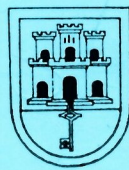


# GIBRALTAR

## 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.

NO. 310 OF 1983

ORAL

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 Loddo 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.



NO. 355 OF 1983

ORAL

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.

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 reprovise, 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 Gibraltar 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.