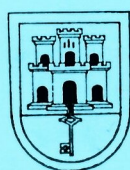


# GIBRALTAR

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

23 March 1983  
182 to 246  
Vol II

NO. 182 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, will Government explain why there was no audit for the Public Works Department in 1981/82?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, may I first of all make a general point which is relevant to this question and to Questions Nos. 183 and 184 tabled by the Hon Member. The post of Principal Auditor is constituted under Section 71 of the Constitution. Section 70(3) of the Constitution provides that in the exercise of his functions the Principal Auditor shall not be subject to the direction or control of any other person or authority. I make the point, Mr Speaker, because I cannot myself speak for the Principal Auditor unless he wishes me to do so, in this case he does wish me to do so.

Mr Speaker, the answer to the question is that it is based on an assumption which is not correct. An audit of the Public Works Department was carried out during the period referred to by the Hon Member.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 182 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Will Government explain therefore why there has been no comment in the annual accounts as presented by the Principal Auditor on the Public Works Department?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the reason there has been no comment is that having conducted an audit of the accounts of the department, the Principal Auditor did not think that there were any financial implications that merited being included in the Report and he also did not find on examining the accounts, any unauthorised expenditure. Can I make one point clear that in saying he conducted an audit, he conducted an audit of a selection of the accounts of the department, I would not like to give the impression that he conducted a complete audit of the department.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 183 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, how many Government Departments have had full audits over the last three years and which Departments have had partial audits over this same period?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the question covers three financial years ended on the 31st March, 1981, 31st March, 1982, and 31st March, 1983; it therefore calls for a rather lengthy reply and with your permission I would like to circulate a paper providing details of the information sought. Before doing so may I explain that the general audit of the Treasury accounts affects all expenditure incurred by the various departments. The examination by the Audit Department of Treasury vouchers and journal vouchers as well as Crown Agents accounts, therefore achieves a degree of audit on all accounting transactions carried out within or on behalf of the departments. This exercise is complemented by a departmental examination of records, systems and controls and the absence of any departmental audits must be looked at bearing these considerations in mind.

NO. 184 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, can Government inform this House why every Government Department is not fully audited every year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, it is not clear from the question what is meant by "fully audited". If it means that every single Government transaction should be audited, then the answer is that this is not possible because of the practical considerations involved. The Constitution provides that the Principal Auditor will have discretion in the exercise of his functions and it is therefore up to him to determine his priorities and to carry out such audits as he considers necessary in order to certify the accounts. Having said this the Government agrees that it would be desirable that all departments should be audited annually.

The Hon Member will be pleased to learn that as a result of specific and comprehensive recommendations submitted by the Principal Auditor for the restructuring of his department the Government has agreed to the addition of a further Higher Executive Officer and to reducing the complement of Clerical Officers by four. The Principal Auditor is confident that the new structure will enable him to carry out a more effective programme of audit. These changes follow the recent increase in the establishment of the audit staff by one Higher Executive Officer and the transfer at the Principal Auditor's request, of the Stores Verifier from the Treasury. The revised structure was considered and accepted by Management Services; it is based on the principle that officers leading an audit team must have the ability to understand and appraise systems quickly, make sound judgements, write cogent reports and argue conclusions at senior levels if necessary. These requirements are not often met below the level of Higher Executive Officer.

The House will no doubt also be pleased to learn that the structural changes which have been made, while, as I say, enabling the Principal Auditor to carry out a more effective audit programme, will also result in an average saving in staff costs amounting to £10,000 pa.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 184 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, am I right therefore in assuming that Members of this side of the House can look forward to a fuller audit of each and every Government Department from now on?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think, Mr Speaker, I must reiterate the point that the Principal Auditor must have a discretion where he thinks fit but in general terms, yes, I think it is hoped that by virtue of this new arrangement it will be possible to conduct more comprehensive audits of each department.

NO. 185 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government state the position regarding the allocation of Garages at Westside School?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the Quarters Allocation Committee have now allocated the six garages adjoining Westside School.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 185 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, have the garages been allocated to the occupants of the flats directly above?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member means the Westside flats, the answer is not necessarily.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, am I not right in assuming that the six flats at Westside were to be allocated together with the garages and for that reason the electricity supply to these garages is directly connected to the flats above them?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I would have to make enquiries into that, I do not know that detail.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I assure the Hon Attorney-General that that is the case, the electricity supply to the garages is connected to the electricity supply of the flats immediately above and if this is the case wouldn't it be logical for the garages in question to be allocated along with the flats particularly in view of the fact that there is a letter from the architect saying that had he known that these garages were not to be allocated with the flats he would have made provision for more storage space for these flats which are rather small?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

That may be so, Mr Speaker, but I am not in a position to comment. I take note of the point but I am not in a position to comment on it.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, will Government then in the meantime hold back on the allocation of these garages until the Attorney-General is completely satisfied?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I am sorry I cannot give that undertaking, the offers have in fact already been made to people.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do I understand correctly, the offers have been made, they have not yet been allocated?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

That is in fact so, Mr Speaker, and I think my original answer was misleading to that extent. The position is that the offers have been made and replies are awaited.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 186 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government consider making the cash awards which accompany Long Service and Good Conduct medals realistic by 1983 standards?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir. This cash award is granted as a token gesture and is not related in any way to increases in the cost of living or in salaries.

The position in the United Kingdom is that such medal awards do not attract cash grants.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 186 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, am I not right in believing that originally the cash awards that accompanied these medals were on the basis of the salary of the officer receiving them and they formed what amounted to the monthly salary or the weekly wage and if that is the case wouldn't it be realistic to bring up the cash awards in line to present wage levels?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, it may well be that when the concept or the idea of the medal was first introduced the amount of money chosen as an annual grant bore some correlation to one's income so it is no longer regarded in the same way, it is now seen as being simply a token gesture.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 187 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government say how the proceedings in connection with the old Shell Petrol Station at the junction of Landport and Corral Road are proceeding?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the matter remains the subject of arbitration proceedings but I can say that terms of settlement are now being discussed, 'without prejudice' of course, between the parties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 187 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, this is the answer that I have been getting now for the last two years. Has the Attorney-General any idea when this matter will be settled?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

If I can use an Americanism, Mr Speaker, momentarily, what I mean is in the very near future.

HON W T SCOTT:

Am I right in assuming that there is an element of the Lands and Surveys within that as well on building application?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I would be grateful if the Hon Member could clarify the point, I am not sure that I understand the point.

HON W T SCOTT:

I have been led to believe that part of the present delay is due to the Lands and Surveys not granting the necessary planning permission.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, that is not the case. I am not sure I can agree that we have been trying for two years to settle but the present delay or the present cause is because there have been proposals and counter proposals and we are at the moment I think where we have a mutually acceptable proposal.



NO. 188 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state how many complaints have been made to the Police in relation to the conduct of persons using the Amusement Arcade situated opposite the Cathedral of St Mary the Crowned or in the immediate neighbourhood thereof and what action, if any, has been taken?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, since 1st January, 1983, there have been no such formal or written complaints to the Police but constables patrolling the area from time to time move people on or speak to them if their conduct is noisy, disorderly or offensive.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 188 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Hon and Learned Attorney-General saying that the conduct of the establishment and of people surrounding is wholly desirable at the moment, it is perfectly in order and fine and would the Hon Attorney-General not agree that that is not the impression that is given from people living in the area or who have businesses in the area?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that there have been no written or formal complaints but that if the Police do see people acting in a way which they think is, obviously they must have a basis as to how they intervene but if they do see people acting in a way which is disorderly or annoy people or offensive they do speak to them or move them on. My own impression during the times I have been through is that people do seem to accumulate there. I cannot in all honesty say that I have ever seen rowdiness there but on the other hand, of course, I am not there 24 hours a day myself.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Attorney-General has referred to from the 1st January, 1983. Am I to assume from that that there were no complaints during 1982?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I cannot say that. We took the 1st January, 1983, as what we thought was a reasonable period. I will certainly find out whether there were complaints during 1982 if the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition wishes me to.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Hon and Learned Attorney-General state whether any special surveillance of that particular area is carried out by the Police in view of the fact that certain known pushers of drugs do consort in that area?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I cannot say that as a matter of personal knowledge, Mr Speaker, but I think I can say quite safely that obviously that is an area which does attract attention. I think the Police are aware of that as an area where people gather and to that extent will keep an eye on it, I am sure. I can ascertain whether that is so as a matter of fact but I am sure it is.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could the Hon and Learned Attorney-General ascertain that because I have put this question because of a number of complaints that I have received from people who live in the area and who work in the area and who have businesses in the area who consider that there is a marked deterioration in what is essentially the centre of our city?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, of course, Mr Speaker, I will convey this.

NO. 189 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, why are cars, which do not display current road licences, allowed to park on the public highway?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, during the period 1 January, 1982, to 31 December, 1982, 34 people were reported by police for not displaying current road licences and 253 reported for not having a current road licence. So far this year 16 people have been reported for these offences.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 189 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is there an on-going procedure in these cases because it would seem to me to be very little to have to pay in the way of a fine if a person who does not display a road licence gets reported once, fined, and that is the end of the matter? Is there an on-going procedure whereby that offender is reported until he is made to get his road licence or is it a one-off thing?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think a person who hasn't got a road licence commits an offence every time he uses a vehicle or has a vehicle on the road without a licence.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I was referring particularly to cars which are parked and remain parked for months on end. They do not have a road licence and they are parked in the same spot indefinitely. Is this type of car or is this type of offence reported on a continuing basis or is it reported merely once and that is the end of the story?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I will have to look into that but I think certainly the penalty for not having a road licence should be such, obviously, as to be more expensive than paying the road licence but I will look into it, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 190 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, have any cars been towed away from towing zones since legislation was introduced to this effect?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, no cars have been towed away since the legislation was introduced because no tow-away areas have yet been demarcated. However, Ministerial approval has been given to go ahead with the demarcation of a number of such areas, the first of which will be at Governor's Street. The necessary traffic signs have to be erected and roadmarking works carried out prior to implementation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 190 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, did I hear correctly that no towing areas have been demarcated and how can this be when whenever there is a parade or a processions or any outdoor organised activity the Police put up portable signs which say 'this is a towing zone'? Does it mean in fact that these signs which have been put by the Police have had in fact no authority behind them?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think those signs are of a kind which are of a temporary nature. I had in mind permanent tow-away areas but there is power under the Traffic Ordinance to erect traffic signs and while the Government is concerned to monitor closely permanent traffic tow-away areas, I think that the class of situation where you want to do something for a morning or for a few hours in the morning is perhaps not one which was within the ambit of that supervision. I think under the Traffic Ordinance there is power to put up traffic signs from time to time but I see that as being outside the scope of the permanent system of towing away.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask then whether any cars have been towed away from these temporary towing zones?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I have no knowledge that any have.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

24.5.83

NO. 191 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government now in a position to make a statement on the legalisation of Citizen's Band in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government is not yet in a position to make a further statement on the legalisation of Citizen's Band radio in Gibraltar. Following discussions on this matter in the UK, as stated in my reply to question No. 225 of 1982, and the receipt of additional information, the matter is being further studied to decide which of the two systems available, FM or AM, should be adopted in Gibraltar. When this study has been finalised proposals will be submitted to the Government for consideration.

