped that this matter will be satisfactorily settled in the very near future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 418 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon and Learned Attorney-General say how he expects fruitful outcome if the original discussions and negotiations seem to have broken down completely? On what basis does he say that he hopes that there will be a fruitful outcome?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I said that I hoped.

HON G T RESTANO:

What in fact is going to be done, Mr Speaker? Am I to take it that for Government to introduce vehicle log books there has to be agreement with the Unions concerned?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think that it is a perfectly proper procedure to seek an informal agreement, then to seek agreements through formal means if the informal procedure does not work. I would not like to make a commitment beyond that.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would agree: I think it is of optimum importance that there should be an agreement. But, will Government say what it will do if it cannot reach an agreement?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think, Mr Speaker, with respect, it would be premature to say that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has Government taken the decision that the introduction of log books will take place irrespective of whether it comes to an agreement with the Unions?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Government accepted as I said, that there should be vehicle log books. At the moment, the Government is concerned by formal discussions to reach agreement with the Unions and beyond that I cannot go.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 419 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state how many of its employees, by Departments, are paid on-duty bonuses and further state the amounts of these bonuses and the nature of the duties?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr Speaker, I do not know whether the Hon Member realises that in order for me to give a satisfactory answer to his question an in-depth study of all industrial and non-industrial grades in the Government service will have to be undertaken. This exercise could take two officers between three and five weeks to complete.

I am therefore not in a position, given such short notice, to answer the question.

Should the Hon Member require information on specific areas I will endeavour to supply the information as soon as possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 419 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

But, Mr Speaker, do not the departments themselves have the information, and cannot they feed this information through a central office in the Secretariat?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there are, I think, something in the order of 100 or more different types of bonus. The Establishment Division cannot provide the information at such short notice; but if the Hon Member could indicate more specifically what he would like, of course we will look into the matter and provide the information.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think it is stated quite categorically in the question, Mr Speaker, it is on-duty bonuses that I am enquiring about, not any other type of bonuses.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am saying that the Government would need time to prepare this information. If the Member is prepared to wait for the time the information will be collated.

HON G T RESTANO:

I accept that, Mr Speaker. Can the Hon Member not say, has he no idea of the amount of on-duty bonuses?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I really don't know.

HON G T RESTANO:

When can I expect to get the answer, Mr Speaker?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

In between three and five weeks time.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, would Government not agree in the compilation of the estimates annually that this would have figured, department by department, in any event?

MR SPEAKER:

May I say that this is the sort of information that the Opposition might have found for themselves if they had reference to the estimates: it is available information. I have allowed the question because it is present bonuses that one is asking for.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think the difference, Mr Speaker, is that in the estimates there is provision made for bonuses but I am asking for a particular type of bonus, which is the on-duty bonus, and if I can make clear to the Hon Member what an on-duty bonus is, an on-duty bonus is a bonus given to somebody who can be recalled to duty at any given time.

MR SPEAKER:

I think an undertaking has been given that the information will be supplied.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I don't<sup>think</sup>/I have had an answer to my question.

MR SPEAKER:

Which is?



HON W T SCOTT:

Does the Government not agree that on-duty bonuses, as with every other bonus, must be computed at the time of the preparation of the estimates by every single department of Government, and that information is there?

MR SPEAKER:

The Government is not denying the fact that on-duty bonuses are being paid. They cannot give the detailed information which is being sought, unless they do a study.

HON A J CANEPA:

There is no such thing as an on-duty bonus. I don't know what Hon Members are talking about, unless it happens to be something else which is on-call allowance.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 420 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, have the arbitrators in the matter of the Old Shell Petrol Station at the junction of Landport and Corral Road reached a decision on the matter, and could we know the decision?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, formal terms of settlement have now been agreed between the Government and the other party. These are about to be submitted to the arbitrator, who is a separate person, so that the matter may be formally concluded.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 420 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do I take it that after about four years we still have not had the arbitration?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that it is four years, but the position is that the parties-not the arbitrator (the arbitrator of course is another party)-have now agreed the terms of settlement. What remains is for those terms of settlement to be formally approved by the arbitrator who has been appointed to "try" the case, as it were.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, if it is not four years it is certainly three. Can the Hon Attorney-General give us an idea of when we can expect to know the result of this?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

If I can, Mr Speaker, there has recently been a lapse of time, I accept that readily. In June of this year the parties agreed the terms of settlement. What then remained was for them to put these down in legal form in a document. I am afraid I have taken since June to finalise the terms between the two parties, but that has now been done. The last point was resolved as early as after the Hon Member's question had been received, two or three days ago. What remains is for those terms of settlement to be presented to the arbitrator, who must formally conclude the arbitration.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 421 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Mr Speaker, unless it is against the public interest will Government state whether any progress has been made in updating the (Construction and Use) Regulation of the Traffic Ordinance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr Speaker, a general examination of the Traffic Ordinance, including the regulations, is presently being carried out with the view of amending the legislation on the introduction of tests at the Motor Vehicle Test Centre.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 421 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Can I have an indication of the amendments? This matter has been brought up in the past, as the Hon Attorney-General will remember, and among other things the changes in directives from Common Market countries as regards braking and exhaust facilities. Are these going to feature as amendments in the (Construction and Use) Regulations?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, what is happening is that the office concerned is looking at the various proposals. I cannot say in detail yet just what they break down into. When the Hon Member said was this contrary to public interest the answer is no, but I trust that the Hon and Learned Member will also appreciate what is involved in preparing legislation and especially technical legislation. The matter is at the stage where the office concerned is preparing proposals. I can in fact say that one set of proposals have just been submitted to my Chambers, and will be looked at before anything is drafted.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Member then state is the (Construction and Use) Regulations going to be increased in size and volume? Is it going to be much more technical, or not?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think, Mr Speaker, I should make it clear that I am relying on my general knowledge rather than specific knowledge, to some extent. I think it must necessarily be the case that any review of the (Construction and Use) Regulations would involve greater detail.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Hon Member confirm that the United Kingdom and EEC directives in the English language give the kind of detailed technical information that is required for the drafting of a new (Construction and Use) Regulations?

HON ATTORNEY--GENERAL:

It is not quite as simple as that, Mr Speaker; but by and large yes. We would look at the Community, of course, as a starting point--and the UK requirements but it is not just a question of copying and writing them out, if that is what the Hon and Learned Member means.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government explain what are the conditions whereby elderly persons can qualify to be included in the Group Practice Medical Scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, the conditions under which any person, including elderly persons, can qualify to be included in the Group Practice Medical Scheme are set out in the Schedule to the Group Practice Medical Scheme Ordinance, 1973. These are:

Employed Persons  
Self-employed persons  
Voluntary Contributors

In addition, by virtue of Regulation 6A of the Group Practice Medical Scheme Regulations, persons whose income does not exceed an amount equivalent to the amount payable as Old Age Pension, can be exempted from the payment of the Registration Fee. This in the main, applies to elderly persons.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 422 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say what in fact is the registration fee for an elderly person?

MR SPEAKER:

That would be in the Regulations.

HON J B PEREZ:

And it depends what he means by an elderly person.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that an elderly couple pay £9.10 per quarter to be registered in the GPMS?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir, I think the answer to the question is quite clear. There are certain categories of persons—the categories are not by age—they are: employed persons, self-employed persons and voluntary contributors.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, the voluntary contributors, Mr Speaker: can the Minister confirm if the rate for them is £9.10 a couple per quarter?

HON J B PEREZ:

Voluntary contributors, there are two sub-divisions: one is like myself, who is self-employed. I would pay 70p a week. The other one is the case in which a person is not in employment, and it depends on the income that that person has. If the income is not greater than the level of the old age pension there is no payment at all.

MR SPEAKER:

But we are explaining things which I think are easily accessible if you have reference to the Regulations, I think it is as simple as that. If you want to ask any question as a result of the information on the Regulations, and whether the Regulations can be amended, that is another matter.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, my information is that it is £9.10 for a couple and if either partner dies the fee remains the same. Would the Minister confirm that?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, totally wrong, both totally wrong.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is no, he doesn't agree.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is he then saying that there is a reduction if a person becomes a widower?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am saying I don't agree, he has got it all wrong, and he has been Shadow Minister for Health for four years. I am surprised at him,

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I will show, if you allow me, a contribution from the Minister where he did in fact say that the registration fee was £9.10 a quarter for a married couple. I didn't bring that information with me but I will certainly, if you will allow me, lay it before the House.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, he might have said that in certain circumstances, a married couple who are unemployed may well pay £9.10 but the answer you have been given is a simple one: that in certain circumstances the contributors don't have to pay anything, if their means entitle them not to have to pay.

HON G T RESTANO:

And what I am asking, Mr Speaker, is when they do pay £9.10 for a married couple and when one of the married couple dies.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, we are going round in circles. The Minister may well have said at any given moment in the House that for a particular couple, in certain circumstances, the contribution is £9.10 a quarter. But, it doesn't mean that every single person in the scheme has to pay £9.10. We will leave it at that: I don't think we are going to get any further. Next question.

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HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, this morning when I asked Question No.422 on the question of the contributions by elderly persons to the Group Practice Medical Scheme, I mentioned the figure of £9.10 a quarter. The Minister said that I had been shadowing for four years and I didn't know what I was talking about, I did say that I would look it up in the Hansard, and in fact the Hansard is December, 1982. Following an amendment to the GPMS Ordinance, the Minister said- and this is the category that I was asking about this morning-would be increased: "The voluntary contributors will be increased now by an extra £9 a week, making a total payment of 70p per week, an annual increase from £31.72 per annum to £36.40 per annum"- which is the £9.10 that I was quoting this morning. So, if I can establish that that is what I was asking for in this question, what I wanted to know was whether that figure remains the same if a person loses his partner?

HON J B PEREZ:

I would reiterate what I said this morning, Mr Speaker: the question asks and speaks of elderly persons, and I referred the questioner to the relevant regulations. There is no mention there of elderly persons.

MR SPEAKER:

No. You have been asked a simple question now. In the circumstances where a couple pay £9.10 a quarter, because they are voluntary contributors, and they lose the spouse and the income is still the same - because I know what you are driving at - does the surviving spouse still pay the same contribution? That is what you are being asked.

HON J B PEREZ:

I cannot say yes or no. In January - he is referring to the Hansard of December, 1982 - it was precisely I who introduced new provisions to try and cater for a different category of persons. What I said there was that the new category was those persons not in employment, whose income does exceed the rate of the Old Age Pension for a single person, but does not exceed the rate for a married couple - that caters for the widower - that person would pay 45p per week and not 70p. So, I cannot categorically say yes or no to that question. Do I make myself clear, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

As far as I am concerned yes. Are you clear on that?

HON G T RESTANO:

That is if that person receives a lower income than the Old Age Pension but if he does not?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, I am sorry, perhaps if you will allow me, Mr Speaker, I can explain the new category which was introduced in January. (As the Hon Member rightly pointed out, it is the Hansard of December, 1982, and the law came into force in January). The new category is this: in the event of a widower, of a single person or a spinster whose income - and we are not talking about elderly persons let me make that quite clear - does not exceed the rate of the single person's Old Age Pension, that person does not pay a penny. If his income is over the single person's Old Age Pension but not greater than the pension for a married couple - and remember we are talking about a single person, which is the example he is giving - that person would then pay 45p per week. I cannot say yes or no because it depends on the case.

HON G T RESTANO:

A married couple have an income, and they pay their £9.10 a quarter. One spouse dies, and the remaining one is earning equivalent or perhaps slightly over the income for a married couple. Does he still pay £9.10 or does he pay less?



HON J B PEREZ:

You cannot get that example in which the person dies and the survivor will still be getting the pension for the married couple: he will be getting the pension for a single person.

HON G T RESTANO:

I said, Mr Speaker, if he retains the income of .....

MR SPEAKER:

We are seeking information which can be obtained. I have given you an opportunity to clear the position, insofar as what was said this morning.

HON J B PEREZ:

Perhaps I could say, if the Hon Member would just put to me a particular example in a case that has arisen, of course, I will look into the matter.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that then.

6.12.83

NO. 423 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has a solution been found to the problem of emergency exit arrangements for the Lewis Stagnetto Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Hon Questioner, that after consultation with the City Fire Brigade a solution to this problem has been found. Their recommendation that the spiral fire escape should be replaced by a dog-legged fire escape has been accepted.

The Public Works Department is currently engaged in obtaining details of the replacement escape staircase.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 423 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say when he expects the operation to be completed?

HON J B PEREZ:

I honestly cannot say that but the matter is already in the hands of Public Works.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is it Government's intention to continue with the transfer of St Mary's Infants School to the premises formerly occupied by St Christopher's School in Town Range?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, it is Government's intention to move St Mary's First School to the ex-St Margaret's site in Town Range. It is estimated that the cost of the project will be £350,000. Works are scheduled to commence in July, 1984, and the project will take just under a year to complete.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 424 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister when was it decided to transfer this School?

HON J B PEREZ:

It was decided well before my time, Mr Speaker, in the time of my Hon Colleague Major Dellipiani.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister then why nothing has been done and why it has now been put down for July, 1984?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, because the simple reason is we did not have the money. We now have the money available. I am very pleased to announce that we will in fact be getting on with the project, and it will commence in July, 1984.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has Government got its priorities right? Is not the cost of transferring this roughly the cost of the MOT Test Centre and ought this not to have been done before, this moving of this School, than the MOT Test Centre?

HON J B PEREZ:

As far as I am aware, Mr Speaker, this is an item which was in fact included in the Development Programme. We now have the money available and we are now proceeding with it. I would expect the Opposition to have been pleased with the answers that I have given, but it seems that one can never be right.

HON P J ISOLA:

Our information is, Mr Speaker, perhaps the Minister will confirm that there had been intention to move this School from year in and year out and the answer has always been: "No, it is being left for the following year". Now, the reason why we ask how firm the Government is is because it happens to be election year, and whether this is a firm date or one that is gone back on as has been the case in previous years?

HON A J CANEPA:

May I remind the Hon Member that the Overseas Development Administration will not give any assistance to Gibraltar for social projects including education. Therefore, whilst the MOT Vehicle Centre can be met from ODA funds, that is not the case for the transfer of the School. That is what has been the immediate cause of delays. Now that we have borrowed £10m, we are going to pay for it out of our own money.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 425 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, in relation to Question 324 of 1983 will Government state what action has been taken?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, as stated in my reply to Question 324 of 1983 the matter of the registration of non-residents in the Adult Education Programme was investigated.

Out of a total of 592 students, four were found to be non-eligible for registration. These four students have been allowed to complete the first term of their courses but will not be re-enrolled for the rest of the academic year, or subsequent programmes.

