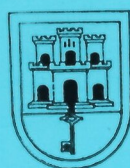


GIBRALTAR

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

10TH FEBRUARY, 1987

1 TO 71

NO. 1 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether it has a target for annual growth in the economy of Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. The economy is going through a period of rapid structural change. It would be unrealistic, even if it were considered desirable on policy grounds, to attempt to plan for growth in terms of a specific increase in national product at this juncture. There are also currently a number of problems in both measuring and forecasting rates of growth, because of the substantial structural changes currently taking place.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 1 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, has the Government ever had a target of annual growth in the economy of Gibraltar?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Not to my knowledge, Mr Speaker, although my memory obviously doesn't go back very, very far.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, surely the Hon Financial and Development Secretary is not saying that the reasons he has given for not having one now have always operated, ie is he saying that the economy of Gibraltar has been in a permanent state of structural change?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, I am always amazed at some of the inferences the Hon Leader of the Opposition draws from my statements but certainly I didn't intend that one but it is going through a period of structural change at the moment. I might add that we are proposing to engage the economic consultants who helped us in 1979 to build an input/output model of the economy and we expect that they will be providing further services to us during the course of this year. That may help to solve part of the problem which is the problem of measuring and, indeed, forecasting rates of growth in the economy which has been

changing rapidly in the last few years.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government, even if it doesn't have a target, have a view as to what range it expects growth to lie within?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As the Hon Member will know, I gave an indication, admittedly it was a retrospective indication of the growth in the economy in 1985/86 and the indications are that the growth in 1986/87, of the subsequent financial year, would be of a similar order, I am talking about a figure of 10% during the last twelve months. As to the likelihood in the next twelve months I am afraid I still find it very, very difficult to make an accurate prediction. All I can say is that the indications of a number of largely un-coordinated, in the economic sense factors, are that growth will continue at a not dissimilar rate but I wouldn't like to be held to a precise figure.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 2 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state what was the contribution to National Income of tourism in 1983/84, 1984/85 and 1985/86?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. Tourist expenditure in 1983/84, 1984/85 and 1985/86 accounted for approximately 16%, 18% and 22% respectively of National Income, the latter being a provisional estimate. In financial terms, the figures are:-

	<u>1983/84</u>	<u>1984/85</u>	<u>1985/86</u>
Tourist Expenditure	£13m	£16m	£22m*
National Income	£80.76m	£87.18m	£99.63m*

*Provisional estimates.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 2 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Hon Member, does the figure that he has given reflect the accuracy or otherwise of the statement made by the Minister for Tourism that there was a 60% multiplier effect in respect of tourist expenditure?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think the Minister for Tourism, if I recall correctly, made a statement in answer to a question in the House recently about this matter and I have nothing to add to what he said then.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the statement that I am asking the Hon Member to answer me on is the statement that he made. Can he say whether the statement that he made, in fact, is reflected in these figures? That is to say, does the £13m and £22m that he has given show that for every pound that a tourist spent there is an additional effect on national income of 60p which is a statement the Minister made?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I cannot really answer on behalf

of the Minister for Tourism.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am not asking the Hon Member to answer on behalf of the Minister for Tourism, I am simply saying that the Minister for Tourism on behalf of the Government for whom he is also answering, made a statement to the effect that tourist spending in the economy of Gibraltar produced an additional effect, originally we thought he had said on Government revenue and he subsequently corrected it in the House by saying that it wasn't on Government revenue, it was on national income. Does, in fact, the £13m, £16m and £22m quoted by the Financial and Development Secretary show the figure after the impact of the 60p in every pound quoted by the Minister or before the 60p in every pound quoted by the Minister?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am sorry, I am just not briefed on that particular aspect, Mr Speaker. I do recall what the Minister for Tourism said and he made a very full explanation. I am sure it was made after consultation with the Economic Planning and Statistics Office and to that extent I would expect to be in a position to support what he said but I am simply not briefed on the matter at this point.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, seeing that the Hon the Minister for Tourism is not here to answer for his own comment which was, in fact, we maintained he had said receipts and in his answer he said 'that for every one pound of tourist expenditure Gibraltar generates 60p'.

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is not being disputed.

HON J E PILCHER:

I know, Mr Speaker, it is a point of clarification. What the Hon Financial and Development Secretary is saying as an explanation was only an explanation on the receipts not on the fact that he maintained that Gibraltar generated 60p from every pound. But can I take the Hon Financial and Development Secretary to task in his understanding of what is the contribution per pound of tourist expenditure since in 1984/85 we have figures that show a rise of £9.46m in tourist expenditure, a national income

growth of £7m and a tourist national income contribution of £3m. What would that mean as far as percentage for the Hon Financial Secretary?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I will make a note of the points which the Hon Member has made, Mr Speaker, and I am quite prepared to consider these outside the House but I don't think it would be helpful if I were to attempt to juggle with new figures or points which he has raised during the answers to this question.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, we are not asking the Hon Member to juggle, we are seeking information. If the Hon Member has said that in 1985/86 there was a contribution towards national income of £22m does that reflect the £21.11m shown in the Tourist Survey Report for 1985? Is he talking about the same figure?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I haven't got it in front of me but I would think almost certainly yes, if we are talking about tourist expenditure, that certainly strikes a bell to me.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would that imply, Mr Speaker, that there is no multiplier effect at all? That is to say, if the Hon Member is saying that the contribution to national income which he has given us of £22m in 1985/86 is the tourist expenditure of £22m in 1985/86, does that mean that no account is being taken of the multiplier effect?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, that is not so. Account is taken, I think it is quite clear that there is a multiplier effect, I am not disputing that. What I am not in a position to say because I am not briefed as extensively on the matter as I would need to be to be able to answer extempore off-the-cuff, I am not quite clear what the detailed calculations are, I would have to consult my staff in the Economic Planning and Statistics Office who are more familiar with the details of this than I. I am quite prepared to do that, of course, but I think it would be more helpful if I were to make that offer rather than to attempt to prolong the answer to this question.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 3 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what was the estimated cost of the 1986 Pay Review for industrials provided under Head 26 at budget time?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. The amount included for industrials in the 1986 Pay Settlement provision was £460,000.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 3 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Hon Member whether, in fact, the actual outcome of the Review is expected to be within that figure or will there be a need for any additional funds?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

There will be a need for additional funds overall, Mr Speaker, yes, inasmuch as the provision which was made covering both non-industrials and industrials was 5% and the average pay increase has worked out at a figure of the order of 6% so there will be a need for additional supplementary funds. I cannot say as of this moment how much of that would be in respect of industrials or non-industrials.

HON J BOSSANO:

But the Hon Member can say that there will be a requirement for additional funds for industrials?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, I cannot say whether there will be an additional requirement for funds in respect of industrials. I know that there will be for non-industrials which, of course, account for a much larger sum of money and when I mention 6% I was thinking specifically of certain groups of staff - Police, teachers and I think nursing staff, some of whom were as a result of pay settlements in the UK awarded sums rather more than the average which was provided for.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is it correct, Mr Speaker, to say that there will be a further statement of re-allocations therefore in respect of the sums involved and that the one that has been provided by the Hon Member does not cover all the allocation to different Heads?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

There will certainly be further re-allocations, Mr Speaker, before the end of the financial year to reflect the fact which I have just stated, namely, that the Pay Settlement provision made was inadequate and therefore there will be further supplementary funds or re-allocations needed.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member explain why the re-allocation in respect of industrial workers which is what the question is about, is not all included in the statement of re-allocation since the settlement for industrials took place late last summer and the re-allocation took place on the 28th January?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Not off-the-cuff, no, Mr Speaker, but I will endeavour to get the information before we reach the Supplementary Appropriation Bill.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 4 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government state how the money provided under the Improvement and Development Fund Head 101, Subhead 4 has been used?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member will recall that the Hon Minister for Public Works, in answer to Question No.225 of 1986, stated that the Government had decided to abandon this project, and concentrate its efforts on the Engineer House Scheme. Accordingly, no expenditure has been, or will be, incurred under Head 101, Subhead 4.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 4 OF 1987

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is the Hon Member saying, Mr Speaker, that they will use the money for the survey that is going to be carried out on Engineer House?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, the Supplementary Appropriation Bill which will be considered by the House later on in these proceedings includes the provision of £10,000 for the Engineer House site inspection. It is not possible to vire from one project to another in the Improvement and Development Fund.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Could we then have a commitment, Mr Speaker, from the Government that this money will only be used for housing?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I cannot provide that commitment on behalf of the Government, not so to speak, formally, but certainly as I understand the Government's plans, I don't know whether one of my colleagues wishes to add to this, the Engineer House development is seen as a substitute for the former proposals in respect of Laguna.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 5 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is Government now in a position to state to which items of capital expenditure they intend to devote the £2.3m borrowed in the 1985/86 financial year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. I have nothing to add to the answer which I gave the Hon Member in answer to Question No.261 of 1986. The Government review of the 1986-1990 Development Programme, including the locally-financed element, has not yet been finalised.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 5 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Hon Member expect to be in a position to provide such information before the Estimates for 1987 are brought to the House?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I would expect that the information will be provided at the time of the Estimates, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

But he will not be in a position to provide it before, is that right, Mr Speaker?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think it is highly unlikely that I would.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 6 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Does Government expect to borrow the £2m estimated at budget time in the current financial year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. On present prospects it looks as if sales of debentures to the public during this financial year will be about £1.6m of which £1m will be of the 9½ per cent tranche due for redemption in 1991. Sales of this were sluggish during the latter half of 1986 because of the rise in UK interest rates but have since improved.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 6 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Hon Member, does he still expect the same outcome for the financial year on the premise that the borrowing will be £1.6m instead of £2m?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Is the Hon Member referring to the outcome as far as the Government's finances are concerned?

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member will recall that in answer to a question in the last House of Assembly I asked him whether he was still anticipating that the result for the financial year would be a deficit of £850,000 and the reply was that this was, indeed, still the expectation. I am asking him whether that will continue to be the expectation in the light of the fact that the income of the Government from borrowing will be £1.6m instead of £2m?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am grateful to the Hon Member for clarifying that. I think I can answer him in two ways. First of all, I think that the outturn for the financial year may be different from the preliminary provisional forecast I gave him in answer to the question earlier to which he has referred although not, I think, to a very substantial extent. There are a number of changes

which have occurred to prospects both on the income and expenditure side and I am not as of this particular moment in a position to say what the net effect is. However, what I can say, returning to his question, is that this particular variation, namely, that we are expecting to sell £1.6m rather than £2m will not of itself have a significant effect on the outturn for the year.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I know the Hon Member seems to be particularly good at not answering questions. Can he explain to me, will the income not be down £400,000 if it is showed as income £2m in the budget in March and, if so, is he saying that he expects that deficiency to be compensated by excesses of revenue over expenditure in other items and therefore to be covered or is he saying that it doesn't matter if it is £1.6m instead of £2m, which is he saying?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I am saying it is really a bit of both, Mr Speaker, I wasn't trying not answer the Hon Leader of the Opposition's question. Sometimes when I go to great lengths to answer him as intelligently as I know how, the effort obviously exceeds the capacity of my brain. But both points are true. There will be obviously a drop in income as a result of the difference of £0.4m which we have been discussing. On the other hand, there are other changes in the Government's account both on the income side and the expenditure, income revenue from a number of sources has been more buoyant than we thought three or six months ago, and on the expenditure side there are additional items which were not predicted so there are a number of changes which affect the Government's account. Certainly, there will be an adverse variance of £0.4m but I don't regard that as being particularly significant in terms of the overall outturn.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 7 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what would be the estimated loss of revenue in a year of bringing personal allowances and tax rates in Gibraltar into line with current UK levels?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

About £6m, Mr Speaker.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 7 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member explain why this figure which he has just given differs so much from the one previously given in the House in the light of the fact that the allowances have been coming up quite substantially in UK in the interim period? Is it that the figure has been reworked and the previous one was not accurate?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Sir. I think the Hon Member has, in fact, answered the question. Last year, at the time of the budget, the estimate which we made was between £7m or £8m instead of the £6m which I have just quoted. The Government gave away about £3m in a full year's term in tax reductions but the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the United Kingdom also gave away in 1986/87 as well so one really has to run faster on the spot to catch up.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 8 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government give the total number of companies in the Exempt Companies Register as at 31st December, 1984, 1985 and 1986?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the number of companies holding valid tax exemption certificates on the dates in question were:

At 31st December 1984	-	1,354
At 31st December 1985	-	1,588
and At 31st December 1986	-	1,880

NO. 9 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government state what were the total number of registered Captive Insurance Companies at the 31st December, 1986, and the comparable figures for 1984 and 1985?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. The details are as follows:-

At 31st December 1984	-	13
At 31st December 1985	-	13
At 31st December 1986	-	14

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 9 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Could the Hon Member then say what is the minimum share capital of a Captive Insurance Company?

MR SPEAKER:

May I suggest that you are free to answer it if you have got the information but that is information which is easily accessible by looking at the particular Ordinance but if you have got the information available it might assist the House, most certainly.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, I haven't, I would have to look it up, Mr Speaker. I think it is much safer for me to do that than rely on my memory.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, on a point of information, we are supposed to be repealing this legislation in this House.

MR SPEAKER:

But until you repeal the legislation there is a requirement.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member say is there a minimum share capital under the new law and what is this minimum going to be?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Under the old law I am pretty sure it was £10,000. Under the new law it is slightly more complicated which is why I was hesitant in providing an answer to the question but we are talking about something substantially in excess of that. The reason why I hesitated is that the figure of £100,000 is in my mind but there are other important criteria such as the margins of solvency and the size of the guarantee fund which are larger than that amount and probably rather more important for the purposes of authorisation.

HON J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Hon Member, is he in fact saying that the provisions that apply to the Captive Insurance Companies under the proposed legislation we shall be passing in this House are no different from the provisions that apply to all insurance companies?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is correct, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Are there transitional provisions for the 14 that were registered in December 1986, or will they be required to meet it as soon as the new law comes in?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, there are transitional provisions, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 10 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government confirm whether ODA has now provided the £2.3m additional grant to the Gibraltar Shiprepair Special Fund and whether any further funds are likely to be provided?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. I think the Hon Member is confused by his Hon Friend's reference to £2.3m in a different context and the figure is, in fact, £2.4m. Payments have already been made by ODA into the GSL Fund from the additional £2.4m which HMG have agreed to make available. HMG have indicated that this is their final contribution to this project.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 10 OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

I can take it therefore that the answer to the second part of the question is that no further funds will therefore be provided?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I can only tell the Hon Member what the indications are from HMG. This does not mean that as a result of the continued eloquence of the Hon and Learned the Chief Minister we might not nevertheless be successful at some future time.