NO. 192 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J FELIZA

Will Government consider minting a Gibraltar pound coin?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

The Government is currently studying whether to mint a Gibraltar pound coin. A final decision has yet to be taken. The considerations include the cost and expected life of a coin compared with those of notes, the number of Gibraltar one pound bank notes in reserve and likely public acceptability of the coin. On the latter aspect the Government wishes to see whether the introduction of the one pound coin in the United Kingdom last month will have wide public acceptability. As the Hon Member will be aware, it appears from press reports that the introduction of a similar coin in the Isle of Man earlier this year was not a success.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 192 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will Government also consider minting other coins in current tender in the United Kingdom like 50p and 20p?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

We could do this, Mr Speaker, but it would be an expensive exercise, the minting of coins is extremely expensive. It would also require an amendment to the UK Coinage Act.

HON A J HAYNES:

I appreciate the difficulties but I understand also, Mr Speaker, and perhaps the Financial and Development Secretary will confirm or deny, that though it is expensive to mint coins of the tender that I am indicating they still are nevertheless cheaper than the bank value of the same so that a 20p coin would cost less than 20p to mint?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am a little confused by the Hon Member's question because there are no 20p notes. I accept that at net present value if you have a coin instead of a note although the initial cost is higher a coin lasts thirty to fifty years life, take an average of that, the life of a note is probably about a year so that in net present value terms the coin turns out to be cheaper but as we have no notes for the smaller denominations one would not be gaining anything except possibly the difference between the face value and the cost of minting.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Financial and Development Secretary state whether or not he will investigate the feasibility or otherwise of minting all forms of coins for Gibraltar?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I will investigate the financial considerations. We can mint them, that is not difficult, but the thing is whether it is worthwhile in finance terms doing so.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that if the English pound coin is used wisely and we do not mind a Gibraltar pound coin, the Currency Note Security Fund could be pretty badly affected?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

This is a consideration, Mr Speaker, but I doubt very much myself whether the Currency Fund would be more gravely affected by a coin than it is by the English pound note which circulates here. We have a running battle with the banks trying to stop them from issuing UK notes and only to issue Gibraltar notes for that very reason and it seems to me that people are less likely to come with twenty or thirty one pound coins in their pockets than twenty pound notes in their wallets and so we are rather hopeful that the coin will lessen the number of one pound notes in circulation.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 193 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would Government give consideration to waiving duty on non-printed paper in order to enable Gibraltar printers to carry out their operations on a more competitive basis?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government is willing to consider reducing the import duty on non-printed paper should it be represented that duty is a significant factor in printing costs; there is no such evidence at present. The House should be aware that the Government has sought to protect the local printing industry in a number of ways. To discourage the importation of printed matter into Gibraltar, an import duty of 12% was imposed in 1982; newsprint however, which is widely used in some sectors of the printing industry does not attract duty. Additionally it is a condition for the award of a tender for printing for Government Departments that the printing must be executed in Gibraltar or in the UK but not elsewhere.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 193 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

So, Mr Speaker, is the Hon Financial and Development Secretary saying that if representations are made to him by the printers Government is willing to investigate reducing the duty?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is what I said, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 194 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Mr Speaker, has there been any significant change since March 1983 to the figures given to this House arising out of Question No. 100 of 1983?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir, there has been no significant change since March 1983. The gross pay for Customs Officers on duty at the frontier for the months of April and May is as follows:-

	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>
Executive Officer	£965	£1,029
Assistant Officer	£599	£ 637

NO. 195 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

What is the average time that a patient under the Group Practice Medical Scheme has to wait before being seen by a resident consultant at St Bernard's Hospital from the time of the referral letter from a local practitioner?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, the average time that a patient under the Group Practice Medical Scheme needs to wait to see a resident consultant following referral by a general practitioner is 24 days. It should be noted, however, that emergencies and/or urgent cases are seen immediately after discussion of the case between the general practitioner and the consultant.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 195 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I must say that people who do come to see me must be the unlucky ones because they always seem to have to wait far longer than 24 days, perhaps the Minister could answer that?

HON J B PEREZ:

All I can say, Mr Speaker, is that the average waiting period is 24 days. If there are any cases which have taken much longer I would urge the Hon Member to bring it to my attention and the matter will be investigated thoroughly.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister explain in that case why somebody who after receiving a referral letter or after a referral letter having been sent by a local practitioner is told that he has to wait about a month and a half but if he asks to see the consultant privately he is seen the following day?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am not aware that that is the case, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I can give examples to the Minister. I think it would be invidious to give any names here in the House but I will certainly give it to him and I would like to have a public explanation. Mr Speaker, having given the information when I do give it to the Minister will the Minister give me a public explanation?

MR SPEAKER:

In fairness to the Minister I think whilst you should not refer to the names for obvious reasons you must give chapter and verse as to dates and what has happened.

HON G T RESTANO:

Yes, I have said once I have given him that information.

MR SPEAKER:

But you haven't.

HON G T RESTANO:

When I give him that information, I cannot give it here because it would be invidious, will he commit himself to give me a public explanation?

HON J B PEREZ:

Of course, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 196 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, do all cigarettes imported into Gibraltar carry a Government health warning?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, under the Agreement signed between the Government, the tobacco importers and the cigarette manufacturers, only cigarettes intended for sale locally are required to carry a Government health warning, cigarettes imported for sale ex-bond to shipping, yachts etc do not carry health warnings.

NO. 197 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, will Government state what has been the total cost to date of the Chairman of the Electricity Department's Steering Committee, how often he has come to Gibraltar and how many days he has spent here in his official capacity?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

1. (a) Mr Speaker, Sir, the total cost to 15 May, 1983, of the Chairman of the Steering Committee is £71,499.93.
- (b) Since I informed the House on 23 March, 1983, in reply to Question 180, that the Chairman had been to Gibraltar on 21 occasions, he has made a further 3 visits. This brings the total number of visits to Gibraltar by the Chairman to 24, in the period up to 15 May, 1983.
- (c) The Chairman has spent 178 days in Gibraltar, in his official capacity, between September 1982 and 15 May 1983.
2. The new Station at Waterport has cost £7m. It is essential therefore that we get the working arrangements absolutely right from the very start, particularly against the background of the troubles in this Department in recent years. The Government considers this money well spent but is conscious, as is the Chairman and the Steering Committee, of the need to bring about early agreement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 197 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm if he never expected this operation to last as long as it has done?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

And was it not therefore at the time considered that the figure for the cost of the Chairman would be for a far shorter period and for an on-going operation now almost a year, more than a year, perhaps, for a person to be paid £400 a day for his services over an extended period, does not the Minister consider that this is somewhat high?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, first of all let me put the Hon Member on the correct tack. It is not the Chairman who is being paid it is the Society who is being paid the appropriate amount of money. As to the time factor involved there are various outstanding issues and these issues should

be resolved and must be resolved especially when, as I mentioned in the second paragraph of my answer, that it is against the background of previous troubles in this department that we want to settle this agreement once and for all so that the electricity situation in Gibraltar is up to scratch and we have no further troubles from this direction.

HON G T RESTANO:

My question was, does not the Minister consider that over a long period of time for the cost of one person to be £400 a day, the cost to the taxpayer, to be somewhat high?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Hon Member mentions the figure of £400 a day. Let me say that these figures are the figures we have been given by the Industrial Society. Let me also add that the estimated cost of the Chairman from the 1st April is £2,190 per week. This takes into account the fact that from that date the Industrial Society is charging a flat rate of £1,250 per week instead of the daily rate of £250. The previous average weekly cost of the Chairman was £1,940 per week. It should also be noted that the Industrial Society fees charged to the Gibraltar Government are considerably lower than the rates applicable to those in the United Kingdom for similar consultancies.

HON G T RESTANO:

Yes, but nevertheless, Mr Speaker, it is still from the answer that the Minister has given £71,499 covering a period of 178 days and that is £400 a day and the question is, and I will repeat it once more, does not the Minister consider this to be high?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I tend to agree with the Hon Member opposite that it does look slightly high but when one considers the professionalism of the Chairman of the Steering Committee, the amount of work he has to do, the complex problem which he has to solve and not only the basic money paid to the Industrial Society but also the fares to and from Gibraltar and the expenses here, I think it is a fair figure in order to solve a very difficult problem.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since it was envisaged, and I can understand the very high costs over a short period of time, but since it has been extended so considerably would it not be a case to try and get the figure paid to the Industrial Society lowered?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact we have done this and we have managed to reduce the figure from £1,940 per week to £1,250 per week as I mentioned in my previous answer.



HON G T RESTANO:

And for how long more, Mr Speaker, does the Minister expect that these payments will have to be made?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe there is a question subsequent to this which deals with this matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say whether he is trying in any way to influence the Chairman of the Steering Committee?

MR SPEAKER:

May I have this question again?

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state whether or not he is trying to influence . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Whether he is trying to influence?

HON A J HAYNES:

Bringing pressure to have the matter resolved since it is being so expensive? My question is, is the Minister trying to accelerate the process of the Steering Committee by any means?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I can in no way influence the Chairman . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I have called him to order precisely on that. All you have been asked is are you trying to see that the process of the Committee is accelerated in order that the cost is mitigated, that is the way I have understood the question and that is the only way I will accept it.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Let me say that the Steering Committee is a body of men which has been formed constitutionally out of different sections of the department, it has an independent Chairman, it has got staff and management people in it and I think they themselves know only too well the need to resolve this problem as early as possible.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does that answer the question, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 198 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what has been the cost of demolishing the walls at the old skid generator site in Line Wall Road?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the cost of demolishing the walls at the old skid generator site in Line Wall Road is approximately £2,800.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 198 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Who was responsible for undertaking this work, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The ancillary section of the Electricity Department, Sir.

HON W T SCOTT:

Was this carried out during normal time or overtime hours or on a job price contract, on what basis?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, initially we had to give them a period of overtime so that the skid generators could be taken back and shipped on the day necessary and in fact we got them back to UK at a very early date thereby saving us a considerable amount of time. We have got about four or five men working on this but usually we have got about two men. We have given them the occasional Saturday overtime and sometimes week-days to try to hasten up the process. I am happy to say that the walls are now demolished. In fact, it presented a problem because it was not only a wall it was a double wall filled with concrete and it presented a problem in bringing it down to the ancillary section but for all the work that has been put in by the ancillary section I think a figure of £2,800 is relatively cheap.

HON W T SCOTT:

Will the Minister not confirm that it was only when he received notice of this question that there seems to have been a remarkable acceleration in the demolishing of the walls?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The answer is obviously no, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 199 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, would the Minister for Municipal Services outline the areas where agreement has been reached in the Electricity Department's Steering Committee and also the areas where agreement has not yet been reached?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, though substantial progress has been made, it is not considered that it would be in the general interest nor indeed of assistance to the work being carried out by the Steering Committee at this stage of its proceedings to give the information asked for in this question at this particular meeting of the House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 199 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Minister now say when he expects the Committee to finish its work?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as regards the work of the Committee we have now advertised senior posts at Waterport, in fact, they have come out, the five system engineers at Waterport, and the PTO.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not enlarge. The question you have been asked is a simple one. When do you consider that the Committee will be in a position to make its report?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is because of what I was going to say which also includes the PSC, it is difficult to give a definite answer to this question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, has the Minister no idea, no indication, are we going to continue paying £71,000 and will that figure increase for three months, six months, a year, has he no idea at all?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, one has an idea but if one mentions an idea one is then chastised here for the idea but what I would like the Opposition to remember and I repeat paragraph 2 of the previous answer: "The new Station at Waterport has cost £7m. It is essential that we get the working arrangements absolutely right from the very start,

particularly against the background of the troubles in this department in recent years. The Government considers this money well spent and is conscious, as is the Chairman and the Steering Committee, of the need to bring about early agreement".