Tighter procedures are now being adopted requiring proof of residency as a pre-requisite for enrolment into evening classes.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 425 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

In arriving at that decision, Mr Speaker, did Government consider imposing an enhanced charge to people who were not residents perhaps to offset slightly within the figures that he has given me -592 and 4-the financial burden on the Department concerned?

HON J B PEREZ:

The matter was in fact considered but it was decided to proceed in the way that I have outlined.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Municipal Services state if there is any possibility of Government reducing the cost of overseas calls as it appears that people resident in Gibraltar are making overseas calls from La Linea because the rates are considerably lower there and this results in loss of revenue to our Gibraltar Telephone Exchange?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, prior to the introduction of I.D.D. in October 1982, the possibility of introducing a cheap rate for direct dialled international calls was investigated. The start of I.D.D. necessitated an increase of international circuits. However, landlines or cable circuits to the U.K. and Europe could not be utilised, on account of the political situation with our neighbours. Therefore, the only option remaining was the utilisation of the far more expensive satellite circuits of Cable and Wireless. Satellite circuits become more economical as distance and volume of traffic increases, and Gibraltar fulfills neither of these conditions. Thus, it would be necessary for Cable & Wireless to reduce their profit margin before cheaper rates could be introduced.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 426 OF 1983

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am glad, Mr Speaker, that I have asked this question because this will clarify in the minds of many people in Gibraltar why this is so, but having said that, wouldn't it be in the interest of Government to try and reduce costs that would, perhaps by the increase in volume that they would create, reduce the difference that exists between here and La Linea?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I take the point of the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza. It is really not only up to us; it is also up to Cable and Wireless, and their agreement to having a reduced charge per call. I imagine that if we did this, the difference would have to be divided between GTO and Cable & Wireless, so our income would fall as well as Cable and Wireless. But, it really depends on Cable and Wireless more than anything else.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Government approached Cable and Wireless on this matter, and if they haven't, could they do so?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, we have approached Cable and Wireless on this

matter. In fact, I have also approached Cable and Wireless on the possibility of introducing a cheap rate at certain times during the weekends and public holidays. At the moment I am in discussion with Cable and Wireless. But, the onus is very much on them to provide a suitable answer. If they do so, I would be very glad to take it up. I promise the Hon Gentleman I shall do everything in my power to follow his suggestion.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 427 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state how many of the old type telephone lead cables remain?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are seven old type lead sheathed telephone cables remaining, which are in the process of being replaced. The number of subscribers served by old type lead telephone cable is 321 which represents 4% of the total number of subscribers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 427 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say which areas are served by these seven remaining lines?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mainly the town area, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON G T RESTANO

Does the Government intend to enforce legislation passed by Government majority, compelling householders in private accommodation to have fire extinguishers in their dwellings before the next general elections?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the regulations necessary to carry the proposals into effect are in the drafting programme and will be drafted as soon as priorities permit.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 428 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that that particular piece of legislation was brought before the House in December, 1981, and that it was passed in March, 1982, can the Hon Attorney-General say why it is taking so long? If, as he says, the regulations are being drafted, can he tell us the conditions as to who will pay and how these will be serviced?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

To answer the first part of the question, Mr Speaker, it took some little while for the drafting instructions to be prepared. The matter has rested with my Chambers for some months I think, perhaps longer. To answer the second part of the question, I think that information is most appropriately divulged when the regulations themselves are promulgated.

HON G T RESTANO:

If my understanding is correct, Mr Speaker, the last time that this question was asked, we were told that the Fire Brigade was looking into the details and that the Hon and Learned Attorney-General's Chambers were awaiting the comments of the Fire Brigade. Can he let the House know whether those recommendations from the Fire Brigade have been received now?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

They are neither recommendations nor comments, Mr Speaker, they are what is known as drafting instructions. Unless you have drafting instructions, you cannot start drafting. I said before that they were received some time ago. I can find out the exact time and tell him.

HON G T RESTANO:

in March  
Mr Speaker, if I can quote the Attorney-General/of this year when he said: "I think because in fact what is happening is that the Fire Services Department are considering the implications of introducing regulations", have they considered...?

MR SPEAKER:

They must have considered it and now they are in the process of being prepared.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, it may be helpful for the Hon Member to understand how legislation is prepared. There are two elements to it: First of all, the Department responsible must prepare a brief or drafting instructions: once that is done my Department is responsible for converting those into legal format.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can we know, Mr Speaker, since all the information has now been centralised, who is going to pay for those fire extinguishers in the private sector; will it be the landlord or will it be the tenant?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think I have answered that question: I said it would be appropriate for that to become public knowledge when the regulations are promulgated, but not before.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Bill was brought before the House in 1981 and....

MR SPEAKER:

The answer you have been given is that the regulations are now in the process of being drafted and it is Government's policy not to publish the kind of information that you are seeking until such time as the regulations are brought before the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Bill was brought before the House; we were asked to vote on it; we had certain reservations. I would just like to know why the secrecy, what is the reason for it?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is not secrecy, Mr Speaker, it is normal practice.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Hon Attorney-General<sup>94</sup> say if the regulations will be promulgated before the end of this House of Assembly?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, my answer is that the regulations will be promulgated when drafting priorities permit. If the Member is not happy with that, I suggest he looks at the statute book and sees how much legislation has been published.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Minister for Municipal Services explain why the official opening of the Waterport Power Station has not yet taken place?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I would have thought the reason why the official opening of the Waterport Power Station has not taken place was quite apparent. It has never been the Government's intention to carry out an official function of this nature while the operation of the station is being contracted to a third party and negotiations are in progress with staff representative unions on manning levels and other working conditions, as has been the case in the Steering Committee. To have done so in such circumstances would have meant that the people who will be involved in the future running of the station would not have been able to participate in this event.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 429 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm that in fact it is not necessary to wait for the agreements within the Steering Committee for that Station to be officially opened?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, I agree with the Hon Member. As I mentioned previously, there was one area of disagreement within the Steering Committee which now seems to have cleared up, and since everything seems to point to a possible settlement and possible signing of the draft agreement, we feel that we ought to wait for this before we make a definite date for the opening of the new Station.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Minister any idea or any indication as to when he thinks he will have the official opening?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, as soon as possible. It could well be either before or after the next meeting of the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does he really have no idea at all, absolutely no idea?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a problem: before the opening of the Station we need the contractors out.

MR SPEAKER:

We know the position. Have you any idea when this will be?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir, I am afraid until we get a more definite idea, then we have to contact the UK to see if they can come out for the opening session.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I understand the Minister to have said that he wants the staff of the Electricity Department to take over the Station first and then they will open. Will there not be an interim period? There has to be training, has there not, Mr Speaker? Will it be before or after the training of the staff of the Electricity Department?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is, however long it takes, the Government has said that they don't propose to have the official opening until they have taken over the operation. You have asked when will this take place. They have said it may be perhaps before or after the next meeting. There is no use going beyond that.

HON G T RESTANO:

What I am asking is do they intend to open it once the staff is trained or before the staff is trained?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact certain members of the staff are being trained at the moment at Waterport Power Station, so that the opening will take place when most of our members are there—even though staff training may be taking place at the very same time.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 430 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, what is the total current amount that has been paid to the contractors for running the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the cost to the 19th November for the contractors operating Waterport Power Station has been £1,304,147 and as stated in answer to Question No 265, this figure includes £353,573 being funded under the main contract.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 430 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, £1.3m is a very, very large amount. Will Government try to recover this money by increasing electricity charges?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I would like to mention two things on this. First of all, the answer is no; and secondly, that the figure of £1,304,147 is to some extent qualified because if we had put our own people there the figure would probably be at least half that amount, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, where will Government pay this £1.3m from?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I couldn't answer that question: it is a financial matter. What I will do is I will ascertain that and speak to the Financial and Development Secretary later and provide the answer to the question to the Hon Gentleman.

HON G T RESTANO:

In the House, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Because I would appreciate asking further questions on that.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I was not entirely sure when the Hon Minister said "if we had had our own men" he said it would cost half that amount. Does he mean half that amount again?

MR SPEAKER:

No, what is being said is that the Station would have had to be operated, even if it had been operated by their own staff, and that staff would have had to be paid and the amount paid would be basically half the amount that has been expended.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister justify that half? I know that there are fewer people employed by the contractors than the Electricity Department will be employing. So, how can he justify the half?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, that same question was asked by the Hon Member in the last House, when I said that there was only a skeleton crew down at Waterport. If we supplied the men, there would be far more men because we would have a lot of other duties to undertake. But, I answered this very question at the last House of Assembly.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government reveal the cost of the 1975/76 Preece, Cardew and Rider Report?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, in answer to Question No.30 of 1983 from the Hon J Bossano, I informed the House that the cost of the 1975/76 Preece, Cardew and Rider report had been met by the ODA. I was not able to reveal the actual cost then for the same reason as I cannot do so now.

The reason for this is simply that Government has no record of this, since Preece, Cardew and Rider were engaged by ODA under a negotiated agreement between the two parties. Government officials here were only involved in consultations with ODA officials to agree the terms of reference and the brief for the actual study which Preece, Cardew and Rider were to undertake and, subsequently, supplied the information necessary for the study.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 431 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister and I have exchanged correspondence on this and he did say in his last letter to me that it was thought in the Department that that particular Report cost about £8,000. Would he confirm this?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, in fact, more than that I will recall the last paragraph of my letter to the Hon Mr Restano dated the 28th November. I said: "When I wrote to you on the 3rd November, 1983, in answer to your earlier letter I confirmed what I have said in the House in answer to Question No.30 which is that Preece, Cardew and Rider were appointed and paid by the ODA and we have no record in Government as to the actual cost of this consultancy. Having said as much, the City Electrical Engineer can vaguely recall a figure of £8,000 having been mentioned by someone at the time probably from Preece, Cardew and Rider but certainly not from the ODA. You will appreciate that this information can only be taken as hearsay and that is the limit of its validity".

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I have asked that because I have a query and that is that that particular report which covered the requirements of electricity and water until the year 2000, therefore a fairly extensive report, apparently cost about £8,000 when Messrs Preece, Cardew and Rider were engaged by the ODA. Yet, when the Gibraltar Government employed Preece, Cardew and Rider for the Waterport Station consultancy the cost is nearly £300,000. Can the Minister say how is that related?



MR SPEAKER:

No, I don't think the Minister is entitled to answer that question. With respect, you have asked for the cost of the Freece, Cardew and Rider Report in this particular instance and you have been given the answer to it. I don't think it can be related to any other charges that the same consultants may have done on another matter.

HON G T RESTANO:

It seems to me very strange, Mr Speaker, that two consultancies are done by the same firm, one consultancy when it was engaged by ODA, the other consultancy when it is engaged by the Gibraltar Government; the difference in the price of the two consultancies is astronomical.

MR SPEAKER:

I accept that but the question then should have been asked in a different way and should have had a basis for comparison, in other words, can Government reconcile the payment of so much in certain circumstances with the payment of the other amount-but not on this question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Let me, Mr Speaker, for the Hon Member's guidance, explain the difference between the two consultancies. One was a report-and basically that alone. The consultancy of PCR in the Station meant having somebody at the Station, to make sure of certain arrangements, and involved a great deal more work than just producing a simple document which was the PCR Report.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, it has always been said by the Government that one of the reasons why they didn't publish it was because it was a very complicated Report.

MR SPEAKER:

In any event we will leave it at that.

NO. 432 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, what is now the total amount that has been paid for the Chairman of the Electricity Department's Steering Committee?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the total amount incurred for the Chairman of the Steering Committee to November, 1983, amounts to £110,915.38.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 432 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the last figure that I had-when I asked this question in October-was nearly £102,000. So how often has he been in Gibraltar since then to justify an extra £8,000?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Twenty days.

HON G T RESTANO:

How often has the Steering Committee in fact sat? Have they sat on all those twenty days?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

He has been here twenty days in his capacity as Chairman of the Steering Committee. Whether the Committee itself has met on every occasion, I would have to enquire; but he has been here as Chairman for twenty days.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I know how many times has the Steering Committee sat during those twenty days; and if the Chairman has come and the Steering Committee has not sat, what has been his reason for coming; and has it been a lot of days or just a few?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I would have to enquire to provide that information, I don't know the answer.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, he has come for twenty days. The meetings are usually held every fourth day, the rest of the time is in the

preparation and the sub-committees. So, the full Steering Committee has probably met about five times in the twenty days. The amount of work that he has put in has been on all the other days, and he has met the different sections and-when necessary-anybody else who he might think could be of help.

HON G T RESTANO:

But my understanding is, Mr Speaker, that the delays that have occurred have been because suggestions are made and they have to be considered by both sides of the Steering Committee, and whilst they are deliberating on that, the Chairman's presence is not required. What has changed the fact that on this occasion, since the 18th October of this year up to now, he has been in Gibraltar for two weeks, fifteen days, without having meetings of the Steering Committee?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He said he had five meetings.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer has been he has attended five full meetings of the Steering Committee, he has attended meetings of the sub-committees, and he has been in consultation with third parties.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, this is the first time we have heard about these sub-committees. Can the Minister give us some explanation about these sub-committees? Who do they consist of: are they sub-committees of the Staff Side or of management or both together?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The sub-committees have involved practically everybody involved in the Steering Committee, and this has been one of the ways of hastening up the process of the Steering Committee in which the Chairman has to be present. I may add as well that, unfortunately due to severe pressure on the part of Mr Bossano, he has only been able to meet once a week. Therefore some of the work has taken place at other times.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I know, Mr Speaker, are there more than one sub-committee or is there just one sub-committee?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are many sub-committees which touch on each section within the Electricity Generating Station.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Perhaps it should be stated that, with the concurrence of the union concerned, the Chairman of the Steering Committee has interviewed practically everybody in the Power Station.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can we know how many sub-committees are there?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I do not have the information but I cannot see what does it matter whether there are twelve or fourteen sub-committees.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I ask the Minister to obtain that information?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, he will I am sure.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I understood from the Minister's answers, I think it was in October, that all outstanding matters had been settled except one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The biggest one.

HON P J ISOLA:

If it is the biggest one, he did not give us that impression. What makes it so necessary to have so many meetings and so forth?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, unfortunately the Hon Member was not here this morning when he could have been here and have heard the answer, but obviously he was coming back from the United Kingdom where he was there on personal business. I said that all areas of the sub-committee have practically been cleared up and I hopefully expect the signing of the draft agreement this week.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

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HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, if I may, in answer to Question No. 432, I have checked with the City Electrical Engineer and there were indeed five meetings of the Steering Committee and about six other meetings at which he had been present.