HON J BOSSANO:

So what we are saying, Mr Speaker, is that really whether the British Government provides any further assistance is not dependent on the original statement by the Chief Minister in the House in 1983 when he said that there was a commitment to provide further assistance if the commercial yard was found to require it but on whether he is as successful as the people who stand outside the House of Assembly playing a violin with a hat on the floor, is that the position?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have nothing to add to that one.

HON J E PILCHER:

He did not expect a reply, Mr Speaker. But what is certainly clear is that the eloquence of the Hon and Learned the Chief Minister has not got us anywhere in getting the extra money that is the difference between what was asked for in 1985 and what was given to us in 1986 and therefore the answer which he gave us in Question No. 187 of 1986 was: 'I cannot do any more because I have exhausted my efforts and I am going to try and give a reply as soon as possible'. The reply is now that those efforts have failed for 1985/86. Whether they are successful in the future is another matter.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 11 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state what have been the total disbursements from the Gibraltar Shiprepair Fund as at the 31st December, 1986?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. Payments out of or on account of the GSL Fund at the 31st December, 1986, totalled £28.9 million.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 11 OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Financial and Development Secretary not agree therefore that he is now outside the law?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member had listened attentively to my answer to his question he would have seen that I said payments out of or on account of the GSL Fund at the 31st December, 1986, totalled £28.9m. The reason for that is that we have in the past made use of the facility provided for under Section 10(1) (e) of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance to make advances on account of a Special Fund but the position, of course, will be regularised, if I may use that word, before the end of the financial year as is required by law and shares will be issued and purchased by the Government to correspond with the value of the amounts which are paid out of the GSL Fund.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, in answer to Question No.10 the Hon Financial and Development Secretary said that the £2.4m had already been passed on to the Fund, am I to understand therefore that only £0.9m of the £2.4m has been allocated?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, Mr Speaker, the position is rather more complicated than that. There is an amount outstanding from the original £28m which is unspent, that is to say, has not been brought to account as at the 31st December under the original grant of £28m drawings and when I say drawings I mean either payments

out of or on account of the Fund, amounted to £27.2m approximately and, again, drawings on account of the Fund in respect of the £2.4m which have been made available totalled £1.7m. That should add up to £28.9m which is the figure I quoted. What I am really saying is that the £28m grant has not yet been exhausted and this is not in any way a surprising development because the agreement with the ODA provided for funds from the £28m to be spent over a period of three years and the three years is not yet concluded.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 12 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state what is the anticipated operating loss of GSL for the year ending 31st December, 1986?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, I cannot at this stage give the Hon Member a precise estimate, because a number of items have still to be finalised, but the indications are that the loss for 1986 will be nearer to £3m than the original projection of £2.3m for the second year of operation made by A&P Appledore in 1983.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 12 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Financial and Development Secretary confirm whether, in fact, the provision of £½m for the payment of rates which was included in the £2.3m is included in the £3m?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

It will not be £½m, Mr Speaker. What I am saying is the actual rates expenditure by GSL in the financial year in question will not be £½m, there will be expenditure but because of the company's eligibility for and the fact that it has been granted development aid relief, it will be a much lower sum but obviously the figures will include something.

HON J BOSSANO:

That is not my question, Mr Speaker. What I am asking him is if the £2.3m included a cost of £½m for rates, does the £3m include anything for rates?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The £3m will include something for rates, this is one of the items, Mr Speaker, which have not yet been finalised in terms of the actual accounts. As regards the original £2.3m my recollection is that there was a figure of £½m included for rates.

HON J BOSSANO:

What I am saying is, can the Hon Member confirm therefore the difference between those figures is, in fact, much bigger than appears at first sight because the original figure includes £½m of costs which the second figure doesn't?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, I don't think so at all. There have been a vast number of changes and a variety of assumptions and the situation which the company has encountered has varied from that which was in the original projections, as is usually the case with all such enterprises, and this is only one particular item.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Financial and Development Secretary is telling the House of Assembly and the people of Gibraltar, Mr Speaker, that the fact that the company originally projected a loss of £2.3m after having to pay rates does not mean that they have lost £½m more than is being projected now because they haven't had to pay rates, that the money that they saved which means that the original figure for comparison purposes should have looked like £1.8m and now it is £3m, he doesn't agree that that is realistic?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

What I am trying to tell the House, Mr Speaker, is that there have been a very great number of variances since the original projections were made in 1983, I recognise this is one of them but I do not think that it would be proper to isolate this and give it undue prominence.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, when is, in fact, GSL going to be included in the Valuation List and be required to pay rates?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, GSL will have been included in the current Valuation List for 1986/87.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, isn't the current Valuation List which has been published for 1987/88, wasn't the List for 1986/87 published a year ago?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, but amendments can be made. The Valuation Officer in the light of developments can at any time during the year write to a company or a firm and make an assessment, if that is the correct word, although the List has been published.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the Hon Member is saying that it will be included before the 31st March in the current financial year?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I hope you won't check me as to the actual precise formality but what I do know is that the Valuation Officer has written to the company with an assessment for rates for 1986/87 which they will have to pay.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 13 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state whether the GSL Pension Fund has now been set up with retrospective effect from the 1st January, 1985?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, the position is still as I explained in answer to Question No.258 of 1986; namely that most of the formalities involving the setting up of the Fund have been completed. I understand however that there has been some delay over the question of employee nominations to the Board of Trustees. I hope that the Trustees will be meeting shortly to formalise matters.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 13 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member not aware that the proposed terms of the Pension Fund differ from that agreed in 1985 and have been rejected by the employees for that reason?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

No, I do understand, Mr Speaker, that some points have been raised on the draft Trust Fund deed, the terms of the deed, by either the employees or their representatives at a fairly late stage.

MR S PEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 14 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON R MOR

Will extra funds be required by the College of Further Education to undertake the B/TEC courses?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND POSTAL SERVICES

The College of Further Education has been running B/TEC courses for the last 8 years under the umbrella of Plymouth College of Technology.

The Gibraltar College has come of age and is now recognised as a B/TEC examination centre in its own right. In respect of this, the Department arranged the visit of two senior B/TEC officials to our College in January, 1987.

All B/TEC courses in the UK are being re-modelled to include a larger element of practical skills training. This has a resources implication for all colleges, including our own.

The above, taken with the fact that MOD(N) did not make adequate provision for the College over the last ten years, means that the Department is aware of the need to increase funding specifically for training resources.

Over and above recurrent expenditure funding, the Department will be seeking special funds in 1987/88 specifically for updating training equipment at the College in respect of new B/TEC requirements.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 14 OF 1987

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member say specifically how much is going to be needed to up-date the equipment and training?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, it is impossible at this stage. Government is in the process of preparing the Estimates for the forthcoming financial year and I cannot give a figure at this stage.

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, could the Government confirm that the advice received

by the officials who came out was that there would have to be a requirement of over £100,000?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

No, that is not my recollection. I think to have it in mint condition will require more than £100,000. Within that, the resources can be provided which will be, if I remember correctly, I met the B/TEC officials in my office on a courtesy call and I remember them telling me that sometimes even if you provide the equipment the lecturers with a piece of string can provide the equipment if the lecturer is good enough so perhaps we can measure what the requirements are and perhaps £100,000 might seem too much or too low. Honestly, at this stage, I am not prepared to say how much money the Government is going to put in.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 15 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON R MOR

Was GBC denied entry at any time into Bayside Comprehensive School to report on the state of the building?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND POSTAL SERVICES

A Gibraltar Chronicle photographer and a Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation camera crew were authorised to visit Bayside Comprehensive School on two occasions (30 January and 2 February) to film and photograph freely any area of the school they wished.

However, on the 28 January before the Education and the Public Works Departments had had a chance to assess the situation, a request by Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation for permission for a camera crew to visit the school was refused. Nevertheless information based on the facts available at the time, was given to the media.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 15 OF 1987

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, does Government not agree that the action they took is an obstruction to the media to report.

HON G MASCARENHAS:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not agree because it was always our intention to allow the camera crews and the photographer, the media generally, to go into the school if they wanted to. The position was that on the 28th January my Department and the Public Works Department were not in a position to assess the situation yet, we didn't know what was going on, in fact, I was still waiting for news and on that basis I think it was a decision taken on the matter which we would not have refused the entry at the time, we wanted to assess the situation ourselves before we allowed the television to enter.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 16 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON R MOR

Does Government accept that the physical deterioration of the building and facilities at Bayside Comprehensive School have reached alarming substandard levels?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND POSTAL SERVICES

No, Sir. The main source of concern is water seepage through roof joints in certain areas. Although considerable efforts and funds have been expended on this problem over the last five years, the problem has not been overcome. The PWD will be carrying out an in-depth survey of the whole complex to identify long-term solutions. Government will determine its priorities in the light of the advice it receives once the survey is completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 16 OF 1987

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, seeing that the Government does not agree that the state of the school has reached alarming substandard levels, would they not agree that the teachers who are after all the professionals and the people who work in the building, that they are the ones who would be the experts on the state of the building and does the Government not agree that the teachers would be the best people to say what the state of the building is?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, under no circumstances can I accept that. I accept that the teachers are professionals in every sense of the word but as teachers not when it comes to the state of the building, none of them are surveyors or engineers.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member must surely consider that the environment in which teachers are working and the environment in which teachers are teaching children is something that they can adequately assess and that if teachers complain about the deteriorating state of the building then it is not merely because they want to complain but because they have actually physically seen that something is wrong with the building and something is seriously wrong?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Yes, but the Hon Member, Mr Mor, has said that as professionals they are in a good position to determine what the state of the building is. I am sorry, I cannot accept that. The professionals are in the Public Works Department not in the Education Department if I may say so.

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, would the Government state then why were the eight classrooms and two laboratories closed down?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, because there was a heavy down pour on the 27th January and there was water seepage through the building and the Headmaster correctly thought that it would be safer to close the classrooms.

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, doesn't that constitute a substandard level?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

No, Mr Speaker, the reply that I have given covers what the Hon Member is asking and we have made efforts over the last five years to correct this water seepage, they have not been overcome. Now the Public Works Department is carrying out an in-depth survey in order to solve this problem once and for all.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member state on how many occasions the Public Works Department has encountered this same problem with this same building?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, I am unable to give an answer on that and my Hon Colleague is shaking his head.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, could they state whether this time the situation has been more serious than on other occasions?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

The situation has been created to be more serious, yes.

HON J C PEREZ:

Has the Department carried out a survey in the past or is this the first time that a survey has been deemed necessary in the circumstances?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

No, Mr Speaker, I am not aware whether an actual survey has been carried out in the past. I know that repairs have been effected in the past on numerous occasions, they have not corrected the problem. What is being done now is the survey is very much more in-depth and I hope that we will find a solution and if it is necessary to make an input of funding to correct the problem once and for all it shall be done.

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member aware that there has been an inquiry before into Bayside Comprehensive School?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Yes, Mr Speaker, of course I am aware.

HON R MOR:

Is the Government aware of the recommendations made in that report?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Absolutely, Mr Speaker.

HON R MOR:

Why is it then, Mr Speaker, that the Government has not followed these recommendations otherwise the state the school is in today would not have been arrived at?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, at the time the faults were cured.

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, but the Gibraltar Teachers Association has been constantly making claims on the Government to sort out the problems at the school, is that not correct?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, the downpour that occurred on the 27th January for the last five years Bayside has not suffered what was suffered two weeks ago, the situation has changed. In the last five years the corrective measures that have been taken by the Public Works Department have worked up to a certain extent. There has been water seepage and I think there is water seepage in a lot of buildings in Gibraltar not only at Bayside School.

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, then the Government must agree that they have been doing patch-up jobs until now, is that correct?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, it depends what you call a patch-up job. Over a period of five years a lot of money has been spent on Bayside to correct these measures, that they have not proved to be the right ones, perhaps the Hon Member is right. What we are doing now is to correct it once and for all.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, the Minister is saying that all the physical deterioration of the school is due to water seepage.

MR SPEAKER:

No, he has not said that, under any circumstances. The Minister has said that there have been defects in the school, that they have tried to correct it, that the works that have been carried out have not been effective, that there has been water seepage at the present moment and that they are trying to put it right. Next question.

10 2 87

NO. 17 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON R MOR

How much of the Education maintenance vote has been spent?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND POSTAL SERVICES

I am advised by the Public Works Department that as at 30 January 1987, £73,600 had been spent from the £80,000 allocated under Head 4(1) Sub-Head 18 - Minor Works for Education. A further £81,000 has been spent on schools from Head 21 - Sub-Head 62 - Repairs/Maintenance Programme (controlled by Public Works Department).

NO. 18 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Can Government confirm that they have now decided to introduce charges for the use of Government sporting facilities?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, SPORT AND POSTAL SERVICES

At a Press Conference held on the 30 June, 1986, I gave public notice of Government's intention to introduce two schemes in respect of sports. Extra allocations and facilities will become available through community use of schools; the 25% levy on gate income has been done away with to be replaced by nominal hire charges for use of facilities.

Full details were given and reported in the local media.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 18 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm why they have decided to raise this measure?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, in June last year I explained that there was a change in Government policy as regards sport, as regards charges at the Government facilities. Additional to that we thought it prudent to utilise to the maximum the resources available to the Government and therefore to the community in the schools and outside certain schools, Hargraves, Mackintosh Hall, and that these were not being used to the maximum use that sports people can put them to and therefore those are coming on line.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, why does the Minister consider that it is prudent now when the economic situation according to the Financial Secretary is supposed to be much more improved and when the economic situation was considered to be worse they never charged?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I didn't quite catch that.

