

GIBRALTAR

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

26TH APRIL, 1990

NO. 46 TO NO. 89

26.4.90

NO. 46 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON A J CANEPA

When will the Government implement the commitment which they made in their electoral manifesto to provide facilities and specialist care for those needing to break free of the drug habit?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question No. 47 of 1990.

THE HON. P. C. MONTEGRIFFO

Will Government confirm what type of counselling service it intends to introduce for the victims of drug abuse in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON. THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Mr Speaker, it is the Government's intention to create a counselling service aimed specifically at young people under the aegis of the Youth Office. Advice on drug related problems will be included in the terms of reference of this service. This will assist Government in determining the extent to which facilities of care may be needed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTIONS NO. 46 AND NO. 47 OF 1990

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister say when this counselling service is to be implemented?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, within this calendar year.

HON A J CANEPA:

Thank you, Mr Speaker, but can the Hon Minister give some more details? Why the Youth Service? To what extent will there be liaison with the Health Authority?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, the intention is to have liaison with every Government Department and also extra governmental agencies who may have knowledge or interest in the problem.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon Member have any plans with regard to the Standing Committee of which the Minister for Medical Services used to be the Chairman? Has that Committee been disbanded or will it continue to work at the same time as the counselling service?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Leader of the Opposition referring to the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, I happen to Chair that body and have done so for the past two years. Yes, it is still going to be active.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Government in possession of figures which will allow them to assess the extent of counselling and/or rehabilitation service that might be required?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, the only figures available to the Government at the moment are those provided by the Police and by Customs. I however think, and the Hon Member will no doubt agree, that these may not necessarily reflect the actual nature of the problem.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon Minister see any role for voluntary groups in this counselling service like the Drug Rehabilitation United Group?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, as I mentioned in my reply to the Hon the Leader of the Opposition, it will be a service that will be in contact not only with Government Agencies but also voluntary groups who may have an interest in the problem.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister of the view that the envisaged counselling service will require specific premises to undertake that service or will they undertake the service from the Youth Service premises?

HON J L MOSS:

Initially, Mr Speaker, the service will be obviously conducted from the Youth Office but, I think, that it is important to note that this service may be in some ways peripatetic with officers having to work in the field rather than staying in an office waiting for people who may have a problem to go there and see them.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I know that the view has been expressed by a voluntary organisation, and this is why I am asking, that premises were helpful and whilst I do not have the expertise to know to what degree they are necessary but I imagine that the Minister will take this view into account.

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, I think perhaps what is happening is that we are confusing the issue slightly. Premises have been mentioned before with rehabilitation, I believe. What we are doing now is trying to assess the problem, see its extent and see whether any other kind of facilities are needed. Once that decision is taken and if it is a positive decision then, I think, would be the time to look at it further.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, one other question. Will the Minister keep in mind the need to publicise the availability of these services, particularly because we are dealing with young people? The service is meant for them and if parents and other relatives become aware of the availability of these services and the youngsters are themselves reluctant to take advantage of this service, then relatives can approach the Youth Officers and they can go and talk to them.

HON J L MOSS:

Yes, Mr Speaker, we will, of course, be publicising the information service and we will also, as I have already mentioned, be making sure that it is active in the field. What we will not be able to do, of course, and I am sure this is understood by the Opposition, is to reveal any confidential information which might emerge as a result of the investigation by this service.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, do I get the impression that the service will be aimed almost exclusively at prevention initially and counselling rather than, say, do this fifty/fifty with rehabilitation? Is rehabilitation, Mr Speaker, something to be done in the future or right at the beginning?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, we are giving this service as broad terms of reference as possible. As I see it, and I think I have already mentioned this before, until we determine what is the extent of the problem it would be completely premature to decide whether the rehabilitation facilities or services are required or otherwise. However, once we have the information available we will be in a position to take a decision based on facts and not on suppositions.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

But the Minister, Mr Speaker, is confirming that rehabilitation will be given the same priority as prevention from the word go? Not a secondary priority at the beginning?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, the Minister is confirming that we are starting to launch an information service which, once it has all the information possible gleamed, will decide whether rehabilitation is required or what form of rehabilitation or assistance is required for people with problems.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G MASCARENHAS

Now that the poll tax is in force in the UK, will Government undertake to assist Gibraltarian students in paying this tax?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Mr Speaker, after the level of poll tax was set in the UK, Government took steps to safeguard the position of Gibraltarian students and a flat rate allowance has been introduced to assist them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 48 OF 1990

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Minister say what the flat rate will be?

HON J L MOSS:

The flat rate, Mr Speaker, will be £100 per student.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, the introduction of this flat rate of £100 per student was that not related to increases in maintenance allowances that took place in the United Kingdom?

HON J L MOSS:

No, Mr Speaker, we are talking now about the poll tax and this allowance was introduced specifically to assist students with the poll tax.

HON A J CANEPA:

As from when, Mr Speaker?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, the allowance will start, strictly speaking, from the 1st September, 1990, but in order to assist students in the interim period, a payment of £25 was made to them immediately.

HON A J CANEPA:

So, Mr Speaker, this is a new allowance that is still to be introduced. It has nothing to do with increases in student grants that have taken place up to the present?

HON J L MOSS:

That is correct, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

We welcome the measure, Mr Speaker, and are very glad that the Government has responded in this positive way, more so having regard to the negative stand taken on a previous occasion when we raised the matter.

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon the Leader of the Opposition for his compliments but I cannot really applaud his lack of memory.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, the Minister will correct me if I do not have the full facts. Does the level of poll tax not vary between the different Councils and in some cases quite a large disproportion exists? As we all know there are huge disparities between them. There is the flat rate which the Minister has announced, the best way of dealing with this bearing in mind that each student will be paying a different rate?

HON J L MOSS:

Mr Speaker, in administrative terms, yes, because the allowance has been set looking at the maximum and not at the minimum. So what will happen in effect is that some students will actually make money out of this. If the Hon Member wishes me to try and find out a way of doing them out of this money I will listen to him.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I understand that the Government's budget is extremely tight and I would not like them to dissipate sources. Quite frankly, I would like to treat all students equally and I do not see why one student should benefit over another simply because he happens to find himself in an area that has a lower poll tax. I only hope that now that the Government is in a generous mood they extend this to everyone.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G MASCARENHAS

What plans are there to restructure the Department of Education?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE
AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

Mr Speaker, it is not the policy of Government to make public statements about plans for the re-structure of Departments. This is for discussion between management and staff.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 49 OF 1990

HON G MASCARENHAS

Mr Speaker, in view of the Minister's statement will the Minister state whether any posts in the Department of Education have been abolished to date?

HON J I MOSS

Mr Speaker, to date no posts have been abolished. But I have to repeat that it is not our policy to make statements in the House about restructures.

HON G MASCARENHAS

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Minister confirm whether the post of Warden of the Teacher's Centre will be abolished in the near future.

HON J I MOSS

Mr Speaker, I cannot confirm that.

HON A J CANEPA

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that the Warden of the Teacher's Centre has only a few more days in his employment? Is not his post being abolished from the end of April? Can the Hon Minister confirm this?