6.12.83

NO. 433 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government release to the Opposition the report on the housing situation in Gibraltar made by Messrs Peat Marwick and Mitchell?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, a Committee composed of Government Ministers and officials has been set up to study the draft report. As soon as the report has been finalised it will be released to Members of the Opposition.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 433 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

I am grateful for that reply, Mr Speaker. Can the Minister give me any indication as to when the likely date will be?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I think I am well known in this House for not giving indications because I do not want to be caught out afterwards.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can we have an assurance that it will be released to us but not on a confidential basis?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think, having read the contents of the draft report, that I will give that assurance.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 434 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government confirm that the Family Care Unit is presently undermanned and will Government endeavour to rectify the situation so as to ensure that applicants waiting to be classified as social cases are not kept waiting for more than four weeks?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Yes, Sir. The Family Care Unit is presently undermanned. However, all cases referred to the Unit have been or are being processed and no delay has occurred as far as the Unit is concerned.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 434 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the waiting time for a report in respect of social case applicants is in excess of four weeks?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker, in actual fact, even though we are undermanned at the moment, the average does not go over four weeks.

HON A J HAYNES:

What is the average, Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The average now is almost immediately, we have caught up with most of the cases.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 435 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

What sums of monies have been paid out to date in 1983 in -  
a) Unemployment Benefit, and b) Supplementary Benefit compared to  
the same period in 1982 and 1981 and how many people have been  
involved in both categories?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, during the period January to October, 1983, £194,790 have been paid in Unemployment Benefit and £447,870 in Supplementary Benefit. The corresponding figures for 1981 were £106,270 and £291,000 and for 1982 £146,190 and £360,360 respectively. 603 people have been involved so far in 1983 in respect of Unemployment Benefit. The corresponding figure for 1981 was 639 and 827 for 1982. Approximately 570 have been involved so far in 1983 in respect of Supplementary Benefit. No statistics are, however, available for 1981 and 1982.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 435 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

In the first instance, Mr Speaker, might I ask the Minister why no statistics are available for the previous two years of Supplementary Benefit?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker. You will notice that in my answers to the Unemployment figures I gave exact figures; in my answers to the Supplementary Benefit figures I said approximately - and approximately is because somehow or other the unit concerned was not keeping statistics, because the method is that you get different applications, you might get thirty or forty different applications, and they are processed, but only ten probably would be paid. But, all of those applications are put together in the same place and the ones that are paid were not extracted. So, in order to give you some answers, we managed to dig up one year by looking virtually at each individual case and that is why I have given you 570. I have already given instructions that statistics for this Supplementary Benefit should also be kept.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, might I ask just one more question? The pattern seems to be one of a sharp trend from 1981 to 1982 and then a downward one to the Unemployment Benefit which is limited, as we all know, to thirteen weeks. Am I right in assuming that the downward trend basically concerns non-resident workers that have not remained, obviously, in Gibraltar after the payment of their thirteenth week Unemployment Benefit?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

NO. 436 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what further progress has Government made on the lowering of the retirement age for the purpose of the Social Insurance Pension?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, I will be replying to this question later in the proceedings, during the course of the Hon Mr Bossano's motion.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 436 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, if I may return to that, obviously, it is not a motion from my side of the House and, secondly, it really does not afford us an opportunity of a question and answer session within the course of the debate. I ask the Minister to reconsider answering my original question.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I hope, Mr Speaker, that in the course of the debate which really touches on most of the elements on which we are now involved, which is unemployment, employment, retirement age, credits, etc we could have had a better opportunity for more discussion on the question. But, if he wants an answer now, the only progress so far has been in effect - which does not really answer your question, I must admit - that in my review for this year, for example, one of the problems which people are suffering now is that once they have retired at 60 they have got to carry on paying until they are 65. One move that I have made so far is that they should not be paying more than they were paying when they were employed. In answer to whether I will make any further progress, at this moment the answer is no, we are studying the whole question. I would remind the Hon Member opposite that, in a statement I made in the House, I gave the figures (based on current figures and not on the figures that are going to come in January, 1984) that a reduction of one year would cost £½m and to bring it down completely to 60 years for everybody will cost an extra £2m at current rates.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, when the Hon Member is saying it is still under further review he is really, effectively not saying much, because if he has already undertaken an examination - to the extent that a lowering of one year is going to cost £x - what further is there to review?

MR SPEAKER:

You have been told that no progress has been made so far; you have been given the train of thought that Government is applying. I do not think we are going to get any further information. Next question.



6.12.83

NO. 437 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, how many persons have applied to take advantage of the recent legislation awarding non-resident workers 13 weeks unemployment benefit in one lump sum?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, five persons have applied.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 437 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I ask what has happened to the employees of the Mons Calpe that we were told the legislation was required so urgently for?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

They have only just applied.

HON P J ISOLA:

So it is more than five?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I was asked how many and it is five.

HON P J ISOLA:

But that is not what we were told in the debate, Mr Speaker. The urgency was for a much larger number of people.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I could not give you the numbers, because when I answered this question, only five had applied. Subsequently, they have applied now.

HON P J ISOLA:

You mean now, this minute?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Two days ago.

HON P J ISOLA:

Then why can't the question be answered with the right number?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Because I have not got all the facts and figures with me.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer to that, of course, is that they were employed until the end of November.

NO. 438 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether there have been any changes in the administrative organisation of the Industrial Tribunal?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, although there have been no changes in the administrative organisation of the Industrial Tribunal two officers of the Department have been assigned to prepare cases for submission to the Tribunal which has improved the situation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 438 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, but didn't Government in answer to a question I asked on this same subject indicate that my own recommendations or views were not upheld by Government, and that they were going to introduce administrative organisation? As there hasn't been, does that mean that the answer has been changed, there has been a change in policy, or what?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think, Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Member when he was talking about different administrative arrangements was talking of the Chairman, a different kind of Chairman; that has not been changed. What we have done, in an effort to get over the backlog of cases, is to appoint two officers specifically assigned to be able to deal with this backlog. We have also had a different venue allocated to us, which is more readily available, and this is why we are speeding up the cases. So, administratively, when we are talking about the Chairman, we have not changed, but in the practicality of the thing, we have made certain moves which are a great improvement.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am glad to hear that again, Mr Speaker. Does this mean that the backlog has now been dealt with or is there still some outstanding work to be done?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will be glad to answer the question, Mr Speaker. Two cases have already been heard and five more cases are due to be heard within the next two weeks.

HON A J HAYNES:

Are there only those seven cases left or what?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

May I remind Hon Members that when I say they have been heard, it does not necessarily mean that the Chairman has given his verdict. Eighteen cases have still to be finalised. These are pending because of an appeal made to the Supreme Court by counsel for the employer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister - I know he does not like to give dates - confirm that, the last time we had an exchange over this matter, the waiting time was two years for a case before hearing in the Tribunal?

MR SPEAKER:

But we have been told that it has been expedited.

HON A J HAYNES:

But is it now going to be possible to have them heard within a short period of time, or are the two officers going to be taken back from their present duties?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, may I please clear one point for Hon Members? It is not always the fault of the Department when cases are not dealt with promptly. There are at least three different parties involved: there is the lawyer defending the employee; the lawyer defending the employer; the Chairman; and the Department. We might set up a date and the lawyer for the defendant might say: "This is no good", so delays are caused by lawyers.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question."

6.12.83

NO. 439 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether or not they have completed their survey to determine the number of tenants who are overhoused and will Government release their findings, if any?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the survey has not yet been completed owing to lack of cooperation on the part of some tenants who failed to return the questionnaire sent to them. However, in order to get the necessary information a house to house survey is being carried out and it is expected that the survey will have been completed by the end of January, 1984.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 439 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Opposition be given these findings?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will give the findings to the Opposition.

HON A J HAYNES:

Before the elections, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 440 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state how many units of Government housing at present have communal sanitary facilities and how many units do not have running water?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, according to the latest information received there would appear to be approximately 381 tenancies sharing toilet facilities and 132 without running water.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 440 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, has there been any difference between when I last asked the question in June and now?

MR SPEAKER:

Well, that is a simple matter which you can see by looking at the answer you got in June.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm there has been no substantive change?

MR SPEAKER:

There is no reason for him to, you can refer to the answer. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 441 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider awarding extra points to a housing applicant of advanced years, eg over 70 years of age?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member must be aware, I agreed at the last meeting with him that the Housing Allocation Committee would be asked to consider and to recommend whether provision should be made in the Scheme to meet this requirement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 441 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Has there been any meeting to consider this?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

They have not had the chance to meet yet.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 442 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government now in a position to make a statement on the legalisation of Citizen's Band in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

No, Sir, the position is still the same as in my reply to your Question No. 191 of May. Information has also been sought from the Federal Communications Commission of the United States of America, as the majority of equipment available locally is AM, mainly constructed to this Body's specifications.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 442 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, has the Minister any idea when he will be able to make a statement on the legalisation of Citizen's Band; and may I also point out to the Minister that, in my supplementary to my question, I pointed out that what was required for Gibraltar was legalisation on the same lines as the UK, which is FM, not AM as in the neighbouring country?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it is precisely why we are taking so long in this issue, because most of the equipment that is available locally is AM, and not FM as in UK. It is purely because of that that we are having some difficulty in being able to rationalise into exactly what we would like. I take the point, particularly because of the proximity of our immediate neighbours, but this is exactly why we are having more difficulty in trying to find out exactly the problems that exist between the items received here of AM manufacture as opposed to FM. As to the first part of his question, Mr Speaker, as to when I will be able to legalise this issue, I can assure the Hon Member that the moment we get clearance on the issue we have nothing against legalising the Citizen's Band at all.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but wouldn't the Minister agree that if he pressed on and legalised it on FM, the AM equipment which is coming in at the moment would stop coming because the radio hams would be forced to use the FM, which does not interfere with local aircraft? Wouldn't the Minister agree that if he pressed on and introduced legislation on FM it would go a long way to solving this problem?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I wish it was that simple. There are problems which I do not think I should give in this House; but we are trying to do our best, Mr Speaker.



6.12.83

NO. 443 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Have any problems been encountered recently regarding the transportation of mail from Morocco to Gibraltar and if so will Government make a statement on the matter?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

No, Sir, however, when on the withdrawal of the sea link it was decided to airlift the surface mails, to ensure the continuation of the service, technical problems led to mail being held up in Tangier for eight days. These problems were overcome, the backlog cleared and mail is now received regularly.

NO. 444 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism and Sport state if the air mail from the United Kingdom has been in any way adversely affected by the reduced schedule flights from London during the winter months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the withdrawal of schedule flights has affected receipt of air mail from the UK. No air mail is received on Wednesdays or Saturdays as there are no flights at all on those days. On Mondays mail is brought in by a charter operator who applied and was granted a licence by the Civil Aviation Authority to carry mail.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 444 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So the Minister is happy that we are in exactly the same position as last year, but no worse?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, there are no planes - as the Hon Member knows - on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. On the Monday, we have a charter operator coming through. There is no plane at all arriving on the Wednesday or Saturday; otherwise, I am sure the charter operators would gladly bring it in. But, we are the same.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

My point is that we are no worse than we were last year?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state if his department has carried out any publicity in Spain or engaged any individual or organisation to attract visitors from Spain to Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, apart from one visit by the Director to the Coast with the object of sounding out leading Coach Operators to assess the potential traffic to Gibraltar no publicity visits have been carried out in Spain. However, we have an action plan ready for promoting and selling Gibraltar in Spain when the frontier is fully opened.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 445 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since there are in fact visitors coming to Gibraltar, isn't there perhaps virtue in trying to get as many of them to come here, in fact, encourage them to come and spend money here, which it seems we are not doing? Could the Minister look further on that; and perhaps take action before the frontier is fully opened?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to spend any advertising money in Spain to attract the kind of tourists or excursionists we are getting from Spain at this moment. If tourists as such are allowed to come into Gibraltar, then the Gibraltar Tourist Office will most certainly do so. The indications we have is that the Spaniards being allowed to cross the frontier are not coming in as tourists but more as day roamers around Gibraltar and not spending as much as some people seem to indicate.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But if the advertising was done the right way doesn't the Minister think that perhaps we could attract certain people who may come and spend more money?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am quite surprised that the Hon Member should be making this point so laboriously. If he looks at Hansard, I think it was in 1982 in December, he mentioned the fact that we should not be doing this. I will give him paragraph and page on that later on, Mr Speaker. No, Mr Speaker, we are not prepared to spend money in advertising in Spain. I would like to remind the Hon Member that there are indications, and I will go no further than that, that Gibraltar Government Tourist Office would not be allowed to advertise in Spain.

6.12.83

NO. 446 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state what has been done since a co-ordinator for tourism was appointed that will induce more tourists to come to Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, since it was I who asked the Administrative Secretary to look into the question of tourism on my behalf, and to report to me, I will answer this question and question Nos. 449, 450 and 456 myself and deal with them in one go.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism explain in some detail the reason for Intasun cancelling two of its weekly flights, if this is a sign that their sales of tours to Gibraltar is proving to be lower than they expected and the reasons for this decline, if so?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, we understand that Intasun did not have the air capacity in Manchester which they were anticipating and indeed the lead in time of their special winter brochure was rather short. Intasun are hoping to come in on the Manchester flight after Christmas.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 447 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So in fact, the position of Intasun is that which they announced originally when they came here; and this is purely a hiccup on the way there. Is that what the Minister is saying?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

In simple language, Mr Speaker, what has really transpired is that there has been a very good response in the Manchester area for the Gibraltar trips, particularly at the prices given by Intasun; but Intasun or, shall I say, Air Europe have been unable to provide the aircraft. Going back to the previous question, Mr Speaker, when I was in England I did speak to Intasun - together with the Administrative Secretary - and they did even attempt to charter aircraft from Britannia, but they were unable to get the aircraft.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I do not quite understand; how could they make that commitment without first making arrangements as to aircraft? Have they not involved a number of hotels in planning an expenditure which is now lost?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, I think, Mr Speaker, it is one of the points I raised. It was extremely bad planning. I think they were over-enthused at the time in committing themselves. Members may not know that they had extended their promise to three flights per week in winter, as opposed to one or two but, unfortunately, their own aircraft - I think Air Europe owns thirteen 737's - have been unable to make use, particularly at Manchester.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 448 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state the date of the last meeting of the Tourist Advisory Board and give information on its outcome?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, the last meeting of the Tourist Advisory Board was held on Thursday 27 October, 1983, and the subjects ranged from Municipal Charges to Tours, Specific Conferences and Taxi Service.

6.12.83

NO. 449 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism explain what matters the Administrative Secretary had to deal with when accompanying the Minister to London that neither himself or the Director of his Department was capable of attending to?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 446, 450 and 456 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 450 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism explain in some detail the role of the Administrative Secretary as coordinator for Tourism?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 446, 449 and 456 of 1983.