MR SPEAKER:

Why are there charges now when the economic situation in Gibraltar is better than before?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, it is not now, it is last year in June.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

But they haven't started to charge yet, Mr Speaker. Can the Minister confirm that the charges are retrospective?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

The charges in some cases will be retrospective, yes.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Why, Mr Speaker, are they going to be retrospective?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Because we have not been able to introduce them, the implementation has been able to take place at the beginning of the season of certain sports. The problem here is that some sports have different starting seasons. It is very difficult, we wanted to implement by the beginning of the winter season of 1986/87 and this was impossible for several administrative reasons. As far as the Associations are concerned, I made it clear to them at the time and their sums were made in such a way that they knew that they would be liable for this amount, the number of allocations that they have for this 1986/87.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm that all the Associations knew that the charges would be retrospective?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Chronicle reported on this very extensively on the 1st July. GBC had a Sports Report, the Monday sports programme, which covered this extensively. Cameras were taken to the schools and to all the facilities that would come on line, the Associations had plenty of time to make representations, indeed, some of them did make some representations at the time. I think after all the problems

were resolved if there were any problems in certain cases, other Associations have welcomed it with open arms, there has been a mixed reaction.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, how much does the Minister think that the Government will raise with this measure?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

I cannot recall the exact figure but it is not a profit situation, we are still heavily subsidising because the cost of maintaining the school facilities open and having to pay caretakers is quite substantial. We have had to take an extra CO at the Victoria Stadium and certainly we are still subsidising to quite a heavy extent.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Does Government not know how much money they will actually raise approximately?

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Yes, but I cannot recall, I think it was in the region of £18,000 per annum.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 19 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J C PEREZ

What arrangements are being made for the supply of electricity to the commercial dockyard in 1987?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker, the MOD (N) will continue to supply electricity to the commercial dockyard during 1987.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 19 OF 1987

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, has that already been agreed?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Mr Speaker, there is an agreement for a further period of two years which will then expire on the 31st December, 1988.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Hon Member state when that was agreed?

HON J B PEREZ:

I don't know the exact date but obviously it was agreed well before the expiry date which was the 31st December, 1986.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Hon Member explain why he has not kept the House informed of developments which was his commitment in November, 1985?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am not quite certain what commitment the Hon Member is referring to, Mr Speaker.

HON J C PEREZ:

I am referring to a commitment he gave in answer to Question No.215 of 1985 when he said: 'I will, of course, keep the House informed of developments'.

HON J B PEREZ:

I will, of course, Mr Speaker, require to read the whole of the question not just what has been highlighted by the Hon Member.

MR SPEAKER:

Was it related to electricity?

HON J C PEREZ:

It was related to the on-going negotiations with the MOD over the supply of electricity to the commercial dockyard.

HON J E PILCHER:

In the new contract which the Hon Minister was referring to, is this the same charge for the electricity as the old contract?

HON J B PEREZ:

I haven't got that information available, Mr Speaker, but let me add, the agreement is, in fact, made between the Ministry of Defence and GSL, an agreement was made by both parties.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, I am not technically asking the Minister, I am asking whoever is responsible for GSL in the House of Assembly on the part of the Government to say whether the new contract is, in fact, the same charges as the old one.

MR SPEAKER:

The responsibilities of the day-to-day running of GSL is that of the Board of Directors and not the House. The responsibility for the general policy is that of the House but I think the Minister has said that he is not aware of the information that you require.

HON J E PILCHER:

It has nothing to do, Mr Speaker, with the day-to-day running, surely a contract on electricity for the next two years is a policy decision.

MR SPEAKER:

That is not for you or I to conclude.

HON J E PILCHER:

It is certainly for the Government.

MR SPEAKER:

I would venture to suggest that the source and manner in which a company derives its electricity is a matter for the company. I am not making a ruling, I am just making a general statement.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, is the Government in a position to answer it?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is why I have stuck my neck out because I understand that the Minister has said very clearly that he does not know.

HON J E PILCHER:

Are they prepared, Mr Speaker, to give us the information at a later stage?

HON J B PEREZ:

I am prepared to try and ascertain whether in the agreement made between GSL and MOD the rates are the same, yes.

HON J E PILCHER:

And could he also tell us whether the rates are the same as the Gibraltar Government currently charge?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, I am prepared to look into the matter, Mr Speaker, but, as I say, the agreement was between the Ministry of Defence and GSL.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 20 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state how many industrial injuries were recorded in Gibrepair in 1986?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Sir, total of 48 industrial injuries were reported to the Department by Gibrepair Ltd in 1986.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 20 OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member give me the incident rates of accidents in Gibrepair?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Could the Hon Member expand on that?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Mr Speaker. The incident rates, normally in most of the dockyards in UK there is an incidence rate by which a percentage of man-hours per accident which normally is an average of about 40% in the UK. How does Gibrepair compare with other UK dockyards in this field?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I do not have those accurate figures, let me answer the Hon Member and mention that the Factories Ordinance requires that written notice should be given to the Department of any accident causing loss of life or disabling any person from earning full wages for more than three days but I have no direct knowledge of the question he is asking. I will try to find out and I will see the Hon Member and see whether I have got any information that he will require in this connection.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, according to our information the incidence rates is about 66% which is 26% higher than in UK.

MR SPEAKER:

Are you giving answers to the Minister?

HON J E PILCHER:

I am giving an answer to the Minister to the question that I asked. Could the Minister therefore check that this is the case because if it is there is certainly cause for concern there and certainly his Department should be in a position to check that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, I will certainly check that. It seems to me highly humourous and a waste of time when he knows the answer already to ask me the answer because he could have asked me this outside the House and then I would have been able to give him the details.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, it is far more hilarious to see the Minister reading his prepared answer that has nothing to do with the question I have just asked him.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us leave it at that. Next question.

10 2 87

NO. 21 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON R MOR

What has been the total amount paid by way of pensions to Spaniards for the year ending 31st December, 1986?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the total amount of pensions paid to Spaniards up to 31 December, 1986, was £6,920,821.92.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 21 OF 1987

HON R MOR:

I am glad, Mr Speaker, that the Hon Member knew that answer, anyway.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 22 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government state what was the insured male and female working population on the 31st December, 1986, and how many of these were Spanish nationals and could they state the comparable figures for 1984 and 1985?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

I regret that the figure of the insured working population on 31 December, 1986, is not yet available. The figure is based on the exchange of insurance cards and this exercise is not normally completed until the end of March.

The insured working population on 31 December, 1984, was 8424 males and 3370 females making a total of 11794 and on 31 December, 1985, 8637 males and 3896 females making a total of 12533.

The number of work permits on issue to Spaniards were:-

121 on 31 December, 1984

336 on 31 December, 1985

754 on 31 December, 1986

The breakdown of these figures between males and females is not available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 22 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

In view that the Minister hasn't got the information to the initial part of the question, I can take it from him that in his usual manner he will supply it to me in writing in due course?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member knows, I have given him guarantees in the past and I will do so again that as soon as I have the figures I will personally write a letter to him giving him all the necessary figures.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I just ask the Hon Member for clarification, did I understand him correctly to say that insurance cards are exchanged at the end of March?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

No, the exercise is completed at the end of March.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 23 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J C PEREZ

Is it still Government's intention to retain a reduced number of lifeguards during the winter season on other duties?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir. Government will recruit on a permanent basis a number of lifeguards who will be required to carry out the duties of lifeguards during the Bathing Season and other duties during the winter months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 23 OF 1987

HON J C PEREZ:

Has the Department done anything to do this after the summer following the commitment of the Hon Member to do so in July, 1986?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Sir, my Department is anxious to have this scheme implemented. The actual means of carrying out this is still under consideration by the Establishment Division, the Industrial Relations Officer and my own Department and, hopefully, proposals will be put to the staff side shortly. It is the intention that the lifeguards in permanent employment will be deployed as handymen outside the bathing season.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 24 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J C PEREZ

Can Government state how much of the £40,000 provided for under Head 106, Subhead 4 in the Improvement and Development Fund is being used to stabilise the bottom part of the lower water catchments area and render it safe?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

None, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 24 OF 1987

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, then why did he say that in answer to a question from me in November, 1986?

HON MAJOR FJ DELLIPIANI:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I don't know what I said in 1986.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, in November, 1986, three months ago, the Hon Member in reply to a question about the safety of that particular area said: 'Yes, Sir, it is proposed to implement the recommendations of the above Report and £540,000 was earmarked under Head 106, Item 4, for the first phase' referring particularly to making that area safe and the creation of a catchbench.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I don't see that this question that the Hon Member has put now is relevant to what I said in November, 1986. The Hon Member has asked me how much money has been spent on this project and I have said none and that is all, Sir. I didn't say that we were going to do it in November, 1986, I said that there was a project to do it but I haven't started on it so if he has asked me how much I have spent I have said none.

HON J C PEREZ:

The work envisaged needs to come out from that vote, can the Minister confirm that?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The work envisaged on the stabilising of the lower area will come from that vote. No work has been carried out because a study is being made on how to do it.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Hon Member referring to the stabilising of the lower area where the Quarry Company is established or the area of the lower water catchments where a catchbench is supposed to be created so that falling rocks lie there and don't fall onto the road?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The main concern of my Department at the moment is to be able to put right the lower part of the area. The question of the catchbench at the top will be an on-going scheme which was started by the Gibraltar Quarry Company and we hope to continue in the future but the immediate danger is from below and it is a fairly big scheme. We hope to take the opportunity during this scheme to widen the road in that area seeing that the width of the area has been excavated by the Gibraltar Quarry Company and it is a fairly long scheme, it is a fairly complex scheme and we hope to carry out the works in phases. To answer the Hon Member's question when he quoted £40,000, I must admit that £24,000 has been spent on the area but it has nothing to do with the stabilisation of the quarry area, it is to do with the outflows that were damaged by a landslide in the area, I am talking about the outflows of the water catchments. If there was an outflow and the outlets weren't properly connected, of course, the water coming down would have caused a bigger problem in the quarry so we have had to spend £24,000 on it to re-connect the outflows which were damaged by the landslide.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member state from which of the votes allocated is each work going to be done? From which of the votes allocated is he planning to do the work at the bottom and from which of the votes allocated is he planning to do the work at the top?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI: ..

Mr Speaker, I haven't got the votes at the moment in hand but if the Hon Member will allow me to investigate I will give him the information as soon as possible.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, is the work that needs to be done at the bottom, was it not envisaged that that needed to be done prior to the beginning of this financial year?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Mr Speaker, it is a very big scheme, a very complex scheme and the Public Works Department is not in a position to tackle it themselves. We are appointing consultants, in fact, the same consultants who did the whole study of the catchbench, to advise us on how to proceed.

HON J C PEREZ:

I am not talking now about the catchbench, Mr Speaker, I am talking about the area at the bottom which the Hon Member has said is very worrying and which he said his Department is going to tackle first. I am talking about stabilising the area where the Quarry Company is today. Can he or can he not confirm that money was already allotted for the building of a wall in that area in the last financial year?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker, as I have said, we haven't got the expertise or the time to be able to tackle the problem of the landslide below, this is what Wallace Evans will do for us.

MR SPEAKER:

I am afraid that we are not going to get into the details of what has to be done and how it is going to be done.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member has said that they have allocated money for that purpose the only thing I would like to know is under what heading in the Estimates has that money been allocated?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I have already given him an undertaking that I will provide him with that information.

HON J C PEREZ:

No, Mr Speaker. Is it Head 105, Subhead 10, the widening of Sir Herbert Miles Road or is it Head 106, Subhead 4, the water catchments?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I haven't got the information. It could be under the widening because we have taken the advantage of stabilising the sand quarry and at the same time widening the road. It could be any of those two votes.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Hon Member confirm that the works that need to be carried out to the area at road level to stabilise the area where the Quarry Company is, is deemed by the Government to be a matter of extreme urgency?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It is quite urgent but if we are not in a position to do it there is a certain pace at which we can do things. We have already asked the people representing the Public Works Department to get into contact with the consultants to be able to come up with a scheme and we hope to implement it as soon as possible. We have also indicated that we would like within this scheme to take advantage of a road widening programme in the area because there is another area which is opposite the Caleta Palace Hotel where there was a landslide in the past and a temporary wall was built which we hope to improve in the future.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not widen the scope of the question.

HON J BOSSANO:

I would like to ask the Hon Member, can he confirm that no work will be commenced in the current financial year?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

And did the Hon Member not tell us in the last House of Assembly that the reason why the Quarry Company could not be allowed to continue was because the employees would not be able to work because of the safety work that needed to be done in that area?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Yes, Sir.

HON J BOSSANO:

Therefore, is there anything to prevent the employees of the Quarry Company continuing working in that area until the Member is ready to start the safety work?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the question of the men working in the area and the safety is connected with the quarrying operations which make the area risky and that is, for example, the equipment that.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to go into that, in other words, the unsafe conditions in which the people are not prepared to work is related to the working of the quarry and not the circumstances surrounding the catchment or the bottom area.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, in the last House of Assembly the Hon Member gave us as an explanation for terminating the Quarry Company the fact that it was not possible for them to carry on being usefully employed in that area on any job because, in fact, something else was going to be done which was to make it safe. Can he tell us whether in the light of the fact that he is not yet able to say when such work is going to be conducted, then the Quarry Company will be able to continue usefully employing those people until such a time because that is the reason he gave us the last time?

MR SPEAKER:

But he has now given you another reason. He has said that the reason why the operations of the Quarry Company - I have just heard him saying it - is the fact that the equipment and the actual activities of the people working in the quarry was unsafe, that is what he is saying.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, when did that equipment and that activity to which he is now referring actually stop?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, as soon as the Public Works Department were

convinced that the works could not carry on, last year when I made the statement the Company had finished. What we have done is whilst we are finding them other alternative work within the Government Departments we have usefully employed the Quarry Company in making repairs to the damage caused to the water catchment area by the landslide so they have been usefully employed during all this period but not on quarrying where they have to use equipment which causes vibrations and can put their lives at risk.

HON J BOSSANO:

That is my question, Mr Speaker, that useful employment which the Hon Member mentioned in the last question in the last House he said would have to come to an end because of the safety stabilisation work that was going to be done in the lower part of the water catchments which he has now told us is not going to be done in the current financial year and which he has now told us he cannot give us a date for the start of work on so what is to prevent the same useful work that has been going on until now from continuing, that is my question?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, because the work that has been done in the lower catchments in connection with the damage caused by the landslide is now being done by the Quarry Company themselves and being paid from the Public Works Department vote. Once the work is completed I cannot visualise any other work which can be carried out by the Quarry Company which will not endanger their own lives.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 25 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J C PEREZ

Does Government anticipate that the painting programme budgetted in the Improvement and Development Fund will be completed in the current financial year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir, the programme will not be completed during the current financial year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 25 OF 1987

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Hon Member state how much of the money budgetted has been spent or is intended to be spent by the end of the financial year?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

No, Sir, I am not in a position to do so at this moment but I will supply the information to the Hon Member.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 26 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J C PEREZ

Has Government now completed the survey of all balconies in Government buildings deemed to be in a state of disrepair?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, a structural appraisal of one hundred and fifty two balconies in five blocks of flats, viz Stanley Buildings, Anderson House, Willis's House, McFarlane House and McMillan House, has now been completed.