HON J I MOSS

Mr Speaker, that is another question which I am afraid that I cannot confirm.

HON G MASCARENHAS

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Minister confirm or deny whether the position of the post of Education Officer, which has not been filled for a matter of two years, is to be abolished?

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HON J I MOSS

Mr Speaker, this might surprise Members but I cannot confirm that either.

HON G MASCARENHAS

Mr Speaker, does that also apply to the post of Assistant Education Officer?

HON J I MOSS

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member wishes to give me a list of all the posts in the Education Department my answer will be exactly the same "I cannot confirm it".

MR SPEAKER

Next Question.

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

Having regard to the fact that the Employment Survey Report for April 1989 has not yet been published, will the Government explain why the publication of the Survey is so seriously delayed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, the Statistics Office has been having problems with its computer since 1988. Analyses are done manually and the April 1988 Survey is nearing completion and will be published shortly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 50 OF 1990

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, will it be published before the House resumes its activities to debate the Estimates? Because it is relevant and although I am prepared to be as helpful as I can, we also need the information. Even if the Government is not able to publish the Employment Survey by then will they undertake early on in the debate on the Estimates, perhaps the Chief Minister himself can provide information with regard to employment levels?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, we have not yet even seen the first draft of the Report, as a Government. I am told by the Statistics Office that it is very nearly completed, however, if this does not materialise I shall get the office to extract information which I will then make available to the Opposition

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I am sure the Hon Chief Minister is aware that we are running a year behind schedule whilst when we were in Government the policy was to be one Survey only in arrears, but not two as is now the case.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am aware of the situation, Mr Speaker. We do not have the information ourselves.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

Will Government give details about the restructuring of the Department of Labour and Social Security, including the Family Care Unit, that has been effected to date and explain what further plans they may have with regards to the future concerning restructuring of this Department?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Mr Speaker, there has not been any restructure beyond what has been announced and is public knowledge.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 51 OF 1990

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, that very brief answer to my question does not do justice to the Minister who told members of his staff, who were worried about the restructuring effects, to listen to the radio on Thursday morning. Mr Speaker, it is a simple enough question. What restructuring has taken place already? This is to some extent public knowledge but what I would really like to deal with is, is there any restructuring envisaged in the future as regards both the administration section and especially the Family Care Unit of the Department?

HON R MOR:

Well, Mr Speaker, the answer to the Hon Member's question is very much the same as my colleague said before, that the question of restructuring of a Department is something to be dealt with between the staff concerned and the Government. Mr Speaker, apart from what I have already said before, there is very little to add and anyway there has not been any restructuring beyond what has already been announced and is public knowledge.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, has the Hon Minister held meetings with the members of his Department who are concerned and has he explained the position to them and are they in agreement with the type of restructuring that it is intended to take place?

HON R MOR:

Mr Speaker, it is not the Minister who discusses with staff questions on restructures. It is the Personnel Department who handles these matters with the staff side.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, having regard to statements made by the Chief Minister, is the Minister for Labour and Social Security able to say whether the staff of his Department figures amongst the 200 that are going to remain as part of the Civil Service or the 400 that are going to be employed elsewhere?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am sure that the Hon Member opposite must know that the Civil Service interchangeability has not changed since we took office from what occurred when he was in Government. Therefore people who work in the DLSS today may well be working in any other Department tomorrow. The figures that I mentioned referred to the Civil Service as a whole and have no relevance to any particular Department.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON DR R G VAIARINO

Will the government give details as to the latest position regarding the building of a new Occupational Therapy Centre, including a residential home for the handicapped?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Mr Speaker, the architectural design and structural consultant's work including site exploration have now been completed and arrangements are in hand to put into place the necessary contract for the works.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 52 OF 1990

HON DR R G VAIARINO:

Mr Speaker, when are the works expected to start and is there any chance that they will be completed in this financial year? I note, Mr Speaker, that in Head 104 an amount of £100,000 was earmarked for the last financial year which ended on the 31st March, 1990, of which, I think, £15,000 was spent probably on the work which the Hon Minister has just mentioned. Has the Minister any idea, Mr Speaker, when the work will commence? Because this is a matter very close to the heart of people who require this type of Centre and should therefore be a priority matter as far as the Government is concerned.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, considering that this project has been on the cards for a number of years and we have only been in office two years and have reached the stage when we are ready to put out contracts for its construction, I would say that the time taken should be very welcome to the Society for the Handicapped since it is a major step forward in their aspirations. I am hoping, Mr Speaker, like everything else that we undertake to complete it as quickly as possible.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister confirming that the Residential Home for the Handicapped forms part of the project?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member opposite is aware that was not included in the project that was being earmarked by the previous administration. However, we are, in fact, including the residential home for the handicapped as part of the project but that aspect of it may be completed in two stages and not straightaway.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member able to give some details as to what is envisaged, for how many handicapped will it cater for?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, it is projected to cater for the existing numbers and for some future figures given to us by the Society and the Education Department. However, I cannot recall the exact figure.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, but the works that are being put out to contract in the first phase are purely for the Therapy Centre and then a second contract? Or will it form part of the first?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, it will include the Therapy Centre and also part of the Residential Home. It will have the capacity for further increase in numbers.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Will the site remain as previously, Mr Speaker?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Yes, Mr Speaker. The site is the one which was previously agreed. This has been done in consultation with the Society and the Laguna Tenants Association. The site is the playground opposite St Martin's School and the playground has been reprovided at the Adventure Playground. It has been reached in consultation with all interested parties including tenants, let me make that quite clear.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Has the Chairman of the Society been appraised of the situation, Mr Speaker, because I have had meetings with several parents and they appeared ignorant of the situation.

HON M A FEETHAM:

I am sure, Mr Speaker, knowing who the Chairman is, Mr Julio Pons, he does not need to be appraised, he just turns up outside my door practically every other day.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

26.4.90

NO. 53 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON M K FEATHERSTONE

How many persons attended the Health Centre in the period April 1988 to March 1989 and April 1989 to March 1990?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, from April 1988 to March 1989 there were 77,677 attendances. From April 1989 to March 1990 there were 77,409 attendances.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION NO. 53 OF 1990

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, under the GSLP Government people are even healthier!