NO. 451 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Government state when they plan to resurface Main Street which is so badly in need of it and which will greatly help to make this main thoroughfare much more attractive?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it is intended to resurface the south section of Main Street, from the Convent to Southport Gates, during the latter part of 1984 and provision is being made in the 1984/85 draft estimates. The area from the Cathedral to the Convent was resurfaced some years ago and is in a good state.

The concept of paving the proposed pedestrianised part of Main Street, from the Engineer Lane junction to the Library Street junction, is planned for the coming year. There are plans for a phased programme but at this stage it would obviously be unwise to spend money on any part of this area until such time as final decisions are made on the timing of the different phases. It would clearly be a waste of money to resurface any part of this area, in asphalt, if paving is to follow within a relatively short time lapse.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 451 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

When you say a relatively short time lapse, could the Minister give an idea?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think I am answering a question later on, Sir, in which we will be starting the paving of one or two of the side streets soon, and the first section of Main Street should be done sometime next year.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The actual resurface of this area should start about when?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We would hope possibly about September next year.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 452 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government have the names of Knight's Court and St John's Court displayed on said buildings in the light of the confusion suffered recently by the Policemen on ambulance duty when attending a call to one of these buildings?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir.

NO. 453 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

How much revenue is Government deriving from the car park opposite the air terminal and how much is the cost of operating this car park?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, to date Government has obtained £3,187.50 in parking fees for the Western Beach car park, and total running costs have been £6,919.56.

However, it is invidious to treat this car park on its own. It should be treated together with the British Lines car park where to date £24,139 have been collected against £7,827.18 in running costs.

Thus the two parks together have taken £27,326.50 against running costs of £14,746.74.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 453 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I notice that the fees at the Western Beach car park were reduced in the sense that it is 2 hours for 50p. Wouldn't the Government consider putting a more realistic fee for parking in Western Beach car park and thus make sure that it makes money from that car park?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think the fee proposed is realistic, Sir. The intention of that car park is twofold. Firstly, to provide room for people visiting the airport to be able to park on a short term basis; and also to act as an overflow for the British Lines car park for people going to Spain. That is why there is a provision of two types of fee. We do not think that the 50p for the 2 hours - which are mainly people visiting the airport - is unreasonable.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, wouldn't the Minister agree that, in the majority of cases, people going to the airport in fact spend about half an hour at the most? Wouldn't it be better to have instead of 50p per two hours, 25p per hour? Instead of forcing them to pay for two hours, which they are not going to use up anyway, and in that case I am sure that a lot of people who otherwise run the risk of being booked for parking on the yellow line or on the pavement will in fact make use of the car park for the sake of 25p. Wouldn't the Minister consider making it 25p an hour provisionally and see whether in fact the revenue is increased?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We started off at 50p per hour, and now it is 50p per two hours. I am willing to look at it but I cannot see that there is very great improvement if we were to reduce it to 25p. I think we would only take a little less money.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is there any reason why people visiting the air terminal should have to pay 50p in the car park opposite when the air terminal car park is used by people who do not visit the air terminal? Is not the problem really there, and not opposite, and is that not a fact? It is obvious to anybody who goes to the airport; isn't it obvious to the Minister?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The small car park at the air terminal is very difficult to administer on a paying basis; it only takes very few cars. In fact, most of the cars there happen to belong to employees around that area, so the average person visiting the airport normally goes into the Western Beach car park.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is that not totally wrong? Has the Minister gone to the airport when a plane arrives, and seen about three cars in the car park opposite; and isn't it a total waste of public space and public money, when you have the whole of that area cluttered with cars - on the road, by the terminal building - and this wonderful large car park is virtually empty 24 hours a day? That is a fact, is it not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, it is not virtually empty 24 hours a day, Sir, because it has taken a fair sum of money. We can possibly look into other restrictions to stop people parking, as they tend to do - at times indiscriminately - in the airport area, in the areas reserved for taxis, even on the pavement, etc.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is there any possible justification for subsidising, because that is what the Minister is doing, subsidising a parking area? Instead of people paying for it, the Government is paying for it, and in that case is it not better to leave it uncontrolled with no payment at all?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If you left it uncontrolled, then you would find half the people who today go into the British Lines car park and paying for it would go into the free car park, and you would lose. That is why the two of them are taken together.

6.12.83

NO. 454 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, when will the Pedestrianisation Scheme in the City Centre physically commence?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, if by "physically" the Hon Member means actual road works, then the Scheme in the City Centre will commence early in the new year. It is intended to start with Market Lane. This is and will continue to be a pedestrianised area at all times, as any form of vehicular traffic is totally unnecessary.

A phased programme for the paving of further parts of the City Centre and which will include new street lighting, landscaping and street furniture, will follow. The extent and timing will depend on the availability of funds.

It is not in the answer, Sir, but after Market Lane the next place that is suggested is Bedlam Court.

6.12.83

NO. 455 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government not agree that a considerable number of our roads and streets still require resurfacing and what roads and streets does Government intend resurfacing during the next twelve months either in part or in whole?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, there are a number of roads which require resurfacing. It is hoped to resurface the following before the end of this financial year:

Library Street, Cannon Lane, Engineer Lane.

Provision is being made in the 1984/85 draft estimates to resurface King's Yard Lane, Main Street (Convent to Southport Gates), Smith Dorrien Avenue, Rodger's Road and Devil's Tower Road from the Sundial to St Theresa's Church.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 455 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

What is the cost to the Department concerned of all this resurfacing?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would have to have notice of that question, Sir, but if the Hon Member would like it I will give him a written reply.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 456 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

What further measures, if any, does Government intend taking to ensure a cleaner and tidier Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, since it was I who asked the Administrative Secretary I think I would be in the best position to answer supplementaries on these matters.

The role of the Administrative Secretary in this matter is to look into the various aspects of tourism and to report to me on ways in which effect might be given to the Government's declared policy of devoting special attention to this sector of the economy.

The reason why, at the suggestion of the Minister for Tourism, the Administrative Secretary accompanied him on his promotional visit to London in late October/early November was to enable him to familiarise himself and report on promotional activities in Britain. This included meetings with the Advertising Agents and Public Relations Consultants in London. The fact that he accompanied the Minister in no way reflects on either the Minister or the Director.

In the course of his assignment, the Administrative Secretary has been engaged in consultations with the Minister and the Director, officials of the Public Works Department and the Chief Environmental Health Officer, the Attorney-General and the Commissioner of Police and individually with each member of the Tourist Advisory Board, the Chairman and Secretary of the Museum Committee and others engaged in the tourist industry in Gibraltar and in Britain, including Intasun.

The process of consultation is now complete and I expect to receive his report in the near future. When the report has been considered the Government will take decisions on the methods to be adopted to attract more tourists to Gibraltar.

I have included Question No. 456 in this composite answer because the question of cleaning and smartening up Gibraltar is an essential pre-requisite to any drive for increasing tourism. Recommendations on this aspect, as well as on ways of coordinating and monitoring the work of Departments, will accordingly form part of the report.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 446, 449, 450 AND 456 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Chief Minister agree that by the answer he has given it shows that the Chief Minister himself apparently has never been interested in tourism before?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Normally, I leave Ministers to get on with their Departments, and I have enough on my plate. But, when the matter becomes one of general national importance, I take such steps as I consider necessary to help the Departments concerned. I did so on this occasion. I have always taken an interest in tourism, but I leave it to Ministers. I do not interfere in their work unless they appear to go wrong or unless they have problems that they bring to me.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Chief Minister say what makes it necessary for him to ask the Administrative Secretary, a civil servant, to report on what is necessary for the Tourist Department when he has a Minister for Tourism who could surely set out in a clear and concise fashion the need and requirements of his Department. Does not this appointment reflect on the Minister?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course it doesn't, and I have said so. In fact, why I asked him to do that was because it is not only purely a political drive, it is a question of getting all the Heads of Departments - whom I have mentioned here - to get themselves interested and have a thrust into tourism: the Environmental Health Department, the Public Works Department, these are Heads of Departments who have to be seen by the Administrative Secretary, who has naturally much higher standing than the other Heads of Departments, and can direct them. It is in order to give an impulse to this intention that it was done. It reflects in no way on the Director or the Minister, who has contributed and collaborated in the preparation of these plans.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Chief Minister has stated, Mr Speaker, that he usually takes up matters when there are problems. Doesn't he agree that tourism has been a problem for the last four years; and why has it taken so long for them to realise this? Is it the closure of the Dockyard now that is bringing all this to the surface?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, to some extent the closure of the Dockyard makes it more sensible to concentrate on tourism more. Perhaps, when we bring the bill to the House, I do not mean the bill of law but the bill that may be incurred in the results of the enquiry, we will consider the extent of the work that has been done. There is no doubt, of course, that the action on tourism was motivated by two things: not only the closure of the Dockyard, but the release of the very useful and prime sites that were given in the package which requires to be developed and which requires particular attention. But, it seems to me that if you take an interest you are also accused of not taking an interest.



HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Chief Minister agree that tourism has always been the second pillar of our economy, and does he agree that - for the past four years - this side of the economy has been failing badly and going from bad to worse?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I agree that tourism has always formed part of the economy, of course I do, and we have done our best, and the provision in the Estimates every year of our promotion, and as the Hon Minister says it has gone from bad to worse, it is suffering the recession that other people are suffering - like in so many other places, certainly in the UK one reads about that. Of course it has always been a part of, and it has always been the policy - and that is evident by looking at the Estimates. This is not the first time that the Administrative Secretary has been put on an assignment to do something; it was done in respect of education, at a critical time, when he was appointed temporary Director of Education and finished off certain things. There is always a problem-shooter in all administrations. This has been done now, and I hope that Members will look forward to the report and contribute when we discuss it and make some helpful suggestions. It is no use recriminating but trying to do something positive on the matter.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the question of the coordinator I think is a very important one.

MR SPEAKER:

I am not interested, with respect, I am interested in questions.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am asking questions, Mr Speaker, in the sense that how can the Chief Minister justify appointing a civil servant as coordinator for tourism, when this is the responsibility of the Minister - and the responsibility of one Minister - who is answerable to this House. He has now appointed a civil servant, who is not answerable to this House in any way, Mr Speaker. Are we going to have, Mr Speaker, a Government run by civil servants?

MR SPEAKER:

I will call you to order once more but not again because you are making statements, with due respect to you.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I make no apologies for appointing a civil servant to look at the matter, which is mainly inter-departmental. The Minister will be greatly helped, I am sure, by the work that has been done at administrative level, and that is all I have to say.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, on the question of the work the coordinator has done in the United Kingdom.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know who called him coordinator; I never appointed him coordinator, I think he invented the word.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, that word was used either in a press release or here in this House.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It was never used by Government, it may have been used by some press media never by Government.

MR SPEAKER:

The word coordinator was used by the questioner as a matter of fact in his original question.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It was used by the questioner on this occasion, Mr Speaker, but it was not thought out by myself, it is a word that I chose because that was the word that was used by the Government on one occasion or other, I forget at what time.

HON P J ISOLA:

Did I understand the Chief Minister correctly to state that one of the reasons why the Administrative Secretary went to London was to see Intasun?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is a pity that people do not listen and take up the time of the House in asking questions. What I said was: "In the course of his assignment, the Administrative Secretary has been engaged in consultations with the Minister and the Director, officials of the Public Works Department and the Chief Environmental Health Officer, the Attorney-General and the Commissioner of Police and individually with each member of the Tourist Advisory Board, the Chairman and Secretary of the Museum Committee and others engaged in the tourist industry in Gibraltar and in Britain, including Intasun".

HON P J ISOLA:

Why the mention of Intasun? I would have thought there were a lot of other tourist operators. Was his attention directed entirely at Intasun, and if so, was it successful because the results do not seem to be very successful?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The point was that when the Minister was in his promotion, and the Administrative Secretary was there, he took the opportunity to go and see Intasun to see why they had not complied with their commitment to bring the number of tourists they announced that they would bring. He wanted to hear it from them and find out why, having promised that, and having obtained the support of the Gibraltar Government, they were not doing it. It is as simple as that, he did not choose that one out of a list, he went there to make a complaint.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that is the complaint that should and ought properly to have been made by the Minister himself?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It was made by the Minister also.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I then ask, Mr Speaker, one last question? Who is now doing the other work of the Administrative Secretary in the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He has finished his work. As we all know, he does very great work and he has not neglected his duties in any way. He has now finished the work, which has entailed mainly interviewing people to get at the substance, and he will just be writing the report.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Chief Minister saying then that after he has written his report the functions of the Administrative Secretary in connection with tourism ends?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course, and why perhaps the Hon Member has used the word co-ordinator was because I may have said that I had appointed him to coordinate in the past; but I never called him coordinator.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, isn't any coordination that has to be done, if all the Departments are going to pull together - which is what I think the Chief Minister meant - more a job of a Minister than that of a civil servant?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a matter of opinion. I will not have questions of opinion at question time.

HON P J ISOLA:

One last question, Mr Speaker. If the report of the Administrative Secretary does not coincide with the views of the Minister, what happens then?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a hypothetical question. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 457 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, having regard to the effects of the recent rains, will Government give further consideration to removing the existing fountain at the Piazza?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the answer to this question will be totally covered by my answer to Question No. 458.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the present position as regards the commissioning of a new fountain for John Mackintosh Square?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as you will be aware, an agreement was signed by the Gibraltar Government and the Shell Company of Gibraltar Ltd on 1 December whereby a new fountain, incorporating the remaining pieces of the old fountain which stood at John Mackintosh Square before World War II, is to be erected.

In order to mark the occasion of Shell's Gibraltar Diamond Jubilee Year this company will contribute a minimum of £12,000 and a maximum of £15,000 towards the total cost of this fountain.

Costs exceeding the maximum figure of £15,000 will be borne by the Gibraltar Government. The total cost which obviously includes installation of pumps, water jets, etc will not exceed £30,000.

I think this is an appropriate moment, within the House of Assembly, to express our thanks to the Shell Company of Gibraltar Ltd for their generous gesture.