It is anticipated that a report giving a detailed description of the state of the balconies and outlining ways of remedying the defects will be ready by the end of March and provision will be made in the Improvement and Development Fund Draft Estimates.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 26 OF 1987

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Member state whether he fulfilled his commitment, following my last question on the subject in November, to make safe the balconies at Stanley Buildings which had been identified to be unsafe through a survey made by his own Department?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The balconies at Stanley Buildings to correct it in a long-term plan was rather complex and we have done a complete survey of the whole of the building and it is hoped that by the end of March we will be in a position to carry out the repairs on the ones that we think are in a more dangerous condition.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Hon Member saying that they are going to get individual balconies and carry out repairs on grounds of safety and then later there is going to be a complete programme to do up all the balconies that are deemed to be in a state of disrepair?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, what is hoped is that the danger will be obliterated by either condemning the balconies for a certain period or if it

is possible, make a temporary repair but the in-depth repairs will not be done until the survey is completed and the structural engineers recommend to us the best way to complete the programme.

HON J C PEREZ:

Once the areas are identified is the Government planning a programme of repairs to these balconies on a yearly basis or is it planning to include most of the work in the incoming financial year?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, we hope that when the survey is completed we will be in a position to identify which are the worst of the buildings in question and if they are all bad we will try and do them all during one financial year. If one is worse than the other we will phase the programme to meet the resources that the Government will give to the Public Works Department.

MR SPEAKER:.

Next question.

NO. 27 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government state how many new Government housing units were started in 1984, 1985 and 1986?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

1984 - 47 units (Castle Ramp 22, Tank Ramp 11, Glacis Bedsits 14)
 1985 - 12 units (Knights Court 5, St Johns 7)
 1986 - 19 units (Willis's 3, South Pavilion 6, Alameda Estate 8, St John's Court 2 bedsitters) (+ 6 No. units for Social Cases).

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 27 OF 1987

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The ones that he has just mentioned for social cases, were they new units or modernised units?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think they were modernised so that they were composed of a cubicle which consists of one room and a kitchen.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Would the Hon Member then agree that there has been a decline on new units being built through the years?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, compared to Varyl Begg, of course there has been a decline.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Why is this so, Mr Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER:

We are not going to debate whether more houses should be built. I think the reason has been stated in the House more than once already. Perhaps you might ask whether it is intended to build more or whether it is intended to make funds available but let us not go into the reasons why it hasn't been done.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I am asking why there has been a decline in houses being built, Mr Speaker?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I think, Mr Speaker, that we have had two problems which the Hon Member I am sure is very well aware of. First of all, we haven't had a piece of land the size of Varyl Begg available and the second is that we have been going through a bad financial period which has been aggravated by the fact that ODA under the present Prime Minister has said 'No more ODA funds for social projects'.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

What the Hon Member is saying is that it is not a question of policy but a question of financial resources, is that correct?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I think everybody wants more housing in Gibraltar. I think the question is a rather wide one.

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, we are not going to debate, if we want a debate we can have one. Information is what you are seeking at Question Time.

HON J BOSSANO:

The reason, I think, Mr Speaker, for the question, if the Hon Member will allow me to expand on it, is that if it is a matter of financial constrain and we are asking for 1985/86 how does the Hon Member square that with the supposed prosperity in 1985 and 1986?

MR SPEAKER:

Fair enough, that is a sensible and reasonable question to be asked.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I think if we are going to go into the realms of finances it is not within my responsibilities.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 28 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government state how many new housing units were completed in the financial year for 1984, 1985 and 1986?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

1984/1985 - 30 units (Rosia Dale phase II)
 1985/1986 - 25 units (Tank Rampll, Glacis Bedsits 14)
 1986/1987 - 29 units (St John's Court 9, Knight's Court 5, Castle Ramp 15) (+ 6 units for Social Cases)

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 28 OF 1987

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can I ask the Hon Member, Mr Speaker, if the Government is satisfied that this is enough to break the back of the Housing problem that we have today?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, of course not.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it enough to maintain the housing problem that we have today with these figures?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I missed the Hon Member's question.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is the Government then satisfied that this is enough to maintain the housing problem as it is today?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, no, of course not. Other things have been built by Government during this period. We have just refurbished a completely new school in Town Range, that costs money. There are home ownership schemes, people have been encouraged to buy

old properties and convert them. We haven't become static, it is a known fact that we haven't had the finances and we haven't had the land.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, is the Government satisfied that this level of building houses is enough to keep the housing stock that the Government needs according to the report of the consultants of ODA? Keep the levels of stock as of today.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I am asked questions because my Department builds or has the authority to contract out for the building programmes but I am not the Minister for Housing.

MR SPEAKER:

Would you repeat your question?

HON J E PILCHER:

The question is, is the Government happy that this rate of building will keep the housing stock as it is today given the report that they received from the consultants of ODA? That is the question. I have asked the Government not the Minister for Public Works.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

On a point of order, I think it would help in future if questions are addressed to particular Members and Ministers responsible for the substance of the question. What the Opposition cannot do is under the guise of one question open up a whole area of policy which can be either by a specific question, motions or otherwise and therefore it is interminable if they carry on asking questions from a Minister who is, as he says, not responsible for housing. It is not that we are happy with the situation but I think we get away from the substance of seeking information which is the reason for questions.

MR SPEAKER:

I agree with the Hon and Learned the Chief Minister when he says that the Opposition tend to widen the scope of questions, it is their prerogative to try and if they get away with it, fair enough. It is my judgement to see at any given moment whether any useful purpose is being served but, most certainly, the

questions are asked by the Opposition to the Government and not to any particular Minister.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We must have sufficient notice of what is coming.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, we give a week's notice of the questions and half the time in acceptable supplementaries like the one in Question No.25 where the Minister said.....

MR SPEAKER:

May I say that I am liberal with supplementaries but I must add that the scope of questions is most certainly widened to, perhaps, sometimes unacceptable conditions and terms. In any event, if you want to ask a question go ahead.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, Question Nos. 27 and 28 asks of the Government not of the Minister for Housing, the rate of house building in the last three years. Does the Government not consider it an acceptable supplementary to ask them whether that rate of building on the last three years is consistent with the recommendation of the ODA as to the rate of building required to maintain the housing stock? Is it consistent or not or don't they know? Have they had a recommendation from the ODA?

MR SPEAKER:

You are not getting an answer and you are not going to get anywhere with the question.

HON J E PILCHER:

That is fine, the Government not answering is, I suppose, part of what they can do but what they cannot do is to complain that.....

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, I have said this many times. You cannot force the Government to answer if they don't want to, you can take whatever inference you want from the fact that they have not answered.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I think the Opposition must understand that there are more than one Minister involved with various facets of the housing programme. There is the Minister for Housing who is responsible for allocation, there is the Minister for Public Works who is responsible for the implementation of the Development Programme. I myself have overall responsibility for what goes into the Development Programme and therefore I have some responsibility for the planning that goes into the Housing Programme. Of course, the Government is not satisfied that its present building programme on housing, the Government's own present building programme on housing, is sufficient to break the back of the housing problem but that is not all that it is doing. It has got other schemes such as home ownership to try to tackle the housing problem in Gibraltar. With regard to the specific question about the Government housing stock, the fact is that to maintain the Government's housing stock doesn't just require that we continue to build a modicum of new units, what is also required is that there should be considerable maintenance of the existing housing stock and that is another aspect of the matter. But when a Minister is asked to answer a question, what we try to do is to identify from the question who should be the most appropriate Minister to answer it. In this case because the subject matter is the building of new housing units, the Public Works Department is responsible for that, the answer has been delegated to the Minister for Public Works but the supplementaries that are being asked go beyond the province of the Minister for Public Works.

HON J BOSSANO:

We haven't had an answer, Mr Speaker. The Hon Member makes a very long speech, you tell us that this is not the time for debate and we are simply saying does the figure provided by the Government in answer to Questions No.27 and 28 confirm to the ODA recommendation of the figure required every year to maintain the existing stock of Government housing? It is very simple.

HON A J CANEPA:

It is some time since I read the ODA Report but I am not aware of any ODA recommendation as to what annual figure is required. There may well be but there you are, you are widening the ambit of the subject matter by referring to a Report that Ministers may have read eighteen months ago and which we don't have readily available here so we need separate notice of the question.

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, I will not allow any further questions. Next question.

NO. 29 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J C PEREZ

Can Government state whether the tender for the conversion into offices of the St Jago's Store block, which closed on 22nd October, 1986, has now been allocated?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 29 OF 1987

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Hon Member release details of who has got the tender and what the price was?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, the date for contract endorsement was Friday 6 February, 1987; the date for possession Monday 23 February, 1987; date for completion 22 February, 1988; tender sum £420,967.79. The tender was awarded to Fabri Construction Ltd which was the lowest valid tender received.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

10 2 87

NO. 30 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state whether it has now been decided to allocate ODA funds to any tourist development project?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Answered together with Question No.31 of 1987.

NO. 31 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state whether the Forward Planning Committee has now reached its final deliberations on the tourist development which is going to be proceeded with?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM

The Forward Planning Committee is currently considering a number of projects, including some tourist orientated projects. A decision as to the method of financing those projects to be undertaken during this development programme has not yet been finalized.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 30 AND 31
OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, I have been getting the same answer since October where, for example, in December I was told two things, this is why I have two questions down on the Order Paper. One was that the information given to me by the Hon the Minister for Economic Development and Trade was the guise under which we should work but that it hadn't been finalised hence my second question, No.31, and the other was the extent to which the unallocated funds were going to be subject to forthcoming discussions with ODA officials in January/February, 1987, that is the basis of Question No.30. The answer which I have been given is really a repetition of the December answer, in fact, it is more vague than the December answer.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I should add, of course, that ODA officials were here, I think it was last week that a continuation of a presentation was made.

HON J E PILCHER:

So the answer to Question No.30 is that it has not been decided, that it is only a week since the ODA officials were here and it is an on-going process?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, that is putting words into my mouth, I have not

said it has not been decided, I have said that the Forward Planning Committee has already decided on a number of projects but the financing of this has not yet been finalised.

HON J E PILCHER:

I think, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member sought to answer both questions together and he is now mixing one question with the other. I am asking, Question No.30, is it that the ODA funds which have to be allocated to specific projects by ODA, that is an on-going process started last week which obviously has not been decided yet. That is one part, am I correct or not, Mr Speaker?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

We haven't as yet decided finally on this, Mr Speaker, but there are certain projects in there that might not be ODA financed.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, if I can refer the Minister to the answer given by the Hon the Minister for Economic Development and Trade in the last House, he said: 'The question of unallocated balance of ODA funds as, indeed, the whole funding of the programme is the subject of final consideration by the Forward Planning Committee and, therefore, perhaps I should add that the details I am going to furnish the Hon Member with are still subject to change'. What I am asking is, has the Forward Planning Committee met and is this now accepted or is there going to be change? That is one question.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, since I gave that answer in December, the Forward Planning Committee had a meeting in January. At that meeting we already knew that ODA officials and economists were going to visit Gibraltar at the beginning of February and that therefore these projects would be discussed with them and that has happened already and the Forward Planning Committee will be meeting later on this month to consider the results of those meetings with the ODA officials. For instance, one of the things that we wanted to know from them was what kind of projects, what criteria, what guidelines would they be keeping in mind in considering project applications in order to facilitate the task. We didn't want to submit projects which would be turned down because that is time wasting so these matters were clarified during the course of last week and we ought to be, at the next meeting of the Forward Planning Committee, in a position, I think

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to arrive at some decisions, perhaps not full decisions, but some decisions regarding the source of financing.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 32 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state how they intend to allocate the £330,000 earmarked for tourism in 1986/87?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Sir, the £330,000 earmarked for tourism has been allocated for the following works:

- (i) Improvements to St Michael's Cave
- (ii) Improvements to the Upper Galleries
- (iii) Refurbishment of the Air Terminal
- (iv) Embellishment of Europa Point

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 32 OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, the money has been allocated but I expect that the actual expenditure on the actual projects will not be undergone in this financial year?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, he is right, Sir, it will not be undergone in this financial year. I should like to add that some of it in the form of equipment that we may buy may be spent, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

10 2 87

NO. 33 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state how many arrivals were recorded in all hotels in 1986 and what percentage of these were tourist arrivals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Answered together with Question No.34 of 1987.

NO. 34 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state what was the average sleeper occupancy levels for all hotels in 1986 and of this what levels were tourist occupancy?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Sir, the information requested is not yet available. The Hotel Occupancy Report will, hopefully, be tabled during the Budget session of this House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 34 OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, we have asked this question obviously because we were not sure that we would get the Hotel Occupancy Survey before the budget. Could the Hon Minister get me the figures I have quoted before the budget session?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, normally of course the figures are provided by the hotels and therefore the Statistics Office as yet has not received, I think, the October/November/December figures, the last quarter. We are normally about a quarter behind in obtaining these figures so there could be a chance that I could have them at the end of March or so and, if so, I will certainly provide the Member with those figures, Sir, provided he reminds me of it, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 35 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state what is the estimated tourist expenditure for 1986 breaking it down as follows:-

- (a) Visitor arrivals at hotels
- (b) Excursionists from Morocco
- (c) Excursionists from cruises
- (d) Visitors on yachts
- (e) Visitors in supplementary accommodation
- (f) In-transit visitors
- (g) Visitors arriving by land?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM

Sir, this information is not yet available. The breakdown of tourist expenditure will be made available once the Tourist Survey Report has been completed. This is envisaged sometime during Summer 1987.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 35 OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, I think it is important. In the coming budget there are a number of questions which we have to ask ourselves and ask the Government on their tourist policies, on building more hotels, and obviously these statistics are very, very important for us to analyse the way forward that the Government is producing and whether or not, according to the statistics this, as far as the Opposition is concerned, this is the way that we should go but, of course, without these statistics it is like the blind leading the blind. Is there no way that the Government can have in their possession these figures I accept that as far as the hotels are concerned.....