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, has the number of doctors decreased at the Health Centre recently?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

On the contrary, Mr Speaker, since we came into Government the number of doctors has increased.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON M K FEATHERSTONE

What was the total cost of prescriptions issued by the Health Centre during the years April 1988 to March 1989 and April 1989 to March 1990?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, the final figure for the year ending March 1989 is £1,261,737.05. The final figure for the year ending this March is not yet available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 54 OF 1990

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, those figures used to be given to me by the Minister on a quarterly basis. Is there any reason why she has desisted from so doing?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I recollect very clearly that at the last meeting of the House I explained to the Hon Member opposite that I would provide the figures once they had been verified. This is what I have just done.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, is the cost of prescriptions going up in proportion to the level of inflation or is it at a higher rate than inflation?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I can only answer for previous years because I have the figures. But I can tell the Hon Member that we expect medicines to go up in comparison with the inflation rate.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, this is a great improvement because previously it was going up at the rate of 20% whereas inflation was up only 4% or 5%. Is there any reason for this?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, what I am trying to tell the Hon Member is that when he was in Government, in 1986/87 there was an increase of 27% and then in 1988/89, when we were in Government, there was an increase of 14% which although lower is still higher than inflation. I can however not provide him at present with actual figures.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

We shall wait and see, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON M K FEATHERSTONE

How many patients were sent to the UK for treatment in the periods April 1988 to March 1989 and April 1989 to March 1990, and at what cost?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, the number of patients sent to UK for treatment from April 1988 to March 1989 was 258 and the cost was £455,017.01. 303 patients were sent in the period April 1989 to March 1990 but the final cost for the year ending this March is not yet available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 55 OF 1990

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Will the Hon Minister confirm, Mr Speaker, the number of patients being sent? Because they appear to be on the increase.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I cannot really confirm that because some of the patients could be referrals. I am sure that when the Hon Member was a Minister he must have known that some of the patients sent at the time were on referral basis. Although it might still be the case that there is an increase, yes.

HON A J CANEPA:

I take it, Mr Speaker, that the cost includes passages, allowances and other transport costs. Have the levels of these maintenance allowances been increased to take account of inflation within the last two years?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, we increased these allowances, and I announced them publicly during my television broadcast, by 50% from 1st January, 1990.

HON A J CANEPA:

And the formula, Mr Speaker, for assessing the level of maintenance, has it remained broadly the same as previously?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

Thank you.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Why did the Gibraltar Health Authority not renew the contract of the Pathologist?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, it was decided not to renew the contract of the Pathologist, which terminated in November, 1989, and the Government does not make public statements about the reasons for not renewing the contract for any specific contract officer.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 56 OF 1990

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, was it not the normal practice where a person in the employment of the Gibraltar Health Authority had given good service to renew their contract under normal conditions?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Well, Mr Speaker, as I wrote to the Hon Member, it is the prerogative of the Government once there is a termination of a contract, to decide whether it wishes to renew the contract or not. I have already informed the Hon Member, in writing, that it is a matter of fundamental policy for the Government not to have to give reasons, in public, as to why it should or not wish to renew a contract. The Hon Member is aware of this.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, was one of the reasons that the Pathologist had requested slightly improved conditions of service?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I have already told the Hon Member that it is the Government's prerogative not to give any reasons why they might or might not wish to renew a contract. That is my answer, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon Minister accept that the person in question is unusually well qualified professionally, and that she is very highly thought of by everyone coming into contact with her and that it is going to be very difficult to replace her by someone with the same level of expertise?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Mr Speaker, I do not accept that.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, who decided that the contract should be terminated, the Government or the Gibraltar Health Authority?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

The Gibraltar Health Authority.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I thought I just heard the Hon Minister say that it is the Government's prerogative not to give details about termination of contracts. I do not quite follow, Mr Speaker, but then I am accused by Hon Members opposite of being slow. Either the Government is saying "it does not give details because it has a prerogative to terminate a contract" or "it is the Gibraltar Health Authority" and if it is the latter the Hon Minister should, in that case, not be giving an answer at all to this question. What is the Hon Minister saying, Mr Speaker?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, we are the Government and the Hon Member is asking the Government and we, the Government, are saying that we do not have to give reasons for terminating a contract.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Minister has just informed me that it is the Gibraltar Health Authority that has terminated the contract and she has said in the same breath that it is the Government's prerogative when it terminates a contract not to have to give a reason. What I would like to know, Mr Speaker, is if Government has terminated the contract the decision has not been taken by the GHA. On

the other hand, if the GHA has terminated the contract why is the Hon Minister giving an answer in this House? When it was has affected GSL, Ministers have refused to answer questions. Who has decided, Mr Speaker, the Minister or the General Manager?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, the GHA decided. But whether the GHA decided or the Government decided, neither have any obligation to give reasons for terminating the contract. Mr Speaker, it is not a question of automatically renewing a contract. Contract officers are brought to Gibraltar for a specific period and when the contract terminates the Government or the GHA have no obligation to give reasons for not renewing the contract.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Minister saying in her answer to the House this morning that she is not giving any answer on behalf of the Government? She is not giving an explanation because the decision was one taken by the GHA and there has not been any Ministerial interference in the decision taken?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

On the contrary, Mr Speaker, what I am telling the Hon Member is that neither the GHA or the Government, when we are talking about contract officers, have to give a public reason as to why we are not renewing a contract, or for any other employee for that matter.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon Minister speak for the GHA? Or on matters of personnel does the General Manager of the GHA take the decision?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I cannot understand the Hon Member's question because he is trying to pinpoint an individual and why her contract was not renewed. What I am telling the Hon Member is that it does not matter who the individual is, it is a matter for the GHA and the Government and whether it is the GHA or the Government is immaterial because it is their prerogative not to renew a contract or give details publicly.

MR SPEAKER:

I think this matter has been aired sufficiently. Next question.

THE HON M K FEATHERSTONE

When does Government intend to table the Accounts of the Gibraltar Health Authority for the year April 1988 to March 1989?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, the Accounts of the Gibraltar Health Authority were received from the Principal Auditor last Friday and will, therefore, be tabled at the next meeting of the House of Assembly.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 57 OF 1990

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon Minister mean the next meeting of the House or at the adjourned meeting when we will discuss the Estimates?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

At the adjourned session, when we come back next month, Mr Speaker.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

So we will not have the benefit of them when we discuss the Budget?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I have just informed the Hon Member that we will table the Accounts when we next come to the House. We have just received them.

HON A J CANEPA:

Then, Mr Speaker, they can be included in the Supplementary Agenda for the next session.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

If they want them then they can have them.

HON A J CANEPA:

Of course we want them, we have been constantly pressing for these Accounts.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

And we have explained why it was necessary to extend the period for nine months.

HON A J CANEPA:

Right, but if they are now available may we please have them?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, Mr Speaker. We are not trying to hide anything.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Minister agreed, at a previous meeting, to make them available as soon as possible, is that not so?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

That is correct, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Then that means today, not tomorrow or the next day.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, they were only received last Friday.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Then we should have had them on Monday.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON LT-COL E M BRITTO

Will Government state whether two years after taking office it is in a position to say when artificial playing surfaces will be laid at the Victoria Stadium?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, as I informed the Hon Member at the last meeting of the House of Assembly, we are actively pursuing alternative proposals and those negotiations have not been concluded.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 58 OF 1990