The fountain will be installed and completed by July, 1984.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 458 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, where exactly will the fountain be sited, on the location of the present one or elsewhere?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, on the same location.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister have ideas as to the size of this? The original fountain, parts of which were lost, cannot be replaced in toto. I know that, subsequent to my asking the question, the information came out as regards Shell, but can the Minister give us more details as to the proposed size of the fountain, etc?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The base of the fountain will be the same size as the base of the present fountain, which will be actually faced in marble. The other fountain will go in the centre. I shall be happy to provide a drawing for the Hon Member tomorrow.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state whether the fountain is to be fenced off or railed off or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is hoped sooner or later to put a wrought iron fence around the fountain. It is a little difficult to get the wrought iron work, but we are looking into it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government produce a list of those buildings which it intends to fully or partly rehabilitate in the next few months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir. Details are as follows:-

Castle Ramp/Road to the Lines Phase II - 22 units -

12-20 Castle Ramp	- 4 units	} Rehabilitation
2-8 Road to the Lines	- 5 units	
11-15 Road to the Lines	- 4 units	
22 Road to the Lines	- 7 units	

1-3 Road to the Lines - 2 new units -

Tank Ramp Phase II - 11 units

15 Castle Steps	} - 4 units	} Rehabilitation
14 Tank Ramp		
16/20 Tank Ramp		

New Building - 3 units

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 459 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Minister has misunderstood my question. If I may refer to Question No. 216 of 1983 - when I asked for a list of those buildings which Government was going to fully or partly modernise in the next twelve months - I was given the breakdown for Castle Ramp/Road to the Lines Phase II and Tank Ramp Phase II, which I think I have been given again. In supplementaries under that question, Mr Speaker, I asked for a list for partly modernised buildings and the Hon Minister said: "If the Hon Member has meant rehabilitation rather than modernisation, his question should have said so". Now I have come back with the question saying so, and I get the wrong answer.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have been given rehabilitation.

HON A J HAYNES:

As I understand it, Mr Speaker, first of all I should establish whether or not the buildings which the Hon Minister has given me are one and the same as the list given in answer to Question No. 216.



HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is so, Sir. If the Hon Member means which house is going to be rehabilitated, because Mr X has moved out of the house and Mr Y wants to move in and the house has to be patched up before he does it, then I am unable to give any specific answers. These minor rehabilitations crop up as the year actually goes through. We do not have a planned programme for them.

HON A J HAYNES:

I take the point, Mr Speaker, but perhaps if I can illustrate again. The Harrington Buildings, which is one which the Minister and I have had frequent correspondence and meetings on that, would the rehabilitation of that building come under modernisation or rehabilitation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think the question of the rehabilitation that the Hon Member is talking about are those which are normally done and paid for out of the Improvement and Development Fund. The rehabilitation that is required at Hargraves would be an Improvement and Development Fund matter. The minor rehabilitations which I spoke about, when a certain person moves out and another person has moved in, are done out of the general Public Works Maintenance Vote. The Hargraves one would definitely be an Improvement and Development Fund one. It is not yet scheduled for next year, no, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 460 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether the replastering and painting of the Humphrey's Estate has now been concluded?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the replastering and painting have not yet been completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 460 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister state or give any indication as to what is happening in Victoria House of the Humphrey's Estate?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am happy to give the whole of the Alameda Estate, Sir: Red Sands House has been completed; Governor's Meadow House the rendering is complete the painting is in hand; Ross House the rendering is in hand; Picton House has been completed; and Victoria, Alameda and Kingsway House are awaiting attention. In fact, Victoria is next on the list, Alameda and Kingsway are lower priority.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am not sure whether the Minister will have the information, Mr Speaker, but I notice that in Victoria House the Public Works Department seems to have taken over an area.

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to get involved in the actual manner in which the redecoration is being done, under any circumstances.

HON A J HAYNES:

One last point, Mr Speaker. Will the Minister state whether the costings so far have been accurate or whether there has been an increase in the estimated amounts, and if so the figure?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Off the cuff, Sir, I would say they are holding reasonably to what is estimated but, of course, as time goes past some slight inflation normally occurs.

HON A J HAYNES:

So it is running at about £30,000 per building.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 461 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether the Castle Ramp and Road to the Lines Phase II modernisation projects have now commenced?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, actual work has not yet commenced, though the tender has been awarded.

The date for site possession is 23rd January, 1984, and the anticipated date for completion is 23rd October, 1985.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 461 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

That means, Mr Speaker, that there has been a slippage of one year in relation to the modernisation project for this year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, I would not say there is a slippage of a year. There has been a slippage, Sir, as has already been stated earlier in the debate because we did not have the funds until we actually made the loans that we were seeking to raise; and those loans were not completed until very recently.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister state whether the costs as a result of the slippage have increased or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the tenderer was specifically asked whether he would hold to his tender over an extra period of something like 2½ months and he has agreed.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 462 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Is Government prepared to amend the law so that holders of 'B' driving licences are allowed to drive a moped as is the case in the United Kingdom, and as promised by the Hon Mr Featherstone in December of last year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir. A number of amendments to the Traffic Ordinance are in preparation and one of these will provide for holders of a 'B' driving licence to drive a moped.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 462 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, how many Traffic Bills do they propose to put before this House, because we have had no less than two Traffic Bills - one in each meeting of the last House? Can't we just have a comprehensive one, and deal with all the amendments? This question of the moped has been outstanding for a considerable time.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there is a distinction between the Bills which have come before the House, which have been enabling Bills for the follow-up action which is by way of regulation.

HON P J ISOLA:

What has been an enabling Bill?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

There are, in fact, three Bills that have come before the House this year, Mr Speaker, to enable regulations to be made. What remains to be done is to make the regulations.

HON P J ISOLA:

But that is what has gone by, Mr Speaker, surely, that is not so. The Traffic Bill that came had substantial amendments to the law, about the number of drivers per taxi and so on. What I am asking is why is it that we cannot have one Traffic Bill, and deal with all the amendments; and why haven't we had the moped one which was raised a long time ago, and agreed by the Minister in its proper turn? Why has that been, for example, postponed to the Taxi Association Ordinance, if I may call it that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

May I correct myself, Mr Speaker, it is the case, of course, that the Traffic Bills which have been produced this year or have been passed this year did not deal exclusively with regulations. As to whether one matter should precede another, as I said earlier on today, that is a matter of priority.

HON P J ISOLA:

But priority to whom? Is this not a matter of priority?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is a matter of relative priority.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 463 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what further consideration has Government given and what action has it taken to warn swimmers of the dangerous state of the sea at our beaches during the non-bathing season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, during the non-bathing season the beaches are inspected on weekdays and if the sea is rough the red flag is hoisted. There are warning notices at Catalan Bay and notices will be provided at Eastern Beach and Sandy Bay.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 463 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Since when has this new procedure been implemented?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Since the end of the last bathing season.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 464 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that they have been offered the PSTO MT workshop at the Viaduct site?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir. To my knowledge no such offer has been made.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state if they have renewed their tenancy agreement for the offices rented at Leon House, at what cost compared with previous agreements and what is the total paid up to the present for their occupation, inclusive of all expenses?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Government has renewed the tenancy agreement at Leon House in respect of the Income Tax Offices only, and in this case for a shorter lease of two years and four months with effect from 1st April, 1983.

The other agreements in respect of the Philatelic Bureau, the Typing Training Centre and the Industrial Relations Offices were not renewed when the tenancies expired last year. However, some arrears had to be paid in respect of the Industrial Relations Offices which could not be vacated when the lease expired.

The Income Tax Offices on the ground and first floor were previously held on a five year term paying an annual rent of £7,320 plus £2,720 service charges. The new lease is for a term of two years and four months at an annual rent of £24,900 and Maintenance/Service Charges of £3,200 per annum.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 465 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Hasn't the Minister considered that the increase in rent is very considerable indeed, and what sort of action does he plan to take for the future because, obviously, I do not suppose the Government intends to carry on paying such high rents?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, the increase is very high, Mr Speaker. In line with Government policy to vacate private rented accommodation, we are hoping - before the present lease expires - to move the Income Tax Office into Government-owned accommodation.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view of the high costs that such tenancies incur, wouldn't it be a sound financial policy of the Government to see what sort of offices, and perhaps even quarters they are using outside, and see if they could themselves build buildings or combine with existing ones, by reconstructing one on top of another, to be able to accommodate all these offices?



HON A J CANEPA:

I agree with the Hon Member, Mr Speaker. As a result of the borrowing recently concluded, the Government has agreed to allocate a sizeable sum of money to the improvement and rehabilitation of Government buildings into office accommodation. I can mention, for instance, what used to be the Loreto High School in Main Street (already some offices are being used there); and the Key and Anchor is being used; and it is also intended - if the money that I have referred to will allow - to rehabilitate at least part of St Jago's.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask, Mr Speaker, why the Government is paying increased rent in respect of premises that are subject to the moratorium legislation? Why is it that public funds are being committed, when there is legislation that precludes increases of rent until the moratorium is over? Perhaps the Hon and Learned Attorney-General could give his opinion to the House if he was here, but he is not here. That is one question, and the other question is: could the Hon Minister say what is the price per square foot that is being paid?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, in fact the original offer that was made to Government was calculated at £9 per square, and in the course of negotiations, we were able to reduce that to £7.50 per square.

HON P J ISOLA:

Perhaps I can have an answer to my question, at a later stage.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

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MR SPEAKER:

I understand that the Hon and Learned Attorney-General wishes to give some information to the House on a particular question?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, Mr Speaker, it is the question relating to the lease that the Government has on Leon House, and it relates specifically to the Income Tax Department. The additional information I would like to give to the House, Mr Speaker, relates to why the Government agreed to a new lease at a new rental without insisting on their rights under the moratorium that is currently in force. The position is that Part 3 of the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance does bind the Crown although the question of whether or not the Crown

is bound, I think, is not relevant; but there is no doubt that the Crown could claim the benefits of the moratorium against people who are bound - and undoubtedly a private landlord is bound. The position, in this case, was that the Crown voluntarily agreed to negotiate a new lease on new terms. It did so as a matter of judgement, not as a matter of insisting on legal rights, because it was felt that normal circumstances - and I will explain that - that the arrangements which were obtained were more desirable than insisting on one's right and becoming involved in the legal dispute. It was considered that the terms obtained were good terms, having regard to the lease that was thus secured to them, and also the rental at which it was secured. I mention the possibility of a legal dispute; the position there was that the landlord's lawyers argued that we were not entitled to claim a renewal of the lease, and indeed, went so far as to serve a writ for trespass on Government. My own Chamber's view - and this is what we advised the Government - was that the legal arguments of the landlords were not good arguments, but there was the prospect of a lengthy and possibly an expensive and, certainly a time-consuming legal dispute. In the event, bearing in mind that we had been negotiating for over a year, it was considered best to settle on the terms which we could negotiate. Those terms involved the reduction of the rental from £9 per square foot to £7.50 per square foot, which was considered to be favourable. On that basis, the Government in effect formed the judgement that that was the best way of dealing with this matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

What the Hon and Learned Attorney-General is saying is very disappointing. For the sake of avoiding litigation, in a case where the Attorney-General's Chambers takes the view that the landlord's claims are ill-founded, the landlord has agreed to spend public monies, backdated to the 1st April, 1983, for a period of two years and four months, of which eight months have gone by and for the privilege of escaping legal costs - and probably the Attorney-General's Chambers being proved wrong in the Court of law - the Government is prepared to pay, Mr Speaker, an additional £16,000 a year.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am not sure whether I am being asked a question, or I am being given information.

MR SPEAKER:

Precisely what I was going to say.

HON P J ISOLA:

I can put it in the form of a question.

MR SPEAKER:

Please do that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does not the Hon and Learned Attorney-General consider that this is an extremely expensive way of avoiding his department possibly being proved wrong in a Court of Law and, by advising the Government to pay an additional £18,000 a year for premises which the Government is not bound to pay, and which other landlords cannot collect at all, and where other tenants have taken the protection, does he consider it right that the Government should form a judgement to spend something like £20,000 of taxpayers money because of the possibility that they might lose the litigation and incur costs?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the answer is not as simple as that. What I am saying is that the Government came to the view as a matter of convenience and because of the prospects of a legal argument, and because it meant that the premises could be systematically vacated, and because - I did not say this before - arrangements are in hand for the removal of the Income Tax Department. The Government felt that it was convenient and reasonable to come to terms with the landlord on the basis that I have just outlined, and that it is a reasonable market rate to pay.

HON P J ISOLA:

Then why did the Government, Mr Speaker, form that view - in view of the fact that the Government has formed a view in this House that the rent moratorium should continue for everybody until January 31st, 1984? What makes this Government form the judgement that the taxpayers should finance additional monies in a case like this when the Government itself as an act of policy is preventing other landlords from increasing rents? Why is the Government so generous with the taxpayers' money, in this case, at a time of constraint? Could we have an answer to that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Certainly, Mr Speaker. There is nothing in the Rent Moratorium Legislation which prevents the tenant from negotiating a rent if he thinks that that rent is reasonable and prudent in the circumstances. The moratorium is directed towards landlord, it does not prevent a tenant from negotiating what he thinks is convenient and reasonable.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, but does the Attorney-General not agree that, in this case, the tenant is the taxpayer, not the Government. It is the taxpayer who has to pay the £20,000. Why does Government form the judgement that, in legislation which prohibits the increases of rent, they themselves are voluntarily incurring expense of the taxpayers to the tune of £20,000? Could that money not have been spent, for example, in allowing old age pensions to be received tax free?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. We are asking for information, not suggesting how money can be spent.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Government is responsible for the taxpayer's money and the Government came to the view, in its judgement, that this was convenient.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to go any further on this.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Attorney-General why was there a need for a settlement, when a law which he himself has passed in this House says that rents shall not be increased? Perhaps this is a political question and it should be answered by a Government Minister. Perhaps the Attorney-General is only acting on instructions.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not think it is a political question. I think it is a question of administrative judgement, with a legal element and an administrative element, and I have explained why it was considered convenient.

NO. 466 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what new Government development projects are envisaged going out to tender within the next twelve months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Tank Ramp Phase II has already gone out to tender and tenders are due on the 21st December, 1983. The contract period is 18 months.

St Mary's First School is to go out to tender in May, 1984, and work is to commence in July, 1984. The completion of this contract is expected to be in July, 1985.

The Tower Blocks remedial works will not be put out to tender, but negotiations are proceeding with a specialist firm so that work will commence during 1984.

Loreto Convent alterations and refurbishing to accommodate Government offices will be put out to tender in mid-February, 1984.

Bedsitters at Voids in Glacis Estate will be put out to tender in July, 1984. The contract will be of nine months duration.

Provision in the Improvement and Development Fund for all these projects is being made.