MR SPEAKER:

What you are asking is whether you can get the information. Can we have an answer to that?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, if they are available I will willingly hand them over to the Hon Member but it is just that I haven't got this information which has not been furnished by quite a number of different inputs, it is not just the hotels but from the (a) to (g) that the Hon Member has asked I just haven't got them available. When I have it I commit myself, provided he reminds me to let him have it, Sir.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Is the Minister suggesting that he has no figures available? Are figures produced on a quarterly basis, for example, is he able to furnish at least nine months figures corresponding to the questions which have been put by my Hon colleague or has he got no figures at all?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Mr Speaker, I have plenty of answers and I have plenty of figures I assure the Hon Member. If nine months are wanted, that is, from the 1st January to 30th September, I have them in the office, that can be made available now, in ten minutes, but the question is for 1986 and, of course, one is thinking of the 31st December inclusive and as I have said, in several of the requirements we are lacking the last quarter of the year.

HON M A FEETHAM:

I can understand that, Mr Speaker, but since he hasn't got the full information at least he could supply whatever information he has. Will he do that?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Sir.

10 2 87

NO. 36 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J C PEREZ

Is it still Government's intention to introduce regulations for the full operation of the MOT Test Centre at Eastern Beach?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir. Draft Regulations will shortly be presented to Ministers and it is hoped to publish the Regulations by April, 1987.

NO. 37 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government state what is the total number of applicants for Government housing up to the end of January, 1987?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, there were 2106 applicants for Government housing at the end of January, 1987.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 37 OF 1987

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is this an increase on previous years?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think it is a slight increase. The figures have been hovering around the 2000 mark for the last year.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Hon Member state if the Housing Department has specified why there are these increases through the years?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Would you repeat that please?

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Hon Member state if the Housing Department can identify why there are these increases through the years?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think it is partly that the number of houses that have become available year by year have not been as great as they were, say five or six year's ago.

NO. 38 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government state what is the total number of applicants in the Housing Medical List up to the end of January, 1987?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir. The Housing Medical List was made up of 56 applicants at the end of January, 1987.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 38 OF 1987

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Am I correct in assuming that the persons in this List will only be allocated houses that are new and it will be a percentage of those that will be allocated from this List?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Of either new or modernised housing and a certain percentage is put aside for the Medical categories. Sometimes an old pre-war house does become available and if it is offered to a medical category and they accept it is given to them.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The Hon Member can then confirm that the restriction is not only on these people that it has to be new housing? In other words, if a post-war house is available it can also be allocated?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 39 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government state how many post-war houses are vacant at present?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, there are 4 post-war houses vacant at present.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 39 OF 1987

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Hon Member state when they will be ready for allocation and why they are vacant at the moment?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the composition of the vacant houses is a bedsitter at St Joseph's, this is to be offered to a tenant from Jumper's Buildings; a 2RKB at Harrington Buildings, the family of the late tenant through their lawyer are making a bid for the exchange of flat, there is another tenant who is also interested and who would exchange for a 3RKB. The problem has been referred to the Housing Allocation Committee and will be resolved at their next monthly meeting to be held on Monday the 2nd March. There is a 3RKB at Rosia House, this is to be allocated on points; and a 2RKB at 11, Royal Sovereign House, this is at the moment occupied by squatters and we are applying to the Supreme Court to get the squatters out.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 40 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government state when was the last survey of the Government pre-war housing stock carried out?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

The last survey of all pre-war houses was carried out in 1975.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 40 OF 1987

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Doesn't the Hon Member consider that there should be another survey carried out to assess what is the situation of pre-war houses under the Government rent roll?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think a survey should be carried out about once every ten years so I think one is due now.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

What the Hon Member is saying is that he is satisfied that the information that he has under the 1975 survey is sufficient for the Housing Department to assess if there are any repairs to be carried out to these houses?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 41 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government confirm that they will only allow exchanges between tenants of Rosia Dale and other Estates, if tenants moving into Rosia Dale commit themselves to purchasing the flats?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir, exchanges are only allowed if the tenant moving into Rosia Dale commits himself to purchase the flat.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 41 OF 1987

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Am I correct in assuming that this condition was not one put to them when they were allocated the flat?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, when the people were allocated the flat it wasn't a question of exchanges or a question of purchasing but since Rosia Dale has been put as an eminent area for home ownership, if anybody should move into the area we wish them to commit themselves to purchasing the flat.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

What happens if somebody accepts those conditions and moves into Rosia Dale and after he has moved he then decided that he doesn't want to purchase the flat?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think we would try and ask them to exchange back out of Rosia Dale to somewhere else.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

10 2 87

NO. 42 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government state if the monitoring system for the reserve funds that landlords are required to set up under the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance, has been introduced?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

The Legal Notice in respect of the Landlord and Tenant (Reserve Funds) Regulation 1987, introducing the necessary regulations to monitor the reserve funds, will be published on the 12 February, 1987, and will come into effect on the 1 April, 1987.

NO. 43 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Can Government state how many persons were registered under the provisions of the GPMS on 1st January, 1987, by virtue of Section 4(1) of the Ordinance and give a breakdown of residence, residence permit holders and frontier workers?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the breakdown requested by the Honourable Questioner is not available. It is estimated that the number of persons covered under the Ordinance is approximately 24,000.

Separate statistics are, however, available in respect of Frontier Workers. There are 635 Frontier Workers registered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 43 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, doesn't the Minister consider that it is important that they should monitor how many people are registered in every aspect like frontier workers, etc?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It presents a certain amount of clerical difficulties to get the figures exactly.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, yet it is important for the Government to know how much it is going to cost them at the end of the financial year. Does he not think that this is important at the end of the year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We have an estimate, we don't have the exact figures which is what you were asking for.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister state how many persons are exempted and how many are paying directly?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would have to get notice of that question, I will find the information and send it to you.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, doesn't the Government consider it extraordinary that they have no projections at all as to the amount of money that it is going to cost them as regards the number of people that are registered under the GPMS, isn't this important?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We do have projections, we have estimated there are 24,000 people.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

And this is overall then because the Minister has just told me that he doesn't know the figures for those people who are exempted, is this an overall figure?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is an overall figure, yes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 44 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Can Government state what were the operating costs of the GPMS exclusive of the cost of prescriptions, in 1984/85 and 1985/86 and the projected cost in 1986/87?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the figures requested are as follows:

1984/85	£319,752
1985/86	£378,964
1986/87	£395,996

NO. 45 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Can Government state how much revenue was collected by contributions to the GPMS in 1984/85 and 1985/86 and the projected revenue for 1986/87?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the actual revenue collected in the financial years 1984/85 and 1985/86 is as follows:

1984/85	£606,636
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1985/86	£762,918
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The projected revenue collectable in the financial year 1986/87 is estimated as £763,000.

NO. 46 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Is Government satisfied that they now have the Meningitis epidemic under control?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir, all possible steps have been taken and will continue to be taken, to deal with the outbreak of this disease.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 46 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say how many cases there have been this year?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Off the cuff, I think there have been four cases.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister say whether they are, in fact, monitoring the situation and do they know at what stage of the epidemic we are in, whether it is declining, whether it is progressing or whether it is static?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It has not been identified that meningitis is in any specific area of Gibraltar. We have had cases from very different geographical situations. I would say that the situation is static at the moment.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government have an idea as to the main cause of the epidemic?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, there is no basic reason why it should be prevalent at the moment but it is prevalent in England as well, it seems to be just one of those things that occurs every so often.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that the Medical authorities are putting a lot of emphasis on the fact that Gibraltar is very densely populated?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Dense population is a contributory factor to the spread of such diseases.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Government then taking into account this problem seriously in view of the fact that they are trying to attract more and more people to come and live in Gibraltar in very densely populated areas?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I wouldn't think that if persons come to live in Gibraltar it is going to make a very great increase in the number of meningitis cases.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 47 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Can Government state when they ordered the equipment for screentesting for AIDS?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the equipment was ordered on the 18 December, 1986.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 47 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, does the Minister know when the equipment is expected to arrive in Gibraltar?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We hope within four weeks.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 48 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Can Government state when they will be running an educational campaign on AIDS?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, I have appointed a Committee under my Chairmanship consisting of:

Director of Medical & Health Services
Director of Education
Administrator, Medical and Health Department
Chief Environmental Health Officer
Matron
Medical Officer I/C Royal Naval Hospital
Rt Rev Mgr C Caruana
Dr D P Wigesinghe
Dr M Maskill
Surg Cdr D Evans
Dr N Borge
Dr W Fitzpatrick

The Committee has already met once, and I can confirm that the question of running an educational campaign on AIDS is being actively pursued.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 48 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I am glad for all that information, we are very concerned as well as to the number of people involved in the Committee, but the point that we want to know is when the campaign is actually going to start? I would like the Minister to give a commitment on a date of when the campaign will be seen to be carried out in Gibraltar, I think that is very important.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We have a leaflet from the United Kingdom which was circulated to all households in the United Kingdom. This is being adapted for Gibraltar and also translated into Spanish. It is due to be presented to us on the 23rd of this month for final vetting when it will go to the printers after which it will be circulated to all households in Gibraltar.

NO. 49 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Has Government now ordered the special syringes for our Medical Services, which reduce the dangers of contamination in relation to AIDS?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, I am advised that these special syringes are only used in confirmed areas of infectious diseases, such as AIDS. No danger is envisaged in the continued use of normal syringes, which are disposable, in routine blood taking provided normal precautions are taken. The question of obtaining a small stock of these special syringes is under active consideration.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 49 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

By the Committee, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, by the Director of Medical and Health Services.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 50 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Can Government state how much they have spent of the £50,000 maintenance money provided for in the Departmental Vote in the Estimates of Expenditure for the Medical Services?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Of the £70,000 provided under Head 16 Sub-head 22, £54,300 have been spent to date.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 50 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Government confirm that this is the only money available for the Medical and Health Department?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, when all that is spent if we need more and it is something urgent then we will go for a supplementary.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Minister satisfied with the state of the Hospitals at the present moment, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Does that mean that the Minister will be asking for more money for their maintenance?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

He has already asked for certain extra things to be done, they are under consideration.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Minister aware of the condition of Napier Ward specifically, Mr Speaker?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Napier Ward is not in too bad a condition, it was painted, I think, last year, it was fumigated this year, it is not in too bad a condition, I go there practically every morning and I think it is in reasonable nick.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member goes there practically every morning does he not get complaints about cockroaches running up and down the Ward every night and has he not got complaints that the wheelchairs cannot be taken into the bathroom to be able to bathe the patients who need to be carried by nurses and the holes that there are in the washing facilities and the conditions of the showers and the conditions of the toilets and that there is a particular equipment in the washing area which is used by nurses to clean out pans which has been out of order for seven years? Is the Hon Member not made aware of this every time he visits Napier Ward?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I have been made aware of the cockroaches and that was the reason that the whole place was fumigated but since then I have been told there has been no more incidence of these unpleasant creatures. I will look into the other points that you have mentioned.

HON J C PEREZ:

Perhaps you could look into the matter of cockroaches as well because the reports we have are that even last week after the fumigation by the Government, there have been cockroaches running up and down the ledges behind the beds and complaints have been made by the patients to the nursing staff.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They haven't told me.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 51 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Has Government now received confirmation from UK following the visit of the expert, that local nursing qualifications will be recognised by UK and the EEC?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 51 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister explain what the problem is?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We are still waiting for the report from the nursing team that came out here, they have promised their report fairly shortly.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister confirm that the nursing team who came over to investigate actually confirmed that our nursing qualifications were acceptable by UK and the EEC?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They were very highly impressed by our nursing situation in Gibraltar and they went back to recommend that we should be accepted but so far it has not come through.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Minister expecting any changes in our nursing standards?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The only changes I can see would be for the better. At the moment our standards are very high.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

In that case, Mr Speaker, why is it that since 1984 he has been telling me in this House that all sorts of changes had to be

introduced before we got our qualifications accepted?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

One of the things that had to be introduced was a cardex system, this has been introduced last year. The other points that were brought out in the earlier report that we had have been looked into by the team that came out and apparently have been found satisfactory.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Really, Mr Speaker, what we are saying is, since 1979, since the Briggs Report was presented to the Government all that has been required is a minor change and it has taken the Government eight years to get our nursing qualifications accepted. Is that the reality of the situation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

This is not in the Government's hands here, this is something that has to be decided by the Nursing Association in the United Kingdom.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

But, surely, it is the Government that has to get moving to try and see whether our qualifications are acceptable or not. We have been pressing in this House since 1984, Mr Speaker, and we have had all sorts of excuses for the delays. If the Minister is saying now that all that is needed is a minor change, surely it proves that all that the Minister has been doing is looking at the Briggs Report and not getting to the actual body in UK who should have actually okayed our qualifications.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The actual body that has got to look into it are the two gentlemen who came out here a little while ago, have looked into it, have gone back and will be making their report to the Nursing Association in Britain to see whether they will accept it or not. Beyond that the Minister here cannot do anything.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, if these two gentlemen that the Minister is referring to had been brought here in 1984 would we not be at this stage....

MR SPEAKER:

That is hypothetical.

HON J E PILCHER:

It is hypothetical but then his answer was hypothetical as well, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Fair enough, that is why I am stopping you. Next question.

NO. 52 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

When does Government expect to have the report of the Review Team for the Medical Services?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the Report has already been received and is being studied.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 52 OF 1987

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Minister give a commitment on a date by which the Government will take a decision as far as its implementation?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, as I said, at the moment it is being studied and until the full study has been completed determinations cannot be arrived at.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, will the Government be handing the Opposition a copy of that report?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, in due course copies will be made available to the Opposition and the report will also be made public.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, when the Minister saw the experts, did the experts confirm to the Minister that unless these recommendations were implemented our medical services would be at the point of collapse?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, this is what the experts told the Opposition. Is

it that the Minister has had different advice from the experts?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I don't know what they said to the Hon Leader of the Opposition and the Hon Spokeslady for Medical Services for the Opposition when they met. I can only say what they said to us.

HON M I MONTEGRIFFO:

What is it, Mr Speaker, that the experts told the Minister?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

They said the matter was urgent but they didn't say that we were on the point of imminent collapse.

HON M I MONTEGRIFFO:

But then, Mr Speaker, if the matter is urgent, does the Minister accept that something has to be done urgently?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, that is why we are studying the matter with a sense of urgency.

