

GIBRALTAR

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

6 December 1983
385 to 491

6.12.83

NO. 385 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the consultants recommended a year ago that employees of Bland Ship Repair Yard should have the same priority of employment as workers made redundant from the Naval Dockyard in the event that commercialisation took place, and has Government accepted this recommendation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the consultants who evaluated the proposals for commercialisation recommended, in September 1982, that the possibility of affording Bland's Shiprepair Yard employees hiring rights equal to those for redundant HM Dockyard employees in the commercial yard be considered. The Government feels that this is a matter which, in the first instance, should be considered by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 385 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not true that the recommendation of the consultants was a recommendation to the Government and not to Appledore or the Shiprepair Company? If the Government is saying it should be a matter for the Shiprepair Company to consider are they saying that they will give a political directive to the directors they appoint to the Shiprepair Company?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Sir, the Government is saying it has taken due note of the recommendation as the employment of individuals will of course depend on a number of factors such as skill, qualifications and experience. It would not be proper to pre-empt managerial decisions by G.S.L. on these matters.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, is it in fact managerial decision by G.S.L. or managerial decisions already taken by Messrs Appledore before they are formally appointed as managers of G.S.L.?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the managerial decisions will be taken by those who are responsible for employing the workers. The Government has taken note of the recommendations made by the consultants in 1982.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Honourable Financial and Development Secretary not agree that in fact by saying that Naval Dockyard employees themselves have no priority over anybody else, Messrs Appledore have pre-empted any note that the Government or the Shiprepair company may wish to take at the appropriate time?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member asked a question about the consultants and I think it is fair to say that the consultants recommended equal hiring rights and not priority of employment which is the phrase the Hon Member used.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member agree that if Bland Shiprepair employees have been recommended as having equal hiring rights with Naval Yard employees it presupposes that there is a difference between the right of employment of people in that category and the right of employment of everybody else?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as I said in an earlier answer to the Hon Member the Government has taken due note of the recommendations in the consultants' report.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask in view of the fact that commercialisation has been accepted by the Government and it is because of commercialisation that the Bland Shiprepair Yard has had to close down, does Government not consider that it has a responsibility to the workers concerned in Bland Repair Yard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think that is another question.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would have thought, Mr Speaker, that this does arise out of this question because the questioner is asking that the workers made redundant from the Shiprepair Yard should have the same priority. So, would Government not consider that it is its responsibility as well since it has accepted commercialisation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have nothing further to say, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state the criteria that will be used for the appointment of directors to the Board of Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited and can any indication be given of the names of proposed directors?

ANSWERTHE HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, may I refer the Honourable and Learned Leader of the Opposition to points made by the Acting Financial and Development Secretary on the Second Reading Speech on the Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd Bill. He explained that Board members should have suitable knowledge and background in commercial shiprepairing, finance, labour relations and management experience generally. One member would be a representative of Her Majesty's Government. The Board will not include Government Ministers nor any person whose appointment might give rise to a conflict of interests. It would not be proper to reveal the names of any candidates for appointment but in any case we have not yet reached that stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 386 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that it is a thoroughly unsatisfactory position to be in that the company has not yet got directors and yet it is this company that apparently should be instructing A & P Appledore Ltd, their managing agents, as to what terms to offer workers in all the matters in relation to the implementation of commercialisation? In these circumstances, is it proper to throw criticism at members of Trade Unions and others, who do not negotiate, when the Government apparently is itself not in a position yet to operate?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, there have of course been a number of circumstances which have given rise to delay in the establishment of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd and not all of these were under the control of the Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Financial and Development Secretary whether his statement that no Ministers will be appointed to the Board of Directors is indicative that the Gibraltar Government Ministers will not be allowed to interfere in the operation of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Government has made it clear-and the Acting Financial and Development Secretary made it clear during the Second Reading

speech on the Bill—that the essence of the operation is that the Gibraltar Shiprepair company should have freedom of day-to-day management (when I say "freedom of day-to-day management" I think that is consistent with the Hon and Learned Gentleman's remarks about interference; I think that answers that particular part of the question) but of course it is not to say that the affairs of the company, in general terms, will not be a matter of concern to this House, and indeed for the concern of the Government. As the Hon and Learned Gentleman also knows, there will be provision for the company's report and accounts to be placed before the House and afterwards will be the subject of some debate and discussion by this House.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Wouldn't the Hon Financial and Development Secretary agree that what he said previously, the way he answered the questions to my Hon Friend Mr Bossano, does not reflect that attitude from the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not agree with that suggestion in any respect whatsoever.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Financial and Development Secretary not agree that, in view of the fact that the Government has decided to make Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd a private company with a Board of directors, that—if there are no Ministers on the Board of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd—the only control the Government can exercise on this company will either be through the terms of its lease with the Gibraltar Government; or by an extraordinary general meeting of shareholders of the company; or at the annual general meeting of shareholders of the company? In other words, the control the Government will be able to exercise on this company—apart from the terms of its lease—will surely be even less than the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation, which is subject to directions from the Governor-in-Council, and is that in the public interest?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if I may detach the latter part of the Hon Gentleman's question from the earlier part, the Government will—I have already indicated by the content of the Bill—have a 100% ownership of the company from the outset. I think that is sufficient assurance of the Government's concern, and will lead to (as I have already said) many opportunities for this House to exercise its overall control of the affairs of the company.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, it is not a question of the House exercising control, it is a question of the Government. Am I to understand that the Board will only be there as a Board of directors so long as they please the shareholders? Is any control going to be exercised,

not at the time of annual accounts when reports are laid in this House, but is any control going to be exercised by the Gibraltar Government on how the Board operates Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd during the year? Will the Board, in effect, not be merely dummies?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the terms and conditions of appointment of the directors is also another medium through which the Government will exercise control over the company.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 387 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether it has yet agreed the terms under which it will lease the Naval Dockyard to Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited and will it make a statement especially identifying any conditions which the Government proposes to impose on Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited in relation to the user of the premises leased to them?

ANSWERTHE HON FINANCIAL & DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the Government has not yet agreed the terms under which it will lease the Naval Dockyard to Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 387 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

In view of an earlier statement, which I understand the Hon Financial and Development Secretary made in this House today, to the effect that goods imported for Shiprepair Ltd would be imported import-duty free, will the Financial and Development Secretary give an assurance that the terms under which it will lease the Naval Dockyard to Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will be couched in such terms so as not to create the situation under which Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will be able to compete unfairly with private industry in the private sector in Gibraltar?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the latter is certainly not the intention of the Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I have an assurance on that point, because it is of some importance, I think?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Articles of Association of the company will make clear what the purpose of the company is. Quite clearly that purpose is mainly shiprepair. I would not like to go further than that general statement at this stage except to say that obviously the Government will be very conscious of the importance of the activities of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd to Gibraltar in the very widest sense and will take note of all representations which are made on that particular point to it.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Financial and Development Secretary aware that-I think he means the Memorandum of Association-that the Memorandum of Association of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd affords absolutely no

protection at all? It is true we have been led to believe that Shiprepair Ltd will be controlled by its Memorandum of Association, but the Memorandum of Association has been couched in such wide terms that it offers and affords no protection at all to private industry in Gibraltar?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I fail to agree, indeed, I disagree with the inference which the Hon and Learned Gentleman has just drawn from his close perusal of the Memorandum of Association.

HON P J ISOLA:

Well, Mr Speaker, all I can tell the Financial and Development Secretary is that when we come to the Second Reading or the Committee Stage of the Bill we shall have to go through each object clause of the proposed Memorandum of Association, where the point I am sure will be amply illustrated.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 388 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government explain why the anticipated cost of employing an apprentice in Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd is 100% higher now than it was in the tender proposals accepted by Government a year ago?

ANSWER

THE HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. Before presenting their report in 1983 APA were able to take a closer look at the cost of employing apprentices.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 388 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

As a result of taking a closer look, the Government is saying that they accept now that an apprentice will cost £6,000 a year and not £3,000 a year. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no, the Government is not saying that. The additional £300,000 is not a highly significant figure in the context of the total manpower bill of about £6½m. This was a forecast and forecasts do change from time to time.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it then the forecast that it will cost the same to employ an adult as it will cost to employ an apprentice?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member will know much better than I, the payscale for MOD apprentices ranges from about £40 a week at the minimum to over £100 at age 21, exclusive of efficiency bonuses, so there is a range there of 250%. In that context, I don't think that the earlier assumption and the correction of that assumption give rise to great concern, again in the context of the total manpower bill of approximately £6½m.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, I am not asking the Hon Member what he thinks is significant or insignificant in the context of the manpower bill of £6½m. I am asking him whether, in the context of the cost of training one hundred apprentices for £300,000, he accepts that it is now realistic that 50 apprentices will be trained for what was previously thought would be the cost of training 100. That is what I am asking?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have already explained the reason for the difference in

the two forecasts which is what the Hon Gentleman asked me. I don't think it is for the Government to get itself involved in the detail of the costs of employing apprentices which will be a matter for consideration and decision by the company which will be employing them. I would suggest to the Hon Member that, if he wishes to go into detail on this matter, he might like to contact the representatives of A & P Appledore who will be glad to discuss the matter with him further.

HON J BOSSANO:

There is no doubt about that, Mr Speaker. But what I am asking the Hon Member is in fact if the Government, having decided to support the proposals, is satisfied about the accuracy of the projections that are being made; and, in that context-if he is satisfied-then I would like him to explain why he is satisfied that the cost of training 50 apprentices is virtually the same as the cost of training 42 adults in the projections.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I said, Mr Speaker, I think this is a matter for the Hon Gentleman to take up with A & P Appledore if his concern is as intense as he suggests that it is.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, Mr Speaker, is the Government's position that they are committed to supporting the venture notwithstanding the fact that they themselves have not taken the trouble to contact those who have produced the figures and establish why the inaccuracies that apparently exist exist. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I certainly have taken the trouble to contact and also to reach an accord, as the Hon Member will know. The Government's position is quite clear on this. Insofar as the minute accuracy of every forecast is concerned, well, of course, the Government does not expect that. I have been responsible for the forecasts of various projects which at the feasibility stage have differed inevitably from subsequent suggestions, and one would expect that forecasts to be made so far in general will differ, and will certainly differ in particular, from the actual results which will be achieved by the company. So I suggest to the Hon Member, with great respect, that it is the latter-that is, the difference between the forecast and the actual results achieved-which he should be concerning himself with.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that it is a legitimate thing to ask the Government at this stage to in fact explain why they place credibility on the forecast if they are unable to explain the inconsistency in the forecast? In that context, can the Hon Member explain why it is that, having given us an explanation what is quoted in the report, that the figures have been looked at in more detail, the only figure on labour costs that differs between the original projection and the subsequent one is the one of apprentices? Can he explain why that is the only difference between the two?

HON. FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I really don't think I can add anything more to what I have said on the matter of minute comparisons between forecasts.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 389 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does Government accept that sales per employee in Gibraltar Ship-repair Ltd will go up by nearly $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as much over its first 4 years of operation than provided for in the tender of A & P Appledore accepted a year ago?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. The Government estimates that the increase in sales per employee is in the order of 25% not $2\frac{1}{2}$ times and that this is almost entirely accounted for by the difference in the numbers to be employed by the fourth year. Total sales figures in the original proposals and the final report are fairly close at some £20m. I think the Hon Member has made a mistake in his arithmetic.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 389 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, I think the Hon Financial and Development Secretary should not have said that, Mr Speaker. Is the Financial and Development Secretary aware that the figures in the two reports are worked differently in that the £20m which he has just quoted in the second report is as a result of an annual escalation for inflation of 5% per annum, whereas the figures in the original report, in fact, are worked out differently; and that if worked out on the same basis, the figure per employee in the original report in the first year comes out to £11,096 per capita, whereas in the second report it is £16,172 per capita?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I don't know which particular figures the Hon Gentleman is referring to but I do know that while in the former report there may have been a figure for cost escalation there was not in the latter. However, the numbers I am quoting, to help him, so that we can be talking about the same source, were those in table 8.2 of the earlier report and table 9.2 of the later report; and if I may trespass a little further on the patience of the House by quoting some numbers, they were 1505 in the earlier report and 1280 in the latter.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Financial Secretary not agree-using his figures-that if 1505 workers are expected to produce sales of £19.3m, and 1280 are expected to produce sales of £20.7m, that brings the per capita figures respectively to £12,824 in the original estimate and £16,172 in the second estimate, which I assume is the 25% differential that the Hon Member has quoted. In fact, if one gets the original figure of £12,800 and removes the 5% per annum cost escalation (which is not included in the £20m) then the difference

is between £11,096 and £16,172. That difference represents that, in the original projection, it is a 38.4% increase between year one and year four; and in the second projection it is a 100.2% increase between year one and year four. Would the Hon Member not agree that that represents an increase in per capita sales $2\frac{1}{2}$ times higher, and this cannot be considered to be a minute difference of detail, I assume?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have listened as closely as possible to the Hon Gentleman's arithmetic and nothing that he has said convinced me that the figure was $2\frac{1}{2}$ times.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member does not agree that 100 is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times 40, is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, that is a different question, to which the answer would be yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member not agree that if in the original projection the sales per employee is £8,019, and in the second projection the sales per employee is £8,079, we are talking about basically a difference per annum of £60 per worker which is negligible. Therefore, if those two figures that I have quoted, Mr Speaker, which is the sales of £6.8m divided in one case by 848 workers and the other one is the sales of £6.1m divided by the 755, that gives us the two comparable figures in year one. Would the Hon Member not agree that if in year four, using the same current costs definition, eliminating the inflation included in one projection and not existing in the other one so that we have got comparable figures, if in fact I am correct in saying that it was originally anticipated that sales per capita would go from £8,000 to £11,000, and it is now anticipated that sales per capita go from £8,000 to £16,000, they are now expected to increase $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as much as they were originally expected to increase?

MR SPEAKER:

Let us have an answer to that.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Well, I recognise the two comparisons which the Hon Gentleman made and I am sorry but he has made an error in his arithmetic. It is one thing to compare sales of, shall we say, £6.8m in the first year with sales of £19m or £20m, and if my arithmetic is correct that is an increase of more than 3 times. But, it is another thing to compare ratios and I think that, with respect, would be the Hon Gentleman's error.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, we are going to have to leave this.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I accept if the Government doesn't want to answer; but I think, if you will allow me, if the Hon Financial and Development Secretary thinks that there is an error and I am unable to point out to him that it is not an error, then surely he may be in a position to give me an answer to the question. I am asking him, Mr Speaker, quite specifically whether the Government is aware that in fact the sales per man projected by Appledore in the project study is in fact considerably higher than the sales per man, that is, the increase in sales between year one and year four?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, and I have already said that the increase is of the order of 25% not $2\frac{1}{2}$ times.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is saying that the increase in sales is 25% on the basis that he is comparing a figure of £12,000 with a figure of £16,000. Am I correct in that? That is how he arrived at his 25%.

MR SPEAKER:

Do you agree that these figures which have been quoted is the calculation made on the basis that Mr Bossano has stated?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The calculations, Mr Speaker, are of sales per employee, that is, sales per capita and I don't recognise all of the figures that the Hon Gentleman has quoted. I recognise some of them and I have endeavoured to answer as best as I can by reference to those figures with which I am familiar. But again, I would urge him that in matters of this nature it would be more sensible and more fruitful and more profitable for him and myself as he has so invited me to discuss these with the representatives of A & P Appledore.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I don't agree with the Hon Member since A & P Appledore are not represented in this House of Assembly by him or by anybody else. I am asking the Government, who have accepted the projections, whether they accept that the figures which are in fact contained in the latest Appledore Report assume an increase in sales over a four-year period, and that that increase in sales is in fact progressing at a faster rate than they originally anticipated, and the differential in growth between the two rates is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us forget the differential in growth: the differential in growth I think has been cleared. You may have your ideas what the differentials in growth are, which is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times, and the Hon Financial Secretary has said that as far as they are concerned it is 25%. Is that correct?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Well, the Hon Gentleman is quoting sales of which I agree, Mr Speaker, But, his question was sales per employee, that is, sales per capita which is only 25%. If he asks me if sales per employee are expected in the second report to go at a faster rate than in the first report, the answer to that is yes: and there is no doubt about that, but not $2\frac{1}{2}$ times which is the figure he quoted in his question, and he has made an error in his arithmetic.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member does not in fact accept then that the difference in the two reports is that sales per employee are now expected to grow $2\frac{1}{2}$ times faster than they were originally expected. Is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no, I am sorry to trespass again on the good nature of the House by repeating the figures, and I have quoted the two tables and I can quote them again so that it is perfectly clear for the record: table 8.2 in the first report and table 9.2 in the second report. The first report, sales £6.8m in year one and in year four £19.3m, so that is an increase of about 300% in sales; and in the second report the figure is similar, sales £6.1m in year one and £20.7m in year four. But this must be taken in relation to the numbers employed, because it is a ratio: it is sales per employee and this particular figure, the ratio, has not increased between the two reports by $2\frac{1}{2}$ times, it has increased by 25%.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to get any further so we will call the next question.

6.12.83

NO. 390 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Have the recently published pay and conditions for hourly paid workers intended to be employed by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd been approved by the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.391, 406, 407 and 408 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 391 OF 1983

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government state what are the sick leave entitlements proposed for the employees of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.390, 406, 407 and 408 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 392 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government state whether the ratio of expatriate managers and supervisors to local production workers envisaged by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd is higher than under MOD management of the Naval yard?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, the ratio of expatriate managers to local production workers envisaged for Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will in the first year be broadly similar to those under MOD management of the naval yard as far as one can ascertain. It will, however, be significantly lower from year two onwards. Of course, in comparing figures, account must be taken of the different organisational structures of the Ministry of Defence and the commercial operators.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 392 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if Appledore has claimed that under commercial management a significant contribution to output per man would be the result of lower management production worker ratios, how can the Hon Member explain that in the first year they are anticipating one of the biggest increases in output per capita, whilst-as he himself has said-the ratio of expatriate managers to local workers is virtually the same?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, that is a slightly different question, and I think invites the answer from me that A & P Appledore will achieve their results by good management. It was their record and their achievement in that respect which were influential with the Government in deciding upon them as the commercial operators for the Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Government have any policy as to what the ratio of expatriate managers and supervisors to local production workers should be at the beginning of the enterprise, whatever promises for the future may be then made?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 393 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the workforce from whom agreement on changed working practices is required by the British Government prior to the release of the £28m, is the existing Naval Dockyard workforce or the workforce that actually takes up employment with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, it is the workforce that will eventually take up employment with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 393 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that the workforce has got to be employed first and their agreement to changed working practices obtained subsequently?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I don't think that that is a sequence of events which necessarily follows from my earlier statement.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if one doesn't know who is going to be the workforce that takes up employment, how does one ask them whether they agree to changed working practices?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think I will have to say in answer to the Hon Gentleman that there are a number of issues which still have to be resolved before the workforce take up employment with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd, and details or a meticulous answer to his question-which is clearly what he seeks from me cannot really be given until it has progressed a little bit further and the people start taking up employment.

HON J BOSSANO:

I don't agree, Mr Speaker, that I am asking for meticulous answers: I am asking for a very simple answer to a very simple question. Which is the workforce that is expected to reach agreements with Appledore on new work practices? If the answer is the workforce that takes up the jobs, then am I correct in saying that to ask the existing Naval Dockyard workforce is meaningless, because the existing Naval Dockyard workforce may not be the people who will eventually work for Appledore? The people who will eventually work for Appledore may disagree with the existing Naval Dockyard workforce.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, there are certainly difficulties at the moment, as the House is aware, in reaching agreement with the workforce and their representatives. It is the wish of the Government that those difficulties can be overcome.

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not asking about the difficulties. I am seeking information as to what is Government policy in this matter. Is it the Government's view, is it the view of the British Government or is it the view of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd that the people who have to agree to new work practices are the people who are currently employed in the Naval Dockyard or the people who will eventually take up the jobs with Appledore, which we don't know yet who they are?

MR SPEAKER:

You have been given an answer to that.

HON J BOSSANO:

My supplementary to that, Mr Speaker, is that if it is the people who eventually take up employment, since we don't know who they are, does the Hon Member accept that first, people have to be employed and then they have to be asked to agree to new work practices? Is that the sequence of events?

MR SPEAKER:

On employment, I imagine.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

From the gist of the Hon Member's statement or question, it seems to me, Mr Speaker, that they will not take up employment with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd and therefore there will be no agreement with the workforce. Well, I don't think that is a hypothesis which the Government would accept in any way.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 394 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J. BOSSANO

Can Government state whether by "current" prices in the context of the proposed RFA programme planned for Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd, is meant the price charged in 1983 by the Naval Dockyard in Gibraltar, Naval Dockyards in UK, British Shipbuilders in UK, or private commercial shiprepair companies for a similar RFA work programme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.395, 396 and 397 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 395 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the fact that RFA work to the value of £14m at current prices has been agreed with the British Government means that the volume of work promised to Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd would be maintained even if prices in 1985 and subsequent years was higher than current prices and hence come to more than £14m?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.394, 396 and 397 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 396 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government explain why the £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m to £1m of naval work for the proposed commercial Dockyard is not at 'current' prices the same as the RFA work?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.394, 395 and 397 of 1983.

NO. 397 OF 1983

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the work, other than RFA's valued at £½m to £1m for the proposed commercial Dockyard would be charged for at the same hourly rate as the RFA work?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the price to be charged for RFA and other naval work will be broadly in line with that normally paid by the Ministry of Defence for the same work carried out in the United Kingdom. All work will be charged at the same hourly rate and will be set at July, 1983, prices but those prices, of course, will be subject to increases in due course in cost of labour and materials as one would expect. So, the £14m volume in 1983 is assured although the price may increase or the value of that may increase in due course. The non-RFA work, which is currently estimated at around £½m to £1m, relates to an expected workload which is subject to operational needs and has therefore not been specifically quantified in price term.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 394, 395, 396 AND 397 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, why is the fact that it may be subject to operational needs not linked to current prices? Is the Hon Member saying that in the case of the non-RFA work the price is fixed?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not saying that, I think one must distinguish between the non-RFA work, which is currently estimated at around £½m to £1m. This is a sum which will fluctuate depending on workload. What I am saying is that all work will be charged at the same hourly rate, and I would expect this to apply to the non-RFA work. There is no specific assurance as to the quantity of that, but then £½m to £1m is a relatively minor amount of work compared with the £14m of RFA work which has been assured.

HON J BOSSANO:

With reference to Question 396 then, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is saying that the non-RFA work would continue to be linked to the hourly rate for RFA work in the context of moving from current prices. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, this £½m to £1m is a very small amount of work. It is marginal in respect to the £14m. We cannot give an assurance in precisely the terms that the Hon Member has asked about this small amount of work. I have given the House the assurance about the much larger amount of work, namely, the £14m for RFA work.

HON J BOSSANO:

The situation is that they would both be charged at the same hourly rate: that has been confirmed has it, by the Hon Member?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is my understanding, Mr Speaker, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Hon Member, when he says that the charge will be that payable in UK in July, 1983, I suggested that there were in UK in fact three different rates being charged currently in July, 1983. Can he tell me which of the three he is referring to?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I said, Mr Speaker, that it would be that normally paid by the Ministry of Defence for the same work carried out in the UK, in a UK Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon Member aware that there is no RFA work being carried out in Naval Dockyards in UK?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Hon Member has the advantage of me by his superior knowledge of the operation; but merely because work is not being carried out at any given time does not mean that a price cannot be fixed for that work in relation to other activities.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is in fact the Hon Member aware that, according to the original PEIDA study, the Naval Dockyards in UK charge £6m for a work programme that a commercial yard would charge £3½m. Which of the two are we using as our base line, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am not using either of the figures in the PEIDA report; I am quoting the assurances which we have been given by the Ministry of Defence. I don't think that the PEIDA report is in any sense relevant to that. If he is making comparisons about the cost of carrying out work in RN Dockyards in the UK and commercial yards in the UK, then I am sure he will not need me to elaborate on the implications of that.

