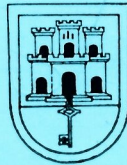


# GIBRALTAR

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

22 February, 1983  
1 to 90

NO. 1 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

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

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, we will do that.

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 2 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Are there many more works to be done still?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

22.2.83

NO. 3 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 4 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

NO. 5 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 5 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 6 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

NO. 7 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 7 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 8 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir, I did not say that.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is part of the exercise, yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 9 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 9 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 10 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 10 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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



HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

NO. 11 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 11 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 12 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think that that is another question.

MR SPEAKER:

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

NO. 13 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 13 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That, Mr Speaker, is a matter of opinion.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I did not say so, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Which number?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No. 89, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 14 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, you must ask questions.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They have only written letters.

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

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

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

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

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

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

HON P J ISOLA:.

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is based on £10 a head.

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 16 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 17 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 17 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are debating now.

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I fear so.

22.2.83

NO. 18 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J. BOSSANO

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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



NO. 19 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 19 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

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

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

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 20 OF 1983

HON. A J HAYNES:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 21 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 21 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

NO. 22 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 22 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

Definitely not within the next six months, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 23 OF 1983

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

MR SPEAKER:

In other words, before the present administration?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

During the Labour Government.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I mean locally, before this particular House.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, before this particular House.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there a ruling?

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

It was the same Government.

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

No, next question.



NO. 24 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 24 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, legal action is taken against squatters.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

Well, what information does the Minister have, Sir?

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state exactly what the policy is?

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

Yes, Sir, but not necessarily squatters.

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question?

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

Seven, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir, as far as I am aware.

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 25 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

What progress has taken place, Mr Speaker?

HON J B PEREZ:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

Not that I am aware of, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

Within the next two weeks.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 26 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 26 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Is it a uniform policy that will be followed?

HON J B PEREZ:

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

MR. SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 27 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 27 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

I have no idea, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Order, order.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

I don't know, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. Next question.



NO. 28 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 28 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, on a point of clarification.

MR SPEAKER:

I will not have that question.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, it was a point of clarification.

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

Well, I would need time to research.

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 29 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 29 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 30 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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

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

No further consultancies have taken place.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 30 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Let us be clear, which Committee?

HON P J ISOLA:

The Steering Committee between Management and Staff.

MR SPEAKER:

You are now referring to the Generating Station.

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 31 OF 1983

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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

SKID GENERATORS

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

TRAILER-MOUNTED GENERATOR

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

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 31 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not get involved.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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



HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

On what percentage was that made, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not get involved, with due respect.

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Could the Hon Member repeat the question, please?

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, what has the Minister said?

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A T LODDO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, that is my answer.

HON W T SCOTT:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In the next few weeks, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

When did No. 10 break down?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In August, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 32 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

It does not mean that.

HON G T RESTANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Which specific questions?

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 33 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 33 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON W T SCOTT:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 34 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 35 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, to which aid is he referring to?

HON G T RESTANO:

Metering aids, local metering.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

How many have been installed so far?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 36 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

The question did say October to January.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 37 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

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

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 37 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

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

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON W T SCOTT:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

MR SPEAKER:

They have got to be cleared by me.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Three working days.

HON P J ISOLA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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



HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

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

HON W T SCOTT:

I am very grateful for that, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 38 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 38 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

NO. 39 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

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

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

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

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

22.2.83

NO. 40 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

NO. 41 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 41 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

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

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, because there are male teachers.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 42 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 42 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am not in a position to answer that question.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 43 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND  
LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

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



THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 44 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON H J ZAMMITT:

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

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 45 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON H J ZAMMITT:

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

NO. 46 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

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

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

SLEEPER OCCUPANCY

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

NO. 47 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

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

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

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 47 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON H J ZAMMITT:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON H J ZAMMITT:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 48 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 48 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 49 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 50 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Was the supervision done this morning, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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



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

MR SPEAKER:

Let us ask a question.

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

Was he not approached by Messrs Bata?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

22.2.83

NO. 51 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 51 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

22.2.83

NO. 52 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

22.2.83

NO. 53 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir, that is not the case.

NO. 54 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 54 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

NO. 55 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 55 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 56 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 57 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 57 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON A T LODDO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 58 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 58 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 59 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 59 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I stand corrected, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 60 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 61 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 61 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON J B PEREZ:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 62 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 62 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 63 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 63 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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



HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 64 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 65 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 65 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We will look at that urgently.

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is a rhetorical question, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think we have undertaken to look at it.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 66 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



22.2.83

NO. 67 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 67 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 68 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

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

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 69 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

MR SPEAKER:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

No and others, and the Mate.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 70 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 71 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 71 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

NO. 72 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 72 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 73 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 73 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

NO. 74 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 74 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON A J CANEPA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

22.2.83

NO. 75 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

22.2.83

NO. 76 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

22.2.83

NO. 77 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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



22.2.83

NO. 78 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

22.2.83

NO. 79 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A. J. HAYNES

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

22.2.83

NO. 80 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

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

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 81 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON G T RESTANO:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

NO. 82 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

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

NO. 83 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 83 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

22.2.83

NO. 84 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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



NO. 85 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 85 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

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

HON P J ISOLA:

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

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

There are five, Mr Speaker.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 86 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So it could be much more than 3,500?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Thank you very much.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 87 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 87 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 88 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 88 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 89 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

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

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Incredible, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

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

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

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 90 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Thank you very much.

HON J BOSSANO:

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

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

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