6.12.83

NO. 467 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether a tender has been awarded in respect of the proposed change of user for the old Port Office at Waterport?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir. The contract has been awarded in the sum of £92,739.95. The contractor will take possession of the site early in January, 1984. The contract completion date is October, 1984.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 467 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Who was the successful tenderer, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot remember. I can let you know, it will be in the Gazette in due course.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 468 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Have the repairs specified in the notice which the Magistrates' Court ordered the owners of the Theatre Royal to carry out, been completed to Government's satisfaction?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir. Most of the works referred to in the Section 23 Notice have not been complied with. The only works which have been carried out are the replacement of some dilapidated timber framed windows by aluminium ones.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 468 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Should not the works specified in that Notice have been completed by July of this year?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't know what the date is, Mr Speaker, but I can tell the Hon Member that the Attorney-General's Chambers have been instructed to proceed with legal action for non-compliance with the said Court Order.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has in fact any action been taken yet?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not able to say, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

Perhaps the Minister could ask the Attorney-General to let me know.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

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HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry I was absent from the House when I think two questions were posed which I could have answered, certainly the first question I could have answered which related to the Theatre

Royal. I understand that the question was: what legal action has in fact been taken? The position basically is that an Order was obtained - I think I gave this information to the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

I asked what further action had been taken once the six months had not been complied with?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The original Order was made on the 14th January, 1983, so we are talking about the 14th July, 1983, when the six months expired. The defendants in the case are represented by lawyers and there have been a series of letters exchanged between my Chambers and the Theatre Royal lawyers and also my Chambers and the Department of Crown Lands. The point of those letters were really to establish what progress was being made in complying with the Order and then checking back with the Director of Crown Lands to see whether he is content and the present position is that on the 1st December of this year the Director of Crown Lands wrote to our Chambers and enquired as to current progress and we are awaiting a reply from the lawyers for the defendants in the case. That is how it stands at the moment. It has been the case that previously on the 22nd November, the Director of Crown Lands had asked us to proceed to take further legal action. I think the position will be that if we do not get a reply within a reasonably prompt period of time then it will be time to take that legal action.



NO. 469 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Can Government confirm whether there has been recently any impediment in the supply of fuel oil to shipping?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. The suppliers of bunkers to ships calling at Gibraltar recently suspected that their fuel oil stocks might have been "off-specification" and were unable to bring in further supplies until the results (of analysis) of samples sent to their Central Laboratories in Holland were known.

After extensive tests it was decided by the suppliers that the oil was in fact suitable for bunkering and supplies to shipping were resumed on the 30th November.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 469 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

What caused the panic, Mr Speaker?

HON A J CANEPA:

The suspicion that they were not of the requisite quality, in particular, I think, sparked off by fuel oil which was found to be unsuitable at the Government's own Generating Station.

HON A J HAYNES:

If that oil was unsuitable, did it come from the same sources as the bunkering, and if so, how can parts be contaminated and not others?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't know.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Minister is not here to answer that kind of question.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am informed that it needed a lot of filtering.

HON P J ISOLA:

Was it a mistake on the part of Shell, or of the Waterport Power Station people?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Waterport Power Station are still not accepting that oil; they will not be using it.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, in any event, assuming that the oil has been contaminated, what would Government's contingency plans enable us to do?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Government has no contingency plan. The Government is not able to import large quantities of fuel oil for bunkering.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say, Mr Speaker, how many ships in fact had to be re-routed from coming to Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am informed, to the extent that the Captain of the Port has been able to ascertain the matter, that nine ships that would have called here for bunkers did not do so. The bunkers were suspended for six days, from the 24th to the 30th November.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am still not clear in my own mind. Is the oil dirty?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not in the least concerned and I am not going to allow questions on this question. The Government is not responsible for the quality of oil that is supplied by the company. Due to some fault in the quality of the oil, bunkers have been suspended for some time. The Opposition is entitled to ask questions which are pertinent to the economy of Gibraltar and such like insofar as that incident is concerned, but not insofar as to the supply that Shell makes to bunkering or the quality of the oil.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, as the Electricity Department is not accepting that oil, how is it that it is not good for the Electricity Department but it can be given for bunkering?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, we have a question here that deals with the suspension of supply to shipping. I am responsible for the Port, I am not able to mobilise all the resources of the Government to answer questions on any subject under the sun.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am concerned to know whether Government have in their agreement with the bunkering company, namely Shell, any conditions whereby they can exact from that company the kind of bunkering service which the Minister as Minister for Port is anxious to promote as part of the shipping promotion for the Port.

HON A J CANEPA:

I think, Mr Speaker, that Shell are just as anxious to ensure that they are able to provide a good, efficient and continuous service. Insofar as shipping is concerned, it has been a scare. If it had been the case that the oil was off-specification, and if the interruption of bunkering services to shipping had been for a longer period of time, obviously the Government would be expressing its concern to Shell in no uncertain terms, because it is a matter which is of vital importance to our economy. One would very much hope that this won't happen again.

HON A J HAYNES:

In any event, I agree, and we would expect nothing less than great concern to be shared by Government in such a matter. But, I would like to know if the Minister has that information, how long it would take to empty out the bunkers.

MR SPEAKER:

No, no.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, perhaps you might allow me to ask a question and it deals basically with the Electricity Generating Station. If the so-called contaminated oil has still not been accepted by the Department has its replacement cost any more money to the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I happen to know, Mr Speaker, that Shell has gone out of its way to give them a much more expensive oil at the regular price in order to retain the supply to the Department.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Economic Development and Trade state if he is satisfied that the Government has the necessary administrative, supervisory and technical expertise to discharge adequately their responsibilities on high standards of ship safety for ships registered in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, as Gibraltar is not a full convention port, it has authorised the five major classification societies to issue the relevant certificates required under the various international conventions that deal with the safety of ships at sea. Such certificates are only issued after survey by these societies. The Government is therefore completely satisfied that its responsibilities to ensure high standards of ship safety in respect of ships registered at Gibraltar are being fully discharged on its behalf by internationally recognised classification societies of high repute.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 470 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is therefore the Minister stating that the comments which were made in The Times are really not applicable to Gibraltar in the sense that the writer was stating, which I am sure the Minister knows?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is not what I am saying, Sir. What I am saying is that that recent criticism has not been directed at the safety aspect but at other union related matters, mainly the question of manning and our inability to provide worldwide coverage.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Chief Minister state if he has made representations to Her Majesty's Government about the ignominy of British Citizens settled in or visiting Spain, whether of Gibraltarian or United Kingdom origin, not being permitted by the Spanish Government to cross the border into the British territory of Gibraltar, whilst Spaniards are, and if so, what has been the response?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. I made strong representations to the Secretary of State, through His Excellency the Governor, in a letter dated 17 December, 1982, two days after the partial opening of the frontier. I referred to the matter again in a letter which I wrote to the Governor on 11 March, 1983, shortly before Señor Moran held his meetings in London with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary and again at my meeting with the Foreign Secretary on 15 November. Both the British and Gibraltar Governments regret that there has not been more progress towards the full restoration of direct communications between Spain and Gibraltar.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can the Chief Minister state what exactly he meant when in his recent address to the Royal Institute of International Affairs he stated that given normal and friendly relations, mutual respect, co-operation in tourism and trade, cultural contacts and a common status as nationals of the European Community the people of Gibraltar might one day through a natural evolution take a different view of their relationship with the Spanish State and will he categorically refute the implication contained in these remarks that a change in Spanish attitudes to Gibraltar could well produce a change in British Gibraltarians as to their national status and as to the sovereignty of Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the meaning of my words, if read in their context, is perfectly clear. I will accordingly put them in their context.

First of all, the words quoted in the question are preceded by the following:

"The key to the solution of the problem lies in a recognition by Spain of the right of the people of Gibraltar to decide whether they wish to live under British or under Spanish sovereignty. There is, of course, no doubt that, today, the vast majority of Gibraltarians want to live under British sovereignty".

Secondly, the words quoted in the question are followed by the words:

"This (that is to say, the possibility that the people of Gibraltar may one day, through a natural evolution, take a different view of their relationship with the Spanish State) is not a promise, not even an offer. But one thing is certain: if a change in relationship does not come about through the natural evolution I have described, then it will never come about. It will assuredly not come about, as the last thirty years have shown, as a result of pressure and duress. I can speak only for the present generation of Gibraltarians. The right to self determination is a continuing and living right, the exercise of which, by the Gibraltarians of today, cannot, either morally or in practice, bind the Gibraltarians of the future to one point of view or the other".

With regard to the second part of the question, there is no need for me to refute any implication that a change in Spanish attitudes to Gibraltar could well produce a change in British Gibraltarians as to their national status and as to the sovereignty of Gibraltar. There is no such implication in my statement. My theme was simply that a future generation of Gibraltarians might think differently from this one and will be free to do so. I have expressed this view often in the past.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 472 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the clarification but will the Chief Minister not agree that in using the words after this particular quotation "this is not an offer or a promise", would he not agree that the impression might have been given and that it is necessary therefore to have made the clarification that he has made today?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that there is no need to make any further clarification, except to put the words in their proper context.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 473 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will the Chief Minister disclose the text of the agreement actually signed by him and the Foreign Secretary in the United Kingdom in July, 1983, in relation to the closure of the Naval Dockyard in Gibraltar and in respect of which the Minister for Economic Development was a witness?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. I have arranged for copies to be made available to all Hon Members and to the Press.

It will be seen that all the essential points in the Agreement have already been made public, notably during the course of the statement I made to the House on 27 July, 1983.

There is, however, part of one sentence in the Agreement which may generate unnecessary excitement and I should therefore like to clarify this now. I refer to paragraph 2 of the Agreement which reads:

"The Royal Naval Dockyard will not now close until 31 December, 1984, unless both Governments agree to an earlier date".

The reason for the second part of this sentence, that is, 'an earlier date', was that, had the plans for the commercialisation of the Dockyard proceeded at a fast pace, it would have been in the interests of the commercial yard, and in the interests of maximum employment from the earliest possible date, to have opened the yard to commercial work as soon as it was ready to take this on.

As we all know, the hope that the commercial yard might have been ready before the end of 1984 is now unlikely to be fulfilled.

Indeed, I regret to say that I am informed that, unless agreement can be reached very soon on going ahead with commercialisation, the first full redundancy notices will have to be issued very early in 1984. Naval ship repair work would have to cease not later than August, 1984, but more probably in June, when it would be necessary to start paying off the workforce on a gradual basis. The naval yard would then finally close on 31 December, 1984. There would be no commercial yard - or anything else - to replace it and the naval work which has been earmarked for Gibraltar during the 3-year period 1985-1987 would be transferred to yards in Britain. Those obstructing the course of commercialisation, in whatever way, would do well to ponder on these realities before it is too late.



SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 473 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I won't ask any questions on the Agreement because, obviously one has to consider it, but can I ask the Chief Minister, in a way it is pre-empting the next question, at whose suggestion was a written Agreement made? Who thought that it was necessary that the British Government should have to sign a commitment or the Gibraltar Government should have to sign a commitment?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I hope that the Hon Member will also put No. 474 together and I can answer them together.

MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps the answer is that the Hon Member should withdraw this supplementary and ask it at the next one. Next question.

NO. 474 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can the Chief Minister inform the House whether there has been any occasion other than the agreement in relation to the closure of the Naval Dockyard and its replacement by a commercial operation when he has actually signed an agreement with the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom and if so will he indicate on what occasions this has occurred?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, there has been no similar occasion.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 474 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I then ask, Mr Speaker, what made it necessary on this occasion that the Gibraltar Government and the British Government should sign an agreement; was it distrust on the part of one of the other or vice versa?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There was no question of distrust at all. The British Government suggested that the matter should be dealt with in this way, presumably to add a touch of formality to an important occasion, and I saw no reason to disagree. Even if there had been no formal signed agreement, I am of course certain that - as on so many other occasions in the past - terms agreed between the British and Gibraltar Governments would have been fully honoured by both sides.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, why was it necessary on this particular occasion? Surely there have been some very important agreements made between the British Government and the Gibraltar Government, on the right of self determination, on a whole number of vitally important issues for the future, and the British Government has never thought it necessary to make it before the occasion for a formal agreement in writing. Does this mean that, in future, agreements between the British and Gibraltar Governments will have to be reduced to writing?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I don't know whether any other agreements in future will be so; it was done in this case, and the reasons I have given make it perfectly clear that there was no sinister motive, if I may say so. I noticed, in one or two areas of our negotiations, it looked as if they were treating with a less colonial Gibraltar than would have been the case otherwise, when the Secretary of State himself came down to sign the agreement.

HON P J ISOLA:

But has this not got the implication and the danger, Mr Speaker, that it is not a dependent territory signing for which Her Majesty's Government is responsible both economically, defence and foreign affairs; but is giving the impression that it is two almost sovereign nations signing an agreement putting a much greater load on Gibraltar for the future?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I rather see it the other way. I feel much prouder to say that the Foreign Secretary himself wanted to sign an agreement with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, and I see no sinister motive at all. All the areas that are covered in the agreement were included in an exchange of letters between Mr Ian Stewart and myself, but of course he could not commit his Government and I could not commit the Government either. Hon Members will see that the agreement was signed and that the terms of this agreement state it will be recommended by the Chief Minister to the Gibraltar House of Assembly.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I take it that notwithstanding the fact that this is all part of an agreement which involves commercialisation, the fact that one part of the agreement is not implemented does not invalidate the other part. Am I correct? I am referring to the question, at the time of the statement, that I asked on the transfer of land, which the Chief Minister subsequently corrected by saying that it was not conditional on the question of commercialisation.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Which transfer of land?

HON J BOSSANO:

The Hon Member will recall, when he announced to the House the package, I raised the question of land. What I am saying is that it is still true to say that, in spite of the fact that it is all incorporated in one agreement, the fulfilment of the establishment of a commercial yard is not a necessary pre-condition of the fulfilment of clause 12 of the transfer of land I take it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I entirely agree. The two areas connected with land I view as separate and valid in themselves. Indeed, insofar as clause 12 is concerned, I did announce, I think, at the last meeting that we had made excellent progress and it has not yet been signed by the Secretary of State, but it appears he is going to sign in the course of the next few days; so that is clause 12,

and there has been no commercialisation yet. Anyhow, I entirely agree that the sites that were negotiated for the benefit of Gibraltar, the prime sites, those parts of the package I would say come to us anyhow.