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, are actual negotiations for playing surfaces taking place with a prospective contractor?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, that was the Hon Minister's answer both in 1988, when I first raised this matter in a question and now, two years later, at the last meeting of the House, we were informed that those negotiations had failed. We now appear to be starting again, Mr Speaker. Is there any indication that they will take another two years and fail or what?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, let me remind the Hon Member that it was a company that approached the Government. The company was given a deadline and we had to wait for that deadline to expire before we could do anything. When the deadline expired last December, we informed the company that we were now free to negotiate with other parties. I informed the House of this at the last meeting. That, Mr Speaker, is precisely what we are doing, negotiating with other parties.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, with the benefit of hindsight, will the Hon Minister accept that maybe a two-year or eighteen months deadline was perhaps too long a deadline and perhaps a shorter deadline should be given in any new negotiations?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Well, Mr Speaker, with the benefit of hindsight it is very easy to talk but the company was given a deadline and we could not do anything until the deadline expired.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I accept that, Mr Speaker, but what I am telling the Hon Minister is that will she accept, with the benefit of hindsight, that after eighteen months the sportsmen of Gibraltar do not have an artificial playing surface and will she accept that in the present negotiations she would be looking at a shorter deadline and at a firmer negotiation so that the decision to lay the surface can be arrived at sooner?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I have already informed the House that we are actively pursuing alternative negotiations. I can assure the Hon Member that we will have an artificial surface before they promised to actually install a swimming pool for GASA in Gibraltar.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, I will not accept the red herring but I challenge the Hon Minister to tell us when the artificial surfaces will be laid since she is so ready to throw mud around like swimming pools. I challenge the Hon Minister to state when the artificial surface will be ready.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

That, Mr Speaker, is really a question that no politician would ever answer. We are in the middle of negotiations. How can the Hon Member expect me to say when they will be ready, moreso when this type of project is conditioned to the weather.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, what excuse will the Hon Minister give the electorate two years from now when she has failed to deliver?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition will have to wait until then to see if I have failed or not.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I am predicting that sportsmen will not have the artificial pitches laid two years from now.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

That, Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member's prerogative but we shall have to wait and see.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Minister accept that her hopes are outstripping her performance?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON LT-COL E M BRITTO

Will Government give details of the financial assistance granted to Sporting Associations in the financial year ended 31st March, 1990?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MEDICAL SERVICES AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, as a result of my Government having maintained the funds made available to Sporting Organisations at £40,000, it has also been possible to meet all requests received for specific commitments during the financial year 1989/90. The financial assistance given is as follows:-

(i)	Gibraltar Island Games Association	-	£6500
(ii)	Grammarians Hockey Club through GHA	-	£2000
(iii)	Eagles Hockey Club through GHA	-	£2500
(iv)	Commonwealth Games Association of Gibraltar	-	£6000
(v)	Gibraltar Squash Rackets Club	-	£2000
(vi)	Gibraltar Amateur Basketball Association (£3500 + £800)	-	£4300
(vii)	Gibraltar Amateur Athletic Association (£600 + £100)	-	£1600
(viii)	Gibraltar Volleyball Association	-	£5000
(ix)	Gibraltar Hockey Association (£2500 + £800 + £500)	-	£3800
(x)	Gibraltar Badminton Association	-	£1800
(xi)	European Federation of Sea Anglers Gibraltar	-	£1000
(xii)	Gibraltar Table Tennis Association	-	£1500
(xiii)	Gibraltar Cricket Association	-	£2000
	Total		<u>£40000</u>

THE HON K B ANTHONY

Will Government make representations to the MOD Authority seeking to allow taxi drivers to be granted permission to drive fares beyond Upper St Michael's Cave, to the upper Cable Car Terminus, returning to town via the northern route?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GSI AND TOURISM

Mr Speaker, during the normal contacts between the PSV Association, the Taxi Association and myself, the possibility of driving through these areas has been discussed. I am in the process of looking at this with the MOD but at this stage any comment would be premature.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 60 OF 1990

HON K B ANTHONY:

Does Government have, Mr Speaker, any plans for decongesting this particular area of the Rock? Because as the Minister no doubt is aware, Mr Speaker, certainly from Queen's Road up to St Michael's Cave it is a very congested area and there are problems in that area.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, there is only one way of decongesting that particular area and that is through the use of a particular road which cannot be touched because of migrant birds. If we did we would have the Ornithological Society objecting to it. There are still schemes being looked at to try and ease as much as possible the situation. However, it is a very difficult area and it is always subject to blockages because of the amount of traffic using the area. There is only one road and one access and what goes up must come down.

HON K B ANTHONY:

I can assure the Hon Minister that Members on this side of the House are just as keen in preserving the environment, flora and fauna as anybody else. However, the Government have announced plans about having an environmental park, if I may use that term, is the area around St Michael's Cave envisaged as part of this park?

HON J E PILCHER:

I am not sure that I understand the question, Mr Speaker.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, Government has announced plans for creating an environmental park, an Apes' Park as well as preserving the fauna and flora. Is the area around St Michael's Cave going to be included in this park?

HON J E PILCHER:

First of all, Mr Speaker, I do not know what this has to do with the Taxi Drivers and access to the Upper Cable Car Terminus.

MR SPEAKER:

I agree that this is a different question. However, if the Hon Minister wishes to answer.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member's current question refers to the Apes' Den as Phase I to the Nature Reserve, if you like, which is situated at Anglian's Way and which is Phase 2. It has nothing to do with St Michael's Cave or the area around St Michael's Cave.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon Minister have any indication of when your negotiations with the MOD authorities will be completed and when are you likely to come to this House with a decision?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, at the moment we are having discussions and they are very complicated because they touch on a lot of factors ranging from security through liability to maintenance and it is not an easy matter. It would be premature at this stage even to say where these discussions will lead to.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, at what level are these discussions being held?

HON J E PILCHER:

At the moment, Mr Speaker, it is a question of the initial contacts. The discussions will be held at the highest level.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, will a decision be arrived at before the summer season or will it have to await to next year?

HON J E PILCHER:

No, Mr Speaker, this will take quite a long time and certainly not by this summer.

MR SPEAKER:

I must draw Members' attention to the fact that no new matter which is not included in the original Question can be introduced during Supplementaries. I have allowed it this time because the Hon Mr Pilcher has been very kind and wanted to answer. However, Hon Members should bear this in mind when questioning.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I will bear that very much in mind, Mr Speaker. Will the Hon Minister confirm that the Government supports the idea, in principle, of the Upper Rock being opened up to the Taxi Drivers and other Tour Operators and is negotiating on that basis? Or on the contrary?

HON J E PIICHER:

First of all, Mr Speaker, we are not negotiating. This is the third time that I have mentioned it. Secondly, we are looking at the matter but we have not taken any decision, in principle, for or against. At this stage it is more of a fact finding exercise with the MOD rather than taking decisions in principle.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Finally, Mr Speaker, in the broader ambit of the question, is Government aware that there are allegations, and I put it that way, Mr Speaker, that a number of foreign vehicles are using the Upper Rock roads with consequent danger arising?