HON J E PILCHER:

The Hon Minister said that the Opposition would be getting a report in due course and then he also said that in due course it would be made public. Could we ask confirmation that the Opposition will be getting the report before the Government takes decision on the matter so that we can also refer to the report?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 53 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government state whether any restrictions have been placed on the area for the street market in Church Lane?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir, following a series of complaints from occupiers in the neighbourhood which have been found to be justified, the Government has decided that the Street Market should not be held in Church Lane or Cannon Lane on Fridays. The Street Market Association have, however, been allocated an alternative site, namely, Sir Herbert Miles Promenade for Fridays and are being allowed to use the Cannon Lane/Church Lane area as usual on Saturdays. I understand, Sir, that we are going to have another alternative site for Fridays.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 53 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Can the Minister please state what conclusions they have come to in order to reach that particular decision? Can the Minister confirm that, in fact, what was quoted in the press was that it has hampering the Finance Centre and as a result of that the street market was asked to cease operation on Friday?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It was not hampering the Finance Centre generally, it was hampering the Finance Centre in that building there. It was creating a certain nuisance to the tenants of the Gibraltar Heights building.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Can the Minister confirm that what he said in the media was, in fact, that the complaints arose during Christmas time?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The complaint has arisen long before Christmas but it was aggravated at Christmas time when as a special privilege the market was allowed to be there every day all through Christmas week but there was considerable complaint that transistors were playing very loudly, there was a gentleman clanging a bell all the time and they could not work in the offices very satisfactorily.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that, in fact, the noise that he was referring to was the fact that we had a Father Christmas ringing a bell.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, order, I am not going to allow it. You can ask the reasons why but we are not going to go into every detail, I am not allowing it.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, will the Government say why they acted in such a dictatorial fashion in allowing a street market operation for five and a half months and then without any prior consultation or warning stop the operation overnight? That is what I want to know, why act in that dictatorial fashion?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

First, they were not there for five and a half months, they were there I think for a period of something like eight weeks and they had been told when they went there from the previous site that they were allocated which had to be disused for traffic reasons temporarily, that they were there for a period on trial.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, if it has hampered Gibraltar Heights can the Government say, for example, how many clients Barclays Bank has lost as a result of having the street market operating outside its premises?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I haven't been given any notification of the financial situation of Barclays Bank with regard to the street market.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, I take it that there has been a complaint from how many persons; one, two, three, who have complained about the street market operating in that area?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

There were a number of general complaints from residents in that area.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, I take it that Government is now offering an alternative site which is by the boulevard?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, I told you that we had another alternative site.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Can the Hon Minister say which is the alternative site.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

It is the one from which the street market had to leave owing to traffic situations, that is the north side of John Mackintosh Square.

HON M A FEETHAM:

And has the Minister already told the Street Market Association this?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, I promised I will tell them that this evening.

HON M A FEETHAM:

If this alternative site is not acceptable, will the Minister take into consideration that the nature of the operation of a street market requires a turnover of people and having made the political decision to allow a street market to operate in Gibraltar it is no good having made the decision, to offer a site to the street market where they are not going to make any income at all or they are going to have losses rather than income.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The Hon Member is definitely flogging a dead horse, I can tell him that the street market would be very happy to go back to the north side of John Mackintosh Square and they have already informed me of that.

HON M A FEETHAM:

If that is the case you should have said so from the beginning.

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NO. 54 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government state how many public companies are registered under the Companies Ordinance in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, there are 42 Public Companies registered in Gibraltar under the Companies Ordinance.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 54 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Can Government confirm that public companies have to publish company accounts under the existing Companies Ordinance?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 55 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government state how many public companies registered on the 31st December, 1986, were investment companies?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, there were 40 Public Companies registered in Gibraltar on 31st December, 1986, and all can undertake investment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 55 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, isn't it a fact that the Bill which is being brought to the House on amendments to the Income Tax Ordinance, that tax concessions are being extended to investment companies?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, we are not aware of that, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 56 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Has Government now investigated the situation regarding service charges at Ocean Heights and what control do they intend to introduce?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, Government has received representations separately from nine flats owners of Ocean Heights regarding Services Charges.

As a result of this the Consumer Protection Officer has held a series of meetings with these tenants and consideration is being given to introducing legislation in order to protect those concerned.

The Consumer Protection Officer is in contact with the Attorney-General's Chambers in order to advise on the best manner of solving this problem.

NO. 57 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government confirm that it intends to put out to tender the site known as old Brympton School?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. Tender documents for the redevelopment of Brympton/Villa Victoria are ready and arrangements are in-hand to invite tenders.

In fact, since the answer was prepared, Mr Speaker, I can state that tenders were invited in yesterday's Chronicle.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 57 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Can the Hon Minister give some indication of what the conditions of the tender are going to be?

HON A J CANEPA:

The main conditions are that as regards prices we envisage an element of control over selling prices and therefore it is intended to give preference to proposals aimed at a price range of between £35,000 to £42,000. If there is subsequently an increase in price, the intention would be to control that by loss of a refund on the premium offered and the sharing of any increase on a 50/50 basis with the Government. Also priority in the sale of the units will be given to tenants of Government accommodation who will therefore release accommodation to the Government for re-allocation and then, apart from those, to other people on the waiting list.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Could the Minister say what criteria he has used in arriving at the restriction of the selling of the flats in the range of £35,000 to £42,000 per unit?

HON A J CANEPA:

We have based that on the selling prices obtained at Vineyard in the knowledge that this is a different sort of site. We envisage that instead of having the type of blocks of flats

that are going to be built at Vineyard, this will be a development more tailored to the site there. It is on a slope and therefore building will be somewhat more difficult, access to the site is also more difficult so I don't think that we can expect that the prices could be on a par with Vineyard. It may also be possible to have slightly superior type of accommodation than the sort of blocks of flats that we are going to have at Vineyard and that is how, tentatively, we have arrived at this sort of price range.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Having therefore set a price range for a developer are we debarring any other developer who feels he could, in effect, build units there of a cheaper range?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, not cheaper but certainly above that. The Government would not wish to see units at Brympton above this price range, we don't want to see units which are going to be sold at £55,000 or £60,000. If there is a developer who is able to come up with proposals involving units below this price range they will not be debarred, they will be given very serious consideration.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Could the Minister inform the House when, having established a price of £35,000 to £42,000 and having classified it as moderately priced units, could the Minister inform the House what criteria he used at arriving at that conclusion in terms of the available income in Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

We have had regard to what new housing has been costing the Government. Even though it was prior to the opening of the frontier, we haven't seen in the public sector as yet any indications that, for Government, prices are that much lower so we are keeping in mind the cost of new accommodation to Government at the time of the last new blocks of flats at St Joseph's, at St Jago's - that was in about 1982 - and they were costing Government over £40,000. At Castle Road/Road to the Lines, even though it has been a case of modernisation, the prices there have been not exactly low and insofar as Government tendering is concerned, in the case, for instance, of offices at St Jago's, the tender prices have been far in excess of what was estimated, thinking that because of the opening of the frontier building costs would be lower, so we

do not envisage that it is going to be possible on a site such as this one to be able to build much more cheaply than the kind of accommodation that was being built for the Government two or three year's ago.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, what I was trying to extract from the Minister and to some extent he did reply though he went off at a tangent is, having established a price then, obviously, you have also identified a market and a potential area for selling these units and since according to Government's own statistics we are talking about average earnings of about £140 a week, can Government tell me to whom they envisage these flats are going to be sold?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't think they are going to be sold to people earning £140 a week. They are going to be sold to people who earn beyond that, to families where there is also more than one wage earner and therefore those are people who are interested in giving up the accommodation which they occupy in order to go and move somewhere else where there would be a smaller number of people living, where they might consider because of the view there that their quality of life is going to be improved and so on. The market that there is in this regard, I can tell the Hon Member, is very considerable. There are no end of people who have approached me, who phone the Crown Lands Department asking to be put on some hypothetical list that they think that we are keeping and, of course, we are not. I also know that there are developers who have been approached already and people have asked them to put them on a list should they be successful. I have no doubt that there are enough families to take up the thirty-five or forty units that are probably going to be built there, the majority of which are going to give up accommodation at Laguna, at Varyl Begg and other Government Estates which the Government in turn will be able to allocate precisely to people who can only earn up to about £140 a week and therefore who cannot buy their own property.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Could the Minister inform the House what he had in mind when he said that there would be subsidies available?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, this is a response to proposals that I have received from Action for Housing on a discount scheme that they have submitted to me, I am having a meeting with them next week and within the Government when we considered the proposals that Action for Housing have submitted, we have had one or two ideas which we are still working on, which we are still developing, and I want to put these preliminary ideas back to Action for Housing for them to think about but I don't think that it is fair when I have written to them and released the letter to the media and I have said that I will be informing them of these counter proposals next week, I don't think it would be fair to them to reveal these in the House and, in any case, they are of a general application and do not necessarily arise at this stage out of Brympton. I would think, having regard to what I have said about certain income groups, I don't think that people who will be interested in purchasing accommodation at Brympton will need any subsidies. I shouldn't think that they will. The subsidy scheme is one that we have in mind for Montagu Basin.

HON M A FEETHAM:

I am grateful for that answer. What conditions are there going to be to stop any EEC nationals from coming and buying a flat in that particular project?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think the fact that we are giving priority to others, the fact that priority is being given to people who hand in accommodation to Government in the first place and, secondly to those who are on the waiting list, should take care of that. I doubt whether there will be many units of accommodation left over for other EEC nationals.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

When the Hon Member mentions people who are in the Housing Waiting List, does he mean those people who are physically in the Housing Waiting List or those people who are eligible to be in the Housing Waiting List?

HON A J CANEPA:

Those who are in the Housing Waiting List and then from then on the third category, obviously, would be people eligible. I actually meant people on the waiting list itself, in other words, applicants for housing.

NO. 58 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government state how the original Rosia Bay Development Project as envisaged in the brochure produced by them in 1984 differs from the one recently awarded?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, there are only two major differences between the original scheme produced by Public Works and the one recently considered. The first is that Parson's Lodge and the escarpment to the south have been omitted from the development area. This will allow the future restoration and conservation of the Battery and the line wall adjacent thereto.

The other main difference is the substitution of an apartment block abutting and overhanging the line wall along Rosia Parade by two tower blocks sited diagonally across the Parade and set back to totally expose the line wall. The two buildings were preferred by the Development and Planning Commission because more open space at ground floor would be available and the splitting of the building into two would be less obstrusive.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 58 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Would the Hon Member confirm that this is the brochure that was originally produced at the time of inviting the project?

HON A J CANEPA:

Would he turn it over, the cover normally looks different to that. Yes, thats it.

HON M A FEETHAM:

This is the docket that contains the brochure with the conditions and the plans. Will the Minister confirm, I need to have to repeat in order to be able to ask the question, certain aspects of the way this project was sold to the general public in Gibraltar in order to make a fair comparison, Mr Speaker, with what has been agreed to now. Will Government confirm that the brochure which sold the broad guidelines to invite developers spoke about Gibraltar having many amenities to offer - 'The site is placed in an established leisure area; a historical and

attractive location; major possibilities for an exciting development; the design potential, and the general concept' - That is the brochure, will the Government confirm that that, in fact, is what was sold to the public in August, 1984?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think it is a pity, Mr Speaker, that the proceedings of the House are only being broadcast over radio and not over television.

HON M A FEETHAM:

In reply to my question the Hon Minister has said that, in fact, the Parson's Lodge area which according to the brochure would have seen a development of an apartment hotel on the slope leading up to the Parson's Lodge will no longer form part of the development.

HON A J CANEPA:

The development proposals that have been received from the prospective developers do not include any development on Parson's Lodge or on the slope leading thereto.

HON M A FEETHAM:

So, in effect, will the Government confirm that what would be seen to be a particular difficult area in terms of profitability when looking at it from the point of view of a developer, has now been hived off from a prime site development?

HON A J CANEPA:

It has been hived off but I would not necessarily accept for the reason which the Hon Member has suggested in the first part to his question, namely, a question of profitability. What they have told the Development and Planning Commission is that they do not wish to consider development of Parsons's Lodge for, what I would term, conservationist reasons.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Would the Hon Member not accept that the conservationists argument is not related to the development that was originally envisaged since one thing was not incompatible with the other? We are talking about an apartment hotel, apartments leading up to Parson's Lodge and Parson's Lodge would still have been there for development in one form or another which would have been acceptable to the conservationists. I am asking this question, will Government confirm that that is, in fact, the case?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, not necessarily. They take the view that they don't want to risk proposals for Parson's Lodge which might bring them into conflict with the conservationist lobby, those are the reasons which have been put to me.

HON M A FEETHAM:

In other words, the reason which the Minister has been defending against the conservationist lobby he has accepted being put over by the developers so that a third of the envisaged project is now not going to be developed?

HON A J CANEPA:

What has happened is, Mr Speaker, that the developers have put these views to the Development and Planning Commission, the Development and Planning Commission would prefer to see some modest low scale development on Parson's Lodge, that the whole of the area is developed comprehensively but the Development and Planning Commission, I think, also considers that it is possible for another party to come in in respect of Parson's Lodge and work on something that could harmonise and that would not be in conflict with anyone. In fact, I have had separate letters from other people pointing to interest being shown by a group who would be interested in doing something at Parson's Lodge that would not be incompatible with the objectives of the Conservation Society.

HON M A FEETHAM:

What the Minister doesn't seem to grasp and I am sorry if I am belabouring the matter because we are talking about a major development of the prime site in Gibraltar.....

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, I have to call your attention, we are debating.

HON M A FEETHAM:

I accept that. Will the Minister not accept that having therefore now conceded to the developer that that area is not going to be developed as it originally envisaged of fifty apartment hotel units that therefore one aspect of the original exciting brochure which was produced is no longer there for development as envisaged? Can I now concentrate, Mr Speaker, on the Rosia Parade area. Will the Minister accept that one-third of it is

now no longer there as originally envisaged?

HON A J CANEPA:

The brochure is not sacrosanct, the brochure represents guidelines.

HON M A FEETHAM:

But the brochure also tells us, Mr Speaker, will the Minister not agree, that whilst they are broad guidelines.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, I think we have established what you want to establish. You have been told already, yes, the new development does not encompass the Parson's Lodge area. You can take your inference from that, but let us not go beyond that.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Will the Minister agree that the original planners or the original thinkers behind this project when this project was put out for development believed that the general concept that was going to be developed in the Rosia Bay area was one which would blend in with the sensitivity and historic potential of the area and, in fact, if that is not what is going to happen and we are now going to have two multi-storey type buildings, that that in fact is harmful to the potential and creative area that is there both from the historical point of view and from the touristic potential of the area? Will the Minister not agree to that?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't know what was in the minds of the planners. I can tell the Hon Member what is in my mind.