HON J BOSSANO:

I would now like, Mr Speaker, perhaps to ask the Chief Minister on the new information that he has made available to the House about the failure of the prospective managers to reach any agreement with the workforce. Does the Chief Minister accept that, if no agreement is reached, it justifies the Ministry of Defence running down the Dockyard earlier?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, yes and no. I do not think it would be to the detriment of the labour force employed up to the end of 1984. It may well be that people will be made redundant and will be paid off whilst the Dockyard is closed; that is a different matter. I think I ought to read that sentence again because it is important, and it has been, of course very clearly studied and cleared with those who are responsible: "I regret to say that I am informed that, unless agreement can be reached very soon on going ahead with commercialisation, the first full redundancy notices will have to be issued very early in 1984. Naval ship repair work would have to cease not later than August, 1984, but more probably in June, when it would be necessary to start paying off the workforce on a gradual basis. The naval yard would then finally close on 31 December, 1984. There would be no commercial yard - or anything else - to replace it and the naval work which has been earmarked for Gibraltar", etc. The point made there is that, unless something else is happening in the Dockyard which is in respect of commercialisation, you cannot just work the Dockyard fully until the end of the year and close it as a shop. You have got to gradually bring down the work in order that, come the end of 1984, if there is nothing to substitute it, there will be just the bare Dockyard: all ships which may have been there for repairs have left, and that would be as bad a desolation as is described in this morning's Chronicle on what has happened to Chatham, by one of our local correspondents in the United Kingdom. So that is the way that has been put to us, and that is that: unless activity is going on to justify other activity, they have to think in terms of closing the Dockyard and having nothing in its place.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, wouldn't the Chief Minister agree that another way of looking at the signature of this agreement - which for the first time, to my knowledge, has been necessary between the Government of the UK and the Gibraltar Government - is that this is part disengagement of the British Government economically from Gibraltar, and they want to make absolutely sure that when the Chief Minister accepted this, he knew what he was doing, and that he appended his signature to it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can hardly consider that disengagement, if you refer to the last paragraph of the agreement which says: "Future economic assistance. If there are future difficulties for the economy, Her Majesty's Government will be prepared, in line with the policy of supporting Gibraltar during the present restrictions, to look at the whole economic and budgetary situation with a view to considering whether, and if so what, further measures of support will be necessary or justifiable in the circumstances of the time". I think, with the greatest respect, that this is a reaffirmation of British commitment to Gibraltar, and I am proud to have put my signature to that document.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view of the difficulties that the Government, in fact, experienced in getting the support and sustain aid before the actual acceptance of the closure of the Dockyard, doesn't it put in question the whole attitude of the British Government with regard to the future consequences of the closure of the Dockyard?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No. There is a question here by Mr Bossano, No. 491, about the question of further measures of support, on this point, and to which I have a reply. I would be anticipating, but my answer to that one now is definitely no, it shows a continuing effect. I would never have interpreted that, not in the spirit in which the negotiations were carried out both at my first meeting with the Prime Minister, with Mr Ian Stewart here, and subsequently with the Foreign Secretary and the second meeting of the Prime Minister. I would not have interpreted that at all. But if it was necessary to ratify that in terms of the written agreement, I think paragraph 17 is sufficient proof that the continuing commitment is reaffirmed in an agreement. We have not had any agreement about support signed by any Minister before, now we have one.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, doesn't the Chief Minister agree that if, as a result of all the studies that have been carried out, the possibility of the Dockyard being viable was more, I think, in favour of being so than in not being so, doesn't the Chief Minister agree that in the light of the reports that we have had, or the statements that he himself has said, before he actually agreed about the possible catastrophic effect on Gibraltar if the Dockyard closed, that all these assurances given are not really all that reliable, in the sense that . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Order. I am afraid that is a completely hypothetical question, and you are asking for assurances.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I said doesn't he agree - in the light of all the things that have happened, the fact that the viability of commercialisation is not as reliable as we would like to see it in this House - that all the assurances that are being given of supporting and sustaining Gibraltar is going to leave Gibraltar more or less at leisure in the future . . . . .

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is extraordinary that the man who was instrumental, well with the help of the Hon Mr Bossano, for starting integration in Gibraltar, should always be so suspicious of the country with which he wanted to integrate.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, if I may be allowed to answer that statement, it is precisely the position that we want to get the British Government so that they could not disengage economically as they are doing now.

MR SPEAKER:

We are debating now.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I ask if paragraph 17 of this agreement is not in fact open to the interpretation, which could be very damaging for the future of Gibraltar, that if the present restrictions are in fact lifted by the time the commercialisation project fails - which would be in four years' time - the British Government will not have a commitment to support Gibraltar because the restrictions will not be there? Does not that paragraph require some clarification?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is naturally expected from the Leader of the Opposition, against the package that I obtained. This has nothing whatever to do with the restrictions; it is a parallel commitment, in line with the policy of supporting Gibraltar through these present restrictions. The way it is meant, and I have no reason to believe otherwise, was in respect of the restrictions you have the policy of support and sustain. In respect of the Dockyard, if there are any future difficulties for the economy in the context of this agreement, then the Government - in the same way as they have done it with support and sustain in respect of the restrictions - will look at the whole economic and budgetary situation with a view to considering whether and if so what further measures. So, really, this is a reiteration of the support and sustain policy of the Government in respect of the restrictions applied to the closure of the Naval Dockyard.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Chief Minister will have noticed that the word 'sustain' is left out from that paragraph 17.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes it is, but it is in line with the policy of support.

MR SPEAKER:

We must not anticipate the next question. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 475 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Since Messrs Wilks and Belch said in the recent television discussion that they saw no reason for their report not being public will Government consider publication of this particular report?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 476 of 1983.



6.12.83

NO. 476 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

In view of the fact that the conclusions summarised at the beginning of the Casey Report contains nothing of a commercial nature will Government at this stage make it public?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the Government's position on the question of the publication of those reports has already been made clear and has not changed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 475 AND 476 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So, Mr Speaker, the Government is not prepared to take the advice of its consultants on this particular issue. Is that a fact?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will the land and assets of the Naval Dockyard be handed over to the Gibraltar Government whether the commercialisation project proceeds or not?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, as stated in paragraph 6 of the Agreement which I have tabled in replying to Question No. 473:

"Dockyard land and assets for the new commercial enterprise will be transferred free of charge to the Government of Gibraltar".

When we concluded our negotiations with the British Government in July we did not envisage commercialisation not going ahead and the alternative proposed in the question did not therefore arise. We remain of the view that commercialisation should most certainly go ahead.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 477 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

I accept entirely that that is the Government's view, Mr Speaker, but what I am saying is if the transfer of the land conditional on commercialisation actually taking place, or is the British Government view that if whoever happens to be the Gibraltar Government in the near future no longer wishes commercialisation to go ahead, they will still be given the land and assets of the Dockyard whether they want it or not? Which of the two is it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think this question is a hypothetical one.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it a hypothetical question because the Hon Member doesn't know the answer or because he doesn't want to answer it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Neither because I don't know or because I don't want because it is hypothetical and I don't answer hypothetical questions.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, given the Chief Minister's supplementary information to the effect that Government proposes to continue with commercialisation despite the difficulties encountered so far, what measures does Government propose to take to ensure that the works necessary for commercialisation will commence and be completed by . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect, how does this question arise from the question that we are being asked?

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if we are talking about the handing over of land we are talking about the continuation of the project. In the same way that Mr Bossano has been concerned to know whether the land will be handed over if another Government takes another view on commercialisation, my view is, is the Government going to go ahead with the tranche of land, Mr Speaker, which of itself requires the re-modernisation which we have been informed of in previous meeting, and I want to know whether the Chief Minister is going to go ahead with that despite the difficulties encountered or no?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is very clear, Mr Speaker, that we all know the conditions under which the £28m are coming in, and it implies a commercial dockyard, and it implies an agreement with the workforce, and so on. If they do not happen, I have indicated in Question No. 473 what will happen.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Chief Minister make a statement as to the action that he will take in the event of non-cooperation from the unions within a given period of time?

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have asked that question three times already. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 478 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

When will the land and assets of the Naval Dockyard be handed over to the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, it is expected that the land and assets of the Naval Dockyard will be handed over to the Gibraltar Government on the 1st January, 1985.

6.12.83

NO. 479 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the MOD houses intended for the 40 or 50 expatriate managers that the Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd intends to recruit would be covered by the agreement on Crown Lands recently made public?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. As the Hon Member will see when he reads the Agreement referred to in my answer to Question No. 473, and if the Hon Member will look at paragraph 10 of the Agreement, he will see that the Ministry of Defence will provide 46 houses or apartments, for use by management staff of the new commercial dockyard, on 3-year leases.

6.12.83

NO. 480 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state whether any progress has been made in the appointment of a Chairman for the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation and give details of any other persons that have been approached for the post of Chairman since the last meeting of the House?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 481 of 1983.

NO. 481 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state why GBC has found it necessary to advertise for a Secretary for the Board of GBC and could not such Board have been serviced by an existing member of the staff of GBC?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I must express some surprise at these questions since I explained the position fully in reply to Question No. 375 and supplementaries on 18 October. I will, however, re-state the position.

The work of the Chairman and of the Board generally has increased considerably over the years and it is the extent of the commitment involved that has been one of the main reasons, if not the main reason, why persons who have been offered the appointment have declined it. Consideration has been given to paying an honorarium to the Chairman but the Government has decided against this, mainly on the grounds that membership of Government Boards and Committees is considered, and in my view, should continue to be considered as service rendered by public spirited persons without financial reward. If this principle were not to be observed in this case, it might be difficult to adhere to it in others.

The Board accordingly suggested that the best way of overcoming the difficulty would be to make use of the provision contained in the Ordinance and appoint a paid part-time Secretary who would lighten the workload of the Chairman and, indeed, of the members of the Board as well. The Secretary will be responsible to the Board and independent of management though obviously maintaining regular frequent contact with the latter.

It is the view of the Board, which I share, that once a Secretary has been appointed, it should be easier to find a person willing to take on the Chairmanship.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 480 AND 481 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, why cannot a member of the staff of GBC, which is costing the taxpayers a very substantial amount of money, be transferred to service the Board as a paid part-time Secretary and thus prevent a greater burden on public funds? Would not, in fact, the amount being paid to a Secretary if recruited, be greater than the sort of honorarium that should be paid to a Chairman and are we not doing the same thing in a different way?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly not. I envisage that the part-time Secretary, efficient and able to service an independent Board, would cost less than an honorarium to a strong Chairman. If you gave him very little, it might appear to be minimising the importance of his job; and if you gave him too much, it would be more than the Secretary. This is the view of the Board - and I share it fully; a very satisfactory way out of the heavy burden. It should be stressed, the Board must be separate from the administration if the independence of television is to be maintained.

HON P J ISOLA:

Which administration?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of GBC, from which the Hon Member was saying the member should be recruited.

HON P J ISOLA:

But, Mr Speaker, isn't the Board set up to run GBC? Are they in conflict with the management of GBC?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They are not in conflict, but they have very wide powers that they have to exercise almost every day. You just cannot find anybody who will do that on an honorary basis, and it has been difficult to find even a Chairman - even if we were to pay one. There is specific provision in the Ordinance, which has nothing to do with the question of the management, that the Board may appoint a Secretary. It has to be remembered that, for the early years of GBC, there were managing agents which were running GBC. That has ceased, and therefore there is a gap in the connection between the Board and the administration. The Board thinks - and I am entirely in agreement with the idea - that there is provision in the Ordinance that the Board may appoint a Secretary, and that this is the best way of achieving what we all want, which is an efficient and well-run GBC.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is there not a manager of GBC today, appointed at very great public expense, at a very high salary indeed, in fact, a higher salary than the Commissioner of Income Tax, and should not that person be, if necessary, Secretary to the Board? Should the Government not encourage a situation under which the Board works with management of GBC but does not act as a check on the management of GBC? Is it not in the public interest that the Secretary of the Board to be appointed should be a member of the staff of GBC, who are all responsible to their employers, GBC, who are in turn heavily subsidised by the taxpayer?



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The general management of GBC's functions are completely different to servicing the Board which has to ensure the proper management of the statutory powers vested in it. That is why there has to be a difference.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I cannot understand that answer. Is not the manager the employee of GBC and therefore GBC, since the management consults them - I know the Chief Minister is reading the Ordinance: it won't help him because the Ordinance talks of managing agents and lots of things that no longer exist. That is another piece of legislation that ought to attract the attention of my Friend the Hon and Learned Attorney-General.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

"Establishment and constitution of the Corporation" says the Ordinance, "For the purposes of this Ordinance there is hereby established a Corporation to be called the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation. The operations of the Corporation shall, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, be controlled and governed by a Board which shall consist of a Chairman and not more than nine other members of whom the Chairman and not more than seven members shall be appointed by the Governor by notice in the Gazette, and two members, who shall be advisory only and shall have no votes in the proceedings of the Board, shall be appointed by the Managing Agents". That is no longer so; they were the people who were doing the work. "The Board may appoint a Secretary of the Corporation". That is separate from the management.

HON P J ISOLA:

I know, Mr Speaker. Can I ask the Chief Minister, that Ordinance which is out-of-date, referred to Managing Agents. That has disappeared; the Government is now paying for a man to be Manager of that Corporation at a very high salary indeed - I think it is £20,000 a year or something like that - and what I am saying is, cannot the Board appoint him as Secretary? Let him service the Board, as is done in a lot of Government Committees where the Executive Officer of the Board is a very high executive in that Department, instead of incurring still more expense on a Corporation that already costs the taxpayer up to 31st March, 1983, £698,000-odd?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The General Manager of GBC is not the executive of the Board.

HON P J ISOLA:

He has no function then, Mr Speaker, that is all I can say. I don't know what he is doing there.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 482 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether existing directions from the Governor-in-Council to the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation preclude advertising by the European Movement in support of their campaign to procure for Gibraltarians the right to vote for a Member in the European Parliament and if so will Government amend their directions?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the directions do not preclude advertising by the European Movement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 482 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

I thank the Hon and Learned Chief Minister for that answer because it clarifies the problem that has arisen during the recent signature collection campaign of the European Movement which was brought to my notice.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 483 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government explain how it is the cost of films put on Gibraltar television has gone up and yet there are a great number of repeat and old films shown on the screen?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 485 and 486 of 1983.

NO. 484 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government make a statement in relation to the accounts of Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation up to 31st March, 1983, which reveal an operating deficit of £698,045 and has Government made any proposal to ensure that the Corporation does not continue to be such a burden on public funds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Government advised GBC that the subsidy sought for 1983/84 would be reduced by £100,000. GBC has announced the measures which they have taken in order to operate within the reduced budget. The subvention is being increased in order to offset the decrease in estimated revenue from advertising.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 484 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is that all the Government has to say about the operating deficit; it has reduced the subsidy to GBC by £100,000, that is all?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, we have reduced it, and in fact it has been very difficult for them, I don't know whether it has been answered, or there is another question about broadcasting outside and so on - it has been hard to cut their budget. The Treasury have given them advice how best to do it, to the extent that they can with regard to financial know-how, but they produced their estimates and we have reduced them by £100,000, which they could hardly bear. They have been making every effort to try and keep them in the parameters of that, except that since their proposed estimates were produced to the Government, the expected receipt from advertising has unfortunately gone down.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Chief Minister not aware that the economies that are being made have been at the expense entirely of the viewer; the outside broadcasting of political matters and interviews, all that has gone on - although one gets just a few seconds; sport has been cut almost entirely; repeat films have been produced; week-end television has been taken off. Every single economy done by GBC has been at the expense of the viewer and none at the expense of the official administration and running of the Corporation. On the contrary, we are now going to have a Secretary as well paid from public funds.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Perhaps the Secretary may be able to help the Board in trying to make economies from the management side.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 485 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government explain the position in relation to the sum of £15,170 paid by GBC for research marketing and consultancy work and what did this in fact involve?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 483 and 486 of 1983.