HON J E PIICHER:

Mr Speaker, when the Hon Member says "is the Government aware". The answer is that my colleague, the Hon Mr Perez, as Minister responsible for Traffic, may supplement the answer if he feels it necessary. But let me take the opportunity to say that it is not a matter for the Government since the area in question are MOD areas which are patrolled by the Gibraltar Services Police and it is not a matter which

comes directly under the Gibraltar Government although I am sure that what the Hon Member is referring to is as a result of a programme on television where this matter was, in fact, mentioned by a Taxi Driver. We have, however, had no report directly to us. It is an MOD affair and not a Gibraltar Government matter.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON LT-COL E M BRITTO

Will Government provide a monthly breakdown of the last quarter of 1989 and the first quarter of 1990 together with comparative figures for same periods of 1988 and 1989 of the following:

- (a) unsold Government lottery tickets returned by agents
- (b) value of prizes contained in these unsold tickets distinguishing between the three major prizes and others?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Month	No. of Tickets	3 Major Prizes	Other Prizes
October 1988	362.5	Nil	111.75
November 1988	1,422.6	Nil	442.50
December 1988	3,715.8	8,000.00	7,603.25
January 1989	14,553.6	49,000.00	9,389.50
February 1989	14,689.5	84,250.00	10,181.50
March 1989	15,993.9	52,000.00	10,858.00
October 1989	25,564.9	134,000.00	16,732.00
November 1989	21,124.0	4,500.00	13,942.50
December 1989	22,311.0	69,000.00	23,377.00
January 1990	22,276.5	Nil	14,076.00
February 1990	19,029.3	Nil	13,425.50
March 1990	19,248.0	54,250.00	10,360.00

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 61 OF 1990

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, I will not go into great detail on the figures which the Hon Minister has just given since they require to be analysed but could I just ask the Hon Minister that in the light of the figures he has quoted and which appear to continue the same trend of figures that the Hon Minister has provided me in the past, are there any plans to restructure the lottery in the immediate future?

HON J C PEREZ:

No, Sir, there are no plans to restructure the lottery in the future.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Does that then imply, Mr Speaker, that Government is satisfied with the large amount of tickets that are remaining unsold and the number of prizes being won by the Government?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, it is not a question of the Government being satisfied. At the moment the Lottery Advisory Committee said that they would meet early this year to review the situation. However, because of some administrative problems they have not yet met. When they do I will, jointly with the Hon the Financial and Development Secretary, consider their recommendations, if any, but at present there are no plans to change the lottery. My own reading of the figures is that although they went down further from the figure that I have just given for January, February and March, 1989, it picked up again and therefore the figures for January, February and March, 1990, cannot be compared solely with what happened in 1989. One has to look at the trend for the whole year to see how the pattern has been developing, particularly with regard to the stage when the advent of Telebingo came in.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Has the Hon Minister in fact been able to study those trends and has he formed an opinion, Mr Speaker?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I have my own opinion but I am not prepared to state it at this moment. I would wish to hear first what the Lottery Advisory Committee have to say on the matter. However, I am not one for changing the structure of the lottery.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Minister not really hoping that with the passage of time, as incomes increase and the Government reduces taxes, which no doubt they will, that people will have more spare cash and therefore invest more in the lottery and the number of unsold tickets will gradually diminish?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, people are investing more on the lottery. You can notice that depending on the weeks that you look at. Going back to what used to happen under the policy of the previous administration. . . .

HON A J CANEPA:

The wise policy!

HON J C PEREZ:

. . . . every time that there was a change in prices there was a slump in sales which later picked up. The picking up is now becoming evident particularly lately and therefore I am not one to want to change the structure. However, if the Lottery Advisory Committee come up with some recommendations, I will study whatever they propose and take it from there.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Can the Government now give details about the formation of the company which collects refuse?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr Speaker, a full explanation of the role of the company and the reason for its formation was given to Hon Members in answer to Question Nos. 15 and 17 of 1990. I have nothing further to add.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 62 OF 1990

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Well, I believe, Mr Speaker, that I asked who was the Managing Director? What was the share capital of the company? Who were the other Directors? How was the transfer of equipment from the PWD handled? All these points have not been answered. Can the Hon Minister do so now?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member bothered to read Hansard he would notice that he did not ask all of those questions. The questions that he asked were answered. On the points raised now, Mr Speaker, the matter is public knowledge and he can undertake a company search and find out all the details. I am not answerable in this House for what is public knowledge.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, does that include details of any transfer of equipment that may have taken place?

HON J C PEREZ:

No, Mr Speaker. I said at the last meeting of the House that no transfer of equipment had taken place.

HON A J CANEPA:

Then on what basis is it being used?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the equipment belongs to the Government of Gibraltar and is used, on a daily basis, by the company. That is how the contract was worked out.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, last time when we discussed the matter the company did not even have a formal name. Does it have one now in order that we can carry out a search?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I believe that last time the company did have a name - Gibraltar Industrial Cleaners Ltd. This was stated last time and the Hon P C Montegriffo jumped up thinking that this was going to take over the cleansing of the whole world.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Minister is unable to tell us the name of the Managing Director?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, is there a problem with the Managing Director? What is the problem? Is this a policy issue? There are Managing Directors in all companies and the Opposition has never asked about them. Is this a policy issue? It is public knowledge.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, the policy issue is that the Managing Director runs the company that collects the refuse and which is a matter of public interest. Now if it turns out to be Mr "X" or Mr "Y" then there are views as to whether it is or not an appropriate appointment. That is a matter of policy. We are entitled to ask and to be given an explanation. Frankly it appears to be an incredible intransigence when the name is available in the Public Registry. It is petty and childish for the Minister not to answer. After all, the listening public is entitled to know who is running the Refuse Collection Company.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, what is frankly ridiculous is that Hon Members opposite, knowing that this is public knowledge, should come and waste the time of this House asking for things they can find out themselves. In any case, Standing Orders do not allow questions that are public knowledge.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

What is ridiculous, Mr Speaker, is that the Hon Minister should wish to hide everything under a smokescreen.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the smokescreen is the Registry and the Hon Member has access to those records.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, this is the House of Assembly and we are entitled to ask questions and we should have legitimate answers.

HON J C PEREZ:

And I, Mr Speaker, am prepared to answer every question that has to do with Government policy but details of things that are public and available I am not prepared to answer.

MR SPEAKER:

As the House knows, there is a rule that if information is set out in public documents or other books of reference, then the Hon Minister is not obliged to answer. If the Hon Minister says that the information now requested is available in a public place there is no point in pursuing the matter further. Next question.

26.4.90

NO. 63 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON K B ANTHONY

Will Government explain why, under the proposed terms of employment with the Gibraltar Nynex Communication Limited, the salary scales of the Supervisor and Operator of the sub-system grade are on a "personal to holder" basis?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Answered together with Question Nos. 64 and 65 of 1990.

26.4.90

NO. 64 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON K B ANTHONY

Will Government explain why, under the proposed terms of employment with the Gibraltar Nynex Communication Limited, five PTO III grades are being regraded to Senior Technician scale on a "personal to holder" basis?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Answered together with Question Nos. 63 and 65 of 1990.

THE HON K B ANTHONY

As all the advertised posts with the Gibraltar Nynex Communication Limited are for non-industrial grades, will the Government explain what is the future role of the present industrial grades with the Gibraltar Telephone Company?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr Speaker, the matter of the transfer of employees in the Telephone Department to the proposed joint venture company is the subject of negotiations between the union and Staff Association representing the workforce, and the Government of Gibraltar. It is Government policy not to divulge information on any specific matter whilst negotiations are taking place. May I, nonetheless, remind the Hon Member that the grade of PTO III does no longer exist in Government Service since it was done away with some years ago as a result of a reappraisal of the technical grades in the UK.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 63, 64 AND 65 OF 1990

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon Minister for his answer. However, my concern is not with the abolishment of the PTO III grades and regrading of Senior Technician, my concern is the possibility that Nynex might have a lower establishment than the present Gibraltar Telephone Department and this could be a potential unemployment situation for five, six or seven people.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, there is no danger of that and all I can do is express the Hon Member's concern to the Staff Association and the Union when I meet them. There is, however, no danger of that.