HON M A FEETHAM:

The Minister may not want or believes he doesn't know what was in the minds of the planners but will the Minister.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, you are not seeking information in any manner or form. If you feel that this is important enough to debate then debate it by all means but at Question Time you are limited to seeking information but not views and opinions.

HON M A FEETHAM:

In that case, Mr Speaker, I will ask for a debate on the adjournment.

HON A J CANEPA:

I hope, Mr Speaker, that it is clear that the Hon Member is asking for a debate on the adjournment not because he is receiving unsatisfactory answers from the Minister responsible for answering but for other reasons because in all the years that I have been in the House whenever a matter has been raised at Question Time and has subsequently been raised in the adjournment debate, it has been because the Opposition has not been satisfied with the answers that they have been getting. I hope that it isn't for that reason.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, in fact, I am not satisfied with the answers I am getting.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am willing to answer as many questions as you in your judgement will allow me to answer.

MR SPEAKER:

You don't have to give any reasons why you want to raise it on the adjournment, you are entitled to raise it on the adjournment.

HON M A FEETHAM:

If I am allowed to continue with my questions.

MR SPEAKER:

No, not on the lines that you are questioning, certainly not, but most certainly you are entitled, and you don't have to give reasons, to raise it on the adjournment. You have got to give notice in writing. Next question.

10 2 87

NO. 59 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government confirm that the building of a hotel at Queensway was a necessary condition of the development being awarded to the successful tenderer?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. The intention has always been that an hotel should be constructed at Queensway as part of the redevelopment of the area.

NO. 60 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government confirm that the area known as the Northern Defences and the Tunnels underneath that area has been allocated on a direct basis?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir. The area known as the Northern Defences and the tunnels below have not been allocated on a direct allocation basis. An application for a direct allocation of the area to restore the defences, with a view to opening them up as a touristic attraction, was originally made in April 1986 and the matter has now gone through various Government Committees and is currently being considered by the Land Board. Other parties have recently shown a similar interest in the restoration of the area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 60 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, will the Government be awarding this on a direct allocation basis?

HON A J CANEPA:

It may or it may not, Mr Speaker, no decision has been taken to that effect one way or the other as yet.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Will Government be making any announcement to that effect before it actually happens? Mr Speaker, will the Minister agree that one can accept the concept of direct allocation for particular things, for example, as has happened when we had the kiosk at Alameda, where we have had the Silk Cut Lounge at the airport, where we have had the Government Hostel at Devil's Tower Road and so on, but we are talking about a unique historical thing when once it goes it is gone forever, if you understand what I mean. Therefore, I think that since it is a matter of public interest that there should be a public announcement so that everybody knows where they stand.

HON A J CANEPA:

A public announcement before the Government takes a decision?

A public announcement that the Government is going to consider the matter and then take a decision? Is that what he is after?

HON M A FEETHAM:

That Government intends to make a direct allocation?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Government is prepared to consider making a direct allocation of this site under the criteria that it has accepted as a result of the Pitaluga Report but that doesn't mean that there is a project in respect of which decisions have reached the stage of a direct allocation. The matter is with the Land Board, the proposals that have been received have to be submitted to the Museum Committee because the area in question although very extensive is, in fact, listed as an ancient monument and the views of the Museum Committee have to be obtained. When those views have been received it is possible that the Land Board may recommend to the Government that the project is worthy of a direct allocation but we haven't reached that stage.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Is Government constituting any consultation process in the meantime with, for example, the History and Heritage Committee or is Government aware that the Friends of Gibraltar's Heritage are in the process of raising funds for a specific project in Gibraltar and they have, in fact, earmarked the tunnels and the Northern Defences as a possibility for that project?

HON A J CANEPA:

I will take a leaf out of the book of my colleague the Chief Minister and say there are two questions here, Mr Speaker. The first one is the History and Heritage Committee - which Committee is he referring to? Is the History and Heritage Committee a Committee that was established as a result of the Pitaluga Report, one of the Committees under the Tourist Consultative Board?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Yes.

HON A J CANEPA:

Then the answer to that is that if we consult the Museum

Committee we don't need to consult them, really, it is either one or the other and the proper Committee is the Museum Committee. As far as the Heritage people are concerned, I am aware that there is and, indeed, the Government is aware, that there is considerable interest from that group of people who are anxious to help Gibraltar in the Northern Defences. At the time when there was a meeting here in November, I had a meeting with one or two people who were here then who said that they were representing an interest, which I won't mention by name, but which has got a long-standing connection in the United Kingdom with projects of this nature and who indicated to me last November that they might be interested in submitting proposals. I told them what the state of play was, that a proposal had been received in April, 1986, and I urged them if they were interested in pursuing the matter to let me have their proposals as soon as possible and certainly not much later than next month or so because one cannot keep people waiting forever. As far as the Friends of Gibraltar as a group are concerned, they have not made any distinct proposals, any separate proposals and I don't think that they will either.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, if I can bring the Minister back to something he said about direct allocation. Obviously in my role of shadowing tourism, since the Pitaluga Report was really a Report geared towards tourism, am I not correct in assuming that when the Pitaluga Report spoke of direct allocation he was really referring to direct allocation in areas where there was a question of urgency, where a building had to go up and people had to spend money?

HON A J CANEPA:

No. The intention was direct allocations for projects that were touristically orientated and where the whole idea was new, a new idea that someone had conceived. The intention was to encourage people who came forward with original ideas with intentions to invest in a particular project and to consider a direct allocation in respect of that project because to go out to tender could mean that other people could then poach on this novel idea in the tendering process. That is the philosophy, as I understand it, behind the recommendations in the Pitaluga Report.

HON J E PILCHER:

I accept the philosophy but I think that Mr Pitaluga, in essence, and at least we understand it this way on this side

of the House, was talking about minor touristic projects, not a project of the immensity of the allocation of all the Northern Defences which is a major asset belonging to the Gibraltar Government.

HON A J CANEPA:

But although this area, Mr Speaker, is extensive it has got very little development potential. There is not a great deal that you can do by way of development in that area, more so because it is a listed monument and therefore there is a lot of development that would not be allowed. What can be done is to provide within the tunnel and the Northern Defences something of a historical nature but in terms of development it would be minor scale.

HON J E PILCHER:

We have been waiting very long for MOD to release prime sites. The tunnels.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, with respect, we are now debating, we are not asking questions.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, but doesn't the Government accept that if it has an area or an asset which is unique, then there is nothing to stop the Government making a public announcement to the effect that anybody who has got some imaginative ideas about making use of the place should submit them and then everybody knows that the thing is up for grabs but if the Government gives it to the first person who comes along with the first idea then surely the Government is not in a position to be sure that it is giving it to the best potential concept and once they take a decision and once it is used for one thing however many brilliant concepts come up it is lost forever. Doesn't the Government accept that that is different in terms of direct allocation to giving a piece of land by direct allocation for somebody to put a restaurant or a kiosk or whatever?

HON A J CANEPA:

Perhaps it would also help if I were to say that if it were to be approved the grant would be subject to a licence agreement only, there is no question of giving a long lease in respect of this site, we are not going to alienate that for 99 years and naturally there would be a formula to share the income,

royalties would be derived for the Government. But this site is not being treated in the way that, for instance, Princess Caroline's would have been treated which would have been the subject of a 99 or 150 year lease because you can have substantial development there. But as far as this site is concerned, I am not going to say that I am getting tired about the number of people who come through my office and talk to me about this, but since the frontier opened six or seven people have come to my office to talk to me about the Northern Defences but only two now, a second proposal was received about a month ago, only two have actually got around to sending in any definite proposals and so the first serious proposals that were received in April, 1986, were, I think, worthy of consideration.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Will the Minister confirm, in fact, as a matter of information, that this will not include the World War II tunnels and that this will be a separate item altogether?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Northern Defences is one thing and the World War II tunnels is another.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, if I may, how do people get to know that the site is available? If the Government doesn't say it is the intention to have that piece of land open for people to put in ideas or tenders, how do people know that that place is up for grabs?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, people get to know sometimes that a site is available because the Government invites proposals before reaching a tendering stage but people also come to Gibraltar with ideas and they look around and they see something which is of interest to them and something which they feel that they can invest in and they then make an approach. It is that kind of interest that we also want to foster.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, I am asking questions because I think it is a supplementary arising from the answer that the Minister has given. The Opposition of Gibraltar only found out about the Northern Defences a few weeks ago and we are.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It has been there for 200 years.

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, we accept that it has been there for 200 years but it didn't belong to the Government of Gibraltar for 200 years, in fact, in April, 1986, we didn't think it belonged to the Government of Gibraltar.

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question.

HON J E PILCHER:

My question is, does the Government not agree that this form of direct allocation should not be used for major projects like this one?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think it is very difficult to say what is a major project. A major project can be one in which you invest £10m, £15m or £20m like, say, at Queensway, and I don't know that a major project is another one in which the investment is £200,000 or £150,000 or £250,000, where do we draw the line? I think the Government has a duty to exercise its judgement on the matter. If a number of people approach the Government at the same time with proposals then obviously tendering is the ideal situation but if an original proposal is received and it meets the criteria of the policy which the Government had accepted it cannot turn round to people and say: 'Sorry, when on such and such a date' - and I think it must have been in October, 1985, when the Pitaluga proposals came out and the Government issued a press release informing the public of the policy that it was going to follow with direct allocation, I don't think you can do a turn-about a few months later when you receive a definite proposal and say: 'No, sorry, this is out of the question'.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister, when were the Northern Defences passed over to the Government of Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am astonished because the Hon Member opposite should know that the Duke of Wellington cleaned it up for the Government of Gibraltar and the Duke of Wellington's have been replaced by the Queen's Regiment that have now left so it must be three years ago, I don't know how they came to know six months ago, quite honestly.

HON J BOSSANO:

So what we are talking about is the outside of the place which was cleaned up by the.....

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, I am talking of the Northern Defences, Mr Speaker. The Members are confusing the Northern Defences with the Princess Lines which are the tunnels below it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Whatever the label is, Mr Speaker, the place that the Government is proposing to give by direct allocation, when did that become Government property?

HON A J CANEPA:

After the clean-up project of the Duke of Wellington's about two and a half or three years ago.

HON J BOSSANO:

And in all that time that the Government has had it in its possession it has never thought it necessary throughout that period to come out with an announcement saying: 'The Government would be interested in any proposals to develop this site on the basis that it retains its preserved historical nature'?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Government hasn't felt that it was necessary to make a public statement of the fact because there were a number of people coming and talking to the Government about it, showing an interest in the project. It generated a lot of interest and there were a lot of people coming to one talking about it and the Government was expecting proposals sooner or later. It isn't as if it is the kind of project that there is going to be a queue of people because it is a rather specialist project, I have

not mentioned publicly - in fact, I don't mind mentioning it now - some of the people that have shown interest in this are Madame Tussaud, they have got big projects in Warwick Castle, in Windsor Castle, this is not as big as that we only wish it were, but it is that kind of rather specialist interest so where you have enough people evincing an interest in the kind of project that you want to see, in your judgement you don't feel that you need to invite tenders because it isn't as if the usual developers that tender for projects within Gibraltar are going to be in a position to do so.

MR SPEAKER:

I think we have gone as far as we can go on this matter. Next question.

NO. 61 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government confirm that the kitchen area of the Government Hostel at Devil's Tower Road was granted by direct allocation for the purpose of operating a Restaurant and, if so to whom and under what conditions?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. The restaurant and kitchen area of the Government Hostel at Devil's Tower Road were granted by direct allocation for the purpose of setting up a fast food service for tourists.

The allocation was made to North Catering Ltd, a subsidiary Company of L Peralta and Co Ltd for a term of 21 years at a monthly rent of £500 for the first five years, with rent reviews at five yearly intervals thereafter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 61 OF 1987.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Can the Minister confirm whether there has been a change of hands in the company running the restaurant?

HON A J CANEPA:

No.

MR SPEAKER: .

You cannot confirm or there hasn't been a change?

HON A J CANEPA:

I cannot confirm that there has been a change. I think I have been asked 'Can the Minister confirm whether.....', I take that to mean that he thinks that there has been, I say I cannot confirm that there has been.

MR SPEAKER:

I wanted to be clear because later on there might be a misunderstanding.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister is not aware of any intended demolition and development of that area and, in fact, if that were intended it would have to come back to the Government?

HON A J CANEPA:

It would have to come back to the Government because the user clause is for the specific purpose of providing reasonably low cost food to visitors and residents of the Hostel.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 62 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government confirm that the area of Epram Cottage is a Crown leasehold?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. Epram Cottage is a Crown Property.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 62 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Could the Minister give an indication of what were the original conditions of the lease?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that it was leased for a term which expired on the 30th June, 1985, I know that to be a fact, and it was for residential purposes with the normal conditions about the up-keep and maintenance of the property.

HON M A FEETHAM:

So what the Minister is saying is, in fact, that the lease has been re-negotiated based, presumably, on the original conditions or is it going to be revert to Government?

HON A J CANEPA:

It doesn't revert back to the Government, if the lessees wish to renew the lease I think that they can do so under the terms of the Landlord and Tenant Ordinance and under the terms of the lease there is probably a clause also prescribing what the arrangements would be for renewal.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 63 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Can Government state whether the City Plan is now complete?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The first draft of a revised planning scheme, otherwise known as the City Plan, has now been produced and the Development and Planning Commission has already held preliminary discussions on the proposals. The target date for exhibiting the scheme for public inspection is July/August 1987.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 63 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

That gives us a good indicator of the General Election, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

No, because the City Plan should have been renewed before the last General Election.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 64 OF 1987THE HON J L BALDACHINO

Can Government confirm that tenants in Rosia Dale, who indicate an interest in purchasing their flats, have been told recently that prices would be increased if they do not definitely commit themselves to buy?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir. Those interested in purchasing have been sent draft leases for their approval with a view to finalising the sale.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 64 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Is there a time limit within which they have to make up their minds one way or the other?