NO. 486 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

How is it that the costs of outside broadcasting by GBC has increased and yet there has been a dramatic cut in the broadcasting of sport by GBC and does Government consider that the Corporation have got their priorities right?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, as the House will be aware, Section 8(3) of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Ordinance provides that, subject to any directions of the Governor-in-Council, the Board shall be responsible for the policy to be adopted by the Corporation in the provision of radio and television services.

While I consider it appropriate to answer questions on the appointment of a Chairman and Secretary, which I have just done, on matters arising out of the Governor-in-Council's directions, which I have also done, and on the overall financial allocation (No. 484), I think there is a danger that, if the Government were to take it upon themselves to answer in this House for matters of detail, the Government might seem to be interfering with the running of the Corporation and encroaching on the Board's responsibility.

I therefore think it would be preferable if the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition were to seek the answer to this question, as well as to Question No. 485, on market research, and No. 486 the broadcasting of sport, direct from the Board rather than from the Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 483, 485 AND 486 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Government not accept some responsibility in this in view of the fact that the Hon and Learned Chief Minister has traditionally answered all questions and queries on GBC, and rightly so, Mr Speaker, because of the enormous amount of public funds that this House commits to the running of this Corporation? Does the Government not agree that the Hon and Learned Chief Minister in his capacity as Minister for Information should, when these questions are asked, collate the information so that the House may know how the monies that it votes are being spent?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

While it is true that the Government has previously answered questions of detail relating to the GBC, sometimes very reluctantly, I am of the view that - for the reasons that I have given - we have to try and curtail rather than extend the areas of these questions. The Government should certainly have a say, by way of consultation with the Board, but would not impose its will on the administration of the Corporation and is accordingly not answerable for the Corporation in this House except on major issues. In details, the Government does

not want to be a post office for the Opposition. If the Opposition have any queries in respect of the way in which it is run, and they address the Corporation, and they do not get reasonable answers - I won't say satisfactory because sometimes you write a letter and you do not get a satisfactory answer - but if they then consider that the Board is acting unreasonably in dealing with their queries, I would be quite happy to look into it. But, I do not want to be the post office for minor matters, in this House, for the Corporation's duties.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that the Chief Minister is not being a post office for the Corporation? Is it not a fact that the Chief Minister should be greatly concerned himself at the problems that seem to arise with this Corporation, at the enormous amount of public funds that are voted by this House for this, and does he not think it appropriate that it is in this House that questions with regard to these funds should be answered - and not by correspondence between GBC and Members of this side of the House, as if GBC was an independent Corporation, which it clearly can never be so long as it relies so heavily on public funds and public subsidisation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Precisely because it relies so heavily on public funds, one has to be doubly careful not to attempt to throw one's weight and alter the neat balance of its independence. I am concerned about the cost of GBC, and I answer generally questions of substance connected with GBC as I have done today. But in the detailed matters, I think we must maintain the Corporation's independence in that way.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 487 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what is its policy with regard to advertising of official notices in the local news media?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Government uses its judgement in deciding whether it will get value for money in each particular case and also takes into account the extent to which a particular publication is of a general "news value" as opposed to acting as the organ of a political party.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 487 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, who makes the judgement as to what is or what is not the organ of a political party, the Minister for Information?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, in conjunction with his advisers.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Hon and Learned Chief Minister aware of the dangers of leaving it to a politician to make that judgement, in view of the fact that it is well known that certain newspapers that get advertising support a particular political party in Gibraltar although, possibly, with far more discretion than others?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am talking of party political organs and not papers of general circulation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon and Learned Chief Minister state the principles upon which this is decided? Has it not occurred recently, in the case of one particular newspaper, is this not the first time that this has occurred in this newspaper and one other one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is not. There are three party organs.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the best advice the Hon and Learned Chief Minister can give to newspapers - if they want Government advertising - is to hide their political feelings, and that way they get advertising from the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think you could not hide the political bias of some papers if you tried.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, that may well be so; but equally, it could be said of other newspapers, where the bias is very clear for all who want to see it clearly. Will those papers be deprived of their advertising, Mr Speaker, even if they support the party in power?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I wonder how much of those papers do publish criticism of the Government, for I am sure the party organ never publishes any criticism of themselves.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Wouldn't it be better, Mr Speaker, perhaps for those papers who are claiming that they are not organs, to change the name?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a matter for the paper; it has nothing to do with me.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Wouldn't the Chief Minister say that, if it was not so publicly said that it is a party organ, then the Government would be considering it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

But it is not a party organ, you can say what you like.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Chief Minister say, therefore, that if the judgement of himself, and this Committee that he has, that there are papers in Gibraltar who do not call themselves party organs and they have actually been working for a particular party ever since they started printing?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is not my view of the situation. There are papers that may or may not favour a particular party; others are only published to run down all the other people and put themselves up in the sky.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't it a fact that the other papers have done precisely the opposite all the time?

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Chief Minister, is it not a fact that, very busy as he is, he finds time nearly every Saturday morning to visit the premises of a particular newspaper, and is this a purely social visit?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, not only on Saturdays but whenever I can, because I am very friendly with the editor. I make no apologies, and he makes no apologies; but he exercises his discretion and he writes a lot of stuff that I do not like - and I never tell him, because it is a free paper.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, if the paper in question writes a bit of stuff that he likes then it is alright?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a different question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has the Chief Minister ever subscribed or controlled the articles that come out in the Post?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the answer is no.

HON A J HAYNES:

Ours is the only paper with a political bias it seems, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Are you asking a question?

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, has the Chief Minister ever been familiar with the principles of natural justice?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. Next question

NO. 488 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government any information as to how security at HM Dockyard was breached when unauthorised foreigners were allegedly taken in and shown around there?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, as the incident occurred entirely on MOD property it would not be appropriate to comment other than to state that the authorities concerned have taken all action necessary in the circumstances.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 488 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, it is confirmed therefore that this incident happened. Was this incident not perpetrated by an employee of the Government?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I would not use the word 'perpetrated' in any event, Mr Speaker, it was not a question of perpetration, it was a question of inadvertence. There was not an employee of the Gibraltar Government involved. When the Gibraltar Police became aware of the matter, because I think somebody made representations to them, they referred the people to the Ministry of Defence. It is a Ministry of Defence matter.

HON G T RESTANO:

So this incident was not carried out inadvertently by a Government employee?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Not by a Gibraltar Government employee, no.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 489 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that expatriate managers and supervisors in the employment of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will receive salaries higher than parity while native workers in the employment of the same company will be paid lower than parity wages?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the Government understands that wages for employees in the new commercial yard will initially be set around the prevailing UK parity levels. Furthermore, the basic wages and salaries will be the same for both expatriate and local employees, whether managerial or industrial.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 489 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So the internationally determined wages for expatriates referred to in the project study are no longer being adhered to. Is that the case?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am not quite sure what lies beyond the Hon Member's supplementary question. If he means that the earnings of expatriates may be higher than those of locally employed labour, that is not a question which I am quite prepared to answer, Mr Speaker. Is that what he means?

HON J BOSSANO:

No, I do not mean that, Mr Speaker. What I am saying is that according to the printed information in the project study produced in May, 1983, which we are told is the latest definitive document on wages and salaries, it says that expatriate managers and supervisors will be paid a salary which is the international going rate. Am I to understand that that policy has now been changed?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the basic wages and salaries will be the same for both expatriate and local employees, whether managerial or industrial. That is my answer to his question.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon Member aware then that, in the project study, the intention was to pay expatriate managers and supervisors more than locally entered workers?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, again as I have said in answer to earlier questions by the Hon Member, there have been many projections made, I am giving him the latest information I have, based on information which is being passed to us by A & P Appledore.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member has said in answer to an earlier question, that the latest information on pay and conditions was the information upon which the projections had been made. When I asked him, Mr Speaker, whether the Hon Member could confirm that for locally entered workers it was intended to pay people time and a half for work on Sundays in March this year, he said he was unaware of what was intended in March this year, he was aware of what was intended in May this year. I am now asking him, was he aware that in May this year it was the intention to pay expatriate managers rates of pay which are described, not as parity with UK, but as internationally determined rates of pay and, consequently, obviously not linked to parity? Is he aware of that?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I must confess that the phrase 'internationally approved rates' is not one which resides in my memory from my reading of the report.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say, when the policy was decided, that locally entered managers and supervisors and UK recruited managers and supervisors would be on the same basic rates of pay?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I cannot say with any precision. I have given the Hon Member what I think is an honest and fair answer to his question, which is that the basic wages and salaries will be the same for both expatriate and local employees, whether managerial or industrial. Whether there may at some time have been some different intention is a matter which seems to be irrelevant; what I am stating now, and it will be on the record, is the one which I think the House should latch onto for future reference.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is this a matter of Government policy or a matter that has been decided by A & P Appledore themselves?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

It is that which has been decided by A & P Appledore, Mr Speaker.

NO. 490 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

In the light of the statement made by the Financial and Development Secretary in the July meeting of the House of Assembly, can Government state when it first found out that the use of the word "support" in the 1981 Defence White Paper implied a commitment to grant-in-aid and was qualitatively different from the use of the words "sustain and support", implying development aid used in connection with the border restrictions?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the word "support" as distinct from "support and sustain" can be interpreted in different ways depending on the circumstances. In the July meeting, the Financial and Development Secretary was not suggesting that the word "support" necessarily implied a de facto commitment to grant-in-aid. He pointed out that there was a risk of Gibraltar becoming grant-aided and that HMG could have considered that situation as fulfilling its obligation in the June 1981 Defence White Paper. The crux of the matter is that under the obligation to "support" the economy, HMG has agreed to provide up to £28m for commercialisation, as opposed to some other amount for grant-in-aid.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 490 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Chief Minister then saying, in fact, that no particular significance should be attached to the omission of the word "sustain" in the 1981 Defence White Paper?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I hope that that became clear in my earlier answers about support and sustain, which was a policy which was developed in the light of the Spanish restrictions. I think, overall, the statement in the Defence White Paper was speaking in connection mainly with the results of the Ministry of Defence decision to close the Dockyard. Therefore, I do not consider that there has been any change. What they were saying is, in this context, we have the responsibility to support. I have looked carefully at what the Financial and Development Secretary then said, and what he said was - and this is something that might have happened, I think we have done much better than that - he said: "We require no thanks for that. What have we got over the past two years, since it first seemed likely that the Dockyard was going to close? After numerous studies we have, in fact, got the £28m which Mr Laddo suggested was available two years ago; it wasn't. It was not available until late last year when HMG accepted that, in its view, a commercial Dockyard could be viable. Up to that time there was a danger that we would not get any support for a commercial Dockyard from HMG and that we would be pushed into grants-in-aid. Some people may consider that that would have been a better choice, that is a matter of opinion, but all I am saying is . . .", and then the Hon Member interrupted and the Financial Secretary picked it up

again and said: "What I am saying, Mr Speaker, is that the danger would have been that HMG would have considered that it was fulfilling its obligation to support, not sustain - the word sustain was not used in the Command White Paper of June, 1981 - to support Gibraltar by granting aid". So, I think that the performance supports my interpretation of the word support.

HON J BOSSANO:

But what I am saying, Mr Speaker, and what I am asking the Government to confirm, because I have taken the fact that the Financial and Development Secretary said what the Hon and Learned Chief Minister has quoted, that the British Government had made it clear that in using the word "support" in the Command White Paper of June, 1981, and the fact that "sustain" did not appear there, was a deliberate decision - and that the implications of that deliberate decision was that they had in fact the opportunity, at any stage, of arguing that they had an obligation to support but not necessarily to sustain the economy. The reason why I am asking that is because if that is the case then it seems to me that, since 1981, the Government has been using the words "sustain and support" and the word "support" on its own as interchangeable on many occasions.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Apart from anything else, I think the proof of the pudding is in the eating; we now have this offer - whether it is good or bad, it is a substantial offer - which might have been avoided by an attempt at giving grants-in-aid. Apart from the question of support and sustain, which is this policy, there is the overall responsibility of the British Government, underwritten in the Gibraltar Constitution, of its duty to support Gibraltar. That could have been discharged in one of two ways for them, under that part, which had nothing whatever to do with the frontier - which is where the support and sustain policy comes - and that is to say; 'we are going to support you by giving you grants-in-aid'. It was a big decision, which was not taken until later, a big decision which was taken at the highest level. There were people in certain departments, of which we now have a former member, who suggested that it was cheaper perhaps, or better, to give grants-in-aid. It went up to the top, where it was decided that Gibraltar deserved better; and that is what the answer is.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 491 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is Government satisfied that the use of the words "Further measures of support" in the House of Commons statement of 27th July, 1983, has the wider meaning attached to the "sustain and support" policy and not the narrower meaning of the use of the word "support" in the July 1981 Defence White Paper?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the formula "sustain and support" has traditionally been linked as the Hon Member himself linked it in the previous question, to the frontier restrictions. The actual wording used in the 1981 Defence White Paper is "the Government's obligation to support the economy of Gibraltar". This clearly contains a wider rather than a narrower meaning. The Government considers that the undertaking given by HMG on the 27 July, 1983, has an even wider meaning, and it has been confirmed by performance, that is why I said that the obligation of the word "support" in the White Paper has now been translated into support to set up a commercial dockyard at the expense of which we already know, as I was saying about the £28m and the rest. At the same time, if I may say so because it is relevant, the package that was agreed at that time - because we knew quite well that the Dockyard, with the very best will in the world, might not make up for the old Dockyard - hence we have this prime site given to us for free and the British Government is paying for the reprovisioning to help the Gibraltar economy in other areas to make up for any loss that might be suffered by the Dockyard.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 491 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So in fact the answer is, Mr Speaker, that the reference to the policy of supporting Gibraltar in paragraph 17 of the Agreement that the Chief Minister has made available today, which is the Agreement to which I am referring in my reference to the House of Commons statement, has to be understood as having the meaning of "sustain and support" and not the meaning referred to by the Financial Secretary in page 307 of Hansard of the July meeting?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Financial Secretary was talking in a debate of alternative ways in which the British Government could discharge its obligations contained in the White Paper. This, I think, is a further proof - as I said before, they go in parallel, and that is why I made the point that in line with the policy of supporting Gibraltar during the present restrictions, it is clearly the kind of help that was being given in respect of one which could be given in respect of the other. I am quite satisfied that we have got that.