HON K B ANTHONY:

On the question of the non-industrial grades which are not mentioned in the contractual offers being made by the Nynex Company, can the Hon Minister give me any information at all about the situation regarding these grades in transferring over?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, these are the matters that I have said are at the negotiating stage.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Can the Hon Minister assure the House that the industrial grades are happy with the situation?

HON J C PEREZ:

This matter is still being negotiated and they will agree when they are totally happy because they will not agree until they are happy with their terms.

HON K B ANTHONY:

I take the Hon Minister's point but nevertheless, Mr Speaker I take it that not all employees will wish to transfer to Nynex, I do not know, but if they do they will deplete the Telephone Department

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, a job offer will be made available to everyone working today in the Gibraltar Telephone Department. If someone does not wish to transfer that is his prerogative, but everyone working in the Gibraltar Telephone Department will receive a job offer.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, one final question. Can the Hon Minister give this House any indication as to when the negotiations will be completed?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I hope shortly but I cannot give the Hon Member a specific date because negotiations are open to delays.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, I take the Hon Minister's point and I am not asking for a specific date as such, but 'shortly' is like describing how long is a piece of string. Does the Hon Minister mean one week, one month, three months?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, if we take as an example the Hon Mr Featherstone's description, some years ago, of what was 'temporary', it could mean five, ten, fifteen or twenty years, but I do not expect that timescale!

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon Minister explain, having regard to what he has told us or what he has not told us this morning, namely, that negotiations are taking place

HON J C PEREZ:

I have told the House that this morning, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, the Hon Minister has told us that this morning. But does he not accept that the reasons which he is alleged to have made public explaining why the Government had invited applications in its Bulletin of Circulars for seven non-industrial grades sounds very weak and hollow? How does the Hon Minister reconcile one with the other?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I am not quite sure as to what the Hon Leader of the Opposition is referring to.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, GBC put certain questions to the Government regarding the advertising of certain posts in the Bulletin of Circulars and the Hon Minister was quoted as having said that all that the Government was doing was testing what interest there was in these posts. Having regard to his failure to give answers to Question No. 65

HON J C PEREZ:

No, Mr Speaker, the answer was not hollow at all. Negotiations are taking place with the employees and we needed to know whether there were sufficient administrative grades prepared to move to the Company. I am glad to say, Mr Speaker, that there were 67 applications for 13 posts. That means that there is sufficient interest. These are factors that need to be known before the Company is actually formed. These negotiations are parallel with the

negotiations taking place with Nynex. Mr Speaker, until the Company is actually formed there can be no concrete job offers to anyone. That is why I made those comments to GBC. I said that we were inviting applications but that until the Company was formally established no offers could be made. Because, at the time, the Company did not exist, but because things are being tackled in parallel and people do not expect things to go drastically wrong, negotiations are taking place at the same time. That is the reason for my comments.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.,

THE HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Has the responsibility for the sewers been transferred from the PWD to another Ministry and, if so, why?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has taken over sections previously in the Public Works Department as a result of the restructure of the Government Service. This includes the Sewers Section.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 66 OF 1990

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Minister has not answered the question as to why?

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, this has arisen as a result of the restructure. It was felt that the major infrastructural part of the Public Works Department would be better suited in the Ministry of Trade and Industry since a lot of their work is connected with the major developments now taking place.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

What changes are involved with regard to maintenance, etc for the workers involved in undertaking those functions?

HON J C PEREZ:

None, Mr Speaker. The Heads of Section now report to the Minister for Trade and Industry and before they used to report to me. That is the only difference.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

It is then only a difference in control and not in different staff, sections or whatever, at this stage?

HON J C PEREZ:

That is correct, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P C MONTEGRIFFO

When will the Financial Services Commission come into operation and has the Government decided on the numbers and staff structure of the proposed Commission?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Mr Speaker the Government is currently in the process of selecting a suitable person for the post of Commissioner. It is not possible, therefore, to state when the Commission will become operational nor give an indication of the staff structure until a person has been appointed and is given an opportunity to assess and advise on requirements.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 67 OF 1990

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Government aware that the present staffing of the Financial Sector Adviser's Office that undertakes similar functions, is terribly inadequate and not equipped to undertake the sort of work that even, at present, is being generated?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, precisely because of this we feel that it would be better to wait until the Commissioner is in place to see what is required. The Hon Member must remember that we have recently introduced two major pieces of legislation, ie the Financial Services Commission and the Financial Services Ordinance and we are expanding our capabilities in this field. It is therefore prudent to wait for the person who will be assessing and advising to be in post before we undertake any changes. It would be best for the Government and the Commission to await his advice on requirements. The present staff will be given an opportunity obviously, to fit into that structure.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Will the Government, therefore, confirm that the existing staff at the Financial Sector Adviser's Office will be given a first option to join the proposed new Financial Services Commission?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Well, Mr Speaker, it depends on the structure that is going to be set up and also whether, in fact, the existing staff may wish to move into that structure.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Obviously, Mr Speaker, you are not going to move people against their wishes. But is it the Government's intention, like with the Telephone Department, to offer every employee in that section employment in the new Financial Services Commission?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Not until we know the structure required. Once we know that we will know how to approach the matter.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I can understand the need to await the Commissioner's appointment because his views will have a bearing on this but can the Hon Minister explain Government policy on the matter? Does the Government not have a view as to whether it would be beneficial and desirable for those people now employed in that area in the public service to be transferred to the new body?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

There is no Government policy?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker. What I am saying is that I am not prepared to state whether or not the Government will take that course of action.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Hon Minister say why he is not prepared to disclose this? Is it confidential? Why for the Telephone Department and not for this section of the public service?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, we need to appoint the Commissioner and then assess his recommendations. There is then a Commission to be appointed with different representative persons and it would therefore be premature for me to make a statement before the views of these respective persons, who are going to play a major part, is available.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Government aware that the delay in implementing the Commission is having a serious detrimental effect on the advantage that was gained by passing both the Financial Services and the Financial Services Commission Ordinances last year? This is being seen as a delay in implementing the supervision which Gibraltar requires.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, the initiative to introduce these types of legislation was taken by this Government because it had been on the cards for years and nothing had been done about it. It was as a result of my setting up my own team into place with assistance from the private sector that it is now in the Statute Book. It is as a result of this Government's initiative that a Commission has been introduced. This had not been thought of before as the way forward for Gibraltar. Mr Speaker, this has been done in a very short space of time and the indications that we have from those concerned, such as the feedback from Legal Chambers, etc, and the Hon Member must be deriving a benefit, is not the scenario that the Hon Member has stated about doubt, no confidence, etc. That is not the case.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I hope that the Hon Minister will not bring personal matters into the debate because if that is the case I will do the same. Can the Government then, Mr Speaker perhaps give an undertaking as to when it considers that it will have in place the Commission that will regulate Financial Services in Gibraltar?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, the advert has been published and we have had over 90 enquiries for the position, 45 formal applications have been received. These applications have had to be vetted. A short list has been drawn up. Once a person is appointed he will most probably have to give notice, if there is a final appointment of a suitable candidate. All

these things, Mr Speaker, take time. It is the Government's policy to have the person in post as soon as possible. To have the Commission working as soon as possible to assist in formulating the Government's policy since we came into office.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON K B ANTHONY

Will Government make a full statement about the current state of the Survey of both Camp Bay and Little Bay beaches and will they also state when these beaches are going to be re-opened for use by the general public?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member is aware, during the month of December and as a result of the heavy rains, significant rockfalls and soil slips occurred in the Camp Bay and Little Bay area.