HON J BOSSANO:

But I do need the Hon Member to elaborate on the implications, Mr Speaker. What I am asking is precisely that he should elaborate

whether the 1983 price, which has been agreed will determine the volume of work, is the price that would be charged in a Naval Dockyard in UK which-according to the report in our possession-is almost 100% higher or the price charged in a commercial Dockyard?

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer you have been given is clear: It is Ministry of Defence prices in the United Kingdom, whichever those may be, and they are not related to the PEIDA report.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member then is telling the House that if it is correct that the RFA work is being done now in commercial Dockyards in UK at a given price, that is the price that would be charged in Gibraltar to arrive at the £14m?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the MOD charging arrangements, as I know from personal experience, are very, very complicated. I don't think that the sort of difference which he has quoted is one which is in any sense relevant to the price which the MOD will be charging for RFA work in Gibraltar. There may be differences between the prices which the MOD pay and commercial yards pay to private firms who need their ships repaired. That is another matter.

MR SPEAKER:

I think that the most that the Hon Member can ask is to get an assurance from Government that whatever is paid should be the most advantageous as possible as far as Gibraltar is concerned. I don't think, in a question, you can get the sort of information and guarantees that you seek.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that the anticipated viability of the project is crucially dependent on the rate charged for the work?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If the Hon Member is talking about Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd, then quite clearly the prices which are charged by the company are of crucial importance.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if in fact the price that the Government has agreed to charge for the RFA work in the package is the price payable by commercial shiprepair companies in UK doing RFA work at the moment, will the Hon Member confirm that that is a fundamental departure from the original proposals of Appledore, where naval work was expected to be almost $2\frac{1}{2}$ times what PEIDA was - however much the Hon Member may not like the $2\frac{1}{2}$ times.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am not quite sure whether the Hon Member's $2\frac{1}{2}$ times there refers to volume or price.

HON J BOSSANO:

In this case, Mr Speaker, I am talking about the difference between £6 an hour and £14 an hour, and £14 is $2\frac{1}{2}$ times £6.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I agree with the Hon Gentleman's arithmetic, but I am still not quite clear what question he is asking me.

HON J BOSSANO:

The question that I am asking is would the Government not agree that if we have now got £14m subject to charging commercial rates, and originally the projection assumed £11m charging £14 when we should be charging £6, the work we have got now is worth considerably less than the original?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think I now understand and apologise to the Hon Member for being slow in catching up with him on this question but he is referring to a figure of £14 on the one hand, and £6 in the 1982 proposals by Appledore. As I said earlier, many of the projections included in that report have been altered by the company on closer acquaintance. Amongst them was the cost of apprentices, about which we had an earlier exchange.

HON J BOSSANO:

I appreciate the ability of the Hon Member to avoid giving answers but if there were anticipated payments for RFA work, so many hours of work at £14 an hour, and now the rate is no longer £14 an hour, does the Hon Member not agree that the change in volume is determined by the amount that we are charging per hour if the total figure is fixed at £14m?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if all other factors in the comparison were equal and the only change were that between £14 and £6 an hour, then I would agree with the Hon Gentleman that that would have a dramatic effect on the forecasts. But many things have changed, and the figure of £14 an hour is one which is inevitably bound to be subject to change. As I said, the MOD are guaranteeing £14m worth of work for the RFAs at July, 1983, prices.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Hon Member whether the price that will be charged for RFA work and the price that will be charged for commercial work is now therefore the same?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, this in fact anticipates a question which is also down on the Order Paper and which the Hon Member is due to ask later.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 398 OF 1983

THE HON J BOSSANO

Would Government state whether the Naval Programme for the proposed commercial Dockyard described as work valued at £14m at current prices means 'charged for' at the rate of £14 per man hour as estimated in the tender proposals submitted by A & P Appledore and accepted by the consultants a year ago?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the understanding reached with MOD is that the £14m programme of naval work for Gibraltar will be priced broadly at the going rate for a UK Dockyard.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 398 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

That is the answer the Hon Member has given to all the other questions being grouped together, and he left this one out. Will the Hon Member say then what is the going rate in a UK commercial dockyard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I think that is a matter for the MOD and it is really in commercial confidence, if you pardon the expression.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will in fact the going rate for a commercial dockyard be applied for all commercial work done in year one as well as for RFA work, or only to RFA work?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Hon Gentleman asked me about MOD work: I think I have answered that question. I cannot really speculate in detail about the future prices for commercial work, other than the RFA work, which must depend on the judgement of the operators as to what the market will bear if they are to get business.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member is saying that, without knowing what the market is expected to bear, the Government is prepared to support the starting of a commercial operation in 1983 having no idea what their revenue will be. Is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The Government has certainly received projections, and these are of course known to the Hon Member, about the future sales income.

That much is known, and the Government has reached its conclusions about the engagement of the operating company in the light of their projections and other proposals they made and other proposals made by others at the time.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member agree with me that in arriving at a rate above the competitive commercial rate in the first years of operation in all the previous projections and reports, the assumption was that it would take a number of years to be able to produce work at the rate commercial operations in UK were producing it. If the Government has now accepted that the charge will be the charge in UK Dockyards, does this not imply that RFA work will be taken at a loss?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If I may pick up the very last point, Mr Speaker, the Government is well aware, indeed the entire projections make it clear, that in the early years of operation the shiprepair company will make an operating loss and that is what in part the development aid from HMG is to meet.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Financial and Development Secretary then confirm that the position now, unlike the tender accepted a year ago, is that losses will be made in the first years on both commercial work and RFA work?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to answer that question in those terms, because the operating losses, and I am speaking now from some experience of accounting, are shown as being the outcome of the entire operation of the company. I think it would be misleading to go into greater detail and start saying: "Well, will you make a loss on this type of work or that type of work?"

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Member not accept that the figures quoted in my question 398 were arrived at as a result of an approach to establishing a commercial facility where there would be a cross subsidy?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I must confess that I am not aware precisely of the sources of the information, the £14 per man hour which was quoted in the earlier report, but as I have already said to the Hon Member, I would expect that—and indeed other figures and other calculations in the report to change with time. Again, I must urge upon the Hon Member that he concentrates not on differences between forecasts, but on the difference between projections and the actual results which the company achieves. That is a more important thing to concentrate on.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree with me that, even behind this, there is a clear change of policy; and that the change of policy is that, whereas originally the RFA work was going to be charged at a higher rate to compensate for the lower rate being charged for commercial work- so that one would make money and the other one lose, and there was a cross subsidy- it is no longer the case, on the basis of his answer, that there will be a cross subsidy. Now, the RFA work will be charged a competitive commercial rate, even if that competitive commercial rate fails to cover costs. That is the case, is it not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Member is approaching this through his long experience in the Dockyard, and using phrases like "cross subsidy" which may be relevant in the case of a Ministry of Defence Dockyard, but I don't think really represents the way in which a commercial operator- whether in the Dockyards or indeed any other commercial undertaking- would approach his business. They must, as I said in answer to an earlier point, charge what the market will bear for commercial rates. They have certain assurances about the MOD business. We have already covered that, Mr Speaker. For the rest, they must charge what the market will bear.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to go much further in this question.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I think it is very important that we clarify whether there has been a fundamental shift of policy.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, I don't think there has been any fundamental change of policy at all, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

So then the Hon Member is telling the House that he is not aware that the original tender accepted by the consultants provided for the Navy to be charged for Naval work considerably more than the going commercial rate by the commercial operator?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I have answered the Hon Gentleman to the best of my ability on the question of charging and his point about cross subsidy, and I have also made it quite clear that operating losses are expected by the company in the first years.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member aware.....

MR SPEAKER:

May I interrupt? Are you working on the assumption that the normal UK Ministry of Defence rates will not be a commercial rate?

HON J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker. What I am saying is that the original proposals for a commercial yard provided for the MOD to be overcharged. If the Hon Member is telling me that there has been agreement that the MOD will not be overcharged now, then there has been a change of policy: the MOD have not accepted paying more than the going rate. Is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, "overcharged" is an emotive word, and I am trying to keep emotion out of my answers to the Hon Gentleman. I don't see that the MOD were overcharged, in any event, even if the forecast included a figure which was on the high side. As I have already said, these projections were made in a great hurry, in a matter of two weeks I believe, and of course they have been subject to revision-and will be subject to continual revision hereafter.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 399 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd would be expected to pay import duty on any goods or capital equipment, the same as any other commercial firm?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the £28m funding requirement for Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will be met from a development aid grant from the ODA. The rules governing ODA funding normally require that the monies cannot be used to meet the cost of import duties levied by the recipient country. Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will therefore be exempted from payment of import duty during the formative period when the operation is funded with ODA grants.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 400 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether in describing the Dockyard package as "up to" £28m it is the British Government's view that some lesser sum should be provided if the cost of any given component of the items of expenditure, should come to less than anticipated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.401, 402 and 403 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 401 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J ROSSANO

Is there a time limit within which the £28m package must be spent?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.400, 402, and 403 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 402 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government say whether losses above those anticipated within the first two years operation of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd would be funded from within the £28m or from extra funds from the UK Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.400, 401 and 403 of 1983.

NO. 403 OF 1983THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what use it can make of any surplus of the sum provided to cover operating losses of the first 2 years of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd if it proves to be larger than required?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, I cannot speak for the British Government but, according to the statement made by HMG on the 27 July, 1983, the £28m grant will be available for the first two years of the commercialisation project. I have no doubt that HMG will accept the need for some flexibility in how the £28m is applied both as to content and indeed timing provided of course there are good grounds for changes in planned expenditure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 400, 401, 402 AND 403 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the answer the Hon Member has given mean that he doesn't know how much of the £28m is for operating losses?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker. I have ready an answer to a question which the Hon Member is due to ask shortly on that very subject. I am prepared to give it now.

MR SPEAKER:

You can if you so wish. You would have to give the answer again, but if you want to refer to it, you are free to do so.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say specifically if the items that are making up the £28m, the cost of each of those items, have been agreed with the UK Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Certainly, the £28m has been itemised and agreed with the UK Government, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

If there is a variation above or below, from the cost of the itemised components, what is the agreed policy?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I explained, Mr Speaker, one would expect some variation. It would be a matter for consideration at the time, if the variation is for large amounts. I am unfamiliar with the infrastructure of the Dockyard, but if some item of capital equipment had been estimated to have cost £3m and it is suddenly found that it is £6m, then I would imagine that some searching questions would be asked. But, as I already said, I expect that HMG will allow us some flexibility in the deployment of the £28m.

HON J BOSSANO:

But in fact the ceiling is £28m, is it not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The ceiling is £28m, yes, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 404 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how much of the £28m "package" is reserved for operating losses in the first 2 years of operation of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the operating losses of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd are expected to be £5.5m over the first two years. This sum is included in the £28m grant from Her Majesty's Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 404 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

If, Mr Speaker, the losses should be less, is Government free to use the money allocated for that purpose out of the £28m for some other purpose or not?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think, as I said in answer to the earlier question by the Hon Member, Mr Speaker, this is something which will have to be judged at the time. If the losses are less, and if the entire range of capital equipment which is included in the £28m is also taken up, and on the assumption that there were no other need for funds, then I can foresee the situation in which the total amount would be less than £28m; but those are very wide assumptions. They are all hypothetical, Mr Speaker, at this stage.

HON J BOSSANO:

If the Hon Member has said in answer to a previous question that the ceiling is £28m, does that mean that if the only amount available to cover losses after meeting the cost of investment was five times £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m, any losses above that figure would have to be met by the Gibraltar Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If the Hon Member means, is it possible that the amount of aid could be greater than £28m, then certainly I would envisage that this is something which would have to be considered at the time. It is conceivable that HMG might also be called upon, in the light of their commitment about future economic assistance, but beyond that I really cannot say, Mr Speaker.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Hon Financial and Development Secretary confirm that the two statements to which he has referred us-or the Hon Mr Bossano-in answer to the question, namely, the statement made in the British Parliament and the statement made by the Chief Minister in July, are rather sketchy?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is a matter of opinion.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there a further document, which makes concrete decisions on those matters which were left nebulous and in the air at the time of those statements, which would entitle us to formulate our own opinions on these matters, which is available to Government and not to the Opposition?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I know of no document, Mr Speaker, that would readily illuminate these questions with more light than I have been able to shed on the subject for the Hon Member.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, we have been told, nevertheless, that there is an itemisation of the £28m. Will that be made available?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

This is the subject of development aid, and in due course I would expect that-as the aid is to be used for the purpose of investment in the operating company-it will be itemised in the balance sheet of the company. As the Hon Member knows, the accounts of the company will be laid before the House in due course, so they will have an opportunity to see how the money has been spent.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 405 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that in the projections made by its consultants of the impact on the economy of the implementation of the cuts envisaged in the June 1981 Defence White Paper, no account has been taken of the 40% reduction in Naval Personnel stationed here by 1986, recently confirmed by the Flag Officer, Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, it is true that no account was taken of any possible reduction in Naval personnel stationed in Gibraltar, other than those engaged in the shiprepair operation in HM Dockyard in the projections referred to by the Hon Member.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 405 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Was Government or the consultants aware at the time that this reduction was going to take place?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am afraid I don't know the answer to that question, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Has in fact the Government taken the matter up with the UK Government since?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I don't think it is for the Gibraltar Government to take this matter up with the UK Government. It is a fact which was not apparently available to the consultants when they produced their report. It is a fact which is now available.

HON J BOSSANO:

But would the Hon Member not agree that if the discussions between the Government of Gibraltar and the British Government have been in pursuance of the commitment in the 1981 Defence White Paper that alternative ways of sustaining the economy would be found, and in assessing the need this factor was not taken into account by the consultants, this is a matter that needs to be raised subsequently when the information becomes available?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, it is a matter which the Government is now fully aware of and therefore will be able to make such use of as it seems necessary at the appropriate time and in the appropriate circumstances.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Government is now in a position to confirm that the impact of the Defence White Paper is greater than anticipated by the consultants, and was not taken into account in arriving at the alternative package?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Member is referring to the impact on the Gibraltar economy of defence cuts, some of which were not seen. I accept that these were not foreseen at the time, and therefore they were not included in the consultants report. They are now known to the Government, but I don't think that this further fact would make any substantial difference to, for example, the £28m package of development aid for the Dockyard which has been negotiated. As I said, the Government will bear this in mind, and will use it as necessary in any subsequent negotiations when it seems to the Government meet and just and timely to do so.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Financial and Development Secretary not in a position to say to what extent these cuts will affect the Gibraltar economy?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, if the House would bear with me I have this information close at hand. The effect of a 40% cut in naval personnel we calculate on the basis of the 1979 Input/Output Study at 1983 prices would be an estimated loss of £1.3m in total expenditure; £0.6m in national income; £0.25m in Government revenue and there will be a potential employment effect of some 80 job opportunities.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, has Government any plans to overcome these reductions?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I think that is an unfair question to ask as a supplementary. It is not fair on Government to be asked a question like this at short notice.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, since the amount has been evaluated, has in fact Government made any provision to offset these losses?

MR SPEAKER:

Is there any possible answer that Government can give?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think in short terms there is no answer the Government can give to this question at the present time, Mr Speaker, in the sense of what steps the Government will be taking for this particular tranche of bad news, if I may use that expression. Of course, the Government has to have regard to the overall impact of a number of measures on the economy, and I am sure the Hon Member will know we are giving very active consideration to this.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

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6.12.83

NO. 406 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the rates of pay for industrial workers advertised by Messrs Appledore as applying in Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd for up to the first 3 months of 1985 have been agreed by the Gibraltar Government and to what grades of workers in UK they have been analogued?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos. 390, 391, 407 and 408 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 407 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does the Gibraltar Government agree with the statement issued by Messrs Appledore that the published terms and conditions of employment for hourly paid workers cannot be altered?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Answered together with Question Nos.390, 391, 406 and 408 of 1983.

NO. 403 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has Government approved the policy that all the unemployed will compete on equal terms for the vacancies that would become available in the commercial Dockyard, if commercialisation went ahead, as stated by Messrs Appledore recently?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, in his statement to the House on 27 July 1983, the Chief Minister said that the question of work practices - which, of course includes terms and conditions of employment - was a matter for discussions and agreement between the commercial operator and the workforce and its representatives. He added that, though this was not a matter for the Government, the Government were of course ready, with their knowledge of local conditions to use their good offices to assist in the discussions if both sides wish them to do so.

The Government consider that all the matters raised in the questions to which I have referred are matters for discussions between the Union and Messrs Appledore. The outcome of that discussion will then fall to be ratified by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 390, 391, 406, 407 AND 408 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member explain how the matter of work practices determines who is employed, whether people have got sick leave entitlements, what is the basic rate of pay as to what rate of pay in UK that grade is analogued?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as I said in my answer to the Hon Gentleman these are in fact matters to be discussed between the commercial operator and the workforce.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, Mr Speaker, the Government itself holds no views at all on what people should be paid in the Gibraltar Shiprepair company, it is a matter of complete indifference to them?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I have said in my answer to the question that the Government is certainly prepared to use their good offices to assist in the discussions, if both sides wish them to do so.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say then whether he has got any inkling at all where the recently published pay and conditions for hourly paid workers have been obtained from?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, could the Hon Member just refresh my memory a little further on that? I am not quite sure to which recently published information he refers to.

HON J BOSSANO:

The Hon Member I don't think was in Gibraltar at the time, Mr Speaker but in fact shortly before his arrival Messrs Appledore placed public advertisements stating what the hourly pay for workers would be, what their annual leave would be and so on. Is he aware where that information was produced from, how it was arrived at?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful to the Hon Member for his courtesy and his acquainting me with the information, which in fact I have seen. As he said, this was a broadsheet—I understand—produced by A & P Appledore. He asked me what the source of information is: well, that is where it came from, from A & P Appledore.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am aware of that, but I mean, is the Hon Member saying that that is a matter to be agreed by some unknown body and Appledore? I asked in Question 390, Mr Speaker, whether that has been approved by the Government or not. If the answer is that it has not been approved by the Government, where does it come from? Where did Appledore get it from? Who have they discussed it with?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the only part of that question which I wish to comment on is that no, of course it has not been approved by the Government in the sense in which the Hon Member mentions, for reasons which I gave in my answer to his questions on the matter. This is a matter for consideration by the company, and they must reach commercial judgement in the light of all the factors which they have to take into account if they are to run the commercial Dockyard successfully.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, Mr Speaker, then the Hon Member is saying that as far as the Government is concerned Messrs Appledore have got a free hand to determine unilaterally what is required in terms of pay and conditions to make the company a success. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I did not say that. I said that the Government is prepared to lend its assistance and its good offices to Appledore for purposes of determining such matters as pay, local conditions of service and so on, and one would naturally expect the company to listen to any advice the Government had to offer.

HON J BOSSANO:

But the company so far has not sought the advice of the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no, the company has not so far sought the formal advice of the Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the company has now come out with published offers of employment on terms and conditions which they have declared cannot be altered, without having sought the advice of the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as the House will be aware, the company have made it quite clear and also in their broadsheet - I think this may be what the Hon Gentleman is referring to - that at the outset the hourly rates of pay which they will bring into operation will in fact be those enjoyed by Dockyard workers now.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, as the Hon Financial and Development Secretary will be quite aware the Chief Minister has said that people would be paid parity in January, 1985. I am asking the Financial Secretary if in fact rates of pay applicable in January, 1985 have been published by the company (and the company has stated publicly in publishing them that they cannot be altered), can he explain to me how they have been arrived at?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Gentleman obviously has the advantage over me because his knowledge of the details of these matters is more extensive than mine, I would expect. I shall have to look into these particular references he has made. If I have been guilty of an error, in fact, then I apologise to the House, but I cannot say any more on this occasion.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, Mr Speaker, as a supplementary of one of my other questions - since the Hon Member answered them all together - is in fact the policy statement that the rates that have been published cannot be altered and that people who wish to apply will have to apply on those rates, has that policy been accepted by the Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Government has certainly taken note of the statement which have been made. But, as I have explained in answer to earlier statements, the Government regards negotiations of wages and conditions of service as being primarily a matter for the commercial operator.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member explain how it is the Government regards negotiations as a matter for the commercial operator when the commercial operator has said that their rates cannot be altered. What does negotiation mean if the rates cannot be altered?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think these are, as I said, matters for negotiation between the company and the workforce.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I have got a question about that coming on. What I am asking the Financial and Development Secretary - since he is answering the questions is in fact what is the Government's position. Is the Government's position that if Appledore tomorrow says that anything that they have made public cannot be altered, is the Government position that because Appledore has said it that's it, the Government doesn't accept responsibility for that statement. Is that it?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Gentleman is now asking a number of hypothetical questions which do not arise out of his questions.

MR SPEAKER:

It is most certainly a follow-up on the answers that he has been given.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, it is in fact on the Order Paper, I cannot help it if the Hon Member has decided, having numbered them as he wished, to answer them all together. In fact I asked, in Question 407, does the Government agree that the published terms and conditions of employment cannot be altered? This is not a hypothetical question: this has been a statement published in the press.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, of course the Government does not agree that the published terms and conditions cannot be altered at any time. I am sorry if in my halting way I failed to recognise that that was what the Hon Member was asking. Of course the Government does not say that they cannot be altered at any time, and it would be absurd to make such a statement.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member then says that in fact Appledore was absurd in making that statement. Is that the situation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not concur in that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I don't think that Question 408 has been answered. Will the commercial yard in fact take their pool of employees from all the unemployed, and will no priority be given to those who become redundant within the Dockyard?

MR SPEAKER:

Question 408 reads: "Has Government approved the policy that all the unemployed will compete on equal terms for the vacancies that would become available in the commercial Dockyard?"

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think that question was answered in my earlier response to the Hon Member, I think in answer to Question 390. Will they compete on equal terms: I don't think it is possible to say that anyone will compete on equal terms, because no one is equal. As I explained earlier, the commercial operators will have to take into account matters of skill, experience and qualifications, personal qualities and so on as employers of personnel normally do.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would Government, Mr Speaker, agree that within the skills of the labour force priority should be given to those who become redundant in the Dockyard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I would certainly expect, Mr Speaker, that A & P Appledore - who wish to run a successful yard - will have very great regard to the claims of redundant Naval Dockyard workers.