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I did not ask him to repeat the answer he gave last time, what I am asking is, has he no idea how long this is going to take? Is it going to take three months, one month, six months? I think it is a very important area for Gibraltar where Gibraltar is paying a lot of money for this, Mr Speaker, and I think it is only fair that the Minister should give an indication for how much longer Gibraltar is going to continue having to pay this.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said before and I will say again I cannot state categorically and I cannot give the answer categorically to that question. May be in the next House of Assembly I shall be able to provide the Hon Member with a far more reasonable answer than the one I have given now.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will the Minister give a time limit once and for all or are we going to be paying this forever?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Ah, Major Peliza, you are here. No, I am afraid I cannot give that undertaking.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister realise that the one who does not seem to be here is himself?

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state on what he based a statement he made to the House in answering questions on this point in March when he said he thought the work of the Committee would be completed by the end of April?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I thought at the time that the work would be finished at the end of April. Unfortunately, as I mentioned during the budget session of the House, several things have delayed the work of the Steering Committee and one of them has been the advertisement of the senior posts within the Waterport. These senior posts were advertised a few weeks ago and we are waiting for the results of the PSC which I hope will be available this week. This has meant a slippage, one may call it, or a loss of time of a few weeks and this is one of the reasons why it will extend beyond the date that I mentioned initially.

HON P J ISOLA:

But is the Minister not aware that slippage not for weeks but for years is the situation in the Power Station and does the Minister not agree that the public who foot the bill are entitled to know the facts with regard to this situation without the Government making a judgement as to who is right or who is wrong or who is delaying or who is not delaying but is the public who pay not entitled to know the facts and is it not time that we had a little more open Government from the Government and they told the public what is happening?

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to have any more questions on this one because we are not going to get any further.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I have an answer to that? Mr Speaker, I believe that my question involves . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question?

HON P J ISOLA:

My question is a question of very great principle and that is, does the Government not believe that the public who are footing the bill are entitled to be told the facts round a situation where the Government is being extremely secretive?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the public will be told the facts.

HON P J ISOLA:

When, after they have paid?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

When the whole arrangement has taken place and then it will be up to them to decide whether the Government has acted in a manner which is correct and whether the Opposition has acted in a manner which is incorrect.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I just ask one question? At what point of time will there be a change in the Chairmanship of the Steering Committee?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I have explained to the Hon Member before that the Steering Committee is really a Committee which will lead on to the Works Council, to the full Works Council, to which if I remember rightly, there will not be the present Chairman therefore the present Chairman of the Steering Committee will remain as long as it is necessary to conclude the business of the Steering Committee.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that. Next question.



NO. 200 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, can Government state the total charges to date that have been made by the contractors of the Waterport Generating Station for running the Station since the commissioning of the engines there?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the total charges that have been made to date for running Waterport Power Station since the commissioning of the engines amount to £686,812. This figure includes £353,573 being funded under the contract.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 200 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

When will Government take over the Station?

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

When the Steering Committee finishes.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I heard the aside from the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza, I will ignore it. I think the answer to the Hon Mr Restano, I was going to say Learned but obviously he has not got that far.

MR SPEAKER:

No, he is not Learned because he is not a member of the legal profession and no other reason.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

He is learning fast, Sir. Obviously the answer is contained in the answer to the next question, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

How much does the Minister expect the Government would have to pay at the end of the day for not having taken over the engines when they were ready for commissioning? So far it is £686,000, will it get to £1m, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am afraid I cannot realistically give the Hon Member a definite figure but I will again quote the second paragraph . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, you won't. Order. That is the answer and we will go to the next question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Could I have an answer?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, I have no idea, that is the simple answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that in allowing the contractor to remain at Waterport Generating Station and therefore be in charge of the engineering and mechanical side of the Station and in the continuing existence of the Steering Committee which is charged with management, he has effectively made himself redundant?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No answer.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 201 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Does Government have a deadline for the official opening of the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, no firm deadline has been fixed for the official opening of Waterport Power Station, but it is now likely to be sometime in the autumn.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 201 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Minister state how he can make that prognosis having regard to the determination with which he has parried any question asking for conclusion dates of the Steering Committee? Are we to understand from this that whether the Steering Committee comes to a decision or not the Government has decided that by the autumn it is going to govern and have an official opening of the Power Station, is that the position?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, with due regard I have said nothing of the kind that the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition is saying.

MR SPEAKER:

You have been asked a simple question. Will the Station be officially opened in the autumn irrespective of the fact that the Steering Committee may not have finished its recommendations, it as as simple as that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

There have been consultations between the Chief Minister and myself and we have decided that it is now likely to be sometime in the autumn.

HON P J ISOLA:

But is that whether agreement is reached between the Steering Committee and everybody else who has to agree or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

HON P J ISOLA:

If the answer to that question is yes what is the objection, Mr Speaker, to opening the Power Station now and not waiting for the autumn, a month before the general election?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

For the very simple reason that the Steering Committee has not completed its work.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean that the Minister is saying that by the autumn he is confident that the Steering Committee will have completed its work, is that correct?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

So how much is that going to cost if the Steering Committee . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, I will not have it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask, it is an important question of principle here. If the Minister is able to say that he expects by the autumn the work of the Steering Committee to have been completed, why wasn't he able to say that in answer to questions precisely on that point earlier on in these proceedings and on what does he base that information?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. With due respect to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition what the Minister did say is that he did not wish to give a fixed date for the finishing and he is now saying that it could be before the autumn.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if the Minister is redundant what makes him think that anybody will give him back his department?

MR SPEAKER:

That is another matter which does not arise from this question. Next question.

NO. 202 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Have consultations been carried out with the Chamber of Commerce and the TGWU on the question of the Shop Hours Ordinance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, it has been the Government's intention to hold consultations with the Chamber of Commerce and the Unions on this matter pending the reconstitution of the Labour Advisory Board, which is the appropriate forum for discussing matters of this nature and on which both sides are represented. This intention was overtaken by the fact that the Labour Advisory Board has recently been reconstituted and it is proposed to hold a meeting in the very near future to discuss the matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 202 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Minister be discussing the possibility of allowing shops to remain open on Sundays?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, that is one of the things that we will discuss. I can tell the Hon Member that pending consideration of the above the Commissioner of Police is exercising his power under Section E(2) of the Ordinance to allow Sunday opening, etc.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 203 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state if they have given any consideration to collect social insurance contributions in conjunction with the PAYE system?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, this possibility was considered some years ago in the context of a study of the possible introduction of an earnings-related social insurance scheme. As a result of this study, which was carried out with the assistance of an adviser from the Department of Health and Social Security in the United Kingdom, it was decided that the proposal for an earnings-related scheme should not be proceeded with and no further consideration has been given to the collection of contributions in conjunction with the PAYE system.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 203 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister state on what grounds this was rejected?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It was a bit before my time, it was in 1971 if I remember but I think that the grounds were that it just was not worth it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has consideration been taken of the amount of extra work required, say, on the people who make the contributions who obviously have to go out, queue up to buy the stamps and so on and so forth which obviously all costs to the concern engaged in doing that? Could the Minister look into the whole question again bearing that side in mind as well?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I am convinced, in fact, that the suggestion by the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza will not be positive but I will promise him I will study it again. I think one should bear in mind that under the present system the Government gets in the money quicker this way than under PAYE.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

That is what I say, but the Minister must also consider the other side, the people who make the contributions, and also perhaps I should make him aware that at one time PAYE was rejected in the same way as this is being rejected today and then it was found that it collected quite a lot of money for the Government very well, very tidily and very effectively?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPANI:

Mr Speaker, this is why I have said that I will study the matter again.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 204 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government amend the Control of Employment Ordinance to further protect resident workers?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, Government is currently considering what amendments require to be made to the Control of Employment Ordinance and to other relevant legislation to give further protection to resident workers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 204 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, can I have an assurance from the Hon Minister that this will be dealt with with some priority by his Department?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I can give that assurance but I will also point out that it is not only my Department that is involved.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does the Government not agree that it is becoming increasingly important to act with speed in this direction?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, having regard to the ever increasing youth unemployment figures does Government have any new plans to stem this flow?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the unemployment figures for juveniles stood at 104 as at 30 April, 1983.

The Gibraltar Government will be offering a total of twelve apprenticeships during 1983 and it is also taking on about thirteen boy labourers (ten PWD - three CEE), which is in excess of the numbers taken on last year. As this House is already aware the Ministry of Defence stopped recruiting apprentices when the defence cuts were announced. The Department of Labour and Social Security will once again be offering training facilities at the Construction Industry Training Centre to those candidates who are successful in the Official Employers Apprentices Board 1983 Entry Examination but to whom it is not possible to offer any apprenticeship. Training in the Construction Trades will be given for a period of one academic year and they will receive an attendance allowance of £2 per day.

The Government is continuously looking at areas of employment opportunities for school leavers and, in this connection, the quota established under the Control of Employment Ordinance is constantly reviewed to take into account the unemployment situation. In the meantime, the Department of Labour and Social Security and the Youth and Careers Service of the Education Department continue in their efforts to help young persons find employment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 205 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

One is glad to hear, Mr Speaker, that there has been an extra intake of young men both in apprentice training and in boy labourers but that to me really does not represent a new initiative and what I am asking Government to do is what we have been asking them to do on our side of the House for a long time now and that is to take a new initiative and come up with at least a pilot scheme in the nature of a youth opportunities or a youth training programme at a local level before it becomes a really bad social problem. Can I have an answer to that, Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, it all costs money and the situation is that we haven't got the money.

HON W T SCOTT:

By that is the Minister saying that investigations have been carried out and that it is found to be too costly to Government?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON W T SCOTT:

Can we have some details of what Government has done in that direction because I have been continuously asking that question and all I have been told is no?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am saying no again, Mr Speaker.

HON W T SCOTT:

No to what, we cannot have any details?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No.

HON W T SCOTT:

Why not?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Because I do not want to give the details at this stage.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, on the question of the cost, could the Minister endeavour to try and get his colleague in the Electricity Department not to waste so much money on that Department and perhaps he could find some money for the scheme?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 206 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government not consider that the manner in which the monthly unemployment figures are now compiled do not represent a true picture of the unemployment situation in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the Government is satisfied that the monthly unemployment figures compiled by the Department of Labour and Social Security reflect the best possible picture of the unemployment situation, given the information available to the Department. The figures are based on those persons who are registered as unemployed and available for work during that particular month and are much more realistic than the figures produced under the previous system whereby every person who had established a claim to unemployment benefit was included irrespective of whether they were available for work or not.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 206 OF 1983

HON. W T SCOTT:

In accepting that perhaps the figure is a little bit more realistic now rather than the old scheme, does Government not agree that not every unemployed individual available for work in Gibraltar is contained within the monthly figures?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I would like the Hon Member to repeat the question.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does not the Minister agree that there are far more people unemployed in Gibraltar than appear in the monthly return?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

We cannot know that, Mr Speaker, because if a person has not registered for a month we do not know whether he is in Gibraltar, whether he has taken up employment and he has not reported back to the Employment Exchange. I will give you an example. If a civil servant retires or he leaves the service at 55 and he does not even bother to register in the Employment Exchange he is unemployed but he might find a job without even registering or he might register the first day as unemployed and then not bother to come back if he has found employment. Now it is as realistic as possible but if other ideas to make it more realistic can be put forward which does not cost the Government more money I would be prepared to look at it.

HON W T SCOTT:

I did not say whether the figures were realistic or not, I asked the Hon Member if he did not agree that the figures are in fact actually higher, by what proportion or not we do not know but they are higher? The present figures do not represent a true picture of the unemployment situation in Gibraltar, that is what I am asking him.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

They represent a picture of unemployment as we in the Labour Department know it by the information that we have available.