The Camp Bay and Little Bay area was closed to the public due to the potential hazard of further rockfalls. Precautions were also taken at Europa Road just south of Glen Rocky in order to remove any loading on the unstable soil slips above the Keightley Way area.

Menarock was engaged to carry out a Survey of the four zones in the area where significant rockfalls had occurred. These zones are:

- (1) Machigolis Gallery area to the north of Camp Bay;
- (2) The soil slope above Camp Bay car park;
- (3) Open fissure area and tunnel portal area which are
- (4) & located to the east of Little Bay.

The purpose of the inspection was to obtain a detailed "Factile range" view of the problem area to assess:-

- (1) the nature and causes of the falls;
- (2) the level of risk remaining for users of the amenity area;
- (3) the remedial works required to reduce that risk to an acceptable level including detailed design of remedial measures that should be carried out before opening the area to the public for the summer of 1990 and diagnose, in principle, longer term remedial works.

In addition to the above, Menarock was asked to carry out a rock scaling exercise of the faces in the area to identify and remove, where possible, the most unstable elements and to identify any unstable features which could not be removed during the scaling exercise.

Mott MacDonald was engaged on a supervisory role during the Survey and future works, as our advisers, on recommendations by Menarock.

The detailed factile survey was carried out between the 26th February and 3 March, 1990. However, as the House is aware, during the first weekend in March, Camp Bay, Keys Promenade and Little Bay suffered further substantial damages as a result of the storm. Further damage was also suffered on all our other beaches.

The Report on the Survey has now been received and after consideration with our advisers, Mott MacDonald, agreement has been reached on the protective works which must be undertaken prior to the opening of the facilities to the general public. The works comprise the erections of rockfall barriers, control of access to certain areas and removal of a couple of loose blocks.

The recommendations and design "in principle" for the long-term stabilisation measures are being studied by our advisers and their comments are expected within a couple of weeks. These major works will be carried out in two stages. Stage I will be carried out during the summer with access restriction, and Stage II will be completed during the winter of 1990 with the area closed to the public.

The major works comprise mainly of supporting blocks with anchors and cables, spraying of concrete into face of conglomerate, underpinning certain structures and trimming of slopes.

In the meantime, works have proceeded in the clearing of the stones, etc accumulated at Camp Bay terraces as a result of the rockfalls and storms and repairing of the terraces facilities as well as the swimming pools. Remedial works is also being carried out on all the other beaches.

I am pleased to say that I have held discussions with the MOD and agreement has been reached which will entail the Royal Engineers, the Green Jackets and a Unit of the Cheshire Regiment, assisting in the joint efforts in carrying out the works. All these Units are currently mobilised on the site along with our own personnel.

It is envisaged that Camp Bay will be opened for the summer period. Insofar as Little Bay is concerned however, Mr Speaker, every effort is being made to have these facilities also open for the summer period.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 68 OF 1990

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon Minister most sincerely for that in-depth answer. However, is the Hon Minister aware that the MOD are recruiting lifesavers for the Nuffield Pool with effect from next Tuesday and does that mean that the pool is going to be open?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, the indications that I have given are that every effort is being made to open Little Bay. Let me say that the joint efforts that are being put into effect as a result of the meetings held is that we want the entire area open. I suppose that in anticipation that this is possible, the MOD is going ahead and recruiting people, which is an indication of the hope that there is that the entire area will be open to the public under certain conditions.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, I saw in January the damage after the December storm and it was to quote the words of the Hon Lady opposite, "horrendous". Certainly the Keightley Tunnel entrance was in a very bad state. Can the Hon Minister give me an indication as to whether this Tunnel will be open this summer or will the entrance be only through Camp Bay?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, the intention is to have entrances at both ends. But there will, of course, because of the works, be certain restrictions as to access.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, when one talks of restrictions of access, in what way will they be applied? For example, traffic lights at the Camp Bay entrance or what?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member has been down to the area in question he will have realised that in order for the Little Bay area to be opened there will have to be certain protective measures so that we can be as sure as it is humanly possible that people using Little Bay and Nuffield have security. That means that instead of being able, for example, to drive down into the car park you may only have limited access pedestrian-wise from Europa Point and access to the car park from the Camp Bay entrance. The thing that the Hon Member should be happy about is that I am making a statement that indicates to people who have asked or are asking, ie the letter in the Gibraltar Chronicle a few days ago, that it looks like Little Bay will also be open and these people should also be happy with this state of affairs.

HON A J CANEPA:

Is it likely that Little Bay and the Nuffield Pool end will be available to the public before Camp Bay is?

HON M A FEETHAM:

What we are trying to do, Mr Speaker, is to have them both ready at the same time. That is our target.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, the personnel working at Camp Bay are PWD personnel, is that so?

HON M A FEETHAM:

They are Government employees, Mr Speaker, under my Ministry.

HON A J CANEPA:

And the Army are at the moment working at the Little Bay/Nuffield Pool end?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Yes, Mr Speaker. But we will also have our workmen working at the Little Bay/Nuffield Pool end.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Minister ensure that we do not have a situation in which MOD personnel, services families and so on, are able to have access to the Nuffield Pool area through Keightley Way before the general public is able to use the facilities at Camp Bay? Because to ask the general public of Gibraltar to go through Keightley Way to be able to use Little Bay is hardly the kind of facility that we would wish them to have.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, it would be totally unacceptable for the Government to accept the position that the Nuffield Swimming Pool is open and Little Bay deprived to the Gibraltarians. The position that we have taken is that the joint efforts being put will ensure that that does not happen. Access will be through both entrances for the general public including MOD personnel.

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think that the Hon Minister has understood my question. What I am saying, Mr Speaker, is that for the general public to be able to come through Keightley Way and have access to Little Bay before they are able to have access to Camp Bay is not acceptable

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, look the ...