HON G T RESTANO:

That is a hope, what the Hon Member is saying. But, is there any directive from the Government to the Shiprepair company - which in fact is going to be the managers for the Government - on these priorities? If it is just a hope, has Government discussed it with A & P Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no directive has been given on this matter. As the House will be aware, there are a number of difficult and delicate issues under consideration at present.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the matter been discussed with A & P Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have nothing to add, Mr Speaker, to my point that no directive has been issued by the Government. Certainly, there have been informal discussions with A & P Appledore about the sort of skills, qualifications and experience, and the trades and the crafts which they will need. Naturally there have been these discussions between A & P Appledore and the Government.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has it been established within these discussions that in fact it would be better for those working in the Dockyard to be given priority? Has the point been made by the Government, within the informal discussions, to A & P Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I have already said, Mr Speaker, the question of equality is one which is very, very difficult to answer without considering the claims in each individual case. The Government is very conscious of the expertise which resides in the Dockyard, and so are A & P Appledore.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in relation to Question 391, might I ask the Government if the sick leave entitlements of the future employees of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will be no less than those enjoyed by workers throughout Gibraltar, both in the public and the private sector, which I understand is done by regulation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I cannot give a positive assurance on that in the terms which the Hon Member has asked. But, as I have said in answer to the earlier questions, these are matters which A & P Appledore are fully alive to and they are aware of the terms and conditions—including sick leave—enjoyed now by Dockyard workers. I have no doubt that they will make note of that in coming to a decision, using their commercial judgement at the time.

HON A J CANEPA:

Insofar as the general conditions of sick pay, which are prescribed by law, which are applicable to the private sector, they will naturally apply.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would like to come back to Question No.408, on what we consider priorities of re-employment. What is to stop the Shiprepair company.....

MR SPEAKER:

That is a hypothetical question.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would like protection for Gibraltarian workers, Mr Speaker, and I would like to ask what the Government feels on this matter. What is to stop, within the ambit of the answer that has been given by the Hon Financial and Development Secretary, for the company to employ foreigners, shall we say, with the same.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, no.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I put it this way, Mr Speaker? Will Government establish with A & P Appledore that whilst there are Gibraltarians with sufficient skills they should have priority of employment?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Government's position on this is that all employees who have the necessary skills and experience will be considered. As I have said, those who are already working in the Dockyard including those who may be made redundant will clearly have a claim by virtue of their expertise and their skills and their experience. But, Appledore have made it quite clear that there will be a fair amount of re-training to be done, and that there are shortages in some skills and in some trades. They have made proposals as to how these might be cured. Within the context of that, I am quite sure that they will have regard to the claims of Gibraltarians, to use the Hon Member's own expression.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has that in fact been established between the Government and A & P Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

This is the understanding which we have from the company.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask, are the projections made by Appledore on what they are able to offer in terms and conditions determined by the accuracy of their projections on sales, to which I referred in an earlier question?

MR SPEAKER:

No, no.

HON J BOSSANO:

What are they based on then? What does the Hon Member mean when he says that the company will pay whatever they can afford in their commercial judgement?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is, I think, the one you gave to the Hon Financial Secretary before: that Messrs Appledore are not in the House. The Hon Financial Secretary cannot answer for Appledore. They have said, most certainly that they would be prepared to use their good offices.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the Government is saying that the terms and conditions offered by Appledore depend on what they, in their judgement, considered can be afforded, I am asking whether the Government then accept as a consequence of that that their projections from what they can sell determines their projections on what they can pay, because if one is inaccurate presumably the Government must accept that the other is inaccurate.

MR SPEAKER:

That is a supposition, isn't it?

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Government agree, then, that having accepted (as they appear to have done) that it is up to the commercial operator in their commercial judgement to determine what they can afford to pay, if it can be demonstrated factually-notwithstanding the answers given to an earlier question-that their commercial judgement is incorrect in one respect, would they accept then that anything that is on offer is suspect because of it?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, no I don't accept that because there may have been variation between one forecast and another, although not of an order of magnitude of the variation that the Hon Gentleman has forecast, that it necessarily follows that any statement made by A & P Appledore exercising their commercial judgement is therefore fallible, which is what I take the statement the Hon Gentleman is asking me to endorse.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Hon Financial and Development Secretary, if I was able to demonstrate to him that it is of the order of magnitude, be less happy with the other forecasts of Appledore?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, it is not entirely clear to me which order of magnitude the Hon Gentleman was just then referring to.

HON J BOSSANO:

The $2\frac{1}{2}$ times, Mr Speaker, which he hasn't accepted. I am asking him if I can demonstrate.....

MR SPEAKER:

That would be hypothetical.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, did Government anticipate-at the time when the Chief Minister made his statement in July of this year-that the two bargaining parties, namely Appledore and the unions, would not by this date in the year have come to any formal agreement?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am afraid that question is in the past future perfect, as far as I am concerned, because I was not here at the time. I would merely say that the Government is very conscious and concerned about the delay in progressing with this operation, which no doubt has serious implications for the Gibraltar economy. Therefore, I certainly for my part hope that the outstanding difficulties will be brought to a speedy resolution.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I quite sympathize and concur with the sentiments expressed by the Financial and Development Secretary mainly one of concern that four or five months hence there has been no progress but I would ask as a follow-up to the initial question, Mr Speaker, given that Government are concerned at the lack of progress between the bargaining parties what measures do they propose to take to ensure that a bargain is struck?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I won't accept the question: we are not going to debate. We have received a clear answer by the Financial and Development Secretary saying that all these matters are matters to be discussed between Appledore and the unions; that the Government is prepared to use its good offices if they are called upon to do so. It is as simple as that. You have been given an answer. Whether the answer is correct or not or acceptable is another matter.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, Government has the conduct of the project for commercialisation....

MR SPEAKER:

But we are not talking about the complete commercialisation, we are talking about specific matters from the questions which are being asked.

HON A J HAYNES:

My question is, Mr Speaker, for how long will Government allow the two parties to continue without meeting and discussing.

MR SPEAKER:

In other words, you are asking will Government at any stage interfere if there is no progress?

HON A J HAYNES:

Exactly.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think the Hon Member's question raises fundamental issues which go back further than July and indeed to the decision by HMG to close the Dockyard in the first place-which as the Hon Member will well know was a decision in which the Gibraltar Government had no part whatsoever.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does that mean no or yes?

MR SPEAKER:

You can take your choice. Next question.

NO. 409 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the original conditions of employment proposed by Messrs A & P Appledore in March, 1983, for prospective industrial employees of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd provided for 15 days annual leave and payment of 1½ per hour overtime worked on Sundays?

ANSWERTHE HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the costings in A & P Appledore's May 1983 report assumed 20 days annual leave and Sunday overtime at double time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 409 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

That is not the question, Mr Speaker. I am asking the Government whether they can confirm that in March, 1983, they were as the question says. Can they confirm that, or are they saying they don't know that that was the case?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am only aware of what was published in the May, 1983, report.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Government of Gibraltar was not given a copy of the draft conditions prepared by Appledore in March, 1983?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I have no knowledge of the document to which the Hon Member is alluding, if indeed it existed.

HON J BOSSANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, perhaps if I give the Hon Member a copy of it, he will admit of its existence then?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 410 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that the presentation by A & P Appledore on Access Television, put on free by GBC, cost £14,000 to prepare in UK and who funded the cost?

ANSWER

THE HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the Government cannot confirm what was the cost of the A & P Appledore presentation on Access Television. It was paid for by ODA as part of the consultancy agreement with A & P Appledore. Individual payments under such agreements are not normally revealed by the ODA.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 411 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government state whether agreement has yet been reached between Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited and A & P Appledore International Limited on the terms under which A & P Appledore International Limited will manage the commercial Dockyard in Gibraltar on behalf of the Gibraltar Government and can Government state whether it proposes that employees of Gibraltar Shiprepair Limited, a Government owned corporation, will enjoy the same terms of service including pension rights as are enjoyed by other Government employees?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, no agreement can be reached between Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd and A & P Appledore International Ltd on a management agreement until the operating company has been incorporated and its Board constituted. I dealt at some considerable length this morning with the secondary question raised by the Hon and Learned Gentleman and I imagine the House will not want me to go over the same ground again.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 411 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Financial and Development Secretary tell us under what authority A & P Appledore International Ltd seeks to get people employed in the Dockyard when (a) it hasn't come to an agreement with Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd on how it is to manage it, and (b) we have Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd unincorporated and without a Board of directors? Who is giving instructions to A & P Appledore International Ltd?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure what particular aspects of the activity of A & P Appledore the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition is referring to.

HON P J ISOLA:

Secretary

Well, if the Hon Financial and Development/ would give way I will tell him: all the adverts they have put out, the offers for employment, the conditions under which they are going to employ people, the working practices they require, all these things: under whose direction and under whose authority are they doing it? It must be the Government.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, as the House is well aware, the activities of A & P Appledore are in fact covered by a consultancy agreement which is of some standing.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that it is the consultants-Mr Casey and company-who are deciding the terms and conditions under which Appledore can operate today, and not the Gibraltar Government?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, obviously before the company can be incorporated-and the delay in this is obviously a matter for regret on all sides-there must be some promotional activity, I think the House, and indeed Gibraltar generally, would be critical if the company which has been selected by the Government as the operating company were to say nothing at all about its modus operandi which, if I understand the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition, is the force of his recent comments.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am sure the Hon and Learned Chief Minister would deny any knowledge-but could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary with whom in the Government is A & P Appledore talking and reporting to, is it to himself?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

A & P Appledore are talking to anybody who will talk to them.

HON P J ISOLA:

As employer, I beg your pardon.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I said earlier in the session of the House this morning, it is regretted they are not in fact talking to more people.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am sure that that is a matter for the Government and for my Hon Friend here, but what I am asking is to whom is A & P Appledore International Ltd reporting to and taking instructions from: the consultants? Is the Government not involved in this process at all?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir, I have been reminded, Mr Speaker, that I in fact Chair a Steering Committee which is engaged in a debate about formalities. The formal position is that the company has not yet been incorporated so there are bound to be some, should I say, quasi legal imperfections in the current arrangements which one hopes will be rectified as quickly as possible by the establishment and the incorporation of the company, a point I made at great length this morning in my answers to some of the other questions which were raised.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I suggest that the word 'Steering Committee' is not used, Mr Speaker? But, could I ask the Chairman of the Steering Committee to whom does he report: the Governor, the Chief Minister, Council of Ministers, Gibraltar Council?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am sure that the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition is even more cognizant of my duties under the Constitution of Gibraltar than I am myself as I have only just recently taken up office.

HON P J ISOLA:

So that means he reports to the Chief Minister because that is what the last Financial and Development Secretary told us usually?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I report to the Gibraltar Government.

HON P J ISOLA:

Which is the Governor under the Constitution.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary to confirm that in fact the situation then is that once the company is incorporated, and once the directors are nominated, the company could well instruct the managers to produce conditions different from the ones that have appeared in the advertisements? Is that the case? There is nothing sacrosanct about the conditions that have been published?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, some of the Hon Member's suggestions suggest that the company will have quite diabolical intentions and I would like to assure the Hon Member that the company's intentions will be to run a successful commercial yard.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am asking a supplementary in relation to the terms and conditions of employment and I think that is a different aspect from the commercial success or otherwise. I am saying, is it correct to say from the answers that he has given, that in fact Appledore at present is offering employment on conditions which they presumably have conjured up themselves but which do not necessarily have the approval of the company—since the company is not incorporated—nor will it necessarily have the approval of the directors, as the directors have not been named?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Appledore have not yet in fact engaged anyone for reasons which the House will be better acquainted with than myself. So, as far that particular point is concerned, I cannot answer the Hon Member because no action has taken place. This morning I gave him information about the terms and conditions and I said that at the outset-as Appledore had made clear they proposed that the pay rates for Dockyard Workers should be at a level similar to those which now obtain. What happens in future will be a matter for determination by Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd.

HON J BOSSANO:

But the point that I am trying to get answered, Mr Speaker, is it a fact or is it not a fact that the Shiprepair company, once established will be in a position to decide as a matter of policy what should be the conditions and terms of employment of its employees? Or does in fact Appledore have the right to decide, and not the Shiprepair company? Who determines this?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, obviously, the final say in these matters will be the Gibraltar Shiprepair company.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Financial and Development Secretary confirm that the lack of agreement between Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd and A & P Appledore may prejudice the starting date for the commercialisation of the Dockyard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I think it is common knowledge that the starting date for the commercial operation of the Dockyard has been subject to some delay, and, in those terms obviously, I cannot dissent from the force of the Hon Member's comment.

HON A J HAYNES:

In the event that there has been some delay-which is confirmed by the Hon Financial and Development Secretary-will the Financial and Development Secretary say whether this delay is also an economic loss?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have certainly acknowledged, Mr Speaker, that any further delay could have economic consequences for Gibraltar.

MR SPEAKER:

But you are not going to expand on that under any circumstances; under this question we are most certainly not. You read the original question and you will see why.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Financial and Development Secretary if he does not agree that if Government is throwing its full weight behind commercialisation, as it is said to be doing, the least the Government could do would be (a) to incorporate Shiprepair Ltd, (b) settle its terms of lease, (c) settle its terms of management of A & P Appledore, and (d) appoint its Board of directors; and does he not think that the Government's lethargy in this respect must inevitably raise questions about the Government's intentions on commercialisation?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I certainly agree with the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition that these things should be done as soon as is possible. I find it impossible to accept the Hon and Learned Gentleman's suggestions that the Government has been lethargic: I think that is grossly at odds with the facts as I understand them and the situation as it has been.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 412 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that quarters owned by the UK departments but supplied with electricity by the Gibraltar Government do not pay the local tariff but a rate based on the price of electricity in UK?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir, quarters owned by UK departments but supplied with electricity by the Gibraltar Government are charged at the local tariff.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 413 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what are the municipal rates that would be payable by a commercial dockyard and state how these have been computed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Sir, as Honourable Members are aware from the figures shown in A & P Appledore's May 1983 report, an estimated provision of £500,000 has been included in the costings of the commercial dockyard. This was computed on the basis of an approximation of the Net Annual Value of a modern shipyard in full operation. The actual assessment will however be eventually influenced by a number of closely related factors, mainly the state of the property market and the nature and use of the premises.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 413 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Government state how this compares with the rates assessed to the Naval Dockyard?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the present NAV of the Naval Dockyard is assessed on 1978 values and represents an under-used obsolescent shiprepair facility. We do not normally disclose the information as it is confidential and relates to agreements between the UK and the Gibraltar Government.

HON J BOSSANO:

So then the Hon Member is saying that the Naval Dockyard is charged less than the market rate for municipal rates because it is obsolescent and under-used. Is that the case?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think that is a reasonable assumption for the Hon Member to draw.

HON J BOSSANO:

And is this a privilege granted only to the Naval Dockyard or does any other property owner in Gibraltar whose property is obsolescent and under-used also able to claim lower rates?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I have not got the information with which to answer that question which is slightly different from the terms of the Hon Member's original question about the Dockyard and which involves relations between Gibraltar and the UK.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am trying to establish how realistic is the rates the commercial dockyard is expected to bear. Can the Hon Member say what degree of magnitude there is in the difference between the two: are we talking about the commercial dockyard having to bear municipal rates twice what the Naval Dockyard does, three times?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member is now asking me what the commercial dockyard will pay in the way of rates, I would point out that the broad area is about £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m; but I would qualify that by pointing out that GSL will be eligible to apply for rating relief, under the Development Aid Ordinance provisions, which will significantly reduce that figure.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Hon Member if the difference which he has failed to point out between the commercial dockyard having to pay rates and the Naval Dockyard having to pay rates applied because of the dilapidated and obsolescent state of the Dockyard, whether other MOD properties which are in excellent condition pay the going rate or they also get a reduced rate?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, that information is not hidden in the answer I gave to the Hon Member. As I have explained, the broad figure which we assume that the commercial yard will pay is in the order of £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m; but this as I said, is a broad figure. In any event, GSL will be eligible to apply for rating relief which could mean that, at any rate, in the first year of operation they will be paying nothing compared with the figure being paid by MOD now.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am aware that that is the answer I am given, but that is not the question I am asking. The question that I am asking is if this broad figure is what the going rate should be if it was not reduced; and if the reason why the Naval Dockyard does not pay the going figure is because it is obsolescent and under-used?

MR SPEAKER:

So what you are asking is whether other MOD properties are charged the maximum rate?

HON J BOSSANO:

Are they charged on the Dockyard basis or on the commercial dockyard basis?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the MOD do of course pay rates here by law and the criteria under which the rates are fixed are fairly general ones.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 414 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state if the projections for the costs of the proposed commercial ship yard are to be revised to show higher electricity and water charges for the years from 1985 onwards?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the projections for the costs of electricity and water for the proposed commercial yard take account of increasing consumption and assumed differences in tariffs to be charged by the Ministry of Defence and the Gibraltar Government undertakings.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 414 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

I am aware of that, Mr Speaker, I am asking whether they are going to be revised from what they were in the May, 1983, projections.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think the answer I have given should satisfy the Hon Member, that is to say the current projections take account of increased consumption but not tariff escalations, except insofar as there is a difference between the tariff charged by MOD, who will supply the Dockyard in the first two years, and the Gibraltar Government's tariff, which will operate from year three onwards. As I recall from the projections, from years one, two, three and four, £0.3m, £0.4m, £0.4m, £0.5m, one would expect it to go £0.3m, £0.4m, £0.5m, £0.6m, but it is because of the lower tariff operating in the Gibraltar electricity service that there is that dip in the middle.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that if the estimated performance of the company is, as it is here, on fixed costs for electricity-subject to the Gibraltar Government being able eventually to supply cheaper than the MOD-would he not agree that if there is a reasonable expectation that the cost of this particular utility will be rising faster than the average rate of inflation, then that should be included in realistic projections?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, as we have already indicated during the course of previous questions, the projections of Appledore in their latest report have all been based on the convention of constant prices. The Hon Gentleman asked me about estimated performance. One cannot talk about performance until the company is in fact performing and in operation, which is a contingency we all look forward to at an early date.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, will the Financial and Development Secretary then confirm that the Government of Gibraltar is satisfied that this is viable; and if so how?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Gentleman is asking me, I think, if the commercial dockyard will be viable and I would refer him to the projections which have been made in the report.

HON J BOSSANO:

Precisely, Mr Speaker, and if in fact their viability is assessed on the projections from the report then can the Hon Member explain to me, when those projections are questioned, how he then goes on to say they have to be implemented to see whether they are realistic? Would the Hon Member not agree that it is Government's responsibility to be able to answer why they are satisfied on projections that on the surface do not appear to make sense?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Gentleman is talking about electricity charges which felicitously happen to be of the same order as the point about apprentices on which we laboured earlier. I do not think that increases in the price of electricity is a highly sensitive assumption in the context of the overall projections for the Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

But would the Hon Member not agree with me that if one goes through a series of items, as I have attempted to do, and shows that there appear to be margins for doubts about the accuracy of the predictions, that whilst individually one can argue as the Hon Member has done that each one taken on its own-if it was the only one-might not make a significant difference, collectively they could make a significant difference to the outset. Would he not agree with that?

MR SPEAKER:

You are asking for confirmation on conclusions. The conclusions that you arrive at, the use you make of the information, is a matter on which you don't have to seek Government confirmation.

HON J BOSSANO:

The position then, Mr Speaker, is that in answer to Question 414 the Government does not propose to revise the rates for electricity that they were producing in 1983: they are still going to go ahead supporting a commercial dockyard, starting in January, 1985, on the assumption that electricity is going to cost the same for the Naval Dockyard (if for nobody else in Gibraltar) as was anticipated in 1983. That is the answer to Question 414?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is a conclusion that you are entitled to arrive at; and that is what I have called you to order about.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am asking specifically are the projections going to be altered or not? If the answer is no, then my question is: are the projections going to remain the same or not?

MR SPEAKER:

Insofar as this particular item is concerned you may be given an answer.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The projections are projections, Mr Speaker, and all projections are liable to be amended in the light of experience. There are certain conventions which one adopts when one makes a forecast of the income and expenditure on any project, and Appledore have used certain conventions. To the best of my ability, I have attempted to describe these to the Hon Member as we went along, although I think he is probably familiar-if not more familiar with the facts than myself; which perhaps permits me to conclude, Mr Speaker-as I think I began at the beginning of this series of questions by expressing the hope that the Hon Member will in fact discuss these in a most meaningful way with A & P Appledore so as to satisfy himself the better about the viability of their operation.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it Government's intention that no further revised figures on the operation of the commercial yard will be produced between now and 1985, that is, what we have in the May, 1983, is the final draft?

MR SPEAKER:

You are asking for revision of electricity and water charges, ask a general question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the supplementary in fact given by the Hon Financial and Development Secretary prompts me to ask in different terms the question which I asked before. The answer given by the Financial and Development Secretary to the effect that he hoped that the Hon Member and Messrs Appledore should talk in the near future, on that point, Mr Speaker: can the Financial and Development Secretary state for how long Government will wait the holding of those talks, and if those talks do not take place by, say, February, whether Government proposes to take any decisions off its own bat?

MR SPEAKER:

I think you have been given an answer to that question, you are just repeating the same question. Next question.

NO. 415 OF 1983

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, does it take three men to read a water meter and if not why were three men so engaged in doing this on Saturday 26th instant?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, there are five meter readers employed by Government. Two are new recruits. They are still learning how to read the different types of meters and are not yet fully conversant with the locations of the meters.

On the occasion in question another, more experienced, meter reader, was showing the two less experienced meter readers the disposition of meters in Waterport Area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 415 OF 1983

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

May I just say, for the accuracy of the House, that this could not have happened as suggested by the Hon Member-because he says that it happened on the 26th instant.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, when I tabled the question it was in November and it was the 26th instant; and secondly, Mr Speaker, I would like to ask is it customary to train meter readers on a Saturday, when they have all week to be trained, considering the cost that is involved in having three men walking around on a Saturday to read water meters? Wouldn't the Hon Financial and Development Secretary agree that, in these days of economic restraint, it seems to be a bit absurd to have one trained meter reader with two trainee meter readers walking around on a Saturday morning?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, it would if the facts of the case were as stated by the Hon Member: but they were not all three of them walking around. It so happens that the two inexperienced meter readers asked for assistance and the more experience meter reader was, in the course of his duties, quite unconnected with training, himself visiting the Waterport area at that particular instance. In the interest of economy and efficiency, they went together: so three meters were read with the price of one visit.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 416 OF 1983

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government consider the waiving of Import Duties for consignments received by post valued at £10 or less?

ANSWER

THE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, there are administrative arrangements for the waiving of import duty on packages received by post consigned to private individuals by persons resident abroad. The concession is not granted for wines, spirits or tobacco. Following UK practice the monetary limit applied when administering the concession is not disclosed. I can however assure the Hon Member that his suggestion will receive careful consideration.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 417 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government give a breakdown of the cost involved in the Chief Minister's personal security?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

No Sir. It is not in the Public interest to disclose information about security matters.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 417 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Hon Member confirm that there are certain security measures under way at the moment? Will he outline what those are?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Sir, I won't go beyond my initial answer.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 418 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, has Government taken a decision on the introduction of vehicle log books?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr Speaker, Government has accepted that vehicle log books should be re-introduced. Informal discussions with Staff Side representatives of several associations (ACTSS, IPCS and TGWU) were held by the Industrial Relations Officer and regrettably all his efforts proved fruitless. Formal discussions with the Unions concerned will shortly be taking place and it is hoped that this matter will be satisfactorily settled in the very near future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 418 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon and Learned Attorney-General say how he expects fruitful outcome if the original discussions and negotiations seem to have broken down completely? On what basis does he say that he hopes that there will be a fruitful outcome?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I said that I hoped.