NO. 207 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether they keep separate lists for housing applicants from Catalan Bay and will Government confirm that proportionately more funds are spent on housing for the inhabitants of Catalan Bay than for applicants from elsewhere in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, separate lists are kept for applicants from Catalan Bay Village. As regards the second part of the question, consideration of comparative expenditure on housing does not give an accurate indication, due to fluctuation in building costs during the post-war years. However, taking into consideration the number of units built at Catalan Bay and in the rest of Gibraltar in relation to population it works out at 1 unit per 4.76 persons at Catalan Bay and 1 unit per 5.57 persons in the rest of Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 207 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

The answer is that there are proportionately more funds spent on housing for the inhabitants of Catalan Bay.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

One cannot say that in terms of money, one can say that in terms of units but not in money.

HON A J HAYNES:

Do units cost money, Mr Speaker? Mr Speaker, there is one other point. Can the Minister tell us . . . . .

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I did not get it.

HON A J HAYNES:

I think it does not really require an answer, Mr Speaker, I think units do cost money so if the Minister accepts that there are more units then I think I can take it there is more money. Can the Minister give us the extent of applicants on the waiting list on this separate list for Catalan Bay?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, that does not form part of the question.

MR SPEAKER:

No, it has nothing to do with the question, with due respect to you.

HON A J HAYNES:

I asked if there was a separate list for housing applicants in Catalan Bay and the answer is now yes, and I was trying to make an enquiry into this separate list.

MR SPEAKER:

What enquiry are you trying to make now?

HON A J HAYNES:

I would like to know the figures of those on the waiting list in this separate list.

MR SPEAKER:

But in fairness to the Minister he would require notice of a question like that, you cannot expect him to have that information available now.

HON A J HAYNES:

Perhaps it is part of his brief, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

If it is and you want to answer it you can do so.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, if he had asked me about separate lists and what are the numbers involved I would have brought the answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, having said that, I know the Minister is new in the post and perhaps he is not familiar with it but can he tell us without giving the exact figures, whether these are more than 20, more than 30 or what?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No idea, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 208 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will the Minister state how many persons have been housed as a result of being classified as "social cases" since 1st January, 1983, and will Government state how many persons classified as "social cases" are still waiting to be rehoused?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, eleven social cases have been accommodated since the 1st January, 1983, and another forty-four social cases are still waiting to be accommodated on availability of accommodation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 208 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister give us an idea how long has, for instance, the longest of these forty-four been waiting for?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the impetus which was achieved last year in the housing of social cases has been totally lost this year?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I will need to look at the figures but obviously the problem is related to the accommodation available. If there was more accommodation available for social cases last year it was easier to move them if there is less now it is more difficult but I will look into it.

HON A J HAYNES:

There are over 200 empty houses, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that people are not classified as social cases lightly?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I hope they are not classified as social cases lightly otherwise it would make a farce of the whole Allocation Committee.

HON A J HAYNES:

I take it then that the Government view social cases as genuine and accord them the importance that the Committee do in their recommendations?



HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The Government does not do this, the Committee does this.

HON A J HAYNES:

But does Government accept at face value the appendage of being classified as a social case or do they go behind the Committee's representations and say they are not as serious.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Why have a Committee then if Government is going to go behind their backs?

HON A J HAYNES:

That is what I would like to establish. The Government therefore accepts at face value, and it is only fair that they should do, that the classification of a social case is as per the description of the Committee and in those circumstances, Mr Speaker, will the Minister undertake to eradicate this number of forty-four who are waiting as soon as possible?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It is not up to me, Mr Speaker, it depends on the accommodation and I do not allocate anything. My mission is to try and find the accommodation.

HON A J HAYNES:

That is what I am asking him to do, Mr Speaker, find forty-four houses and let the Committee decide who they go to.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

My mission is to find the extra accommodation especially under the present financial situation in Gibraltar.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, again the financial situation we have in Gibraltar. The point made by my Learned Friend must be valid, Mr Speaker, will the Government consider saving and making themselves more efficient in order to do more worthy acts?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a general question. Next question.

NO. 209 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will the Minister for Housing explain his policy for interviews in respect of housing applicants?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that allocation powers have now been delegated by the Minister to the Housing Allocation Committee, the Minister's role will now be to exercise political responsibility for policy matters affecting the provision of housing and formulating the policy governing allocations. I will not therefore be granting interviews. Applicants will continue to be interviewed by members of the Housing Department.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 209 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister say whether he has sat in on any of the deliberations of the various Committees that now service the allocation and other parts of housing?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker, because since I have taken over responsibility the Committee has not sat.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will not the Minister propose to sit in on any of these Committees whether on an introductory basis or in any other capacity?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I have made arrangements with the Housing Manager for me to be notified for the next Committee meeting so that I can attend and introduce myself to the members.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister consider extending an invitation to me, Mr Speaker, I have been waiting four years now?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, I am afraid not but my office is always open so that he can discuss anything with me.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am obliged.

HON P J ISOLA:

Do I understand the position to be that an applicant on the housing list who feels an injustice has been done to him will no longer be able to see the Minister and complain about it, is that the position?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, that is the position.

HON P J ISOLA:

So that means that it is now the policy of this Government that no Minister of the Government will grant an interview to any person who feels he has got a housing case and who feels he is in great hardship, no Minister of the Government will now grant an interview, is that the position?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, that is not the case. I am going to answer because I have something to do with that. Anybody who has any injustice claim against the administration is given an interview by any Minister and if necessary by me but we have done precisely what we have been accused of not having done before, of passing the responsibility of the allocation to the Housing Allocation Committee. Surely, the Housing Allocation Committee will never do an injustice it is only the Minister who does the injustice. Now they are with it, now they have to stick it out in the same way as the Minister has been sticking it out for so many years. If there is any blatant injustice because the system has not been properly followed then of course he will be interviewed and I see people at least the ones who feel that they have not been treated justly and I see that they are put on the proper rails to get the treatment that they deserve if they have not done so but not otherwise.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Chief Minister for the answer but I would have thought that if a person feels that an injustice has been done to him, the proper person to go to in the first instance to redress that injustice is the Minister for Housing and not the Minister for Education or the Chief Minister or anybody else but I understood from the answer given by the Minister for Housing that he will not see anybody who feels aggrieved, is that the position?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition, he said that the Minister will no longer carry out interviews for the allocation of houses.

HON P J ISOLA:

That is not the question I put, Mr Speaker. I asked the Minister a direct question, would he see an applicant on the housing list who felt that an injustice had been done to him, that was my question

and he said no. What is the answer? We do not disagree with the policy of the Government, we think it is high time an Allocation Committee gave houses but now, of course, there are not many houses to give so there is no point in Ministerial patronage but I asked the Minister to give us an answer on that because if a policy is going to be promulgated it should be known clearly to the public.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I am not going to get myself involved in the allocation of any houses, we have a Housing Committee. If an applicant thinks that an injustice has been done by the Allocation Committee . . . . .

HON P J ISOLA:

Or anybody else.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, it cannot be anybody else, it is the Allocation Committee who does the allocations, he will be seen by members of my department first. If members of my department feel that an injustice has been done then I will deal with the matter but I will not make myself that readily available to be accused of interfering in personal matters as we know Gibraltar is so small and they say: "Oh yes, he did this because it is his father-in-law or his cousin lent him his car" and all the rest. I will be seen to be doing justice because I will not involve myself in the Allocation Committee because I think the Allocation Committee is composed of honourable people.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer has been clear now.

HON P J ISOLA:

No, Mr Speaker, it hasn't. So what the Minister is in fact telling the House and the people is that he will see an applicant who feels an injustice has been committed if members of his department decide that he should see them, this is what he has answered, Mr Speaker, this is what the Minister has answered.

MR SPEAKER:

No, will you please sit down. The answer has been very explicit. He will not get involved with interviews, he will not get involved with the allocation of houses. If there is a genuine case of complaint it will be investigated by his department and if necessary he will see the person.

HON P J ISOLA:

With respect, Mr Speaker, this is a very important point because what the Minister has said in the answer and I have heard him very clearly is that if the members of his department share the view of the applicant then he will see him but what I am asking the Minister is

does that in effect mean that a person who is aggrieved will no longer have an interview with the Minister unless his departmental staff thinks that he should have one?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I will go one further with the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition. I will ask my Housing Manager for every interview that has been given what the grounds are and then I will follow it through.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister not agree that in the circumstances that he has answered to me under which he does not see anybody unless his department advises him, that it would be highly undesirable for any Minister in the Government to see an aggrieved person on his housing situation, is that his view in view of the format that he has given to us for the future?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

My view is that I shall not get involved in the allocation of houses. What I have just said is that applicants are interviewed by my department, I will keep a check on what the interviews are for, what the grievances are without being told by the Housing Manager, I will ask him every month how many interviews have you done, what were the basis of the interviews and if I see any irregularities I will deal with it with the Housing Allocation Committee but I will not interfere with any allocation, I will not listen to people because otherwise I would spend all my life listening to people. If they have a genuine complaint they can always write to me.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister this question? If an applicant, an elector, an aggrieved person, goes to see the Chief Minister or the Minister for Economic Development or the Minister for Public Works and those Ministers telephone him and say: "I think you ought to see this person", will he break the rule then and see them?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 210 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many units of Government housing at present have communal sanitary facilities and how many units do not have running water?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, according to the 1981 Census Report the number of Government units sharing flush toilets is 381 and 106 have no running water.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 210 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the Government going to do anything about improving that, Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, this will be part of my general housing policy but there must be a bit of caution in this that if in trying to improve the sanitary facilities of a building we create a bigger housing problem I have to be cautious. I will look into the scheme where we might be able to provide this service without creating bigger problems of overcrowding etc by losing living space.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, whilst I welcome the statement of the Minister that something will be done, in the same way that he treats the matter with caution I treat his statements with caution, Mr Speaker. If one goes back to the 1976 AACR election manifesto it is quite clear they were going to do something about it then.

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect to you, what is the question you are asking?

HON A J HAYNES:

The question, Mr Speaker, is will the Minister confirm that this has been the alleged ambition of his party for over ten years and that very little if anything has been done in that time?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Part of the scheme has been modernisation but modernisation improves the general housing stock of the Government but it also has a slight effect in that because of the improvement it reduces the number of living spaces that there is available. This is why I am saying that under the present stock that we know we have I will move with caution to see that we do not provide these facilities at the cost of having more overcrowding.

HON A J HAYNES:

For the sake of Government's convenience they are not going to reduce these figures, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

We are now debating, with due respect. It is hypothetical in any case. I would be delighted if you asked a supplementary and I will not interrupt if it is to seek information and nothing else. Next question.

NO. 211 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government inform this House as to the results of the enquiry dealing with the escape by a prisoner from Moorish Castle Prison?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, I wish to make clear that there has not been an official enquiry, by that I mean an administrative enquiry, dealing with the escape by a prisoner from Moorish Castle Prison. There were however disciplinary charges brought against the two Prison Officers on duty at the time.

The case against the Senior Officer was not proven and accordingly the charge against the second officer was withdrawn.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 211 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Hon and Learned Attorney-General explain how that is the case, if there were disciplinary offences against two and the senior was found not proved why was the case against the junior withdrawn?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the charge against the senior officer was fully investigated before a tribunal that was appointed for the purpose. In view of the findings in respect of the senior officer it was considered that it would not be appropriate to proceed against his junior because after all the senior officer was responsible overall.

HON P J ISOLA:

Who made these considerations, if I may ask?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

This was a decision taken by the public service.

HON P J ISOLA:

By the Public Service Commission sitting as a Commission?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, the responsibility for the decision was that of the Deputy Governor.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is that usual when there is a disciplinary offence? Isn't the Public Service Commission the body that deals with this?



HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think the Public Service Commission's role is to advise the Governor on policy matters, on the general policy on appointments. What happened was that the Governor appointed a tribunal of three people, a very senior Head of Department, a lawyer and an engineer. The Establishment Officer put his case against the senior officer before that Committee and when they reported their findings, as I say, because the other officer was more junior it was thought that it would not be appropriate to pursue this matter against the junior officer.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Attorney-General, will there in fact be an enquiry into how a prisoner was able to escape considering the nature of his escape which was not merely running away, it was having to saw through two bars of the prison cell which must have taken more than a day, how he was able to acquire all these sheets which he knotted together to form a rope? This is not a simple case of a chap sort of running off whilst the prison warden's back was turned, this was a very well thought out and well planned escape and will there be an enquiry into how it was possible for this man to acquire the hacksaw, acquire all the sheets, in fact, a thorough enquiry into how an escape of this nature was possible? Will there be an enquiry?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, to my knowledge it is not intended to hold an enquiry at the moment of that kind. This matter was investigated from a disciplinary point of view and other enquiries were made by other authorities to see what had happened, it was investigated very thoroughly. So far as disciplinary matters are concerned it is not intended to proceed further. I think the point raised by the Hon Member really goes to the question of the general administration of the prison and at this stage I think I am correct in saying it is not intended to pursue an enquiry.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, it is not in the interest of who to proceed with this enquiry? I would think that this is a very serious thing and if an enquiry is not gone into it makes a mockery of the whole system whereby you have a prison where offenders are consigned to and yet if they can manage to get away nobody seems to care one way or the other.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

This is not true, with respect to the Hon Member, it is not true that nobody cares.

MR SPEAKER:

It is not quite correct.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, with respect, Mr Speaker, it is not true that nobody cares, the matter was taken extremely seriously. It was investigated at the level, if you like, of a particular incident and to my knowledge it is not intended to have a more detailed enquiry because of that.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would it be possible to supply Members of this House with the report of the occurrence?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think, I am speaking off the cuff, but I think that it would not be normal practice to disclose the detailed report. I can certainly find out and supply further information.

HON W T SCOTT:

It is surprising, even astonishing and most unsatisfactory, Mr Speaker, because this could happen again as far as we understand, it could continue happening. Hacksaws could be taken up, sheets and God knows what, aiding other prisoners to escape.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there is always a possibility of a break from a prison. It has not been taken lightly at all, it has been taken most seriously and I think the enquiry that was set up, as I say, was headed by a very senior Departmental Head. The Civil Service takes the view that it was believed there was a case for investigation, in the event the tribunal came down with its findings and those findings were accepted. It does not mean that one will look at the situation complacently, obviously one will take note of what has happened.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Government, as a result of that enquiry, whether there have been any security measures implemented at the prison?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I will find out but I am quite sure that what happened there has been taken note of and that appropriate measures will have been taken or are being taken to prevent or to minimise the risk of a similar account but you cannot possibly guarantee that it won't ever happen again.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, during the course of this enquiry was it established how often searches of cells are carried out and whether these are carried out on a regular basis or on a spot check basis?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

My understanding, Mr Speaker, is that the officers on duty do an hourly round. It may be that there is a case for a spot check in addition. The documents I saw; and I did see them at one stage, indicated that there had been an hourly surveillance.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, obviously I did not phrase my question correctly. I did not want to know about the hourly patrol, what I wanted to know is if as a result of these enquiries has it been established that in fact the prison staff carry out searches of the different cells without prior notice to the inmates that their cells are going to be searched to find out whether there are an extra number of sheets in a cell or there is a hacksaw hidden under a mattress, was this established?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I cannot possibly myself say yes but I am sure that this is a standard technique in a prison, from time to time to carry out a spot check, but I will find out and tell the Hon Member.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

24.5.83

NO. 212 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many receptions for visiting and local sportsmen whether as teams or associations have been given by the Minister for Sport since February, 1980?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, twenty-eight receptions have been held.

NO. 213 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider embellishing and improving the amenities at the Apes Den in the Upper Rock as this is one of the main touristic attractions with which Gibraltar is associated the world over?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, Sir, although I agree that some improvements would be desirable, financial considerations rule out the possibility of carrying these out at present.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 213 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister realise that this is one of the most important amenities in Gibraltar from the touristic point of view and shouldn't he attach some urgency to this particularly in the terrible state that our tourist industry is in? Isn't this a way of improving our product which everybody in the tourist trade is clamouring for here in Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, we have held discussions with representatives of the military authorities in charge of the Apes Den and tour operators on ways to improve the site particularly to ease the flow of traffic. It was suggested that traffic wardens under Police supervision could be employed to exercise traffic control of this and other sites in the Upper Rock area especially St Michael's Cave. The Commissioner of Police was consulted and he stated that it is not possible at the moment not only from the financial point of view but also because of the difficulties in negotiating the necessary conditions of service for that which would be a new grade in Gibraltar and there were objections from the Trade Unions last year, as is known, about the case of Police Reservists. We are quite aware, Mr Speaker, that we should do what we can to improve that particular part of Gibraltar and there are plans but it is very expensive and I am afraid to say that this particular year is not one of the golden eras of Gibraltar's existence.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But doesn't the Minister realise that if he wants to improve this second industry in Gibraltar, tourism is one of our main industries in Gibraltar, the Government has got to invest?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer has been given.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am going from there now. Isn't it possible, without going into the more expensive side of car parks and so on and so forth, in actually improving the amenities in the place itself, say, put some things for the monkeys to run about, a see-saw, a piece of rope which they can climb, a little attraction there so that when tourists go up there they can enjoy themselves not only be feeding nuts to the apes but also to see the monkeys perform for them, as it were? Couldn't the Minister give some thought to that, it won't cost all that money?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I don't know how long it is since the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza has been up the Apes Den but there are ropes and there are see-saws and there is a lot of monkey business going on up there, I assure you, with the monkeys. From the particular question that the Hon and Gallant Major has asked I got the impression that his idea was of improving the product there. One is not talking of parking areas but talking of flow of traffic and try to improve the product and I agree, Mr Speaker, it is a vital industry to Gibraltar tourism but I must make this very clear and let the people understand it, if the Opposition or the Hon and Gallant Member doesn't, we do not have this year the financial resources and therefore you cannot invest unless we further tax the people of Gibraltar which, as they already say, are well over-taxed.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Minister know that there are plenty of funds in the reserve and that is what the reserves are there for to invest them in matters that will produce more money and not just leave them there idle?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism and Sport state if he intends to convene any more meetings of the Gibraltar Tourist Board and, if so, when?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Yes, Sir, of course. Meetings of the Gibraltar Tourist Advisory Board will be called as soon as the Air Europe application and its subsequent appeal is resolved which should not be long now.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 214 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Minister got to wait for that to happen, surely, there are other matters connected with tourism which I am sure he is concerned with discussing. Why should one item completely invalidate the function of that Board?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Because, Mr Speaker, there are conflicting interests.

HON MAJOR R.J PELIZA:

The conflicting interests are there all the time, this is what the Minister is there, I think, to smooth over. If he is incapable of doing that he should look for somebody else for the Ministry.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I do not think that I am incapable, Mr Speaker. Since February, 1982, there have been ten meetings of the Tourist Advisory Board and I do not think that Gibraltar's tourism will collapse dramatically because we have not held a meeting since last August..

NO. 215 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism and Sport state what tangible things he has done to improve the tourist product in the last six months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, due to financial constraints, it has not been possible to carry out any of the desirable major improvements to the tourist product.

A list of touristic projects was submitted to the ODA for consideration in connection with development aid, but, regrettably without success. However, Government is giving sympathetic consideration to the possibility of funding from our own resources improvements to St Michael's Cave and to the creation of a Military Museum at Willis's Magazine.



NO. 216 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government produce a list of those buildings which it intends to fully or partly modernise in the next 12 months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it is intended that the following buildings be modernised during the next 12 months:-

Castle Ramp/Road to the Lines - PHASE II (22 units)

4 Bedsits

2 - 1 Bedroom flats

6 - 2 " "

8 - 3 " "

2 - 4 " "

Tank Ramp - PHASE II (11 units)

3 New 2 Bedroom flats

5 modernised 1 Bedroom flat

3 modernised 2 " "

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 216 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

There is no list for partly modernised buildings in that.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think if the Hon Member has meant rehabilitation rather than modernisation his question should have said so, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, on the information that I do have, will the Minister state the number of units which actually existed before the Government concentrated on modernisation in respect of Castle Ramp?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I would need notice of that question.

HON A J HAYNES:

They always seem to need notice, Mr Speaker.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because you ask questions that are completely out of context.

HON A J HAYNES:

Would the Minister confirm that there were more units before the Government proposed to do modernisation here than there will be now?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Usually in modernisation there is some loss of the housing stock, yes, because you often change four very unsatisfactory flats into three satisfactory ones.

HON A J HAYNES:

If you are Minister for Public Works that is alright, if you are Minister for Housing the fact that you are losing units is a consideration for not giving them, is that the way Government works, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

24.5.83

NO. 217 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LOEDO

Mr Speaker, what measures does Government propose to take to combat oil pollution problems on the beaches on the East side of the Rock?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, all the beaches are cleaned daily during the bathing season by the beach cleaners. Should the beaches become polluted with oil, the City Fire Brigade is properly equipped to combat this problem.

NO. 218 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will the fencing of the pool at Varyl Begg be completed before the Summer season?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, it is hoped that it will be completed before the 1st July.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 218 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, Summer season the 1st July? Why did he answer yes, the 1st July is right in the middle of it, surely?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Therefore this question is out of time because the Summer season started on the 1st May, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Why did the Minister answer yes and tell us then the 1st July?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, we take the second phase of the Summer season when the schools break up.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 219 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, when does Government hope to have the new parking bays opposite St Peter's School completed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the car park bays are in constant use. A small measure of work is required to finish the job and this is being deferred pending a decision whether to widen the road.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 219 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but if I remember correctly I was told last year that they would be completed in time for the season last year and absolutely nothing has been done. Can the Minister say whether in fact anything will be done before 1st July?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER: .

Next question.

24.5.83

NO. 220 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Public Works say whether the surfacing works on Tank Ramp have now been completed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the final wearing surface at Tank Ramp was laid on 19 November, 1982.

NO. 221 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Public Works say what the present position regarding the protection of windows at Hargraves Barracks is?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the protection screens to one flat at Hargraves Barracks are being manufactured at the Workshop and will be fixed very shortly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 221 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, what about the other two flats?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They are being demanded by the two tenants, so far no decision has been made on them.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, why is it going to be a case of one tenant and not the other two when the three tenants are equally subjected to flying footballs and in one case one of the tenants is an elderly lady who lives on her own?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We are not yet convinced, Sir, that the line of fire of flying footballs is equally the same with all tenants.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister whether he would care to go and visit this lady? I believe that she has already repaired the broken panes of glass but I am sure she will be able to tell him exactly how the ball goes in through her kitchen window. Will the Minister please investigate and do something about it, this is an old lady on her own who has no one in the world to look after her interests? If he has a social conscience, and I am sure he has, would he please take this matter up seriously?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am willing to give it sympathetic consideration.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 222 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, why are Police vehicles not maintained at the PWD Garage?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Police vehicles, including ambulances, are repaired and serviced under contract usually by the garage of origin of the vehicle, and are given priority over all other vehicles. This has been found to be both the most economical and efficient way.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 222 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

If they are maintained at the source of origin why is it put out to tender?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is a difficult question. The normal regulations are that they should be put out to tender and it usually occurs that the garage of origin wins the tender partly, I suppose, because they have got the spare parts available.