HON A J CANEPA:

For those who have not yet declared an interest the position is that they have been told that the Government is proceeding to conclude the sale with those intending to purchase providing, naturally, that more than 50% are interested and the offer continues open to all the tenants of the Estate, in other words, to those who haven't yet replied or those who have said no, if they wish to change their mind, for so long as they remain tenants of Rosia Dale but I am afraid that in that case they can hardly expect that the purchase price which is currently on offer to those who have said yes is going to remain frozen forever.

HON J BOSSANO:

Not forever but, Mr Speaker, isn't the purchase price related to the rent?

HON A J CANEPA:

Precisely, for as long as there is no increase in rent the purchase price to those who may become interested in the future would be maintained but after there were to be an increase in rents then, naturally, the price would have to be reviewed for those who have not yet indicated an interest.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Mr Speaker, those who have shown an interest to buy, if there is a rent increase will the price of the flat go up? Can the Hon Member then confirm that he still stands by the commitment that he gave me in the House in a previous question?

HON A J CANEPA:

If there were to be a rent increase later on this year - which obviously there isn't - then for those people who have already indicated an interest in buying the price will be maintained notwithstanding any rent increase.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 65 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Will Government state how many ships were registered and how many officers and crew members were employed on the 31st December, 1986, and how do they compare with the figures for 1984 and 1985?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, there were 113 ships registered at Gibraltar on 31st December, 1986. On 31st December 1985, 70 ships were on the register and in 1984, 43..

There are no requirements in the process of registry to keep a record of crew members employed. These would in any case vary from time to time according to operational requirements. However, once Marine Administration develops, it may be possible to keep these records.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 65 OF 1987

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is the situation then that as far as the 113 ships registered now it doesn't make any difference how undermanned they are with the consequences for the safety of the ship because the Government of Gibraltar has got no control over manning levels?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, Mr Speaker. The position is different to the UK in that what we do not have is a crew manning scale which they have in the UK but we are working towards the international conventions, we want to have them extended to Gibraltar and one of these conventions is the international conventions of standards of training, certification and watch-keeping for seafarers of 1978. Once this convention is extended to Gibraltar, naturally we will abide by it and we hope to be able, as I say, to monitor the situation in respect of crew manning and we would want the necessary standards to be maintained. But at the time when a ship is registered it may be on the home trade, it may be on foreign trade, it may be laid up and therefore there is no need or no requirement, indeed, for crew numbers to be given.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does the current Merchant Shipping Ordinance not require for members of the crew that are taken on to be notified to the Captain of the Port?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am informed that that is not the case.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, in fact, if it were the case then would the Minister not agree that steps must be taken to enforce the law if one can demonstrate that that is in the existing Ordinance?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, indeed. If it is a legal requirement that that should be the case then I think we ought to comply with the law.

HON J BOSSANO:

The Minister accepts that in the amendment that he is bringing to the House he is not adding that to the law?

HON A J CANEPA:

No.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, what he is saying is he believes it doesn't exist in the law, he believes we ought to enforce it if it were in the law and he has no intentions of putting it in the law if it isn't there?

HON A J CANEPA:

Not for the moment. What we intend to do is as our Marine Administration develops and we are able to expand the administration, we think that we might be able to take on this extra work and we think that we will be able to do it under the relevant convention that I have mentioned.

HON J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, does the Captain of the Port, Mr Speaker, keep crew lists currently or not?

HON A J CANEPA:

He doesn't have full crew lists, no.

HON J BOSSANO:

Does he have copies of the articles upon which seafarers are engaged?

HON A J CANEPA:

He should have.

HON J BOSSANO:

Doesn't the article have the name and address of the person and the capacity in which he is engaged?

HON A J CANEPA:

Not of all the members of the crew, I don't think.

HON J BOSSANO:

Doesn't the Hon Member know that under the Merchant Shipping Acts of the United Kingdom each individual seafarer is required to sign articles and that that provision in the United Kingdom legislation is ipso facto adopted by the Merchant Shipping Ordinance of Gibraltar which I believe it is under Clause 22 says that any clause in the Merchant Shipping Acts of the United Kingdom which is not specifically mentioned in the Merchant Shipping Ordinance of Gibraltar, applies in Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that that is for officers only.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, there is a provision that says that the Master of a ship must be certificated and must be of British nationality but what I am talking about is the requirements in the United Kingdom legislation which the Government has said: "We, in Gibraltar, have all the same requirements as in the United Kingdom".

HON A J CANEPA:

The information such as I have here with me indicates that

that is only in respect to the officers.

MR SPEAKER:

It would appear that the information is not readily available.

HON A J CANEPA:

I think I would require separate notice of that, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am asking about legislation that has been around since 1894, plenty of time for the AACR to have done it, since 1894.

HON R MOR:

Despite everything that the Hon Member has said, isn't there a requirement in the laws of Gibraltar that persons employed in ships registered in Gibraltar are required to pay social insurance?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is not absolutely clear, Mr Speaker, and I am not willing to get myself involved in a discussion at this stage under the guise of this question about the law regarding the payment of insurance. The matter I know is being carefully looked at by the Director of Labour and Social Security and we are taking advice and I am not prepared to go beyond that.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, didn't the Hon Member give an undertaking in this House that the Labour Department were going to take steps in 1985 to approach owners of vessels registered in Gibraltar with a view to informing them of the requirement to cover their employees for social insurance and was that undertaking fulfilled which he gave us two years ago?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Labour Department, Mr Speaker, have not as yet been able to satisfactorily clear the matter up and I am familiar with the steps that are currently being taken in order to clear the matter up, in order to get to the root of the matter. They have not been able to go to the root of the matter yet in spite of consultations with the relevant Government Departments in the United Kingdom.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, has the Member not confirmed here, the Government has confirmed in this House that under the law of Gibraltar the position is perfectly clear. If it isn't would the Hon and Learned Attorney-General tell us because we have looked at the law and we think it is explicitly stated, there is no possibility of doubt about what our law says.

HON A J CANEPA:

There is, Mr Speaker, doubt as to whether seafarers are required to pay just employment injuries insurance or additionally social insurance as well. That has not been resolved unless the Attorney-General has some information on the matter.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am prepared to look into this, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, we have been asking the Government to look into this for two years and they have told us already. Is the Hon Member then saying that the undertaking he gave the Opposition in 1985 that he would ask the Labour Department not to investigate, the undertaking he gave which is on record in Hansard was that the Labour Department would approach the employers as specified in the law informing them of the requirement. Has that been done? Has an approach been made to the employers?

HON A J CANEPA:

That I don't know. What I do know is that shortly afterwards, because I think that was in March last year, there were officials here from the Department of Transport, they were asked by the Labour Department for information as to how in the United Kingdom they went about collecting the contributions but that information has not been received and therefore the Labour Department is taking further steps on the matter.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am not asking the Hon Member that question, I am not asking him about whether he has had a reply from the United Kingdom. What I am asking him is has the undertaking he gave me in this House which was and is on record and he can go back and check it for himself, that the Labour Department would approach the employers, has that happened or not?

HON A J CANEPA:

I don't know definitely but it may well have been. It probably has happened because I know that I have received representations from ship agents about the disincentive that that will have on ship owners wishing to register ships in Gibraltar. So if I have received representations from some ship agents in that respect, I think it is as a result of the Labour Department having intimated to ship owners that contributions were required. I also know that there has been some correspondence where ship owners have alleged that they are covered either elsewhere in another country or that they run their own private insurance schemes and that they are therefore adequately covered but I am talking about a Department of which I am not its political head and therefore I am not in daily contact with them.

HON J BOSSANO:

I accept that, Mr Speaker, and in fact the Hon Member answered me along those lines when he gave the commitment and he said that it wasn't his Department but that he would pass it on and that he wasn't here to be on top of the Department on a day-to-day basis, those were his words at that time. Could I ask the Minister for Labour.....

HON A J CANEPA:

No, I can answer him because I had a meeting with the Minister for Labour and the Director of Labour a week ago and all the information that I am passing over is as a result of that meeting.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, a week ago was when he gave notice of this question.

HON A J CANEPA:

No, in fact, I will take out my diary and I will show the Hon Member exactly the date on which it was.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, in any event, I have been very liberal but it does not arise from the question.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I beg your pardon, if we have a question that says how many people are employed on ships and the law of Gibraltar says that people who are employed on ships pay social insurance, I would be grateful if you can explain to me how it doesn't arise from the question if we then ask.....

MR SPEAKER:

With respect, I am telling you it doesn't and in my judgement it doesn't and that is why I am telling you.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, and I am saying that since you are not infallible, I think we can accept that you are not infallible.

MR SPEAKER:

With resepct, will you please sit down. I may not be infallible but I am the man who sits here and who has to exercise his judgement and his discretion and I have exercised it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, and I am saying that in exercising that discretion which I think you use very, very frequently to stop us asking questions, I would like you to explain to me why the Opposition is not within its rights.....

MR SPEAKER:

Order, I will not accept an imputation that I have called you to order for the purposes of not enabling you to ask questions. That is an imputation which I take objection to.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, my meeting with the Director and the Minister was on the 30th January, well before the Opposition asked the question.

HON J BOSSANO:

I can carry on asking I take it, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

Most certainly.

HON J BOSSANO:

Thank you very much. Can I ask the Hon Member between the time that he gave me the undertaking in this House that the matter was going to be pursued by the Labour Department and the date that he has just given me, what has happened between those two dates?

HON A J CANEPA:

What has happened is that the Department has been trying to first of all, clear up without any doubt whether seafarers have got to pay employment injuries and/or social insurance as well. Secondly, how they go about in the United Kingdom, how they go about collecting contributions. Thirdly, what is the position of crew members who are EEC nationals and do they pay social insurance in another country or don't they. Not having had satisfactory answers to these matters, we held this meeting on the 30th January and the intention now is to send a senior officer of the Department to the DHSS in London in order to try to get the information which we are not getting.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 66 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON M A FEETHAM

Has Government received any representations from users of small boats berthed at the Camber who have been adversely affected by regulations recently introduced by Government?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. Written and verbal representations have been received by the Captain of the Port from Camber users who have been adversely affected by regulations recently introduced by Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 66 OF 1987

HON M A FEETHAM:

Can the Minister give any indication of the numbers involved since the regulations affect other people as well?

HON A J CANEPA:

A survey that has been carried out by the Port Department of the vessels in the Camber indicates that there are five bona fide pleasure craft with petrol engines of over 200 brake horsepower and they are therefore affected by the regulations and it is, in fact, from the owners of some of these that representations have been received.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 67 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government confirm that it is the policy of the Tourist Office not to bring to Gibraltar any outside experts and will this policy apply to any other areas of Governmental responsibility?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the question of bringing outside experts to Gibraltar to advise or assist the Tourist Office or any other Government Department is a matter to be judged in the light of the particular circumstances prevailing at the time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 67 OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, I accept the answer but the question is geared towards a statement made by the Director of Tourism when he took over the job when he said in the Gibraltar Chronicle, he was talking about an overall plan for tourism and he said that it would be done 'not by bringing outside experts in, we have had enough of those'. So I take it that the policy of the Tourist Office as said by the Director of Tourism is that no more outside experts will be brought in.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He was expressing his own view on taking over and presumably he will be quite alive to try and avoid the necessity of bringing experts for the Tourist Office. The question had a wider implication.

HON J E PILCHER:

But it is not therefore the policy of the Tourist Office as expounded by the Director of Tourism?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not a policy for all time, he was explaining the position as he saw it on taking over.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 68 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government confirm that GSL have now received assurances of financial support?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I will be dealing with this question in a statement which I have given due notice which I will be making on GSL's funding requirements later on in the proceedings of this House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 68 OF 1987

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, I accept that a statement will be made but obviously I am not in a position to question or ask supplementaries on a statement.

MR SPEAKER:

May I explain perhaps at this time so that you can take a decision as to how you want to proceed. The position is that you have an opportunity now to ask questions if they wish to be answered. You will have an opportunity to ask questions for the purposes exclusively of clarification when the statement is made but most certainly you will also have a better opportunity to seek whatever information you wish to obtain from the Government when the Appropriation Bill is debated.

HON J E PILCHER:

I accept that but what I don't want to happen is that I am then called out of order because this question is.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, it is not out of order and it is right that you should ask a question now to enable you to have information later on.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, I prefer the question to be answered now.

MR SPEAKER:

If the Government wants to answer it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer is that I am making a statement in a few minutes time.

HON J BOSSANO:

The Hon and Learned Chief Minister says that the statement will contain the answer to the question, is that what he is saying?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, it contains a lot more.

HON J BOSSANO:

But it will include the answer to the question?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course, otherwise I wouldn't have given that answer.

HON J E PILCHER:

He will accept that I can also question the fact why the accounts haven't been brought to the House which is subject to financial assurances by a third party to the Auditors and that is why the accounts.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think he may get the answer before you hear it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 69 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J E PILCHER

Can Government state when the Price Waterhouse Report will be completed and in their possession?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the Government has now received the final draft of the Report. An abridged version, which will update the latest financial projections, is being prepared and should be ready for publication by the end of this month.

NO. 70 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON R MOR

Can Government state what progress has been made by the Joint Study Group set up to look at the problem of meeting the cost of Spanish pensions beyond 1988?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the Joint Study Group have had a number of meetings of an exploratory nature and various matters are being examined. It would not be normal practice for me to say more at this stage about the proceedings of an inter-governmental working group which are confidential, but there is in fact nothing for me to report. I will inform the House of any conclusions or recommendations at the appropriate time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 70 OF 1987

HON R MOR: -

Mr Speaker, when I last asked a similar question the Hon Member said that he would expect that well before 1988 a solution would be found. Does he still maintain that that is so?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am still hopeful on that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 71 OF 1987

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Is it Government's intention to produce a supplement to the Register of Electors prior to the holding of the next General Election?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Elections Ordinance (now the House of Assembly Ordinance) was amended in December 1984, to provide for the preparation of the Register in 1986 instead of 1985 as was due as the law stood before this amendment.

The purpose of the amendment was therefore to allow for the publication of a more up-to-date Register nearer the general election otherwise a new Register would have had to be published in 1985.

The current Register of Electors was accordingly published on the 1st August 1986, and includes persons who will attain the age of 18 years up to the 31st March 1988. It is therefore quite up-to-date.

In the circumstances that I have described, Government sees no reason to produce a new supplement to the Register before the General Election. However, matters of this nature are normally dealt with on a consensus basis and the Government is prepared to consider any suggestions from the Opposition. I would add that I have only recently received representations in this respect from a former member of the House of Assembly which are being investigated.