HON G T RESTANO:

What in fact is going to be done, Mr Speaker? Am I to take it that for Government to introduce vehicle log books there has to be agreement with the Unions concerned?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think that it is a perfectly proper procedure to seek an informal agreement, then to seek agreements through formal means if the informal procedure does not work. I would not like to make a commitment beyond that.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would agree: I think it is of optimum importance that there should be an agreement. But, will Government say what it will do if it cannot reach an agreement?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think, Mr Speaker, with respect, it would be premature to say that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has Government taken the decision that the introduction of log books will take place irrespective of whether it comes to an agreement with the Unions?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Government accepted as I said, that there should be vehicle log books. At the moment, the Government is concerned by formal discussions to reach agreement with the Unions and beyond that I cannot go.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 419 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state how many of its employees, by Departments, are paid on-duty bonuses and further state the amounts of these bonuses and the nature of the duties?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr Speaker, I do not know whether the Hon Member realises that in order for me to give a satisfactory answer to his question an in-depth study of all industrial and non-industrial grades in the Government service will have to be undertaken. This exercise could take two officers between three and five weeks to complete.

I am therefore not in a position, given such short notice, to answer the question.

Should the Hon Member require information on specific areas I will endeavour to supply the information as soon as possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 419 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

But, Mr Speaker, do not the departments themselves have the information, and cannot they feed this information through a central office in the Secretariat?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there are, I think, something in the order of 100 or more different types of bonus. The Establishment Division cannot provide the information at such short notice; but if the Hon Member could indicate more specifically what he would like, of course we will look into the matter and provide the information.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think it is stated quite categorically in the question, Mr Speaker, it is on-duty bonuses that I am enquiring about, not any other type of bonuses.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am saying that the Government would need time to prepare this information. If the Member is prepared to wait for the time the information will be collated.

HON G T RESTANO:

I accept that, Mr Speaker. Can the Hon Member not say, has he no idea of the amount of on-duty bonuses?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I really don't know.

HON G T RESTANO:

When can I expect to get the answer, Mr Speaker?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL:

In between three and five weeks time.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, would Government not agree in the compilation of the estimates annually that this would have figured, department by department, in any event?

MR SPEAKER:

May I say that this is the sort of information that the Opposition might have found for themselves if they had reference to the estimates: it is available information. I have allowed the question because it is present bonuses that one is asking for.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think the difference, Mr Speaker, is that in the estimates there is provision made for bonuses but I am asking for a particular type of bonus, which is the on-duty bonus, and if I can make clear to the Hon Member what an on-duty bonus is, an on-duty bonus is a bonus given to somebody who can be recalled to duty at any given time.

MR SPEAKER:

I think an undertaking has been given that the information will be supplied.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I don't^{think}/I have had an answer to my question.

MR SPEAKER:

Which is?

HON W T SCOTT:

Does the Government not agree that on-duty bonuses, as with every other bonus, must be computed at the time of the preparation of the estimates by every single department of Government, and that information is there?

MR SPEAKER:

The Government is not denying the fact that on-duty bonuses are being paid. They cannot give the detailed information which is being sought, unless they do a study.

HON A J CANEPA:

There is no such thing as an on-duty bonus. I don't know what Hon Members are talking about, unless it happens to be something else which is on-call allowance.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 420 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, have the arbitrators in the matter of the Old Shell Petrol Station at the junction of Landport and Corral Road reached a decision on the matter, and could we know the decision?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, formal terms of settlement have now been agreed between the Government and the other party. These are about to be submitted to the arbitrator, who is a separate person, so that the matter may be formally concluded.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 420 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do I take it that after about four years we still have not had the arbitration?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure that it is four years, but the position is that the parties-not the arbitrator (the arbitrator of course is another party)-have now agreed the terms of settlement. What remains is for those terms of settlement to be formally approved by the arbitrator who has been appointed to "try" the case, as it were.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, if it is not four years it is certainly three. Can the Hon Attorney-General give us an idea of when we can expect to know the result of this?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

If I can, Mr Speaker, there has recently been a lapse of time, I accept that readily. In June of this year the parties agreed the terms of settlement. What then remained was for them to put these down in legal form in a document. I am afraid I have taken since June to finalise the terms between the two parties, but that has now been done. The last point was resolved as early as after the Hon Member's question had been received, two or three days ago. What remains is for those terms of settlement to be presented to the arbitrator, who must formally conclude the arbitration.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 421 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Mr Speaker, unless it is against the public interest will Government state whether any progress has been made in updating the (Construction and Use) Regulation of the Traffic Ordinance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr Speaker, a general examination of the Traffic Ordinance, including the regulations, is presently being carried out with the view of amending the legislation on the introduction of tests at the Motor Vehicle Test Centre.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 421 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Can I have an indication of the amendments? This matter has been brought up in the past, as the Hon Attorney-General will remember, and among other things the changes in directives from Common Market countries as regards braking and exhaust facilities. Are these going to feature as amendments in the (Construction and Use) Regulations?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, what is happening is that the office concerned is looking at the various proposals. I cannot say in detail yet just what they break down into. When the Hon Member said was this contrary to public interest the answer is no, but I trust that the Hon and Learned Member will also appreciate what is involved in preparing legislation and especially technical legislation. The matter is at the stage where the office concerned is preparing proposals. I can in fact say that one set of proposals have just been submitted to my Chambers, and will be looked at before anything is drafted.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Member then state is the (Construction and Use) Regulations going to be increased in size and volume? Is it going to be much more technical, or not?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think, Mr Speaker, I should make it clear that I am relying on my general knowledge rather than specific knowledge, to some extent. I think it must necessarily be the case that any review of the (Construction and Use) Regulations would involve greater detail.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Hon Member confirm that the United Kingdom and EEC directives in the English language give the kind of detailed technical information that is required for the drafting of a new (Construction and Use) Regulations?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is not quite as simple as that, Mr Speaker; but by and large yes. We would look at the Community, of course, as a starting point-and the UK requirements but it is not just a question of copying and writing them out, if that is what the Hon and Learned Member means.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 422 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government explain what are the conditions whereby elderly persons can qualify to be included in the Group Practice Medical Scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, the conditions under which any person, including elderly persons, can qualify to be included in the Group Practice Medical Scheme are set out in the Schedule to the Group Practice Medical Scheme Ordinance, 1973. These are:

Employed Persons

Self-employed persons

Voluntary Contributors

In addition, by virtue of Regulation 6A of the Group Practice Medical Scheme Regulations, persons whose income does not exceed an amount equivalent to the amount payable as Old Age Pension, can be exempted from the payment of the Registration Fee. This in the main, applies to elderly persons.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 422 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say what in fact is the registration fee for an elderly person?

MR SPEAKER:

That would be in the Regulations.

HON J B PEREZ:

And it depends what he means by an elderly person.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that an elderly couple pay £9.10 per quarter to be registered in the GPMS?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir, I think the answer to the question is quite clear. There are certain categories of persons-the categories are not by age-they are: employed persons, self-employed persons and voluntary contributors.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, the voluntary contributors, Mr Speaker: can the Minister confirm if the rate for them is £9.10 a couple per quarter?

HON J B PEREZ:

Voluntary contributors, there are two sub-divisions: one is like myself, who is self-employed. I would pay 70p a week. The other one is the case in which a person is not in employment, and it depends on the income that that person has. If the income is not greater than the level of the old age pension there is no payment at all.

MR SPEAKER:

But we are explaining things which I think are easily accessible if you have reference to the Regulations, I think it is as simple as that. If you want to ask any question as a result of the information on the Regulations, and whether the Regulations can be amended, that is another matter.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, my information is that it is £9.10 for a couple and if either partner dies the fee remains the same. Would the Minister confirm that?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, totally wrong, both totally wrong.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is no, he doesn't agree.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is he then saying that there is a reduction if a person becomes a widower?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am saying I don't agree, he has got it all wrong, and he has been Shadow Minister for Health for four years. I am surprised at him,

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I will show, if you allow me, a contribution from the Minister where he did in fact say that the registration fee was £9.10 a quarter for a married couple. I didn't bring that information with me but I will certainly, if you will allow me, lay it before the House.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, he might have said that in certain circumstances, a married couple who are unemployed may well pay £9.10 but the answer you have been given is a simple one: that in certain circumstances the contributors don't have to pay anything, if their means entitle them not to have to pay.

HON G T RESTANO:

And what I am asking, Mr Speaker, is when they do pay £9.10 for a married couple and when one of the married couple dies.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, we are going round in circles. The Minister may well have said at any given moment in the House that for a particular couple, in certain circumstances, the contribution is £9.10 a quarter. But, it doesn't mean that every single person in the scheme has to pay £9.10. We will leave it at that: I don't think we are going to get any further. Next question.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, this morning when I asked Question No.422 on the question of the contributions by elderly persons to the Group Practice Medical Scheme, I mentioned the figure of £9.10 a quarter. The Minister said that I had been shadowing for four years and I didn't know what I was talking about, I did say that I would look it up in the Hansard, and in fact the Hansard is December, 1982. Following an amendment to the GPMS Ordinance, the Minister said- and this is the category that I was asking about this morning-would be increased: "The voluntary contributors will be increased now by an extra £9 a week, making a total payment of 70p per week, an annual increase from £31.72 per annum to £36.40 per annum"- which is the £9.10 that I was quoting this morning. So, if I can establish that that is what I was asking for in this question, what I wanted to know was whether that figure remains the same if a person loses his partner?

HON J B PEREZ:

I would reiterate what I said this morning, Mr Speaker: the question asks and speaks of elderly persons, and I referred the questioner to the relevant regulations. There is no mention there of elderly persons.

MR SPEAKER:

No. You have been asked a simple question now. In the circumstances where a couple pay £9.10 a quarter, because they are voluntary contributors, and they lose the spouse and the income is still the same - because I know what you are driving at - does the surviving spouse still pay the same contribution? That is what you are being asked.

HON J B PEREZ:

I cannot say yes or no. In January - he is referring to the Hansard of December, 1982 - it was precisely I who introduced new provisions to try and cater for a different category of persons. What I said there was that the new category was those persons not in employment, whose income does exceed the rate of the Old Age Pension for a single person, but does not exceed the rate for a married couple - that caters for the widower - that person would pay 45p per week and not 70p. So, I cannot categorically say yes or no to that question. Do I make myself clear, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

As far as I am concerned yes. Are you clear on that?

HON G T RESTANO:

That is if that person receives a lower income than the Old Age Pension but if he does not?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, I am sorry, perhaps if you will allow me, Mr Speaker, I can explain the new category which was introduced in January. (As the Hon Member rightly pointed out, it is the Hansard of December, 1982, and the law came into force in January). The new category is this: in the event of a widower, of a single person or a spinster whose income - and we are not talking about elderly persons let me make that quite clear - does not exceed the rate of the single person's Old Age Pension, that person does not pay a penny. If his income is over the single person's Old Age Pension but not greater than the pension for a married couple - and remember we are talking about a single person, which is the example he is giving - that person would then pay 45p per week. I cannot say yes or no because it depends on the case.

HON G T RESTANO:

A married couple have an income, and they pay their £9.10 a quarter. One spouse dies, and the remaining one is earning equivalent or perhaps slightly over the income for a married couple. Does he still pay £9.10 or does he pay less?

HON J B PEREZ:

You cannot get that example in which the person dies and the survivor will still be getting the pension for the married couple: he will be getting the pension for a single person.

HON G T RESTANO:

I said, Mr Speaker, if he retains the income of

MR SPEAKER:

We are seeking information which can be obtained. I have given you an opportunity to clear the position, insofar as what was said this morning.

HON J B PEREZ:

Perhaps I could say, if the Hon Member would just put to me a particular example in a case that has arisen, of course, I will look into the matter.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that then.

6.12.83

NO. 423 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has a solution been found to the problem of emergency exit arrangements for the Lewis Stagnetto Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, I am pleased to inform the Hon Questioner, that after consultation with the City Fire Brigade a solution to this problem has been found. Their recommendation that the spiral fire escape should be replaced by a dog-legged fire escape has been accepted.

The Public Works Department is currently engaged in obtaining details of the replacement escape staircase.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 423 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say when he expects the operation to be completed?

HON J B PEREZ:

I honestly cannot say that but the matter is already in the hands of Public Works.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 424 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is it Government's intention to continue with the transfer of St Mary's Infants School to the premises formerly occupied by St Christopher's School in Town Range?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, it is Government's intention to move St Mary's First School to the ex-St Margaret's site in Town Range. It is estimated that the cost of the project will be £350,000. Works are scheduled to commence in July, 1984, and the project will take just under a year to complete.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 424 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister when was it decided to transfer this School?

HON J B PEREZ:

It was decided well before my time, Mr Speaker, in the time of my Hon Colleague Major Dellipiani.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister then why nothing has been done and why it has now been put down for July, 1984?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, because the simple reason is we did not have the money. We now have the money available. I am very pleased to announce that we will in fact be getting on with the project, and it will commence in July, 1984.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has Government got its priorities right? Is not the cost of transferring this roughly the cost of the MOT Test Centre and ought this not to have been done before, this moving of this School, than the MOT Test Centre?

HON J B PEREZ:

As far as I am aware, Mr Speaker, this is an item which was in fact included in the Development Programme. We now have the money available and we are now proceeding with it. I would expect the Opposition to have been pleased with the answers that I have given, but it seems that one can never be right.

HON P J ISOLA:

Our information is, Mr Speaker, perhaps the Minister will confirm that there had been intention to move this School from year in and year out and the answer has always been: "No, it is being left for the following year". Now, the reason why we ask how firm the Government is is because it happens to be election year, and whether this is a firm date or one that is gone back on as has been the case in previous years?

HON A J CANEPA:

May I remind the Hon Member that the Overseas Development Administration will not give any assistance to Gibraltar for social projects including education. Therefore, whilst the MOT Vehicle Centre can be met from ODA funds, that is not the case for the transfer of the School. That is what has been the immediate cause of delays. Now that we have borrowed £10m, we are going to pay for it out of our own money.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 425 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, in relation to Question 324 of 1983 will Government state what action has been taken?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND HEALTH

Sir, as stated in my reply to Question 324 of 1983 the matter of the registration of non-residents in the Adult Education Programme was investigated.

Out of a total of 592 students, four were found to be non-eligible for registration. These four students have been allowed to complete the first term of their courses but will not be re-enrolled for the rest of the academic year, or subsequent programmes.

Tighter procedures are now being adopted requiring proof of residency as a pre-requisite for enrolment into evening classes.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 425 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

In arriving at that decision, Mr Speaker, did Government consider imposing an enhanced charge to people who were not residents perhaps to offset slightly within the figures that he has given me -592 and 4-the financial burden on the Department concerned?

HON J B PEREZ:

The matter was in fact considered but it was decided to proceed in the way that I have outlined.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Municipal Services state if there is any possibility of Government reducing the cost of overseas calls as it appears that people resident in Gibraltar are making overseas calls from La Linea because the rates are considerably lower there and this results in loss of revenue to our Gibraltar Telephone Exchange?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, prior to the introduction of I.D.D. in October 1982, the possibility of introducing a cheap rate for direct dialled international calls was investigated. The start of I.D.D. necessitated an increase of international circuits. However, landlines or cable circuits to the U.K. and Europe could not be utilised, on account of the political situation with our neighbours. Therefore, the only option remaining was the utilisation of the far more expensive satellite circuits of Cable and Wireless. Satellite circuits become more economical as distance and volume of traffic increases, and Gibraltar fulfills neither of these conditions. Thus, it would be necessary for Cable & Wireless to reduce their profit margin before cheaper rates could be introduced.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 426 OF 1983

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am glad, Mr Speaker, that I have asked this question because this will clarify in the minds of many people in Gibraltar why this is so, but having said that, wouldn't it be in the interest of Government to try and reduce costs that would, perhaps by the increase in volume that they would create, reduce the difference that exists between here and La Linea?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I take the point of the Hon and Gallant Major Peliza. It is really not only up to us; it is also up to Cable and Wireless, and their agreement to having a reduced charge per call. I imagine that if we did this, the difference would have to be divided between GTO and Cable & Wireless, so our income would fall as well as Cable and Wireless. But, it really depends on Cable and Wireless more than anything else.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Has the Government approached Cable and Wireless on this matter, and if they haven't, could they do so?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, we have approached Cable and Wireless on this

matter. In fact, I have also approached Cable and Wireless on the possibility of introducing a cheap rate at certain times during the weekends and public holidays. At the moment I am in discussion with Cable and Wireless. But, the onus is very much on them to provide a suitable answer. If they do so, I would be very glad to take it up. I promise the Hon Gentleman I shall do everything in my power to follow his suggestion.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 427 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state how many of the old type telephone lead cables remain?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are seven old type lead sheathed telephone cables remaining, which are in the process of being replaced. The number of subscribers served by old type lead telephone cable is 321 which represents 4% of the total number of subscribers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 427 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say which areas are served by these seven remaining lines?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mainly the town area, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 428 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Does the Government intend to enforce legislation passed by Government majority, compelling householders in private accommodation to have fire extinguishers in their dwellings before the next general elections?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the regulations necessary to carry the proposals into effect are in the drafting programme and will be drafted as soon as priorities permit.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 428 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that that particular piece of legislation was brought before the House in December, 1981, and that it was passed in March, 1982, can the Hon Attorney-General say why it is taking so long? If, as he says, the regulations are being drafted, can he tell us the conditions as to who will pay and how these will be serviced?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

To answer the first part of the question, Mr Speaker, it took some little while for the drafting instructions to be prepared. The matter has rested with my Chambers for some months I think, perhaps longer. To answer the second part of the question, I think that information is most appropriately divulged when the regulations themselves are promulgated.

HON G T RESTANO:

If my understanding is correct, Mr Speaker, the last time that this question was asked, we were told that the Fire Brigade was looking into the details and that the Hon and Learned Attorney-General's Chambers were awaiting the comments of the Fire Brigade. Can he let the House know whether those recommendations from the Fire Brigade have been received now?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

They are neither recommendations nor comments, Mr Speaker, they are what is known as drafting instructions. Unless you have drafting instructions, you cannot start drafting. I said before that they were received some time ago. I can find out the exact time and tell him.

HON G T RESTANO:

in March

Mr Speaker, if I can quote the Attorney-General of this year when he said: "I think because in fact what is happening is that the Fire Services Department are considering the implications of introducing regulations", have they considered...?

MR SPEAKER:

They must have considered it and now they are in the process of being prepared.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, it may be helpful for the Hon Member to understand how legislation is prepared. There are two elements to it: First of all, the Department responsible must prepare a brief or drafting instructions: once that is done my Department is responsible for converting those into legal format.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can we know, Mr Speaker, since all the information has now been centralised, who is going to pay for those fire extinguishers in the private sector; will it be the landlord or will it be the tenant?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I think I have answered that question: I said it would be appropriate for that to become public knowledge when the regulations are promulgated, but not before.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Bill was brought before the House in 1981 and....

MR SPEAKER:

The answer you have been given is that the regulations are now in the process of being drafted and it is Government's policy not to publish the kind of information that you are seeking until such time as the regulations are brought before the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Bill was brought before the House; we were asked to vote on it; we had certain reservations. I would just like to know why the secrecy, what is the reason for it?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is not secrecy, Mr Speaker, it is normal practice.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Hon Attorney-General⁹⁴ say if the regulations will be promulgated before the end of this House of Assembly?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, my answer is that the regulations will be promulgated when drafting priorities permit. If the Member is not happy with that, I suggest he looks at the statute book and sees how much legislation has been published.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 429 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Minister for Municipal Services explain why the official opening of the Waterport Power Station has not yet taken place?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, I would have thought the reason why the official opening of the Waterport Power Station has not taken place was quite apparent. It has never been the Government's intention to carry out an official function of this nature while the operation of the station is being contracted to a third party and negotiations are in progress with staff representative unions on manning levels and other working conditions, as has been the case in the Steering Committee. To have done so in such circumstances would have meant that the people who will be involved in the future running of the station would not have been able to participate in this event.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 429 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm that in fact it is not necessary to wait for the agreements within the Steering Committee for that Station to be officially opened?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, I agree with the Hon Member. As I mentioned previously, there was one area of disagreement within the Steering Committee which now seems to have cleared up, and since everything seems to point to a possible settlement and possible signing of the draft agreement, we feel that we ought to wait for this before we make a definite date for the opening of the new Station.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Minister any idea or any indication as to when he thinks he will have the official opening?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, as soon as possible. It could well be either before or after the next meeting of the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Does he really have no idea at all, absolutely no idea?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a problem: before the opening of the Station we need the contractors out.

MR SPEAKER:

We know the position. Have you any idea when this will be?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, Sir, I am afraid until we get a more definite idea, then we have to contact the UK to see if they can come out for the opening session.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I understand the Minister to have said that he wants the staff of the Electricity Department to take over the Station first and then they will open. Will there not be an interim period? There has to be training, has there not, Mr Speaker? Will it be before or after the training of the staff of the Electricity Department?

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is, however long it takes, the Government has said that they don't propose to have the official opening until they have taken over the operation. You have asked when will this take place. They have said it may be perhaps before or after the next meeting. There is no use going beyond that.

HON G T RESTANO:

What I am asking is do they intend to open it once the staff is trained or before the staff is trained?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, in fact certain members of the staff are being trained at the moment at Waterport Power Station, so that the opening will take place when most of our members are there-even though staff training may be taking place at the very same time.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 430 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, what is the total current amount that has been paid to the contractors for running the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, Sir, the cost to the 19th November for the contractors operating Waterport Power Station has been £1,304,147 and as stated in answer to Question No 265, this figure includes £353,573 being funded under the main contract.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 430 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, £1.3m is a very, very large amount. Will Government try to recover this money by increasing electricity charges?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I would like to mention two things on this. First of all, the answer is no; and secondly, that the figure of £1,304,147 is to some extent qualified because if we had put our own people there the figure would probably be at least half that amount, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, where will Government pay this £1.3m from?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I couldn't answer that question: it is a financial matter. What I will do is I will ascertain that and speak to the Financial and Development Secretary later and provide the answer to the question to the Hon Gentleman.

HON G T RESTANO:

In the House, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

In the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Because I would appreciate asking further questions on that.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I was not entirely sure when the Hon Minister said "if we had had our own men" he said it would cost half that amount. Does he mean half that amount again?

MR SPEAKER:

No, what is being said is that the Station would have had to be operated, even if it had been operated by their own staff, and that staff would have had to be paid and the amount paid would be basically half the amount that has been expended.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister justify that half? I know that there are fewer people employed by the contractors than the Electricity Department will be employing. So, how can he justify the half?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, that same question was asked by the Hon Member in the last House, when I said that there was only a skeleton crew down at Waterport. If we supplied the men, there would be far more men because we would have a lot of other duties to undertake. But, I answered this very question at the last House of Assembly.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government reveal the cost of the 1975/76 Preece, Cardew and Rider Report?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, in answer to Question No.30 of 1983 from the Hon J Bossano, I informed the House that the cost of the 1975/76 Preece, Cardew and Rider report had been met by the ODA. I was not able to reveal the actual cost then for the same reason as I cannot do so now.