HON W T SCOTT:

I suppose by accident rather than design but it still does not really answer my original question. Isn't there a case to be made now that we have a new Public Works Garage for those vehicles, all Government vehicles to be maintained at the Government Public Works Garage?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There is a case, Sir, perhaps I might like to speak to the Hon Member privately.

HON W T SCOTT:

And perhaps whilst doing so and if the contract does go out to tender I see no reason why the Public Works Garage itself cannot go out to tender on it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 223 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the average cost per unit (distinguishing between the different types of units ie 4 rooms K/B - bedistters) at the new Estate at Catalan Bay?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, the average cost per unit of the new building at Catalan Bay is -

Bedsitter	-	£20,630
2 Bedroom	-	£37,555
3     "	-	£44,845
4     "	-	£45,230 (Handicapped flat)

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 223 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

How do these figures, Mr Speaker, compare with modernisation units?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think such comparison would be completely invidious.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, I was going to say there is no need to answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

What is the estimated cost of the Rosia Dale Phase I, in units?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Rosia Dale Phase I worked out about £27,000 to £30,000 per flat.

HON A J HAYNES:

And of these figures that have been given in respect of the average cost per unit, the estimated average cost per unit or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Very reasonably close to the estimate, yes.

HON W T SCOTT:

I see a remarkable difference between the figures for Rosia Dale Phase I and Catalan Bay, something like between £27,000 to £30,000 and on occasions £40,000 and £45,000, is there any valid reason because the timing was almost the same, a year's difference perhaps a year and a half?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think that more than a year's difference, Sir, I think Rosia Dale has been in actual occupation for at least three years when we are talking of the first phase. These compare much more closely with later works that we have done such as St Joseph's and St Jago's.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, what is the proposed rental cost for these units?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is not my department to decide, Sir, I do not know the answer to that one.

HON A J HAYNES:

Surely, his department must advise on the figures, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the Public Works Department does not normally make any advice available on what they consider should be the rent, I think that is a prerogative of the Housing Department. I am informed it is about £120 per square.

NO. 224 of 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider increasing the car parking potential at the new USOC car park by making use of the gravel pavement on the west side?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the USOC area was constructed as a coach park for 40 coaches in an open frontier situation but since this has not materialised it is being used as a temporary car park. Since there is still ample parking in Queensway at the Romney Huts site, which is close by, it is not considered necessary to alter the existing layout which was designed for coaches.

NO. 225 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many zebra crossings have been repaired in accordance with Question 34 of 1983 and how many remain to be seen to?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, since the 22 February this year, when Question 34 was answered and the subject of zebra crossings was introduced in supplementaries, a total of 76 lamps have been replaced both in the spot lights and the beacons at the 14 pedestrian crossings which are fitted with this equipment.

At present there are 4 flexiglobes and one spot light missing. These will be fitted once a consignment of spares, which were ordered on the 16 December, is received. The consignment is expected to arrive this week and work will proceed shortly.

NO. 226 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, with regard to Road to the Lines Phase II, what new steps has Government taken to ensure there is no repetition at final account stage of what occurred in Phase I?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Hon Member's question is not clearly understood. The final account for Phase I will not be settled until January, 1984. If the question refers to the application for additional funds, the explanation is that there was an increase in accommodation area over that at tender stage and an upgrading of specifications of finishes to reduce maintenance costs. Allowances have been made in Phase II to try to avoid the need for supplementaries.

NO. 227 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government give the reasons and the projected cost of the work undertaken by the PWD in Governor's Lane?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, with the reversal of the traffic flow in Governor's Lane/Cathedral Square/Main Street it has been decided for improved safety to provide a small footpath for pedestrians on the north side of the road.

Since the road was closed for these works, it was also considered opportune to resurface the road. The total cost of the works will be approximately £4,000 but I would add, Sir, this does not include the cost of the resurfacing.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 227 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Was this an initiative of Government or was it brought to their notice?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was a mixture of both, Sir. We did have a request from the tenants in the area that they considered that a certain amount of danger did appertain especially on the northern side because of the very narrow curve that was there. When they came out their house they were stepping almost straight into the road but it was also partly one of the considerations of Government when the scheme becomes permanent to make the road itself improved. One of the improvements is to extend the pavement on the south side so that we can do away with any parked cars in that area at all.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is Government satisfied that the width of the new pavement on the north side will improve the safety requirements adequately?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, it is quite wide enough to walk along safely and the main safety measure when you come out of your house is that you are not stepping straight into the road.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I notice that these pavements have been continued all the way up to the garden opposite the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity. Has Government taken into consideration the fact that by doing these bits of pavement there they are doing away with a number of parking sites and do they propose to make other sites available?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is appreciated that a number of parking sites have been lost. However, there are now ample parking sites on the USOC area and there is a walkway through to USOC which does not make it a very great hardship to walk an extra fifty yards.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but is the Government going to put some bollards or something on these pavements because I can see cars parking on the pavement anyway?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

I thought the USOC car park was going to be temporary and in any case for coaches anyway, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

You are still hoping that the Lisbon Agreement is going to come through.

HON A J HAYNES:

If it does become a coach park where will the cars park, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When the Lisbon Agreement comes through we will see what the situation is.

HON W T SCOTT:

Can I ask the Hon Minister when we can expect that project to be completed and again open to traffic?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It should be completed within the next ten days, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 228 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will the Minister for Public Works confirm or otherwise if the litter in Jumper's Bastion has been satisfactorily removed and, if not, whether action has been taken against the tenants as intended by the Minister as stated in his answer to my Question 146 of 1983?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, an inspection of the area was conducted by officers of the Lands and Surveys Department and has shown that the majority of the offending articles have been removed. It is not therefore felt that legal action is warranted at this juncture although the situation is being monitored both to avoid a recurrence and to ensure that the clearance is completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 228 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will the Minister take my word that the first thing I did on coming to Gibraltar on this occasion was precisely to go there and there it is, all the muck is still there, and will the Minister please investigate why he has been given that incorrect information?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If the information is incorrect I will definitely investigate it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I suggest to the Minister that perhaps he could go there and look for himself.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 229 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider pruning overgrown bushes and trees on the west side of the roads on the Upper Rock which unduly obscure the spectacular view of the bay and surrounding scenery from people taking walks and recreating generally in the area?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the pruning of overgrown bushes and trees on the Upper Rock will be carried out when the labour force becomes available after the vegetation at the Upper Rock Fire Breaks has been removed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 229 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Minister give an idea of when this is going to be, will it be in time for the summer season tourist period when we hope we shall be getting more tourists coming to Gibraltar and so endeavour to improve the product?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

In about six weeks time, Sir, but we will try and improve on it.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Public Works state if there is any person responsible to ensure that such things as clocks in Government public buildings are kept in working order and names of Government houses are properly maintained?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, there is a private firm which undertakes the maintenance of the clocks (three) and PWD assist in winding up and providing technical support. As to the other part of the Hon Member's question, Housing wardens and foremen are generally responsible for reporting defects within their districts. Names of Government houses are frequently vandalised and when reports are received every effort is made to replace the defective or missing letters if in stock. If not available orders are placed from time to time and a time-lag can occur.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 230 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister aware that the clock opposite the Market is almost always giving the wrong time and that even the one here in this building on the east side has been out of order, not now it is working now I notice, have been out of order for months on end? Can the Minister state whether the person responsible for that was the company engaged in winding it up or whatever it is or the persons in his department who are supposed to look after them?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think there has been some difficulty with the mechanism of the clock outside here which is being remedied. The one at the Market Place I will have it looked into.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister keep an eye on things like that because it gives a very bad reputation to Gibraltar of neglect and couldn't care less attitude of the Government which we all know in this House but we do not want it to be made public? As to the other bit of the question that I asked regarding the letters that cannot be found, is the Minister aware that Referendum House in Glacis the letter wasn't there for months on end and that now Portmore House has three letters missing? When does he expect to get those letters?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Unfortunately you don't place an order for one letter at a time if one letter goes missing. We have replaced on certain occasions but unless you have an extremely large stock of spare letters there must be times when letters are missing and are not replaced immediately.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I think they are more time missing than they are there and replaced but could the Minister have a couple of A, B, C's handy in his office to be able to replace them when one is lost?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, I believe the frequency of which the letter E is used is greater than any other letter.

HON A T LODDO:

Now that we are on the subject of clocks could I ask the Minister to have a close look, or his department rather, have a close look at the clock opposite the Market because I fear that the cupola over the clock is now leaning at a very dangerous angle and if that were to fall down heaven help whoever it catches underneath. It would be no consolation to say: "We did warn you about it", if there is a car damaged or personal injury occurs?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As far as I remember I answered a question about that last year in which I assured the Hon Member and my department assures me there is no danger of it collapsing, it is perhaps becoming a challenger to the leaning tower of Pisa.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 231 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how much revenue is derived from the advertisements displayed on pavement barriers and do they not think that they cheapen the atmosphere of our historic city?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the revenue derived from the advertisements displayed on pavement barriers is approximately £1,000 per annum so far. I would add that it does increase as more are put on. The cost of manufacturing, erecting and maintaining these barriers falls on the company which has been awarded the concession, as is the case with the directional signs and coat of arms on these barriers which the company supplies free of charge to Government.

Government does not think that this form of advertisement in the locations which have been selected, cheapens the atmosphere of our historic city. On the contrary they provide a necessary service to the trading community which is coordinated very satisfactorily. The quality and design is good and very professional and is strictly controlled. I am sure that it has not escaped notice that the majority of these pedestrian-barrier advertisements are concentrated largely on the northern outskirts of the city with only a limited number at Casemates Square at the entry of our shopping area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 231 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Minister ever visited Germany and Austria where obviously they take great care particularly in their historic cities to make sure that the character of the city is not in any way blemished with plastic signs and signs like the ones we are putting up now and isn't that destroying the image of Gibraltar and certainly much more counter-productive to the industry, generally, than the benefit that the advertisements can bring either to the Government purses or to the traders themselves who are advertising there?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have visited many places in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France and I have seen quite a number of these places where they do have this type of sign and, as I said before, these are done quite tastefully and they are serving a useful purpose.

HON W T SCOTT:

Who has the contract, Mr Speaker, what country of origin are the directors or who has the contract for this advertising and was it put out to tender?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was not put out to tender, Sir, but a number of firms were approached to see what they could offer. The firm which has been given the concession is a Gibraltarian company, I think the directors are an Englishwoman and her Spanish husband.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 232 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, did Government consult with the Unions before the purchase of the street cleaning vehicle and if so why is it not being used?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Trade Unions were fully aware that Government was going to purchase a street sweeping vehicle before this equipment was ordered. The vehicle has been blacked by one Trade Union because the Staff Side claim that after the reduction of overtime worked by the sweepers, the vehicle was operated in a section of the town which previously had been swept by hand. However, since there was no loss of jobs, Government feels that the flexible use of the vehicle to assist the sweepers in any area is quite reasonable.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 232 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

So in fact he is saying that the street cleaning vehicle since the industrial action has not been used at all?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I wouldn't say it is not being used at all but it is not being used with the flexibility with which Government would like to see it being used.

HON W T SCOTT:

What I am saying is that, for example, in Main Street once the sweepers have gone through and litter accumulates again, before the next shift the following morning there could be a situation where the street cleaning vehicles could well be used to maintain a clean Main Street, at least.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I couldn't agree with you more.

HON W T SCOTT:

What action is Government taking then?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

At the moment we are negotiating with the Unions to see if this flexibility can become a feature of the use of the vehicle.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make a statement on its dispute with the street sweepers and does Government intend to take any action to ensure that the filthy state of our streets does not become a health hazard?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, there is no dispute in strict legal terms.