The reason for this is simply that Government has no record of this, since Preece, Cardew and Rider were engaged by ODA under a negotiated agreement between the two parties. Government officials here were only involved in consultations with ODA officials to agree the terms of reference and the brief for the actual study which Preece, Cardew and Rider were to undertake and, subsequently, supplied the information necessary for the study.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 431 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister and I have exchanged correspondence on this and he did say in his last letter to me that it was thought in the Department that that particular Report cost about £8,000. Would he confirm this?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, in fact, more than that I will recall the last paragraph of my letter to the Hon Mr Restano dated the 28th November. I said: "When I wrote to you on the 3rd November, 1983, in answer to your earlier letter I confirmed what I have said in the House in answer to Question No.30 which is that Preece, Cardew and Rider were appointed and paid by the ODA and we have no record in Government as to the actual cost of this consultancy. Having said as much, the City Electrical Engineer can vaguely recall a figure of £8,000 having been mentioned by someone at the time probably from Preece, Cardew and Rider but certainly not from the ODA. You will appreciate that this information can only be taken as hearsay and that is the limit of its validity".

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I have asked that because I have a query and that is that that particular report which covered the requirements of electricity and water until the year 2000, therefore a fairly extensive report, apparently cost about £8,000 when Messrs Preece, Cardew and Rider were engaged by the ODA. Yet, when the Gibraltar Government employed Preece, Cardew and Rider for the Waterport Station consultancy the cost is nearly £300,000. Can the Minister say how is that related?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I don't think the Minister is entitled to answer that question. With respect, you have asked for the cost of the Freece, Cardew and Rider Report in this particular instance and you have been given the answer to it. I don't think it can be related to any other charges that the same consultants may have done on another matter.

HON G T RESTANO:

It seems to me very strange, Mr Speaker, that two consultancies are done by the same firm, one consultancy when it was engaged by ODA, the other consultancy when it is engaged by the Gibraltar Government; the difference in the price of the two consultancies is astronomical.

MR SPEAKER:

I accept that but the question then should have been asked in a different way and should have had a basis for comparison, in other words, can Government reconcile the payment of so much in certain circumstances with the payment of the other amount-but not on this question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Let me, Mr Speaker, for the Hon Member's guidance, explain the difference between the two consultancies. One was a report-and basically that alone. The consultancy of PCR in the Station meant having somebody at the Station, to make sure of certain arrangements, and involved a great deal more work than just producing a simple document which was the PCR Report.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, it has always been said by the Government that one of the reasons why they didn't publish it was because it was a very complicated Report.

MR SPEAKER:

In any event we will leave it at that.

NO. 432 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, what is now the total amount that has been paid for the Chairman of the Electricity Department's Steering Committee?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr Speaker, the total amount incurred for the Chairman of the Steering Committee to November, 1983, amounts to £110,915.38.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 432 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the last figure that I had-when I asked this question in October-was nearly £102,000. So how often has he been in Gibraltar since then to justify an extra £8,000?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Twenty days.

HON G T RESTANO:

How often has the Steering Committee in fact sat? Have they sat on all those twenty days?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

He has been here twenty days in his capacity as Chairman of the Steering Committee. Whether the Committee itself has met on every occasion, I would have to enquire; but he has been here as Chairman for twenty days.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I know how many times has the Steering Committee sat during those twenty days; and if the Chairman has come and the Steering Committee has not sat, what has been his reason for coming; and has it been a lot of days or just a few?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I would have to enquire to provide that information, I don't know the answer.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, he has come for twenty days. The meetings are usually held every fourth day, the rest of the time is in the

preparation and the sub-committees. So, the full Steering Committee has probably met about five times in the twenty days. The amount of work that he has put in has been on all the other days, and he has met the different sections and-when necessary-anybody else who he might think could be of help.

HON G T RESTANO:

But my understanding is, Mr Speaker, that the delays that have occurred have been because suggestions are made and they have to be considered by both sides of the Steering Committee, and whilst they are deliberating on that, the Chairman's presence is not required. What has changed the fact that on this occasion, since the 18th October of this year up to now, he has been in Gibraltar for two weeks, fifteen days, without having meetings of the Steering Committee?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He said he had five meetings.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer has been he has attended five full meetings of the Steering Committee, he has attended meetings of the sub-committees, and he has been in consultation with third parties.

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, this is the first time we have heard about these sub-committees. Can the Minister give us some explanation about these sub-committees? Who do they consist of: are they sub-committees of the Staff Side or of management or both together?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The sub-committees have involved practically everybody involved in the Steering Committee, and this has been one of the ways of hastening up the process of the Steering Committee in which the Chairman has to be present. I may add as well that, unfortunately due to severe pressure on the part of Mr Bossano, he has only been able to meet once a week. Therefore some of the work has taken place at other times.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I know, Mr Speaker, are there more than one sub-committee or is there just one sub-committee?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, there are many sub-committees which touch on each section within the Electricity Generating Station.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Perhaps it should be stated that, with the concurrence of the union concerned, the Chairman of the Steering Committee has interviewed practically everybody in the Power Station.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can we know how many sub-committees are there?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I do not have the information but I cannot see what does it matter whether there are twelve or fourteen sub-committees.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can I ask the Minister to obtain that information?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, he will I am sure.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I understood from the Minister's answers, I think it was in October, that all outstanding matters had been settled except one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The biggest one.

HON P J ISOLA:

If it is the biggest one, he did not give us that impression. What makes it so necessary to have so many meetings and so forth?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, unfortunately the Hon Member was not here this morning when he could have been here and have heard the answer, but obviously he was coming back from the United Kingdom where he was there on personal business. I said that all areas of the sub-committee have practically been cleared up and I hopefully expect the signing of the draft agreement this week.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, if I may, in answer to Question No. 432, I have checked with the City Electrical Engineer and there were indeed five meetings of the Steering Committee and about six other meetings at which he had been present.

6.12.83

NO. 433 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government release to the Opposition the report on the housing situation in Gibraltar made by Messrs Peat Marwick and Mitchell?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, a Committee composed of Government Ministers and officials has been set up to study the draft report. As soon as the report has been finalised it will be released to Members of the Opposition.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 433 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

I am grateful for that reply, Mr Speaker. Can the Minister give me any indication as to when the likely date will be?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I think I am well known in this House for not giving indications because I do not want to be caught out afterwards.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can we have an assurance that it will be released to us but not on a confidential basis?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think, having read the contents of the draft report, that I will give that assurance.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 434 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government confirm that the Family Care Unit is presently undermanned and will Government endeavour to rectify the situation so as to ensure that applicants waiting to be classified as social cases are not kept waiting for more than four weeks?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Yes, Sir. The Family Care Unit is presently undermanned. However, all cases referred to the Unit have been or are being processed and no delay has occurred as far as the Unit is concerned.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 434 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the waiting time for a report in respect of social case applicants is in excess of four weeks?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker, in actual fact, even though we are undermanned at the moment, the average does not go over four weeks.

HON A J HAYNES:

What is the average, Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The average now is almost immediately, we have caught up with most of the cases.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 435 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

What sums of monies have been paid out to date in 1983 in -
a) Unemployment Benefit, and b) Supplementary Benefit compared to
the same period in 1982 and 1981 and how many people have been
involved in both categories?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, during the period January to October, 1983, £194,790 have been paid in Unemployment Benefit and £447,870 in Supplementary Benefit. The corresponding figures for 1981 were £106,270 and £291,000 and for 1982 £146,190 and £360,360 respectively. 603 people have been involved so far in 1983 in respect of Unemployment Benefit. The corresponding figure for 1981 was 639 and 827 for 1982. Approximately 570 have been involved so far in 1983 in respect of Supplementary Benefit. No statistics are, however, available for 1981 and 1982.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 435 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

In the first instance, Mr Speaker, might I ask the Minister why no statistics are available for the previous two years of Supplementary Benefit?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker. You will notice that in my answers to the Unemployment figures I gave exact figures; in my answers to the Supplementary Benefit figures I said approximately - and approximately is because somehow or other the unit concerned was not keeping statistics, because the method is that you get different applications, you might get thirty or forty different applications, and they are processed, but only ten probably would be paid. But, all of those applications are put together in the same place and the ones that are paid were not extracted. So, in order to give you some answers, we managed to dig up one year by looking virtually at each individual case and that is why I have given you 570. I have already given instructions that statistics for this Supplementary Benefit should also be kept.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr. Speaker, might I ask just one more question? The pattern seems to be one of a sharp trend from 1981 to 1982 and then a downward one to the Unemployment Benefit which is limited, as we all know, to thirteen weeks. Am I right in assuming that the downward trend basically concerns non-resident workers that have not remained, obviously, in Gibraltar after the payment of their thirteenth week Unemployment Benefit?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker.

NO. 436 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what further progress has Government made on the lowering of the retirement age for the purpose of the Social Insurance Pension?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, I will be replying to this question later in the proceedings, during the course of the Hon Mr Bossano's motion.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 436 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, if I may return to that, obviously, it is not a motion from my side of the House and, secondly, it really does not afford us an opportunity of a question and answer session within the course of the debate. I ask the Minister to reconsider answering my original question.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I hope, Mr Speaker, that in the course of the debate which really touches on most of the elements on which we are now involved, which is unemployment, employment, retirement age, credits, etc we could have had a better opportunity for more discussion on the question. But, if he wants an answer now, the only progress so far has been in effect - which does not really answer your question, I must admit - that in my review for this year, for example, one of the problems which people are suffering now is that once they have retired at 60 they have got to carry on paying until they are 65. One move that I have made so far is that they should not be paying more than they were paying when they were employed. In answer to whether I will make any further progress, at this moment the answer is no, we are studying the whole question. I would remind the Hon Member opposite that, in a statement I made in the House, I gave the figures (based on current figures and not on the figures that are going to come in January, 1984) that a reduction of one year would cost £½m and to bring it down completely to 60 years for everybody will cost an extra £2m at current rates.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, when the Hon Member is saying it is still under further review he is really, effectively not saying much, because if he has already undertaken an examination - to the extent that a lowering of one year is going to cost £x - what further is there to review?

MR SPEAKER:

You have been told that no progress has been made so far; you have been given the train of thought that Government is applying. I do not think we are going to get any further information. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 437 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, how many persons have applied to take advantage of the recent legislation awarding non-resident workers 13 weeks unemployment benefit in one lump sum?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, five persons have applied.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 437 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I ask what has happened to the employees of the Mons Calpe that we were told the legislation was required so urgently for?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

They have only just applied.

HON P J ISOLA:

So it is more than five?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I was asked how many and it is five.

HON P J ISOLA:

But that is not what we were told in the debate, Mr Speaker. The urgency was for a much larger number of people.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I could not give you the numbers, because when I answered this question, only five had applied. Subsequently, they have applied now.

HON P J ISOLA:

You mean now, this minute?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Two days ago.

HON P J ISOLA:

Then why can't the question be answered with the right number?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Because I have not got all the facts and figures with me.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer to that, of course, is that they were employed until the end of November.

NO. 438 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether there have been any changes in the administrative organisation of the Industrial Tribunal?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, although there have been no changes in the administrative organisation of the Industrial Tribunal two officers of the Department have been assigned to prepare cases for submission to the Tribunal which has improved the situation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 438 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, but didn't Government in answer to a question I asked on this same subject indicate that my own recommendations or views were not upheld by Government, and that they were going to introduce administrative organisation? As there hasn't been, does that mean that the answer has been changed, there has been a change in policy, or what?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think, Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Member when he was talking about different administrative arrangements was talking of the Chairman, a different kind of Chairman; that has not been changed. What we have done, in an effort to get over the backlog of cases, is to appoint two officers specifically assigned to be able to deal with this backlog. We have also had a different venue allocated to us, which is more readily available, and this is why we are speeding up the cases. So, administratively, when we are talking about the Chairman, we have not changed, but in the practicality of the thing, we have made certain moves which are a great improvement.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am glad to hear that again, Mr Speaker. Does this mean that the backlog has now been dealt with or is there still some outstanding work to be done?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will be glad to answer the question, Mr Speaker. Two cases have already been heard and five more cases are due to be heard within the next two weeks.

HON A J HAYNES:

Are there only those seven cases left or what?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

May I remind Hon Members that when I say they have been heard, it does not necessarily mean that the Chairman has given his verdict. Eighteen cases have still to be finalised. These are pending because of an appeal made to the Supreme Court by counsel for the employer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister - I know he does not like to give dates - confirm that, the last time we had an exchange over this matter, the waiting time was two years for a case before hearing in the Tribunal?

MR SPEAKER:

But we have been told that it has been expedited.

HON A J HAYNES:

But is it now going to be possible to have them heard within a short period of time, or are the two officers going to be taken back from their present duties?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, may I please clear one point for Hon Members? It is not always the fault of the Department when cases are not dealt with promptly. There are at least three different parties involved: there is the lawyer defending the employee; the lawyer defending the employer; the Chairman; and the Department. We might set up a date and the lawyer for the defendant might say: "This is no good", so delays are caused by lawyers.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question."

NO. 439 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether or not they have completed their survey to determine the number of tenants who are overhoused and will Government release their findings, if any?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the survey has not yet been completed owing to lack of cooperation on the part of some tenants who failed to return the questionnaire sent to them. However, in order to get the necessary information a house to house survey is being carried out and it is expected that the survey will have been completed by the end of January, 1984.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 439 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Opposition be given these findings?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I will give the findings to the Opposition.

HON A J HAYNES:

Before the elections, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 440 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, according to the latest information received there would appear to be approximately 381 tenancies sharing toilet facilities and 132 without running water.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 440 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, has there been any difference between when I last asked the question in June and now?

MR SPEAKER:

Well, that is a simple matter which you can see by looking at the answer you got in June.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm there has been no substantive change?

MR SPEAKER:

There is no reason for him to, you can refer to the answer. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 441 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government consider awarding extra points to a housing applicant of advanced years, eg over 70 years of age?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING, LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member must be aware, I agreed at the last meeting with him that the Housing Allocation Committee would be asked to consider and to recommend whether provision should be made in the Scheme to meet this requirement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 441 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Has there been any meeting to consider this?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

They have not had the chance to meet yet.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 442 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

No, Sir, the position is still the same as in my reply to your Question No. 191 of May. Information has also been sought from the Federal Communications Commission of the United States of America, as the majority of equipment available locally is AM, mainly constructed to this Body's specifications.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 442 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, has the Minister any idea when he will be able to make a statement on the legalisation of Citizen's Band; and may I also point out to the Minister that, in my supplementary to my question, I pointed out that what was required for Gibraltar was legalisation on the same lines as the UK, which is FM, not AM as in the neighbouring country?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, it is precisely why we are taking so long in this issue, because most of the equipment that is available locally is AM, and not FM as in UK. It is purely because of that that we are having some difficulty in being able to rationalise into exactly what we would like. I take the point, particularly because of the proximity of our immediate neighbours, but this is exactly why we are having more difficulty in trying to find out exactly the problems that exist between the items received here of AM manufacture as opposed to FM. As to the first part of his question, Mr Speaker, as to when I will be able to legalise this issue, I can assure the Hon Member that the moment we get clearance on the issue we have nothing against legalising the Citizen's Band at all.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, but wouldn't the Minister agree that if he pressed on and legalised it on FM, the AM equipment which is coming in at the moment would stop coming because the radio hams would be forced to use the FM, which does not interfere with local aircraft? Wouldn't the Minister agree that if he pressed on and introduced legislation on FM it would go a long way to solving this problem?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I wish it was that simple. There are problems which I do not think I should give in this House; but we are trying to do our best, Mr Speaker.

6.12.83

NO. 443 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Have any problems been encountered recently regarding the transportation of mail from Morocco to Gibraltar and if so will Government make a statement on the matter?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

No, Sir, however, when on the withdrawal of the sea link it was decided to airlift the surface mails, to ensure the continuation of the service, technical problems led to mail being held up in Tangier for eight days. These problems were overcome, the backlog cleared and mail is now received regularly.

6.12.83

NO. 444 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism and Sport state if the air mail from the United Kingdom has been in any way adversely affected by the reduced schedule flights from London during the winter months?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the withdrawal of schedule flights has affected receipt of air mail from the UK. No air mail is received on Wednesdays or Saturdays as there are no flights at all on those days. On Mondays mail is brought in by a charter operator who applied and was granted a licence by the Civil Aviation Authority to carry mail.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 444 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So the Minister is happy that we are in exactly the same position as last year, but no worse?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, there are no planes - as the Hon Member knows - on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. On the Monday, we have a charter operator coming through. There is no plane at all arriving on the Wednesday or Saturday; otherwise, I am sure the charter operators would gladly bring it in. But, we are the same.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

My point is that we are no worse than we were last year?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 445 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state if his department has carried out any publicity in Spain or engaged any individual or organisation to attract visitors from Spain to Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, apart from one visit by the Director to the Coast with the object of sounding out leading Coach Operators to assess the potential traffic to Gibraltar no publicity visits have been carried out in Spain. However, we have an action plan ready for promoting and selling Gibraltar in Spain when the frontier is fully opened.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 445 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since there are in fact visitors coming to Gibraltar, isn't there perhaps virtue in trying to get as many of them to come here, in fact, encourage them to come and spend money here, which it seems we are not doing? Could the Minister look further on that; and perhaps take action before the frontier is fully opened?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to spend any advertising money in Spain to attract the kind of tourists or excursionists we are getting from Spain at this moment. If tourists as such are allowed to come into Gibraltar, then the Gibraltar Tourist Office will most certainly do so. The indications we have is that the Spaniards being allowed to cross the frontier are not coming in as tourists but more as day roamers around Gibraltar and not spending as much as some people seem to indicate.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

But if the advertising was done the right way doesn't the Minister think that perhaps we could attract certain people who may come and spend more money?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am quite surprised that the Hon Member should be making this point so laboriously. If he looks at Hansard, I think it was in 1982 in December, he mentioned the fact that we should not be doing this. I will give him paragraph and page on that later on, Mr Speaker. No, Mr Speaker, we are not prepared to spend money in advertising in Spain. I would like to remind the Hon Member that there are indications, and I will go no further than that, that Gibraltar Government Tourist Office would not be allowed to advertise in Spain.

6.12.83

NO. 446 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state what has been done since a co-ordinator for tourism was appointed that will induce more tourists to come to Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, since it was I who asked the Administrative Secretary to look into the question of tourism on my behalf, and to report to me, I will answer this question and question Nos. 449, 450 and 456 myself and deal with them in one go.

NO. 447 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism explain in some detail the reason for Intasun cancelling two of its weekly flights, if this is a sign that their sales of tours to Gibraltar is proving to be lower than they expected and the reasons for this decline, if so?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, we understand that Intasun did not have the air capacity in Manchester which they were anticipating and indeed the lead in time of their special winter brochure was rather short. Intasun are hoping to come in on the Manchester flight after Christmas.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 447 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So in fact, the position of Intasun is that which they announced originally when they came here; and this is purely a hiccup on the way there. Is that what the Minister is saying?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

In simple language, Mr Speaker, what has really transpired is that there has been a very good response in the Manchester area for the Gibraltar trips, particularly at the prices given by Intasun; but Intasun or, shall I say, Air Europe have been unable to provide the aircraft. Going back to the previous question, Mr Speaker, when I was in England I did speak to Intasun - together with the Administrative Secretary - and they did even attempt to charter aircraft from Britannia, but they were unable to get the aircraft.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I do not quite understand; how could they make that commitment without first making arrangements as to aircraft? Have they not involved a number of hotels in planning an expenditure which is now lost?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, I think, Mr Speaker, it is one of the points I raised. It was extremely bad planning. I think they were over-enthused at the time in committing themselves. Members may not know that they had extended their promise to three flights per week in winter, as opposed to one or two but, unfortunately, their own aircraft - I think Air Europe owns thirteen 737's - have been unable to make use, particularly at Manchester.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 448 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism state the date of the last meeting of the Tourist Advisory Board and give information on its outcome?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, the last meeting of the Tourist Advisory Board was held on Thursday 27 October, 1983, and the subjects ranged from Municipal Charges to Tours, Specific Conferences and Taxi Service.

6.12.83

NO. 449 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism explain what matters the Administrative Secretary had to deal with when accompanying the Minister to London that neither himself or the Director of his Department was capable of attending to?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 446, 450 and 456 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 450 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Tourism explain in some detail the role of the Administrative Secretary as coordinator for Tourism?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 446, 449 and 456 of 1983.

NO. 451 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Government state when they plan to resurface Main Street which is so badly in need of it and which will greatly help to make this main thoroughfare much more attractive?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it is intended to resurface the south section of Main Street, from the Convent to Southport Gates, during the latter part of 1984 and provision is being made in the 1984/85 draft estimates. The area from the Cathedral to the Convent was resurfaced some years ago and is in a good state.

The concept of paving the proposed pedestrianised part of Main Street, from the Engineer Lane junction to the Library Street junction, is planned for the coming year. There are plans for a phased programme but at this stage it would obviously be unwise to spend money on any part of this area until such time as final decisions are made on the timing of the different phases. It would clearly be a waste of money to resurface any part of this area, in asphalt, if paving is to follow within a relatively short time lapse.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 451 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

When you say a relatively short time lapse, could the Minister give an idea?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think I am answering a question later on, Sir, in which we will be starting the paving of one or two of the side streets soon, and the first section of Main Street should be done sometime next year.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The actual resurface of this area should start about when?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We would hope possibly about September next year.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 452 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government have the names of Knight's Court and St John's Court displayed on said buildings in the light of the confusion suffered recently by the Policemen on ambulance duty when attending a call to one of these buildings?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir.

NO. 453 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

How much revenue is Government deriving from the car park opposite the air terminal and how much is the cost of operating this car park?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, to date Government has obtained £3,187.50 in parking fees for the Western Beach car park, and total running costs have been £6,919.56.

However, it is invidious to treat this car park on its own. It should be treated together with the British Lines car park where to date £24,139 have been collected against £7,827.18 in running costs.

Thus the two parks together have taken £27,326.50 against running costs of £14,746.74.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 453 OF 1983

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I notice that the fees at the Western Beach car park were reduced in the sense that it is 2 hours for 50p. Wouldn't the Government consider putting a more realistic fee for parking in Western Beach car park and thus make sure that it makes money from that car park?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think the fee proposed is realistic, Sir. The intention of that car park is twofold. Firstly, to provide room for people visiting the airport to be able to park on a short term basis; and also to act as an overflow for the British Lines car park for people going to Spain. That is why there is a provision of two types of fee. We do not think that the 50p for the 2 hours - which are mainly people visiting the airport - is unreasonable.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, wouldn't the Minister agree that, in the majority of cases, people going to the airport in fact spend about half an hour at the most? Wouldn't it be better to have instead of 50p per two hours, 25p per hour? Instead of forcing them to pay for two hours, which they are not going to use up anyway, and in that case I am sure that a lot of people who otherwise run the risk of being booked for parking on the yellow line or on the pavement will in fact make use of the car park for the sake of 25p. Wouldn't the Minister consider making it 25p an hour provisionally and see whether in fact the revenue is increased?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We started off at 50p per hour, and now it is 50p per two hours. I am willing to look at it but I cannot see that there is very great improvement if we were to reduce it to 25p. I think we would only take a little less money.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is there any reason why people visiting the air terminal should have to pay 50p in the car park opposite when the air terminal car park is used by people who do not visit the air terminal? Is not the problem really there, and not opposite, and is that not a fact? It is obvious to anybody who goes to the airport; isn't it obvious to the Minister?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The small car park at the air terminal is very difficult to administer on a paying basis; it only takes very few cars. In fact, most of the cars there happen to belong to employees around that area, so the average person visiting the airport normally goes into the Western Beach car park.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is that not totally wrong? Has the Minister gone to the airport when a plane arrives, and seen about three cars in the car park opposite; and isn't it a total waste of public space and public money, when you have the whole of that area cluttered with cars - on the road, by the terminal building - and this wonderful large car park is virtually empty 24 hours a day? That is a fact, is it not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, it is not virtually empty 24 hours a day, Sir, because it has taken a fair sum of money. We can possibly look into other restrictions to stop people parking, as they tend to do - at times indiscriminately - in the airport area, in the areas reserved for taxis, even on the pavement, etc.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is there any possible justification for subsidising, because that is what the Minister is doing, subsidising a parking area? Instead of people paying for it, the Government is paying for it, and in that case is it not better to leave it uncontrolled with no payment at all?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

If you left it uncontrolled, then you would find half the people who today go into the British Lines car park and paying for it would go into the free car park, and you would lose. That is why the two of them are taken together.

6.12.83

NO. 454 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, when will the Pedestrianisation Scheme in the City Centre physically commence?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, if by "physically" the Hon Member means actual road works, then the Scheme in the City Centre will commence early in the new year. It is intended to start with Market Lane. This is and will continue to be a pedestrianised area at all times, as any form of vehicular traffic is totally unnecessary.

A phased programme for the paving of further parts of the City Centre and which will include new street lighting, landscaping and street furniture, will follow. The extent and timing will depend on the availability of funds.

It is not in the answer, Sir, but after Market Lane the next place that is suggested is Bedlam Court.

6.12.83

NO. 455 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government not agree that a considerable number of our roads and streets still require resurfacing and what roads and streets does Government intend resurfacing during the next twelve months either in part or in whole?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir, there are a number of roads which require resurfacing. It is hoped to resurface the following before the end of this financial year:

Library Street, Cannon Lane, Engineer Lane.

Provision is being made in the 1984/85 draft estimates to resurface King's Yard Lane, Main Street (Convent to Southport Gates), Smith Dorrien Avenue, Rodger's Road and Devil's Tower Road from the Sundial to St Theresa's Church.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 455 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

What is the cost to the Department concerned of all this resurfacing?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would have to have notice of that question, Sir, but if the Hon Member would like it I will give him a written reply.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 456 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

What further measures, if any, does Government intend taking to ensure a cleaner and tidier Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, since it was I who asked the Administrative Secretary I think I would be in the best position to answer supplementaries on these matters.

The role of the Administrative Secretary in this matter is to look into the various aspects of tourism and to report to me on ways in which effect might be given to the Government's declared policy of devoting special attention to this sector of the economy.

The reason why, at the suggestion of the Minister for Tourism, the Administrative Secretary accompanied him on his promotional visit to London in late October/early November was to enable him to familiarise himself and report on promotional activities in Britain. This included meetings with the Advertising Agents and Public Relations Consultants in London. The fact that he accompanied the Minister in no way reflects on either the Minister or the Director.

In the course of his assignment, the Administrative Secretary has been engaged in consultations with the Minister and the Director, officials of the Public Works Department and the Chief Environmental Health Officer, the Attorney-General and the Commissioner of Police and individually with each member of the Tourist Advisory Board, the Chairman and Secretary of the Museum Committee and others engaged in the tourist industry in Gibraltar and in Britain, including Intasun.

The process of consultation is now complete and I expect to receive his report in the near future. When the report has been considered the Government will take decisions on the methods to be adopted to attract more tourists to Gibraltar.

I have included Question No. 456 in this composite answer because the question of cleaning and smartening up Gibraltar is an essential pre-requisite to any drive for increasing tourism. Recommendations on this aspect, as well as on ways of coordinating and monitoring the work of Departments, will accordingly form part of the report.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 446, 449, 450 AND 456 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Chief Minister agree that by the answer he has given it shows that the Chief Minister himself apparently has never been interested in tourism before?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Normally, I leave Ministers to get on with their Departments, and I have enough on my plate. But, when the matter becomes one of general national importance, I take such steps as I consider necessary to help the Departments concerned. I did so on this occasion. I have always taken an interest in tourism, but I leave it to Ministers. I do not interfere in their work unless they appear to go wrong or unless they have problems that they bring to me.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can the Chief Minister say what makes it necessary for him to ask the Administrative Secretary, a civil servant, to report on what is necessary for the Tourist Department when he has a Minister for Tourism who could surely set out in a clear and concise fashion the need and requirements of his Department. Does not this appointment reflect on the Minister?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course it doesn't, and I have said so. In fact, why I asked him to do that was because it is not only purely a political drive, it is a question of getting all the Heads of Departments - whom I have mentioned here - to get themselves interested and have a thrust into tourism: the Environmental Health Department, the Public Works Department, these are Heads of Departments who have to be seen by the Administrative Secretary, who has naturally much higher standing than the other Heads of Departments, and can direct them. It is in order to give an impulse to this intention that it was done. It reflects in no way on the Director or the Minister, who has contributed and collaborated in the preparation of these plans.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Chief Minister has stated, Mr Speaker, that he usually takes up matters when there are problems. Doesn't he agree that tourism has been a problem for the last four years; and why has it taken so long for them to realise this? Is it the closure of the Dockyard now that is bringing all this to the surface?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, to some extent the closure of the Dockyard makes it more sensible to concentrate on tourism more. Perhaps, when we bring the bill to the House, I do not mean the bill of law but the bill that may be incurred in the results of the enquiry, we will consider the extent of the work that has been done. There is no doubt, of course, that the action on tourism was motivated by two things: not only the closure of the Dockyard, but the release of the very useful and prime sites that were given in the package which requires to be developed and which requires particular attention. But, it seems to me that if you take an interest you are also accused of not taking an interest.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Doesn't the Chief Minister agree that tourism has always been the second pillar of our economy, and does he agree that - for the past four years - this side of the economy has been failing badly and going from bad to worse?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I agree that tourism has always formed part of the economy, of course I do, and we have done our best, and the provision in the Estimates every year of our promotion, and as the Hon Minister says it has gone from bad to worse, it is suffering the recession that other people are suffering - like in so many other places, certainly in the UK one reads about that. Of course it has always been a part of, and it has always been the policy - and that is evident by looking at the Estimates. This is not the first time that the Administrative Secretary has been put on an assignment to do something; it was done in respect of education, at a critical time, when he was appointed temporary Director of Education and finished off certain things. There is always a problem-shooter in all administrations. This has been done now, and I hope that Members will look forward to the report and contribute when we discuss it and make some helpful suggestions. It is no use recriminating but trying to do something positive on the matter.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the question of the coordinator I think is a very important one.

MR SPEAKER:

I am not interested, with respect, I am interested in questions.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am asking questions, Mr Speaker, in the sense that how can the Chief Minister justify appointing a civil servant as coordinator for tourism, when this is the responsibility of the Minister - and the responsibility of one Minister - who is answerable to this House. He has now appointed a civil servant, who is not answerable to this House in any way, Mr Speaker. Are we going to have, Mr Speaker, a Government run by civil servants?

MR SPEAKER:

I will call you to order once more but not again because you are making statements, with due respect to you.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I make no apologies for appointing a civil servant to look at the matter, which is mainly inter-departmental. The Minister will be greatly helped, I am sure, by the work that has been done at administrative level, and that is all I have to say.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, on the question of the work the coordinator has done in the United Kingdom.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know who called him coordinator; I never appointed him coordinator, I think he invented the word.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, that word was used either in a press release or here in this House.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

It was never used by Government, it may have been used by some press media never by Government.

MR SPEAKER:

The word coordinator was used by the questioner as a matter of fact in his original question.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It was used by the questioner on this occasion, Mr Speaker, but it was not thought out by myself, it is a word that I chose because that was the word that was used by the Government on one occasion or other, I forget at what time.

HON P J ISOLA:

Did I understand the Chief Minister correctly to state that one of the reasons why the Administrative Secretary went to London was to see Intasun?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is a pity that people do not listen and take up the time of the House in asking questions. What I said was: "In the course of his assignment, the Administrative Secretary has been engaged in consultations with the Minister and the Director, officials of the Public Works Department and the Chief Environmental Health Officer, the Attorney-General and the Commissioner of Police and individually with each member of the Tourist Advisory Board, the Chairman and Secretary of the Museum Committee and others engaged in the tourist industry in Gibraltar and in Britain, including Intasun".

HON P J ISOLA:

Why the mention of Intasun? I would have thought there were a lot of other tourist operators. Was his attention directed entirely at Intasun, and if so, was it successful because the results do not seem to be very successful?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The point was that when the Minister was in his promotion, and the Administrative Secretary was there, he took the opportunity to go and see Intasun to see why they had not complied with their commitment to bring the number of tourists they announced that they would bring. He wanted to hear it from them and find out why, having promised that, and having obtained the support of the Gibraltar Government, they were not doing it. It is as simple as that, he did not choose that one out of a list, he went there to make a complaint.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that is the complaint that should and ought properly to have been made by the Minister himself?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It was made by the Minister also.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I then ask, Mr Speaker, one last question? Who is now doing the other work of the Administrative Secretary in the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He has finished his work. As we all know, he does very great work and he has not neglected his duties in any way. He has now finished the work, which has entailed mainly interviewing people to get at the substance, and he will just be writing the report.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Chief Minister saying then that after he has written his report the functions of the Administrative Secretary in connection with tourism ends?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course, and why perhaps the Hon Member has used the word co-ordinator was because I may have said that I had appointed him to coordinate in the past; but I never called him coordinator.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, isn't any coordination that has to be done, if all the Departments are going to pull together - which is what I think the Chief Minister meant - more a job of a Minister than that of a civil servant?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a matter of opinion. I will not have questions of opinion at question time.

HON P J ISOLA:

One last question, Mr Speaker. If the report of the Administrative Secretary does not coincide with the views of the Minister, what happens then?

MR SPEAKER:

That is a hypothetical question. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 457 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, having regard to the effects of the recent rains, will Government give further consideration to removing the existing fountain at the Piazza?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the answer to this question will be totally covered by my answer to Question No. 458.

NO. 458 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the present position as regards the commissioning of a new fountain for John Mackintosh Square?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, as you will be aware, an agreement was signed by the Gibraltar Government and the Shell Company of Gibraltar Ltd on 1 December whereby a new fountain, incorporating the remaining pieces of the old fountain which stood at John Mackintosh Square before World War II, is to be erected.

In order to mark the occasion of Shell's Gibraltar Diamond Jubilee Year this company will contribute a minimum of £12,000 and a maximum of £15,000 towards the total cost of this fountain.

Costs exceeding the maximum figure of £15,000 will be borne by the Gibraltar Government. The total cost which obviously includes installation of pumps, water jets, etc will not exceed £30,000.

I think this is an appropriate moment, within the House of Assembly, to express our thanks to the Shell Company of Gibraltar Ltd for their generous gesture.

The fountain will be installed and completed by July, 1984.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 458 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, where exactly will the fountain be sited, on the location of the present one or elsewhere?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, on the same location.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister have ideas as to the size of this? The original fountain, parts of which were lost, cannot be replaced in toto. I know that, subsequent to my asking the question, the information came out as regards Shell, but can the Minister give us more details as to the proposed size of the fountain, etc?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The base of the fountain will be the same size as the base of the present fountain, which will be actually faced in marble. The other fountain will go in the centre. I shall be happy to provide a drawing for the Hon Member tomorrow.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister state whether the fountain is to be fenced off or railed off or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is hoped sooner or later to put a wrought iron fence around the fountain. It is a little difficult to get the wrought iron work, but we are looking into it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 459 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

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

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir. Details are as follows:-

Castle Ramp/Road to the Lines Phase II - 22 units -

12-20 Castle Ramp	- 4 units)	
2-8 Road to the Lines	- 5 units)	
11-15 Road to the Lines	- 4 units)	} Rehabilitation
22 Road to the Lines	- 7 units)	

1-3 Road to the Lines - 2 new units -

Tank Ramp Phase II - 11 units

15 Castle Steps)	- 4 units)	
14 Tank Ramp)	} Rehabilitation
16/20 Tank Ramp	- 4 units)	

New Building - 3 units

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 459 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Minister has misunderstood my question. If I may refer to Question No. 216 of 1983 - when I asked for a list of those buildings which Government was going to fully or partly modernise in the next twelve months - I was given the breakdown for Castle Ramp/Road to the Lines Phase II and Tank Ramp Phase II, which I think I have been given again. In supplementaries under that question, Mr Speaker, I asked for a list for partly modernised buildings and the Hon Minister said: "If the Hon Member has meant rehabilitation rather than modernisation, his question should have said so". Now I have come back with the question saying so, and I get the wrong answer.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have been given rehabilitation.

HON A J HAYNES:

As I understand it, Mr Speaker, first of all I should establish whether or not the buildings which the Hon Minister has given me are one and the same as the list given in answer to Question No. 216.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is so, Sir. If the Hon Member means which house is going to be rehabilitated, because Mr X has moved out of the house and Mr Y wants to move in and the house has to be patched up before he does it, then I am unable to give any specific answers. These minor rehabilitations crop up as the year actually goes through. We do not have a planned programme for them.

HON A J HAYNES:

I take the point, Mr Speaker, but perhaps if I can illustrate again. The Harrington Buildings, which is one which the Minister and I have had frequent correspondence and meetings on that, would the rehabilitation of that building come under modernisation or rehabilitation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think the question of the rehabilitation that the Hon Member is talking about are those which are normally done and paid for out of the Improvement and Development Fund. The rehabilitation that is required at Hargraves would be an Improvement and Development Fund matter. The minor rehabilitations which I spoke about, when a certain person moves out and another person has moved in, are done out of the general Public Works Maintenance Vote. The Hargraves one would definitely be an Improvement and Development Fund one. It is not yet scheduled for next year, no, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 460 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether the replastering and painting of the Humphrey's Estate has now been concluded?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the replastering and painting have not yet been completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 460 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister state or give any indication as to what is happening in Victoria House of the Humphrey's Estate?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am happy to give the whole of the Alameda Estate, Sir: Red Sands House has been completed; Governor's Meadow House the rendering is complete the painting is in hand; Ross House the rendering is in hand; Picton House has been completed; and Victoria, Alameda and Kingsway House are awaiting attention. In fact, Victoria is next on the list, Alameda and Kingsway are lower priority.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am not sure whether the Minister will have the information, Mr Speaker, but I notice that in Victoria House the Public Works Department seems to have taken over an area.

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to get involved in the actual manner in which the redecoration is being done, under any circumstances.

HON A J HAYNES:

One last point, Mr Speaker. Will the Minister state whether the costings so far have been accurate or whether there has been an increase in the estimated amounts, and if so the figure?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Off the cuff, Sir, I would say they are holding reasonably to what is estimated but, of course, as time goes past some slight inflation normally occurs.

HON A J HAYNES:

So it is running at about £30,000 per building.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 461 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether the Castle Ramp and Road to the Lines Phase II modernisation projects have now commenced?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, actual work has not yet commenced, though the tender has been awarded.

The date for site possession is 23rd January, 1984, and the anticipated date for completion is 23rd October, 1985.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 461 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

That means, Mr Speaker, that there has been a slippage of one year in relation to the modernisation project for this year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, I would not say there is a slippage of a year. There has been a slippage, Sir, as has already been stated earlier in the debate because we did not have the funds until we actually made the loans that we were seeking to raise; and those loans were not completed until very recently.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister state whether the costs as a result of the slippage have increased or not?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the tenderer was specifically asked whether he would hold to his tender over an extra period of something like 2½ months and he has agreed.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 462 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Is Government prepared to amend the law so that holders of 'B' driving licences are allowed to drive a moped as is the case in the United Kingdom, and as promised by the Hon Mr Featherstone in December of last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir. A number of amendments to the Traffic Ordinance are in preparation and one of these will provide for holders of a 'B' driving licence to drive a moped.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 462 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, how many Traffic Bills do they propose to put before this House, because we have had no less than two Traffic Bills - one in each meeting of the last House? Can't we just have a comprehensive one, and deal with all the amendments? This question of the moped has been outstanding for a considerable time.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, there is a distinction between the Bills which have come before the House, which have been enabling Bills for the follow-up action which is by way of regulation.

HON P J ISOLA:

What has been an enabling Bill?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

There are, in fact, three Bills that have come before the House this year, Mr Speaker, to enable regulations to be made. What remains to be done is to make the regulations.

HON P J ISOLA:

But that is what has gone by, Mr Speaker, surely, that is not so. The Traffic Bill that came had substantial amendments to the law, about the number of drivers per taxi and so on. What I am asking is why is it that we cannot have one Traffic Bill, and deal with all the amendments; and why haven't we had the moped one which was raised a long time ago, and agreed by the Minister in its proper turn? Why has that been, for example, postponed to the Taxi Association Ordinance, if I may call it that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

May I correct myself, Mr Speaker, it is the case, of course, that the Traffic Bills which have been produced this year or have been passed this year did not deal exclusively with regulations. As to whether one matter should precede another, as I said earlier on today, that is a matter of priority.

HON P J ISOLA:

But priority to whom? Is this not a matter of priority?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

It is a matter of relative priority.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 463 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what further consideration has Government given and what action has it taken to warn swimmers of the dangerous state of the sea at our beaches during the non-bathing season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, during the non-bathing season the beaches are inspected on weekdays and if the sea is rough the red flag is hoisted. There are warning notices at Catalan Bay and notices will be provided at Eastern Beach and Sandy Bay.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 463 OF 1983

HON W T SCOTT:

Since when has this new procedure been implemented?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Since the end of the last bathing season.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 464 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that they have been offered the PSTO MT workshop at the Viaduct site?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir. To my knowledge no such offer has been made.

NO. 465 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government state if they have renewed their tenancy agreement for the offices rented at Leon House, at what cost compared with previous agreements and what is the total paid up to the present for their occupation, inclusive of all expenses?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the Government has renewed the tenancy agreement at Leon House in respect of the Income Tax Offices only, and in this case for a shorter lease of two years and four months with effect from 1st April, 1983.

The other agreements in respect of the Philatelic Bureau, the Typing Training Centre and the Industrial Relations Offices were not renewed when the tenancies expired last year. However, some arrears had to be paid in respect of the Industrial Relations Offices which could not be vacated when the lease expired.

The Income Tax Offices on the ground and first floor were previously held on a five year term paying an annual rent of £7,320 plus £2,720 service charges. The new lease is for a term of two years and four months at an annual rent of £24,900 and Maintenance/Service Charges of £3,200 per annum.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 465 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Hasn't the Minister considered that the increase in rent is very considerable indeed, and what sort of action does he plan to take for the future because, obviously, I do not suppose the Government intends to carry on paying such high rents?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, the increase is very high, Mr Speaker. In line with Government policy to vacate private rented accommodation, we are hoping - before the present lease expires - to move the Income Tax Office into Government-owned accommodation.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view of the high costs that such tenancies incur, wouldn't it be a sound financial policy of the Government to see what sort of offices, and perhaps even quarters they are using outside, and see if they could themselves build buildings or combine with existing ones, by reconstructing one on top of another, to be able to accommodate all these offices?

HON A J CANEPA:

I agree with the Hon Member, Mr Speaker. As a result of the borrowing recently concluded, the Government has agreed to allocate a sizeable sum of money to the improvement and rehabilitation of Government buildings into office accommodation. I can mention, for instance, what used to be the Loreto High School in Main Street (already some offices are being used there); and the Key and Anchor is being used; and it is also intended - if the money that I have referred to will allow - to rehabilitate at least part of St Jago's.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask, Mr Speaker, why the Government is paying increased rent in respect of premises that are subject to the moratorium legislation? Why is it that public funds are being committed, when there is legislation that precludes increases of rent until the moratorium is over? Perhaps the Hon and Learned Attorney-General could give his opinion to the House if he was here, but he is not here. That is one question, and the other question is: could the Hon Minister say what is the price per square foot that is being paid?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, in fact the original offer that was made to Government was calculated at £9 per square, and in the course of negotiations, we were able to reduce that to £7.50 per square.

HON P J ISOLA:

Perhaps I can have an answer to my question, at a later stage.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

MR SPEAKER:

I understand that the Hon and Learned Attorney-General wishes to give some information to the House on a particular question?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Yes, Mr Speaker, it is the question relating to the lease that the Government has on Leon House, and it relates specifically to the Income Tax Department. The additional information I would like to give to the House, Mr Speaker, relates to why the Government agreed to a new lease at a new rental without insisting on their rights under the moratorium that is currently in force. The position is that Part 3 of the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance does bind the Crown although the question of whether or not the Crown

is bound, I think, is not relevant; but there is no doubt that the Crown could claim the benefits of the moratorium against people who are bound - and undoubtedly a private landlord is bound. The position, in this case, was that the Crown voluntarily agreed to negotiate a new lease on new terms. It did so as a matter of judgement, not as a matter of insisting on legal rights, because it was felt that normal circumstances - and I will explain that - that the arrangements which were obtained were more desirable than insisting on one's right and becoming involved in the legal dispute. It was considered that the terms obtained were good terms, having regard to the lease that was thus secured to them, and also the rental at which it was secured. I mention the possibility of a legal dispute; the position there was that the landlord's lawyers argued that we were not entitled to claim a renewal of the lease, and indeed, went so far as to serve a writ for trespass on Government. My own Chamber's view - and this is what we advised the Government - was that the legal arguments of the landlords were not good arguments, but there was the prospect of a lengthy and possibly an expensive and, certainly a time-consuming legal dispute. In the event, bearing in mind that we had been negotiating for over a year, it was considered best to settle on the terms which we could negotiate. Those terms involved the reduction of the rental from £9 per square foot to £7.50 per square foot, which was considered to be favourable. On that basis, the Government in effect formed the judgement that that was the best way of dealing with this matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

What the Hon and Learned Attorney-General is saying is very disappointing. For the sake of avoiding litigation, in a case where the Attorney-General's Chambers takes the view that the landlord's claims are ill-founded, the landlord has agreed to spend public monies, backdated to the 1st April, 1983, for a period of two years and four months, of which eight months have gone by and for the privilege of escaping legal costs - and probably the Attorney-General's Chambers being proved wrong in the Court of law - the Government is prepared to pay, Mr Speaker, an additional £16,000 a year.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am not sure whether I am being asked a question, or I am being given information.

MR SPEAKER:

Precisely what I was going to say.

HON P J ISOLA:

I can put it in the form of a question.

MR SPEAKER:

Please do that.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does not the Hon and Learned Attorney-General consider that this is an extremely expensive way of avoiding his department possibly being proved wrong in a Court of Law and, by advising the Government to pay an additional £18,000 a year for premises which the Government is not bound to pay, and which other landlords cannot collect at all, and where other tenants have taken the protection, does he consider it right that the Government should form a judgement to spend something like £20,000 of taxpayers money because of the possibility that they might lose the litigation and incur costs?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the answer is not as simple as that. What I am saying is that the Government came to the view as a matter of convenience and because of the prospects of a legal argument, and because it meant that the premises could be systematically vacated, and because - I did not say this before - arrangements are in hand for the removal of the Income Tax Department. The Government felt that it was convenient and reasonable to come to terms with the landlord on the basis that I have just outlined, and that it is a reasonable market rate to pay.