Because of the current economic situation, the financial provision made for sweeping in the estimates was reduced. Consequently, evening and week-end overtime was cut. A result is that the amount of unswept litter, particularly after a week-end; has been considerably greater.

The sweepers, who, the Union maintains, are not in dispute with Government, have alleged that as the amount of litter is greater, they cannot at all times sweep the whole district allocated to them. Government has the impression that there is a certain measure of 'go-slow' tactics involved to try and force Government to restore the overtime to previous levels.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 233 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister not agree that if there is no dispute there is nothing that looks more remarkable like one as the present one and can the Minister confirm that in fact the streets are not being swept satisfactorily during the week, never mind week-ends?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

As I have said Government has the impression that there are 'go-slow' tactics by the sweepers. The Government has, I won't say gone along with this situation but has tried not to exacerbate it over the past week or two but Government now intends to take much stronger measures against those sweepers who do not give an honest days work for an honest days pay.

HON G T RESTANO:

He has the impression, does he not know? Cannot he come out with something concrete? He says he has the impression that there is a 'go-slow' tactic and that is why the streets are not clean, why is he hiding behind impression?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is euphemistically speaking.

HON G T RESTANO:

What in fact does the Government intend to do from now on?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, we know they are definitely going slow but we are trying to be pleasant about it.

HON G T RESTANO:

I said what in fact therefore is Government going to do about it?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We have tried to be reasonably tolerant for the time being to avoid a proper dispute. We are now going to take, as I said, stronger action, if that leads to a full dispute with a strike the streets will not be swept but I expect the Opposition to back the Government up against the men who are trying to be bloodminded.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am asking what the Government intends to do about it, quite simple, this is the third time I have asked?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have just said, to take stronger measures. The first measure is to put the men on a charge, the second one is to put them on a second charge and the third phase is to dismiss them and I expect the Opposition to back the Government fully in such a measure.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is that a request?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is an answer.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask something that seems to have pressed into industrial dispute or industrial talks or whatever it is the Government calls them, and this is references to the men. Are we to understand that the Trade Union is not in negotiation in this matter, that there is some sort of direct talking between the Government and the men?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

When one talks about the men, the situation I think as the Hon Member must know very well, is that the Trade Unions state that they have to support what the men themselves have decided. In this instance it is the men who have decided what they want to do and the Trade Union is supporting them.



HON P J ISOLA:

But is the Trade Union actually leading negotiations or talks or is the Government dealing with the men alone? What is the position?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They are dealing with the representatives of the men one of whom is a Trade Union official.

HON P J ISOLA:

So then the Trade Union itself has no policy on this, it takes no part, is that the position?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Trade Union policy, as I have already stated, is to do what the men wish.

HON P J ISOLA:

So they are superfluous to requirements really, is that the position?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

You should tell your friend that.

HON G T RESTANO:

What in fact is the Government doing about the possible health hazard?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The possible health hazard, in spite of a certain gentleman who was on TV the other day and talked about bubonic plague etc, is at the moment still very low indeed.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I do not know whether he has walked but I certainly have done one or two evenings down Main Street and there is a proliferation of mosquitoes.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, that has nothing to do whatsoever with the rubbish that is around. The rubbish that is around is basically waste paper and this does not create a considerable health hazard. It is when there is remainders of food that are around that it is dangerous and when there are remainders of food which is not happening at the moment but when they are they are sprayed by the health authorities.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Minister saying that there is no health hazard then, that the whole thing is being coped with effectively?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

At the moment, yes.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that the Public Health Authority as reported in a statement that they made to the Chronicle last Saturday, are very seriously concerned indeed and it is not a question of dismissing it lightly?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Of course they are very seriously concerned that it could get out of hand if it was not dealt with it on a reasonable basis but as I have said at the moment the rubbish that is being left around is mainly litter and paper and is not constituting a health hazard. A health hazard would occur should the rubbish being left around contain remnants of food and things like that and this of course is always a possibility if industrial dispute might escalate.

HON G T RESTANO:

If there is no remnant of food, Mr Speaker, and the rubbish is not being collected and there are piles of rubbish, shall we say, at Devil's Tower Road, does that not constitute remnants of food at Devil's Tower Road?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The pile of rubbish at Devil's Tower Road in the main was not household waste but waste by traders who were indiscriminately dumping large quantities of wood and cardboard in the road because they found the door shut.

HON G T RESTANO:

In that case where is the remnants of food, the household rubbish which includes food, where is that being collected and where is that being dumped?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Some of it is being dumped over the ash chute and the remainder is being burnt. Remember they are working 39 hours so you are getting 39 hours of burning, the remainder is being dumped at sea.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 234 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has Government now resolved its dispute with the staff at the Refuse Destructor and if not can Government make a statement on the position?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

There is no dispute in strict legal terms. The funds provided to operate the refuse incinerator were reduced with the result that the weekly operational time was cut from 71 hours to 60½ hours. When put to the men this offer was rejected and they maintained that either they continued to work 71 hours or they would opt to work a 39 hour basic week. Government then proposed to introduce two shifts based on a 5 day 39 hour working week. This second offer was also rejected.

On 17 May, 1983, Government proposed a new offer giving a slightly enhanced working week. The Staff Side, however, turned down the offer.

NO. 235 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government inform this House as to the hours of operation of the Refuse Destructor two weeks before and two weeks after the commencement of the industrial dispute?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

There is no industrial dispute in strict legal terms. Prior to the recent cuts in overtime, the hours of operation of the incinerator were as follows:

8 am to 6.30 pm Mondays to Saturdays

8 am to 4.00 pm Sundays

This represented a total of 71 worked hours equivalent to 88.8 paid hours.

Two operatives started at 7 am in order to receive the initial refuse collection vehicles and to start up the plant.

For the following two weeks the hours of operation were as follows:

8 am to 4.00 pm Mondays to Thursdays

8 am to 3.00 pm Fridays

This represents a total of 39 hours, worked and paid.

NO. 236 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, following the undertaking given in answer to Question No. 149 of 1983, will the Minister responsible for Public Works now inform this House with the information requested?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the previous question related to the lifespan of the Ford Escort motor cars that were replaced in 1980; the Mazda patrol car was purchased in 1982 as an additional vehicle made necessary when the Police moved from a three shift to a four shift system. It was necessary to revise the shift system when the working week was reduced to 40 hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 236 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

But there was, in fact, in answer to supplementaries dealing with a Mazda car which still has not been mentioned today and that is I think the information I am trying to find out.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I said the Mazda patrol car was purchased in 1982.

HON W T SCOTT:

I beg your pardon.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 237 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government approach MOD for the release of the Fortress Officers' Mess in Bomb House Lane?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, an approach has already been made. In fact, the Fortress Officers' Mess in Bomb House Lane was included in a list of properties and land areas which the Gibraltar Government would like to see transferred from the MOD as early as possible. This list was prepared in 1979 in consultation with the MOD.

The whole question of the release of Crown Lands held by the Ministry of Defence and no longer required for defence purposes is being considered in consultation with the United Kingdom Government and the Government hopes that important progress in the arrangements for such release will be made shortly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 237 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, should we be successful in obtaining the release of this land would the Government look favourably upon handing over the Fortress Officers' Mess in Bomb House Lane to the Museum to form a very much needed Annex to the Gibraltar Museum?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think, Mr Speaker, that the Hon Member, with all due respect to him, has got his facts slightly wrong. He is referring to the Fortress Officers' Mess which is the one, in fact, opposite the Museum. The request for that particular building was made by Government in connection with an extension to the Hebrew School. I think that what he is referring to is 20, Bomb House Lane, adjoining the Gibraltar Museum, and it is in respect of this latter building that I am aware that an informal approach was made by the Museum Committee for the release of these MOD quarters. I am not aware of any request having been made for the building opposite the Museum in connection with an extension of the Museum but in connection with an extension to the Hebrew School.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I did not know about the request for an extension to the Hebrew School and the Museum have not asked me to put this question forward. It has come from me purely because I know that inside the building to which I refer, which is the Fortress Officers' Mess opposite the Museum, there is a protected monument, namely, a Moorish arch, and I believe that this building would be a very welcome extension to the Museum and incorporate the Moorish arch which is a protected ancient monument. I have not been put up to this question by anybody, I can assure this House.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not suggesting for one moment, Mr Speaker, that the Hon Member has been put up to it at all but in any case even if that particular building were to be used as an extension to the Hebrew School and there is a serious problem there of accommodation, that does not in any way preclude affording the necessary protection to this Moorish arch that the Hon Member is referring to. I think, perhaps, I could inform the House that one of the main problems in pursuing the matter further has been the high cost of reprovisioning, in other words, the standpoint of the Ministry of Defence is that they require these buildings and they can only give them up if they are reprovided elsewhere and at our cost and reprovisioning is a very expensive affair.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, in pursuing this would the Government consider making a bid for the old Line Wall School which could very easily connect with the Hebrew School?

MR SPEAKER:

We are now extending the scope of the question.

HON A J CANEPA:

That does not belong to the Government.

HON A J HAYNES:

Assuming you could say in the near future the Fortress Officers' Mess is released to Government, is there going to be any debate as to the user to which it is going to be put or is it going to be automatically given to the Hebrew School?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think the use of that is a matter certainly for consideration within the Government and in particular the Development and Planning Commission. We are also pursuing at the moment concurrently the question of the provision of further space for the Hebrew School notwithstanding this building in a separate scenario, as it were, and if we are able to make progress with that then there would be no need to earmark this Fortress Officers' Mess for the school.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the Minister also said that in 1979 a list of buildings were submitted to the MOD for transfer. Has the Government also got views as to what the user for all these other . . . . .

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, I am not going to have that question. Next question.

NO. 238 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state if a scheme to embellish Market Lane submitted by enterprises in the area was rejected and if so can they state the reasons for so doing?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Government is not aware that any such scheme has been submitted by enterprises in Market Lane. I wonder whether the Hon Member is referring to an informal approach made to the Chief Planning Officer by these enterprises signifying their agreement to the pedestrianisation scheme of Main Street and particularly that of Market Lane. The position today is that Market Lane has been closed to traffic as part of the trial period on pedestrianisation and would ultimately be pedestrianised in the context of the overall project.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 238 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am pleased to hear that answer from the Minister, obviously I hope they have something in mind for that, but could he say if other Lanes are going to be treated in the same manner?

HON A J CANEPA:

In due course, yes, as part of the general pedestrianisation scheme of Main Street other subsidiary Lanes abutting, as it were, Main Street would also be considered in the overall context of the project.



NO. 239 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government confirm that it has received the Dockyard Project Study Report and can Government state when it proposes to make the same available to the Opposition?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. The Report comprises a number of documents prepared by the consultants to the Government, by A & P Appledore International Limited and its civil engineering advisers. These documents and the Report will be made available to all Members of the House once the Government of Gibraltar has formulated a view and well in time, I should add, for them to be able to take a view well ahead of the proposed meeting before the end of June on the commercialisation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 239 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Is there any particular reason why the Opposition should not have the Report before the Government has formulated a view? May it not be useful in helping Government to formulate a view if the Opposition should have it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, we are quite near that stage so that there is really not much difference on that, we may be formulating our own views pretty soon. Certainly I will make them available to Hon Members as soon as possible and well in time for them to make up their minds. Members will have the opportunity, I would rather not give it another adjective, but I think they will have an interesting presentation. There will be as there was on the previous occasion two representations, one by A & P Appledore for Members of the Opposition and one by the Government consultants themselves in the first place and I think the timing of that should be in such a way that Members should have had the Report a little ahead of time so that it is more meaningful when they see the presentations which are useful, very helpful, in a general way.