HON P J ISOLA:

Then why did the Government, Mr Speaker, form that view - in view of the fact that the Government has formed a view in this House that the rent moratorium should continue for everybody until January 31st, 1984? What makes this Government form the judgement that the taxpayers should finance additional monies in a case like this when the Government itself as an act of policy is preventing other landlords from increasing rents? Why is the Government so generous with the taxpayers' money, in this case, at a time of constraint? Could we have an answer to that?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Certainly, Mr Speaker. There is nothing in the Rent Moratorium Legislation which prevents the tenant from negotiating a rent if he thinks that that rent is reasonable and prudent in the circumstances. The moratorium is directed towards landlord, it does not prevent a tenant from negotiating what he thinks is convenient and reasonable.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, but does the Attorney-General not agree that, in this case, the tenant is the taxpayer, not the Government. It is the taxpayer who has to pay the £20,000. Why does Government form the judgement that, in legislation which prohibits the increases of rent, they themselves are voluntarily incurring expense of the taxpayers to the tune of £20,000? Could that money not have been spent, for example, in allowing old age pensions to be received tax free?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. We are asking for information, not suggesting how money can be spent.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, the Government is responsible for the taxpayer's money and the Government came to the view, in its judgement, that this was convenient.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to go any further on this.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Attorney-General why was there a need for a settlement, when a law which he himself has passed in this House says that rents shall not be increased? Perhaps this is a political question and it should be answered by a Government Minister. Perhaps the Attorney-General is only acting on instructions.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not think it is a political question. I think it is a question of administrative judgement, with a legal element and an administrative element, and I have explained why it was considered convenient.

NO. 466 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what new Government development projects are envisaged going out to tender within the next twelve months?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Tank Ramp Phase II has already gone out to tender and tenders are due on the 21st December, 1983. The contract period is 18 months.

St Mary's First School is to go out to tender in May, 1984, and work is to commence in July, 1984. The completion of this contract is expected to be in July, 1985.

The Tower Blocks remedial works will not be put out to tender, but negotiations are proceeding with a specialist firm so that work will commence during 1984.

Loreto Convent alterations and refurbishing to accommodate Government offices will be put out to tender in mid-February, 1984.

Bedsitters at Voids in Glacis Estate will be put out to tender in July, 1984. The contract will be of nine months duration.

Provision in the Improvement and Development Fund for all these projects is being made.

6.12.83

NO. 467 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether a tender has been awarded in respect of the proposed change of user for the old Port Office at Waterport?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir. The contract has been awarded in the sum of £92,739.95. The contractor will take possession of the site early in January, 1984. The contract completion date is October, 1984.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 467 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

Who was the successful tenderer, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I cannot remember. I can let you know, it will be in the Gazette in due course.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 468 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Have the repairs specified in the notice which the Magistrates' Court ordered the owners of the Theatre Royal to carry out, been completed to Government's satisfaction?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir. Most of the works referred to in the Section 23 Notice have not been complied with. The only works which have been carried out are the replacement of some dilapidated timber framed windows by aluminium ones.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 468 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Should not the works specified in that Notice have been completed by July of this year?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't know what the date is, Mr Speaker, but I can tell the Hon Member that the Attorney-General's Chambers have been instructed to proceed with legal action for non-compliance with the said Court Order.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has in fact any action been taken yet?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not able to say, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

Perhaps the Minister could ask the Attorney-General to let me know.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry I was absent from the House when I think two questions were posed which I could have answered, certainly the first question I could have answered which related to the Theatre

Royal. I understand that the question was: what legal action has in fact been taken? The position basically is that an Order was obtained - I think I gave this information to the House.

HON G T RESTANO:

I asked what further action had been taken once the six months had not been complied with?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. The original Order was made on the 14th January, 1983, so we are talking about the 14th July, 1983, when the six months expired. The defendants in the case are represented by lawyers and there have been a series of letters exchanged between my Chambers and the Theatre Royal lawyers and also my Chambers and the Department of Crown Lands. The point of those letters were really to establish what progress was being made in complying with the Order and then checking back with the Director of Crown Lands to see whether he is content and the present position is that on the 1st December of this year the Director of Crown Lands wrote to our Chambers and enquired as to current progress and we are awaiting a reply from the lawyers for the defendants in the case. That is how it stands at the moment. It has been the case that previously on the 22nd November, the Director of Crown Lands had asked us to proceed to take further legal action. I think the position will be that if we do not get a reply within a reasonably prompt period of time then it will be time to take that legal action.

NO. 469 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Can Government confirm whether there has been recently any impediment in the supply of fuel oil to shipping?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. The suppliers of bunkers to ships calling at Gibraltar recently suspected that their fuel oil stocks might have been "off-specification" and were unable to bring in further supplies until the results (of analysis) of samples sent to their Central Laboratories in Holland were known.

After extensive tests it was decided by the suppliers that the oil was in fact suitable for bunkering and supplies to shipping were resumed on the 30th November.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 469 OF 1983

HON A J HAYNES:

What caused the panic, Mr Speaker?

HON A J CANEPA:

The suspicion that they were not of the requisite quality, in particular, I think, sparked off by fuel oil which was found to be unsuitable at the Government's own Generating Station.

HON A J HAYNES:

If that oil was unsuitable, did it come from the same sources as the bunkering, and if so, how can parts be contaminated and not others?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't know.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Minister is not here to answer that kind of question.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am informed that it needed a lot of filtering.

HON P J ISOLA:

Was it a mistake on the part of Shell, or of the Waterport Power Station people?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Waterport Power Station are still not accepting that oil; they will not be using it.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, in any event, assuming that the oil has been contaminated, what would Government's contingency plans enable us to do?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Government has no contingency plan. The Government is not able to import large quantities of fuel oil for bunkering.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say, Mr Speaker, how many ships in fact had to be re-routed from coming to Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am informed, to the extent that the Captain of the Port has been able to ascertain the matter, that nine ships that would have called here for bunkers did not do so. The bunkers were suspended for six days, from the 24th to the 30th November.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am still not clear in my own mind. Is the oil dirty?

MR SPEAKER:

No, I am not in the least concerned and I am not going to allow questions on this question. The Government is not responsible for the quality of oil that is supplied by the company. Due to some fault in the quality of the oil, bunkers have been suspended for some time. The Opposition is entitled to ask questions which are pertinent to the economy of Gibraltar and such like insofar as that incident is concerned, but not insofar as to the supply that Shell makes to bunkering or the quality of the oil.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, as the Electricity Department is not accepting that oil, how is it that it is not good for the Electricity Department but it can be given for bunkering?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, we have a question here that deals with the suspension of supply to shipping. I am responsible for the Port, I am not able to mobilise all the resources of the Government to answer questions on any subject under the sun.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am concerned to know whether Government have in their agreement with the bunkering company, namely Shell, any conditions whereby they can exact from that company the kind of bunkering service which the Minister as Minister for Port is anxious to promote as part of the shipping promotion for the Port.

HON A J CANEPA:

I think, Mr Speaker, that Shell are just as anxious to ensure that they are able to provide a good, efficient and continuous service. Insofar as shipping is concerned, it has been a scare. If it had been the case that the oil was off-specification, and if the interruption of bunkering services to shipping had been for a longer period of time, obviously the Government would be expressing its concern to Shell in no uncertain terms, because it is a matter which is of vital importance to our economy. One would very much hope that this won't happen again.

HON A J HAYNES:

In any event, I agree, and we would expect nothing less than great concern to be shared by Government in such a matter. But, I would like to know if the Minister has that information, how long it would take to empty out the bunkers.

MR SPEAKER:

No, no.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, perhaps you might allow me to ask a question and it deals basically with the Electricity Generating Station. If the so-called contaminated oil has still not been accepted by the Department has its replacement cost any more money to the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I happen to know, Mr Speaker, that Shell has gone out of its way to give them a much more expensive oil at the regular price in order to retain the supply to the Department.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 470 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Minister for Economic Development and Trade state if he is satisfied that the Government has the necessary administrative, supervisory and technical expertise to discharge adequately their responsibilities on high standards of ship safety for ships registered in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, as Gibraltar is not a full convention port, it has authorised the five major classification societies to issue the relevant certificates required under the various international conventions that deal with the safety of ships at sea. Such certificates are only issued after survey by these societies. The Government is therefore completely satisfied that its responsibilities to ensure high standards of ship safety in respect of ships registered at Gibraltar are being fully discharged on its behalf by internationally recognised classification societies of high repute.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 470 OF 1983

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is therefore the Minister stating that the comments which were made in The Times are really not applicable to Gibraltar in the sense that the writer was stating, which I am sure the Minister knows?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is not what I am saying, Sir. What I am saying is that that recent criticism has not been directed at the safety aspect but at other union related matters, mainly the question of manning and our inability to provide worldwide coverage.

6.12.83

NO. 471 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Chief Minister state if he has made representations to Her Majesty's Government about the ignominy of British Citizens settled in or visiting Spain, whether of Gibraltarian or United Kingdom origin, not being permitted by the Spanish Government to cross the border into the British territory of Gibraltar, whilst Spaniards are, and if so, what has been the response?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. I made strong representations to the Secretary of State, through His Excellency the Governor, in a letter dated 17 December, 1982, two days after the partial opening of the frontier. I referred to the matter again in a letter which I wrote to the Governor on 11 March, 1983, shortly before Señor Moran held his meetings in London with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary and again at my meeting with the Foreign Secretary on 15 November. Both the British and Gibraltar Governments regret that there has not been more progress towards the full restoration of direct communications between Spain and Gibraltar.

NO. 472 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can the Chief Minister state what exactly he meant when in his recent address to the Royal Institute of International Affairs he stated that given normal and friendly relations, mutual respect, co-operation in tourism and trade, cultural contacts and a common status as nationals of the European Community the people of Gibraltar might one day through a natural evolution take a different view of their relationship with the Spanish State and will he categorically refute the implication contained in these remarks that a change in Spanish attitudes to Gibraltar could well produce a change in British Gibraltarians as to their national status and as to the sovereignty of Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the meaning of my words, if read in their context, is perfectly clear. I will accordingly put them in their context.

First of all, the words quoted in the question are preceded by the following:

"The key to the solution of the problem lies in a recognition by Spain of the right of the people of Gibraltar to decide whether they wish to live under British or under Spanish sovereignty. There is, of course, no doubt that, today, the vast majority of Gibraltarians want to live under British sovereignty".

Secondly, the words quoted in the question are followed by the words:

"This (that is to say, the possibility that the people of Gibraltar may one day, through a natural evolution, take a different view of their relationship with the Spanish State) is not a promise, not even an offer. But one thing is certain: if a change in relationship does not come about through the natural evolution I have described, then it will never come about. It will assuredly not come about, as the last thirty years have shown, as a result of pressure and duress. I can speak only for the present generation of Gibraltarians. The right to self determination is a continuing and living right, the exercise of which, by the Gibraltarians of today, cannot, either morally or in practice, bind the Gibraltarians of the future to one point of view or the other".

With regard to the second part of the question, there is no need for me to refute any implication that a change in Spanish attitudes to Gibraltar could well produce a change in British Gibraltarians as to their national status and as to the sovereignty of Gibraltar. There is no such implication in my statement. My theme was simply that a future generation of Gibraltarians might think differently from this one and will be free to do so. I have expressed this view often in the past.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 472 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the clarification but will the Chief Minister not agree that in using the words after this particular quotation "this is not an offer or a promise", would he not agree that the impression might have been given and that it is necessary therefore to have made the clarification that he has made today?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that there is no need to make any further clarification, except to put the words in their proper context.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 473 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will the Chief Minister disclose the text of the agreement actually signed by him and the Foreign Secretary in the United Kingdom in July, 1983, in relation to the closure of the Naval Dockyard in Gibraltar and in respect of which the Minister for Economic Development was a witness?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, Sir. I have arranged for copies to be made available to all Hon Members and to the Press.

It will be seen that all the essential points in the Agreement have already been made public, notably during the course of the statement I made to the House on 27 July, 1983.

There is, however, part of one sentence in the Agreement which may generate unnecessary excitement and I should therefore like to clarify this now. I refer to paragraph 2 of the Agreement which reads:

"The Royal Naval Dockyard will not now close until 31 December, 1984, unless both Governments agree to an earlier date".

The reason for the second part of this sentence, that is, 'an earlier date', was that, had the plans for the commercialisation of the Dockyard proceeded at a fast pace, it would have been in the interests of the commercial yard, and in the interests of maximum employment from the earliest possible date, to have opened the yard to commercial work as soon as it was ready to take this on.

As we all know, the hope that the commercial yard might have been ready before the end of 1984 is now unlikely to be fulfilled.

Indeed, I regret to say that I am informed that, unless agreement can be reached very soon on going ahead with commercialisation, the first full redundancy notices will have to be issued very early in 1984. Naval ship repair work would have to cease not later than August, 1984, but more probably in June, when it would be necessary to start paying off the workforce on a gradual basis. The naval yard would then finally close on 31 December, 1984. There would be no commercial yard - or anything else - to replace it and the naval work which has been earmarked for Gibraltar during the 3-year period 1985-1987 would be transferred to yards in Britain. Those obstructing the course of commercialisation, in whatever way, would do well to ponder on these realities before it is too late.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 473 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I won't ask any questions on the Agreement because, obviously one has to consider it, but can I ask the Chief Minister, in a way it is pre-empting the next question, at whose suggestion was a written Agreement made? Who thought that it was necessary that the British Government should have to sign a commitment or the Gibraltar Government should have to sign a commitment?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I hope that the Hon Member will also put No. 474 together and I can answer them together.

MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps the answer is that the Hon Member should withdraw this supplementary and ask it at the next one. Next question.

NO. 474 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can the Chief Minister inform the House whether there has been any occasion other than the agreement in relation to the closure of the Naval Dockyard and its replacement by a commercial operation when he has actually signed an agreement with the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom and if so will he indicate on what occasions this has occurred?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, there has been no similar occasion. . .

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 474 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I then ask, Mr Speaker, what made it necessary on this occasion that the Gibraltar Government and the British Government should sign an agreement; was it distrust on the part of one of the other or vice versa?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There was no question of distrust at all. The British Government suggested that the matter should be dealt with in this way, presumably to add a touch of formality to an important occasion, and I saw no reason to disagree. Even if there had been no formal signed agreement, I am of course certain that - as on so many other occasions in the past - terms agreed between the British and Gibraltar Governments would have been fully honoured by both sides.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, why was it necessary on this particular occasion? Surely there have been some very important agreements made between the British Government and the Gibraltar Government, on the right of self determination, on a whole number of vitally important issues for the future, and the British Government has never thought it necessary to make it before the occasion for a formal agreement in writing. Does this mean that, in future, agreements between the British and Gibraltar Governments will have to be reduced to writing?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I don't know whether any other agreements in future will be so; it was done in this case, and the reasons I have given make it perfectly clear that there was no sinister motive, if I may say so. I noticed, in one or two areas of our negotiations, it looked as if they were treating with a less colonial Gibraltar than would have been the case otherwise, when the Secretary of State himself came down to sign the agreement.

HON P J ISOLA:

But has this not got the implication and the danger, Mr Speaker, that it is not a dependent territory signing for which Her Majesty's Government is responsible both economically, defence and foreign affairs; but is giving the impression that it is two almost sovereign nations signing an agreement putting a much greater load on Gibraltar for the future?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I rather see it the other way. I feel much prouder to say that the Foreign Secretary himself wanted to sign an agreement with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, and I see no sinister motive at all. All the areas that are covered in the agreement were included in an exchange of letters between Mr Ian Stewart and myself, but of course he could not commit his Government and I could not commit the Government either. Hon Members will see that the agreement was signed and that the terms of this agreement state it will be recommended by the Chief Minister to the Gibraltar House of Assembly.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I take it that notwithstanding the fact that this is all part of an agreement which involves commercialisation, the fact that one part of the agreement is not implemented does not invalidate the other part. Am I correct? I am referring to the question, at the time of the statement, that I asked on the transfer of land, which the Chief Minister subsequently corrected by saying that it was not conditional on the question of commercialisation.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Which transfer of land?

HON J BOSSANO:

The Hon Member will recall, when he announced to the House the package, I raised the question of land. What I am saying is that it is still true to say that, in spite of the fact that it is all incorporated in one agreement, the fulfilment of the establishment of a commercial yard is not a necessary pre-condition of the fulfilment of clause 12 of the transfer of land I take it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I entirely agree. The two areas connected with land I view as separate and valid in themselves. Indeed, insofar as clause 12 is concerned, I did announce, I think, at the last meeting that we had made excellent progress and it has not yet been signed by the Secretary of State, but it appears he is going to sign in the course of the next few days; so that is clause 12,

and there has been no commercialisation yet. Anyhow, I entirely agree that the sites that were negotiated for the benefit of Gibraltar, the prime sites, those parts of the package I would say come to us anyhow.

HON J BOSSANO:

I would now like, Mr Speaker, perhaps to ask the Chief Minister on the new information that he has made available to the House about the failure of the prospective managers to reach any agreement with the workforce. Does the Chief Minister accept that, if no agreement is reached, it justifies the Ministry of Defence running down the Dockyard earlier?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, yes and no. I do not think it would be to the detriment of the labour force employed up to the end of 1984. It may well be that people will be made redundant and will be paid off whilst the Dockyard is closed; that is a different matter. I think I ought to read that sentence again because it is important, and it has been, of course very clearly studied and cleared with those who are responsible: "I regret to say that I am informed that, unless agreement can be reached very soon on going ahead with commercialisation, the first full redundancy notices will have to be issued very early in 1984. Naval ship repair work would have to cease not later than August, 1984, but more probably in June, when it would be necessary to start paying off the workforce on a gradual basis. The naval yard would then finally close on 31 December, 1984. There would be no commercial yard - or anything else - to replace it and the naval work which has been earmarked for Gibraltar", etc. The point made there is that, unless something else is happening in the Dockyard which is in respect of commercialisation, you cannot just work the Dockyard fully until the end of the year and close it as a shop. You have got to gradually bring down the work in order that, come the end of 1984, if there is nothing to substitute it, there will be just the bare Dockyard: all ships which may have been there for repairs have left, and that would be as bad a desolation as is described in this morning's Chronicle on what has happened to Chatham, by one of our local correspondents in the United Kingdom. So that is the way that has been put to us, and that is that: unless activity is going on to justify other activity, they have to think in terms of closing the Dockyard and having nothing in its place.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, wouldn't the Chief Minister agree that another way of looking at the signature of this agreement - which for the first time, to my knowledge, has been necessary between the Government of the UK and the Gibraltar Government - is that this is part disengagement of the British Government economically from Gibraltar, and they want to make absolutely sure that when the Chief Minister accepted this, he knew what he was doing, and that he appended his signature to it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can hardly consider that disengagement, if you refer to the last paragraph of the agreement which says: "Future economic assistance. If there are future difficulties for the economy, Her Majesty's Government will be prepared, in line with the policy of supporting Gibraltar during the present restrictions, to look at the whole economic and budgetary situation with a view to considering whether, and if so what, further measures of support will be necessary or justifiable in the circumstances of the time". I think, with the greatest respect, that this is a reaffirmation of British commitment to Gibraltar, and I am proud to have put my signature to that document.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view of the difficulties that the Government, in fact, experienced in getting the support and sustain aid before the actual acceptance of the closure of the Dockyard, doesn't it put in question the whole attitude of the British Government with regard to the future consequences of the closure of the Dockyard?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No. There is a question here by Mr Bossano, No. 491, about the question of further measures of support, on this point, and to which I have a reply. I would be anticipating, but my answer to that one now is definitely no, it shows a continuing effect. I would never have interpreted that, not in the spirit in which the negotiations were carried out both at my first meeting with the Prime Minister, with Mr Ian Stewart here, and subsequently with the Foreign Secretary and the second meeting of the Prime Minister. I would not have interpreted that at all. But if it was necessary to ratify that in terms of the written agreement, I think paragraph 17 is sufficient proof that the continuing commitment is reaffirmed in an agreement. We have not had any agreement about support signed by any Minister before, now we have one.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, doesn't the Chief Minister agree that if, as a result of all the studies that have been carried out, the possibility of the Dockyard being viable was more, I think, in favour of being so than in not being so, doesn't the Chief Minister agree that in the light of the reports that we have had, or the statements that he himself has said, before he actually agreed about the possible catastrophic effect on Gibraltar if the Dockyard closed, that all these assurances given are not really all that reliable, in the sense that . . .

MR SPEAKER:

Order. I am afraid that is a completely hypothetical question, and you are asking for assurances.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, I said doesn't he agree - in the light of all the things that have happened, the fact that the viability of commercialisation is not as reliable as we would like to see it in this House - that all the assurances that are being given of supporting and sustaining Gibraltar is going to leave Gibraltar more or less at leisure in the future

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is extraordinary that the man who was instrumental, well with the help of the Hon Mr Bossano, for starting integration in Gibraltar, should always be so suspicious of the country with which he wanted to integrate.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, if I may be allowed to answer that statement, it is precisely the position that we want to get the British Government so that they could not disengage economically as they are doing now.

MR SPEAKER:

We are debating now.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, could I ask if paragraph 17 of this agreement is not in fact open to the interpretation, which could be very damaging for the future of Gibraltar, that if the present restrictions are in fact lifted by the time the commercialisation project fails - which would be in four years' time - the British Government will not have a commitment to support Gibraltar because the restrictions will not be there? Does not that paragraph require some clarification?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is naturally expected from the Leader of the Opposition, against the package that I obtained. This has nothing whatever to do with the restrictions; it is a parallel commitment, in line with the policy of supporting Gibraltar through these present restrictions. The way it is meant, and I have no reason to believe otherwise, was in respect of the restrictions you have the policy of support and sustain. In respect of the Dockyard, if there are any future difficulties for the economy in the context of this agreement, then the Government - in the same way as they have done it with support and sustain in respect of the restrictions - will look at the whole economic and budgetary situation with a view to considering whether and if so what further measures. So, really, this is a reiteration of the support and sustain policy of the Government in respect of the restrictions applied to the closure of the Naval Dockyard.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Chief Minister will have noticed that the word 'sustain' is left out from that paragraph 17.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes it is, but it is in line with the policy of support.

MR SPEAKER:

We must not anticipate the next question. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 475 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Since Messrs Wilks and Belch said in the recent television discussion that they saw no reason for their report not being public will Government consider publication of this particular report?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 476 of 1983.

6.12.83

NO. 476 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

In view of the fact that the conclusions summarised at the beginning of the Casey Report contains nothing of a commercial nature will Government at this stage make it public?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the Government's position on the question of the publication of those reports has already been made clear and has not changed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 475 AND 476 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So, Mr Speaker, the Government is not prepared to take the advice of its consultants on this particular issue. Is that a fact?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 477 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will the land and assets of the Naval Dockyard be handed over to the Gibraltar Government whether the commercialisation project proceeds or not?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, as stated in paragraph 6 of the Agreement which I have tabled in replying to Question No. 473:

"Dockyard land and assets for the new commercial enterprise will be transferred free of charge to the Government of Gibraltar".

When we concluded our negotiations with the British Government in July we did not envisage commercialisation not going ahead and the alternative proposed in the question did not therefore arise. We remain of the view that commercialisation should most certainly go ahead.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 477 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

I accept entirely that that is the Government's view, Mr Speaker, but what I am saying is if the transfer of the land conditional on commercialisation actually taking place, or is the British Government view that if whoever happens to be the Gibraltar Government in the near future no longer wishes commercialisation to go ahead, they will still be given the land and assets of the Dockyard whether they want it or not? Which of the two is it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think this question is a hypothetical one.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it a hypothetical question because the Hon Member doesn't know the answer or because he doesn't want to answer it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Neither because I don't know or because I don't want because it is hypothetical and I don't answer hypothetical questions.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, given the Chief Minister's supplementary information to the effect that Government proposes to continue with commercialisation despite the difficulties encountered so far, what measures does Government propose to take to ensure that the works necessary for commercialisation will commence and be completed by

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect, how does this question arise from the question that we are being asked?