NO. 240 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has Government been provided with a copy of the answer of the Secretary of State for Defence to the representations of the Gibraltar Trades Council that the Dockyard should be kept open and if so will Government make the same available to Members of the Opposition?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. I was informed by the Governor of the contents of the reply after it had been received by the Gibraltar Trades Council. I would refer the Hon Member to two Reports which have appeared, one in the local press and one in The Times, in which there is reference and part of it appears to have been informed by the recipient of the letter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 240 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does not the Chief Minister agree that as a matter of courtesy a British Minister in a letter that is so important for the general public and more especially for the Government, should as a matter of courtesy have sent a copy of the reply to the local Government and will he try and obtain one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether that has not been done, what actually has happened is that it was a letter reiterating the decision of the British Government to close the Dockyard by the end of the year, it was a courteous letter, a rather longish letter, stating the reasons why they could not change their mind a copy which was received by the Governor. The Governor showed it to me across the table, I read it and there is nothing in it that we did not know before and it is no departure from anything that we knew, there is nothing really new except that he went out of his way to explain the matter in more detail to the Unions that had been done before, presumably because he has just taken office.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Chief Minister that may be so but on a matter of such importance does he not agree that it would be desirable that Hon Members of this House should see a copy of the reply so that they can be filled in on current thinking even though there may not be much difference and will he try and procure a copy of that letter so that it can be circulated to Members of the House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether I can go that far but I certainly will be prepared to ask for a copy to be made available for Hon Members to look at, that I will do.

NO. 241 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government consider further increasing the number of Gibraltar Government Tickets as they appear to be selling out on some of the draws?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Government is normally guided by advice from the Government Lottery Committee whenever a restructuring of the lottery is considered necessary and the indications are that tickets are obtainable very late in the week for the following weekly draw. The Government, therefore, does not propose to increase the number of tickets at present. I should add that at this moment there are two sets of tickets on sale, the tickets for the June draw and the ordinary weekly tickets and the tickets for the June draw have been increased in price and in numbers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 241 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Hon and Learned Chief Minister say whether since the increase in numbers there has been any appreciable number of returned tickets at the end of each week?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think there are any returned tickets. The Hon Member has been in the Lottery Committee long enough to know that the virtue of it is that there should be sufficient for the demand and a little short. There was an initial bigger increase than there is now because of the very severe penalties that have been imposed by people who were casually or deliberately found with tickets on crossing the barrier.

HON G T RESTANO:

But despite these restrictions and despite the increase of 1,000 tickets a week there have been no returns.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There have been some small returns.

HON G T RESTANO:

Very small returns perhaps smaller than what they used to be before so would that not indicate that there could be an increased revenue for the Government in increasing yet a little bit more?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will have a talk with the Chairman of the Lottery Committee and they are considering the matter again once the June Draw is out of the way.

NO. 242 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government make a statement on the resignation of the Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation and does Government not consider it advisable that the new Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation should be appointed by the Governor after consultation with the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Opposition?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The last Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation has authorised me to say that he relinquished his appointment because he found he had to devote far too much time to the task.

With regard to the second part of the question, I would recall that, in answer to Question No. 361 of 1981, I pointed out to the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition, *inter alia*, that the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation acts in accordance with the Directions issued by His Excellency the Governor-in-Council which requires the maintenance of strict political impartiality and that the Government was satisfied that the present procedure for appointing members to the Board of the Corporation was adequate. In answering supplementaries I said that in any doubtful case I would be quite prepared to have a word with the Leader of the Opposition before an appointment was made.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 242 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, if I recall correctly, the Hon and Learned Chief Minister agreed that he would go into the question of consultation with the Leader of the Opposition because is it not a fact that the Chief Minister himself is consulted on the person who should be Chairman and on a Corporation that we are anxious should be independent does he not agree that the same courtesy should be extended to the Leader of the Opposition by the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

First of all, the parameters of the Chairman, according to the instructions, makes it obvious that he has to be independent. If there were any candidates whom I thought might be likely to be controversial certainly I will. I am not at this stage prepared to go beyond that and particularly at this time because we want to see how the matter develops. If there is any suggestion of any appointment that might be controversial I will certainly bear that in mind.

HON P J ISOLA:

But, Mr Speaker, surely it is not possible to know whether a particular candidate is going to be controversial until one knows what the other side thinks about him.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will have to exercise an element of judgement and stand on my judgement of it and be criticised if necessary.

HON P J ISOLA:

In other words, Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Chief Minister intends to keep that appointment to himself.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not my appointment, Mr Speaker, it is the appointment of the Governor and I intend to continue carrying out my constitutional duty to advise the Governor on matters like this.

HON P J ISOLA:

But does not the Chief Minister agree that if the Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation is to be shown publicly to be an independent person, he should be appointed after consultation not just with the Chief Minister but also with the Leader of the Opposition?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not necessarily.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I also ask, Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that the present Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation finds the task an onerous one, whether it should not be considered to have a paid Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation who could then devote the necessary time and effort to ensure that the Corporation remains an independent body and is not in any way biased or partial?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We are at a crossroad on the question of the Corporation and I would not like to anticipate anything that might happen if there is a change in the management by the retirement of the Manager and perhaps in different circumstances the task of the Chairman might become less if the nature of the appointment of a future Manager would be much more wideranging than the present terms are in which case, of course, the task of the Chairman would be considerably less. The question of an honorarium to a Chairman is one which I have considered but there again if we come here even if there is consultation and we come here for money to pay a substantial amount to the Corporation it will be an increase in the subvention and then when it comes to increasing the subvention we are severely criticised about the way the Corporation is run so really there is a difficulty there which we are trying to see whether we can solve in another way and of course as I often say and my colleague has just told me, it is rather a

dangerous precedent. There are many people doing sterling work as Chairmen of various statutory boards and committees completely free and voluntary and unless it was on terms that they are very necessary, this could set a very bad precedent and do away with a considerable amount of social work being performed by a number of public spirited people in Gibraltar at present.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would not the Hon and Learned Chief Minister agree that the job of Chairman of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation must inevitably be a very demanding one and that he would find no difficulty in getting support from the Opposition for paying an honorarium to a Chairman of that Corporation if as a result of that we are to get a person who will be able to devote the time that is necessary to devote to that Corporation? What he will not get support from us I am sure, will he not agree, is if he comes to us purely and simply to vote more money to keep things like Spanish television advertising or advertising of Spanish products on television and other things but on a question or the issue of payment of an honorarium to the Chairman when such a payment would result in him being able to give the time and attention that is required, I can assure the Chief Minister he would find no lack of support on this side of the House to vote the funds.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am glad to note that latter remark with regard to the other reference. There is a question in the Order Paper to which I will be referring.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 243 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has the Chief Minister now been provided with detailed information of the extent of advertising on GBC of products in Spain and will Government make a statement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, talks have recently been initiated between GBC and Government officials to discuss the application of the cuts the Government has made in the subvention to GBC following consideration of the Corporation's estimates for 1983/84. This matter will be taken up as soon as those talks have been concluded.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 243 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

But does Government have any policy on the matter, this is what we are interested in hearing on this side of the House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think I have stated that I do not particularly like some of the advertisements. I think we ought to be a little less parochial about some of them but until we know what the amount involved is and the final results of these talks regarding the cuts we will not be able to make a proper assessment. It may be that we will have to cut here and say: "If you want those advertisements cut we will have to vote more money".

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 244 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government make available at the Gibraltar Government Tourist Office in London Information Leaflets on the British Nationality Act 1981, for Gibraltarians who may wish to inform themselves of their rights under the Act, and provide personal advice on how to proceed to register for those who may need it?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. The processing of applications is, of course, done in Gibraltar and advice on individual cases or problems, as distinct from advice on the procedure for submitting applications, will have to be obtained from here.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 244 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Chief Minister also provide the Gibraltar Group with leaflets who have been told by them that they are prepared to distribute this through their normal mailing list? Is the Minister aware that recently, in fact the case is still going on, of a Gibraltarian who was served with deportation papers and in fact he has written to Albert McQuarrie and through me to Lord Bethell and in fact the matter is being discussed, perhaps because of ignorance at source?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

My information on that matter is that there was no attempt at deportation at all. In fact, I do not want to be diverted from the question but the very strong evidence that we have is that there has been no attempt, the only point is that the person applied on the basis of five years residence, it was short of it and he was told to come again and no difficulty was put in his way with regard to his continued residence and he has not appeared again after the period had elapsed. With regard to giving copies of this to the Gibraltar Group, no difficulty at all, I can provide the Hon Member and perhaps he can pass it on and we can avoid postage.



THE HON G T RESTANO

Is there any monitoring being carried out at the frontier in order to detect the number of Spanish nationals who enter Gibraltar on a daily basis?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. This information is supplied to Government by the Police on a weekly basis.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 245 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Does Government have any indication then that any of these nationals who do come in on a daily basis come in for the purpose of taking up employment without going through the Department of Labour?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think this is a completely different matter arising from this question. We monitor that, we know the difficulty with regard to some of those who come who may wish to work here, that was said earlier by my Hon Colleague and it is a matter on which the Unions have made representations and a matter on which we are trying to see whether we can plug the difficulties but perhaps in order to know the nature of the undertaking in this respect or whatever it is or the incidence of it may be related if I say that between the 15th December, 1982 and the 15th May, 1983, the figures are as follows: Spaniards into Gibraltar - 310,957 and British into Gibraltar which of course meant that they had gone out before or the few that live around - 350,814.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think perhaps the Chief Minister did not quite get the intention of the question. The question was those who enter on a daily basis and that is why I asked whether there was any monitoring being done in order to check any who might be coming in every day in order to perhaps take up employment without going through the Department of Labour?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly there are no figures that I know of or rather no particulars are kept of the people, only a question of numbers who cross and by nationality. No doubt the Police are carrying out their duties if in fact there are people who seem to be pretty regular and stand out from the rest may become well known to the Police in the future as they were known when there were no identity cards and people were known by their faces but the recording that is done is the ins and outs by the two nationalities that can cross and in future perhaps there will be a separate one for the Portuguese but they are not identified, no records are kept of the numbers.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that it might be a good thing to have further particulars identified at the frontier in order to curb the problem that I was talking about and would he not think it is a good suggestion that the Police be asked to keep further particulars or more detailed particulars?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that that would not help the problem and probably we would find that the Police would say that they cannot cope and in fact the queues would be considerably increased if names were to be recorded of people who enter Gibraltar. It would be an endless queue if particulars of people that entered or left Gibraltar were to be taken apart from the fact that no doubt the Police would ask for much more and I see that this could be too big an exercise to discover what may be a question of a handful of people who are doing this and in any case you would have to prove later on that they were carrying out work so we are trying to plug that hole in another way as the Unions have been informed and in fact there was a question earlier and which was answered by the Minister for Labour.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since, obviously, it is going to be very difficult to carry out any detection in this way, would it be possible for the Government to amend the relevant Ordinance or Ordinances to ensure that any person working without a permit who is not a Gibraltarian is committing an offence?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is the case now and persons who come into Gibraltar are given permission to reside here by the stamp that is put in their passport.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if they are taking any action to reduce the cost of £750,000 that Gibraltar taxpayers contribute to provide land frontier services 24 hours a day?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the manning levels of the Police and Customs at the land frontier are dictated by operational requirements and security consideration to which I was referring just now, and in the case of Customs, by agreement with the Staff Association.

The Staff Inspection of the Customs Department has now been concluded. The Staff Association has been informed that the Official Side is ready to start negotiations and hopes that meaningful progress is made to enable recommendations to be made to Government for its implementation.