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if we are talking about the handing over of land we are talking about the continuation of the project. In the same way that Mr Bossano has been concerned to know whether the land will be handed over if another Government takes another view on commercialisation, my view is, is the Government going to go ahead with the tranche of land, Mr Speaker, which of itself requires the re-modernisation which we have been informed of in previous meeting, and I want to know whether the Chief Minister is going to go ahead with that despite the difficulties encountered or no?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is very clear, Mr Speaker, that we all know the conditions under which the £28m are coming in, and it implies a commercial dockyard, and it implies an agreement with the workforce, and so on. If they do not happen, I have indicated in Question No. 473 what will happen.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Chief Minister make a statement as to the action that he will take in the event of non-cooperation from the unions within a given period of time?

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have asked that question three times already. Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 478 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

When will the land and assets of the Naval Dockyard be handed over to the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, it is expected that the land and assets of the Naval Dockyard will be handed over to the Gibraltar Government on the 1st January, 1985.

6.12.83

NO. 479 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether the MOD houses intended for the 40 or 50 expatriate managers that the Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd intends to recruit would be covered by the agreement on Crown Lands recently made public?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. As the Hon Member will see when he reads the Agreement referred to in my answer to Question No. 473, and if the Hon Member will look at paragraph 10 of the Agreement, he will see that the Ministry of Defence will provide 46 houses or apartments, for use by management staff of the new commercial dockyard, on 3-year leases.

6.12.83

NO. 480 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state whether any progress has been made in the appointment of a Chairman for the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation and give details of any other persons that have been approached for the post of Chairman since the last meeting of the House?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 481 of 1983.

NO. 481 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state why GBC has found it necessary to advertise for a Secretary for the Board of GBC and could not such Board have been serviced by an existing member of the staff of GBC?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I must express some surprise at these questions since I explained the position fully in reply to Question No. 375 and supplementaries on 18 October. I will, however, re-state the position.

The work of the Chairman and of the Board generally has increased considerably over the years and it is the extent of the commitment involved that has been one of the main reasons, if not the main reason, why persons who have been offered the appointment have declined it. Consideration has been given to paying an honorarium to the Chairman but the Government has decided against this, mainly on the grounds that membership of Government Boards and Committees is considered, and in my view, should continue to be considered as service rendered by public spirited persons without financial reward. If this principle were not to be observed in this case, it might be difficult to adhere to it in others.

The Board accordingly suggested that the best way of overcoming the difficulty would be to make use of the provision contained in the Ordinance and appoint a paid part-time Secretary who would lighten the workload of the Chairman and, indeed, of the members of the Board as well. The Secretary will be responsible to the Board and independent of management though obviously maintaining regular frequent contact with the latter.

It is the view of the Board, which I share, that once a Secretary has been appointed, it should be easier to find a person willing to take on the Chairmanship.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 480 AND 481 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, why cannot a member of the staff of GBC, which is costing the taxpayers a very substantial amount of money, be transferred to service the Board as a paid part-time Secretary and thus prevent a greater burden on public funds? Would not, in fact, the amount being paid to a Secretary if recruited, be greater than the sort of honorarium that should be paid to a Chairman and are we not doing the same thing in a different way?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly not. I envisage that the part-time Secretary, efficient and able to service an independent Board, would cost less than an honorarium to a strong Chairman. If you gave him very little, it might appear to be minimising the importance of his job; and if you gave him too much, it would be more than the Secretary. This is the view of the Board - and I share it fully; a very satisfactory way out of the heavy burden. It should be stressed, the Board must be separate from the administration if the independence of television is to be maintained.

HON P J ISOLA:

Which administration?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of GBC, from which the Hon Member was saying the member should be recruited.

HON P J ISOLA:

But, Mr Speaker, isn't the Board set up to run GBC? Are they in conflict with the management of GBC?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They are not in conflict, but they have very wide powers that they have to exercise almost every day. You just cannot find anybody who will do that on an honorary basis, and it has been difficult to find even a Chairman - even if we were to pay one. There is specific provision in the Ordinance, which has nothing to do with the question of the management, that the Board may appoint a Secretary. It has to be remembered that, for the early years of GBC, there were managing agents which were running GBC. That has ceased, and therefore there is a gap in the connection between the Board and the administration. The Board thinks - and I am entirely in agreement with the idea - that there is provision in the Ordinance that the Board may appoint a Secretary, and that this is the best way of achieving what we all want, which is an efficient and well-run GBC.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is there not a manager of GBC today, appointed at very great public expense, at a very high salary indeed, in fact, a higher salary than the Commissioner of Income Tax, and should not that person be, if necessary, Secretary to the Board? Should the Government not encourage a situation under which the Board works with management of GBC but does not act as a check on the management of GBC? Is it not in the public interest that the Secretary of the Board to be appointed should be a member of the staff of GBC, who are all responsible to their employers, GBC, who are in turn heavily subsidised by the taxpayer?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The general management of GBC's functions are completely different to servicing the Board which has to ensure the proper management of the statutory powers vested in it. That is why there has to be a difference.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I cannot understand that answer. Is not the manager the employee of GBC and therefore GBC, since the management consults them - I know the Chief Minister is reading the Ordinance: it won't help him because the Ordinance talks of managing agents and lots of things that no longer exist. That is another piece of legislation that ought to attract the attention of my Friend the Hon and Learned Attorney-General.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

"Establishment and constitution of the Corporation" says the Ordinance, "For the purposes of this Ordinance there is hereby established a Corporation to be called the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation. The operations of the Corporation shall, subject to the provisions of this Ordinance, be controlled and governed by a Board which shall consist of a Chairman and not more than nine other members of whom the Chairman and not more than seven members shall be appointed by the Governor by notice in the Gazette, and two members, who shall be advisory only and shall have no votes in the proceedings of the Board, shall be appointed by the Managing Agents". That is no longer so; they were the people who were doing the work. "The Board may appoint a Secretary of the Corporation". That is separate from the management.

HON P J ISOLA:

I know, Mr Speaker. Can I ask the Chief Minister, that Ordinance which is out-of-date, referred to Managing Agents. That has disappeared; the Government is now paying for a man to be Manager of that Corporation at a very high salary indeed - I think it is £20,000 a year or something like that - and what I am saying is, cannot the Board appoint him as Secretary? Let him service the Board, as is done in a lot of Government Committees where the Executive Officer of the Board is a very high executive in that Department, instead of incurring still more expense on a Corporation that already costs the taxpayer up to 31st March, 1983, £698,000-odd?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The General Manager of GBC is not the executive of the Board.

HON P J ISOLA:

He has no function then, Mr Speaker, that is all I can say. I don't know what he is doing there.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 482 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government state whether existing directions from the Governor-in-Council to the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation preclude advertising by the European Movement in support of their campaign to procure for Gibraltarians the right to vote for a Member in the European Parliament and if so will Government amend their directions?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the directions do not preclude advertising by the European Movement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 482 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

I thank the Hon and Learned Chief Minister for that answer because it clarifies the problem that has arisen during the recent signature collection campaign of the European Movement which was brought to my notice.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 483 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government explain how it is the cost of films put on Gibraltar television has gone up and yet there are a great number of repeat and old films shown on the screen?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 485 and 486 of 1983.

NO. 484 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Will Government make a statement in relation to the accounts of Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation up to 31st March, 1983, which reveal an operating deficit of £698,045 and has Government made any proposal to ensure that the Corporation does not continue to be such a burden on public funds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Government advised GBC that the subsidy sought for 1983/84 would be reduced by £100,000. GBC has announced the measures which they have taken in order to operate within the reduced budget. The subvention is being increased in order to offset the decrease in estimated revenue from advertising.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 484 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is that all the Government has to say about the operating deficit; it has reduced the subsidy to GBC by £100,000, that is all?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, we have reduced it, and in fact it has been very difficult for them, I don't know whether it has been answered, or there is another question about broadcasting outside and so on - it has been hard to cut their budget. The Treasury have given them advice how best to do it, to the extent that they can with regard to financial know-how, but they produced their estimates and we have reduced them by £100,000, which they could hardly bear. They have been making every effort to try and keep them in the parameters of that, except that since their proposed estimates were produced to the Government, the expected receipt from advertising has unfortunately gone down.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Chief Minister not aware that the economies that are being made have been at the expense entirely of the viewer; the outside broadcasting of political matters and interviews, all that has gone on - although one gets just a few seconds; sport has been cut almost entirely; repeat films have been produced; week-end television has been taken off. Every single economy done by GBC has been at the expense of the viewer and none at the expense of the official administration and running of the Corporation. On the contrary, we are now going to have a Secretary as well paid from public funds.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Perhaps the Secretary may be able to help the Board in trying to make economies from the management side.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

6.12.83

NO. 485 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Can Government explain the position in relation to the sum of £15,170 paid by GBC for research marketing and consultancy work and what did this in fact involve?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 483 and 486 of 1983.

NO. 486 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

How is it that the costs of outside broadcasting by GBC has increased and yet there has been a dramatic cut in the broadcasting of sport by GBC and does Government consider that the Corporation have got their priorities right?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, as the House will be aware, Section 8(3) of the Gibraltar Broadcasting Ordinance provides that, subject to any directions of the Governor-in-Council, the Board shall be responsible for the policy to be adopted by the Corporation in the provision of radio and television services.

While I consider it appropriate to answer questions on the appointment of a Chairman and Secretary, which I have just done, on matters arising out of the Governor-in-Council's directions, which I have also done, and on the overall financial allocation (No. 484), I think there is a danger that, if the Government were to take it upon themselves to answer in this House for matters of detail, the Government might seem to be interfering with the running of the Corporation and encroaching on the Board's responsibility.

I therefore think it would be preferable if the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition were to seek the answer to this question, as well as to Question No. 485, on market research, and No. 486 the broadcasting of sport, direct from the Board rather than from the Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 483, 485 AND 486 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Government not accept some responsibility in this in view of the fact that the Hon and Learned Chief Minister has traditionally answered all questions and queries on GBC, and rightly so, Mr Speaker, because of the enormous amount of public funds that this House commits to the running of this Corporation? Does the Government not agree that the Hon and Learned Chief Minister in his capacity as Minister for Information should, when these questions are asked, collate the information so that the House may know how the monies that it votes are being spent?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

While it is true that the Government has previously answered questions of detail relating to the GBC, sometimes very reluctantly, I am of the view that - for the reasons that I have given - we have to try and curtail rather than extend the areas of these questions. The Government should certainly have a say, by way of consultation with the Board, but would not impose its will on the administration of the Corporation and is accordingly not answerable for the Corporation in this House except on major issues. In details, the Government does

not want to be a post office for the Opposition. If the Opposition have any queries in respect of the way in which it is run, and they address the Corporation, and they do not get reasonable answers - I won't say satisfactory because sometimes you write a letter and you do not get a satisfactory answer - but if they then consider that the Board is acting unreasonably in dealing with their queries, I would be quite happy to look into it. But, I do not want to be the post office for minor matters, in this House, for the Corporation's duties.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that the Chief Minister is not being a post office for the Corporation? Is it not a fact that the Chief Minister should be greatly concerned himself at the problems that seem to arise with this Corporation, at the enormous amount of public funds that are voted by this House for this, and does he not think it appropriate that it is in this House that questions with regard to these funds should be answered - and not by correspondence between GBC and Members of this side of the House, as if GBC was an independent Corporation, which it clearly can never be so long as it relies so heavily on public funds and public subsidisation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Precisely because it relies so heavily on public funds, one has to be doubly careful not to attempt to throw one's weight and alter the neat balance of its independence. I am concerned about the cost of GBC, and I answer generally questions of substance connected with GBC as I have done today. But in the detailed matters, I think we must maintain the Corporation's independence in that way.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 487 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what is its policy with regard to advertising of official notices in the local news media?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Government uses its judgement in deciding whether it will get value for money in each particular case and also takes into account the extent to which a particular publication is of a general "news value" as opposed to acting as the organ of a political party.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 487 OF 1983

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, who makes the judgement as to what is or what is not the organ of a political party, the Minister for Information?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, in conjunction with his advisers.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Hon and Learned Chief Minister aware of the dangers of leaving it to a politician to make that judgement, in view of the fact that it is well known that certain newspapers that get advertising support a particular political party in Gibraltar although, possibly, with far more discretion than others?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am talking of party political organs and not papers of general circulation.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon and Learned Chief Minister state the principles upon which this is decided? Has it not occurred recently, in the case of one particular newspaper, is this not the first time that this has occurred in this newspaper and one other one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is not. There are three party organs.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, the best advice the Hon and Learned Chief Minister can give to newspapers - if they want Government advertising - is to hide their political feelings, and that way they get advertising from the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think you could not hide the political bias of some papers if you tried.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, that may well be so; but equally, it could be said of other newspapers, where the bias is very clear for all who want to see it clearly. Will those papers be deprived of their advertising, Mr Speaker, even if they support the party in power?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I wonder how much of those papers do publish criticism of the Government, for I am sure the party organ never publishes any criticism of themselves.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Wouldn't it be better, Mr Speaker, perhaps for those papers who are claiming that they are not organs, to change the name?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a matter for the paper; it has nothing to do with me.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Wouldn't the Chief Minister say that, if it was not so publicly said that it is a party organ, then the Government would be considering it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

But it is not a party organ, you can say what you like.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Chief Minister say, therefore, that if the judgement of himself, and this Committee that he has, that there are papers in Gibraltar who do not call themselves party organs and they have actually been working for a particular party ever since they started printing?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is not my view of the situation. There are papers that may or may not favour a particular party; others are only published to run down all the other people and put themselves up in the sky.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't it a fact that the other papers have done precisely the opposite all the time?

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Chief Minister, is it not a fact that, very busy as he is, he finds time nearly every Saturday morning to visit the premises of a particular newspaper, and is this a purely social visit?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, not only on Saturdays but whenever I can, because I am very friendly with the editor. I make no apologies, and he makes no apologies; but he exercises his discretion and he writes a lot of stuff that I do not like - and I never tell him, because it is a free paper.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, if the paper in question writes a bit of stuff that he likes then it is alright?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a different question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has the Chief Minister ever subscribed or controlled the articles that come out in the Post?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the answer is no.

HON A J HAYNES:

Ours is the only paper with a political bias it seems, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Are you asking a question?

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, has the Chief Minister ever been familiar with the principles of natural justice?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. Next question

6.12.83

NO. 488 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government any information as to how security at HM Dockyard was breached when unauthorised foreigners were allegedly taken in and shown around there?

ANSWER

THE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, as the incident occurred entirely on MOD property it would not be appropriate to comment other than to state that the authorities concerned have taken all action necessary in the circumstances.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 488 OF 1983

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, it is confirmed therefore that this incident happened. Was this incident not perpetrated by an employee of the Government?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I would not use the word 'perpetrated' in any event, Mr Speaker, it was not a question of perpetration, it was a question of inadvertence. There was not an employee of the Gibraltar Government involved. When the Gibraltar Police became aware of the matter, because I think somebody made representations to them, they referred the people to the Ministry of Defence. It is a Ministry of Defence matter.

HON G T RESTANO:

So this incident was not carried out inadvertently by a Government employee?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Not by a Gibraltar Government employee, no.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 489 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that expatriate managers and supervisors in the employment of Gibraltar Shiprepair Ltd will receive salaries higher than parity while native workers in the employment of the same company will be paid lower than parity wages?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the Government understands that wages for employees in the new commercial yard will initially be set around the prevailing UK parity levels. Furthermore, the basic wages and salaries will be the same for both expatriate and local employees, whether managerial or industrial.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 489 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So the internationally determined wages for expatriates referred to in the project study are no longer being adhered to. Is that the case?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am not quite sure what lies beyond the Hon Member's supplementary question. If he means that the earnings of expatriates may be higher than those of locally employed labour, that is not a question which I am quite prepared to answer, Mr Speaker. Is that what he means?

HON J BOSSANO:

No, I do not mean that, Mr Speaker. What I am saying is that according to the printed information in the project study produced in May, 1983, which we are told is the latest definitive document on wages and salaries, it says that expatriate managers and supervisors will be paid a salary which is the international going rate. Am I to understand that that policy has now been changed?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, the basic wages and salaries will be the same for both expatriate and local employees, whether managerial or industrial. That is my answer to his question.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon Member aware then that, in the project study, the intention was to pay expatriate managers and supervisors more than locally entered workers?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, again as I have said in answer to earlier questions by the Hon Member, there have been many projections made, I am giving him the latest information I have, based on information which is being passed to us by A & P Appledore.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member has said in answer to an earlier question, that the latest information on pay and conditions was the information upon which the projections had been made. When I asked him, Mr Speaker, whether the Hon Member could confirm that for locally entered workers it was intended to pay people time and a half for work on Sundays in March this year, he said he was unaware of what was intended in March this year, he was aware of what was intended in May this year. I am now asking him, was he aware that in May this year it was the intention to pay expatriate managers rates of pay which are described, not as parity with UK, but as internationally determined rates of pay and, consequently, obviously not linked to parity? Is he aware of that?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I must confess that the phrase 'internationally approved rates' is not one which resides in my memory from my reading of the report.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Hon Member say, when the policy was decided, that locally entered managers and supervisors and UK recruited managers and supervisors would be on the same basic rates of pay?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, I cannot say with any precision. I have given the Hon Member what I think is an honest and fair answer to his question, which is that the basic wages and salaries will be the same for both expatriate and local employees, whether managerial or industrial. Whether there may at some time have been some different intention is a matter which seems to be irrelevant; what I am stating now, and it will be on the record, is the one which I think the House should latch onto for future reference.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is this a matter of Government policy or a matter that has been decided by A & P Appledore themselves?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

It is that which has been decided by A & P Appledore, Mr Speaker.

NO. 490 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

In the light of the statement made by the Financial and Development Secretary in the July meeting of the House of Assembly, can Government state when it first found out that the use of the word "support" in the 1981 Defence White Paper implied a commitment to grant-in-aid and was qualitatively different from the use of the words "sustain and support", implying development aid used in connection with the border restrictions?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the word "support" as distinct from "support and sustain" can be interpreted in different ways depending on the circumstances. In the July meeting, the Financial and Development Secretary was not suggesting that the word "support" necessarily implied a de facto commitment to grant-in-aid. He pointed out that there was a risk of Gibraltar becoming grant-aided and that HMG could have considered that situation as fulfilling its obligation in the June 1981 Defence White Paper. The crux of the matter is that under the obligation to "support" the economy, HMG has agreed to provide up to £28m for commercialisation, as opposed to some other amount for grant-in-aid.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 490 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Chief Minister then saying, in fact, that no particular significance should be attached to the omission of the word "sustain" in the 1981 Defence White Paper?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I hope that that became clear in my earlier answers about support and sustain, which was a policy which was developed in the light of the Spanish restrictions. I think, overall, the statement in the Defence White Paper was speaking in connection mainly with the results of the Ministry of Defence decision to close the Dockyard. Therefore, I do not consider that there has been any change. What they were saying is, in this context, we have the responsibility to support. I have looked carefully at what the Financial and Development Secretary then said, and what he said was - and this is something that might have happened, I think we have done much better than that - he said: "We require no thanks for that. What have we got over the past two years, since it first seemed likely that the Dockyard was going to close? After numerous studies we have, in fact, got the £28m which Mr Laddo suggested was available two years ago; it wasn't. It was not available until late last year when HMG accepted that, in its view, a commercial Dockyard could be viable. Up to that time there was a danger that we would not get any support for a commercial Dockyard from HMG and that we would be pushed into grants-in-aid. Some people may consider that that would have been a better choice, that is a matter of opinion, but all I am saying is . . .", and then the Hon Member interrupted and the Financial Secretary picked it up

again and said: "What I am saying, Mr Speaker, is that the danger would have been that HMG would have considered that it was fulfilling its obligation to support, not sustain - the word sustain was not used in the Command White Paper of June, 1981 - to support Gibraltar by granting aid". So, I think that the performance supports my interpretation of the word support.

HON J BOSSANO:

But what I am saying, Mr Speaker, and what I am asking the Government to confirm, because I have taken the fact that the Financial and Development Secretary said what the Hon and Learned Chief Minister has quoted, that the British Government had made it clear that in using the word "support" in the Command White Paper of June, 1981, and the fact that "sustain" did not appear there, was a deliberate decision - and that the implications of that deliberate decision was that they had in fact the opportunity, at any stage, of arguing that they had an obligation to support but not necessarily to sustain the economy. The reason why I am asking that is because if that is the case then it seems to me that, since 1981, the Government has been using the words "sustain and support" and the word "support" on its own as interchangeable on many occasions.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Apart from anything else, I think the proof of the pudding is in the eating; we now have this offer - whether it is good or bad, it is a substantial offer - which might have been avoided by an attempt at giving grants-in-aid. Apart from the question of support and sustain, which is this policy, there is the overall responsibility of the British Government, underwritten in the Gibraltar Constitution, of its duty to support Gibraltar. That could have been discharged in one of two ways for them, under that part, which had nothing whatever to do with the frontier - which is where the support and sustain policy comes - and that is to say; 'we are going to support you by giving you grants-in-aid'. It was a big decision, which was not taken until later, a big decision which was taken at the highest level. There were people in certain departments, of which we now have a former member, who suggested that it was cheaper perhaps, or better, to give grants-in-aid. It went up to the top, where it was decided that Gibraltar deserved better; and that is what the answer is.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 491 OF 1983

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is Government satisfied that the use of the words "Further measures of support" in the House of Commons statement of 27th July, 1983, has the wider meaning attached to the "sustain and support" policy and not the narrower meaning of the use of the word "support" in the July 1981 Defence White Paper?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the formula "sustain and support" has traditionally been linked as the Hon Member himself linked it in the previous question, to the frontier restrictions. The actual wording used in the 1981 Defence White Paper is "the Government's obligation to support the economy of Gibraltar". This clearly contains a wider rather than a narrower meaning. The Government considers that the undertaking given by HMG on the 27 July, 1983, has an even wider meaning, and it has been confirmed by performance, that is why I said that the obligation of the word "support" in the White Paper has now been translated into support to set up a commercial dockyard at the expense of which we already know, as I was saying about the £28m and the rest. At the same time, if I may say so because it is relevant, the package that was agreed at that time - because we knew quite well that the Dockyard, with the very best will in the world, might not make up for the old Dockyard - hence we have this prime site given to us for free and the British Government is paying for the reprovisioning to help the Gibraltar economy in other areas to make up for any loss that might be suffered by the Dockyard.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 491 OF 1983

HON J BOSSANO:

So in fact the answer is, Mr Speaker, that the reference to the policy of supporting Gibraltar in paragraph 17 of the Agreement that the Chief Minister has made available today, which is the Agreement to which I am referring in my reference to the House of Commons statement, has to be understood as having the meaning of "sustain and support" and not the meaning referred to by the Financial Secretary in page 307 of Hansard of the July meeting?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Financial Secretary was talking in a debate of alternative ways in which the British Government could discharge its obligations contained in the White Paper. This, I think, is a further proof - as I said before, they go in parallel, and that is why I made the point that in line with the policy of supporting Gibraltar during the present restrictions, it is clearly the kind of help that was being given in respect of one which could be given in respect of the other. I am quite satisfied that we have got that.