HON A J CANEPA:

Because, Mr Speaker, it is more difficult for the general public of Gibraltar to have to go all the way up to Europa Point and go through Keightley Way Tunnel in order to be able to use the limited facilities at Little Bay, which are very small, when the main beneficiaries are going to be service families, many of whom already live at Europa Point, and it is very near for them to use the Nuffield Pool.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, every effort is being made to have the entire area open to the general public, including the MOD families. In my estimation, having visited the area a number of times, Camp Bay will be open before Little Bay by maybe a week or two, although I have no wish to be pinned down to those dates. It is therefore very probable that Camp Bay will be open before Little Bay anyway, so all the facilities which were there before will be available except that there will be slight restrictions to protect the general public, in their own interest.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon Minister for that answer which is precisely what I was looking for.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, it was mentioned in the News last night that the Government hoped to re-open Camp Bay and Little Bay in June. Can I have an assurance from the Minister that if the works can be expedited these two areas will be open earlier?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member has been to the area he will know the enormous task that we have set ourselves and every effort is being made to open the area as soon as possible. What I cannot predict is whether it will be two weeks before or two weeks after the time mentioned. What I think the general public, who has been invited by the Hon Member to listen today, should be glad of is that the entire area will be available this summer.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Minister in a position to confirm the cost of the works and also whether ODA has agreed to cover the cost of the further damage caused by the recent storms?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, it is impossible for me to give an estimate of the costs involved. Our main priority at present is to open up the area for the general public. We have an idea of the cost involved but I am not prepared to say anything because other things are in play and there are joint responsibilities involved in the operation. The Hon Member should at this time leave it to the Government to deal with these negotiations on the costs involved.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, if I agree to leave it to the Government, will the Government confirm that the ODA is going to pick up the total bill? Or is that also a matter of adjustment?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, let me clarify this point. The ODA have accepted to pay for the Report and the Survey and they will then consider any costs from the works required. What I am saying is that in order to have the area open to the general public the costs involved have not been established since other matters are involved like the MOD involvement.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Minister referred to reaching agreement with MOD to clear up the area and which is, of course, very welcome but will the Hon Minister say whether this co-operation in clearing up the area also extends to the other beaches? Or is it restricted to the area of the Nuffield Swimming Pool?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, it is restricted to the major problem area which is the Camp Bay/Little Bay area. The other beaches are on target even though we have been set back by the bad weather. We are confident that the other beaches will open on time as well. In fact, they are being upgraded with new sand, etc something which has never been done before, certainly within my recollection.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, I was under the impression that Sandy Bay was being given a lower priority?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker. We started with Eastern Beach and we will finish the renovation of all of them before the summer season starts, including Catalan Bay for the benefit of the Hon Leader of the Opposition.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, the sand which was opposite Catalan Bay and Sandy Bay is no longer there, it is at the reclamation and sand is being brought by lorry to replace it.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is hitting below the belt because all the studies which have been made clearly indicate that that is not the case and I am quite willing to show this information to the Hon Member opposite.

HON J C PEREZ:

If I may add, Mr Speaker, the effect that we are suffering here from the sand is being suffered all over the Coast and it has to do with the weather, nothing else.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J CANEPA

Does the Government have any plans, or has it received any proposals for development of the area, below and to the west of Windmill Hill flats known as "Jacob's ladder"?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

No, Mr Speaker.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 69 OF 1990

HON A J CANEPA:

The Government has no plans to develop the area and has not received any proposals?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, if it were to receive proposals will the Government take into account that the habitat existing there is rather unique, even for Gibraltar, and that it is an area which from a wildlife point of view should be preserved as it is?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Yes, of course, Mr Speaker, we will.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am very grateful for that answer, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J CANEPA

Will the Minister for Trade and Industry make a statement regarding the feasibility study for the proposed East Side Reclamation Project?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

No, Mr Speaker, when I am ready I will do so.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 70 OF 1990

HON A J CANEPA:

Has there been no progress on this matter since a question was asked last time in the House?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, I am not in a position to make a statement so therefore we have not completed the costings, etc involved in such a major project.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Minister able to say whether the feasibility study includes a hydrographic survey aimed, obviously, at ensuring that whatever development takes place will not have an adverse effect on the already precarious state of our beaches?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Absolutely, Mr Speaker, that is one of the major considerations in this study.

HON A J CANEPA:

And other than the commercially sensitive aspects of the matter, will the Minister undertake to make public the results of the feasibility study in order to give an opportunity for discussion and comment prior to any irrevocable decision being taken on the matter?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker. The Government will use its judgement, consult whoever it believes ought to be consulted, and I have already indicated that the Catalan Bay Council will be consulted insofar as it affects them, but everything else is a matter for the Government.

NO. 71 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Has the Government any plans to develop the Little Bay and Camp Bay area?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

No, Mr Speaker.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 71 OF 1990

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Will the Hon Minister therefore confirm that they will remain bathing areas for the general public for the foreseeable future?

HON M A FEETHAM:

The bathing areas will remain bathing areas for the foreseeable future, yes, for many years I hope.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON LT-COL E M BRITTO

Will Government confirm that it intends to move the Ministry of Trade and Industry to a new location away from The Haven?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

As the Hon Member is aware, the Government is in the process of restructuring the Civil Service, and in this connection it may well be that the Ministry will move out of The Haven.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 72 OF 1990

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, the question was does he intend to move it to a new location? Could I have a 'yes' or a 'no'?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, I am answering as the position is today. It may or it may not.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that an alternative site has already been chosen and decided?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that, maybe it has not been decided, but it is being considered to move it to the area of the Old Bakery at Town Range?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, the Ministry is composed of a number of Departments and it may be that one of the Departments moves to the area mentioned by the Hon Member. The Ministry has many Departments and it is a question of where to house them. It may be that the Ministry, as a whole, goes there but then it may not.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Fine, Mr Speaker. So we have established that a section of the Ministry may be moving to the area in question, to new premises at Town Range, is that correct?

HON M A FEETHAM:

That is the case, Mr Speaker, and as the Hon Member is aware, Gibraltar is very small, we are moving Departments around and a great deal of deployment has to take place until we get all the Ministries properly structured in their long-term places.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, is this location into which this section of the Ministry may be moving into Government property, private property or MOD property?

HON M A FEETHAM:

The property in question, which is in fact the Queensway Street area in Town Range, and I do not know why the Hon Member has not named it, may house a particular section of my Ministry and is MOD property, at the moment. That is one of the reasons why we may or may not move into the area. It may be or it may not be one of the properties that will eventually be handed over to the Government of Gibraltar. But in anticipation, as forward planning, that building may be used by my Ministry.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon Minister for at last being forthcoming. The question now is "Are these not married quarters and would it not be more beneficial to use these premises for housing at this stage"?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, as my colleague on my left has just mentioned, that has nothing to do with my Ministry moving or not moving. This has nothing to do with the original question and I have no reason to answer. However, let me say that 75% of the existing area is used by the MOD as workshops and offices.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, I cannot accept that it has nothing to do with my original question because my question was "moving into a new location?" And what we are talking about is the new location and this new location is more suitable for housing.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member is now talking about housing.

MR SPEAKER:

I think we are diverging from the question a lot now. The Hon Member is now asking for an opinion in assessing the matter and as Members are aware, opinions are not even allowed at Question Time. I, however, think that the matter has been thrashed out sufficiently. Next question.

THE HON LT-COL E M BRITTO

Will Government make a statement giving details of the proposed major changes at the Crown Lands Department?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Mr Speaker, in keeping with our well established policy in respect of the restructure of the Civil Service, proposals were received from the staff in Crown Lands to undertake the management of the land and property holdings and related property matters on a fee basis. These were considered acceptable by the Government and arrangements are in hand to put this agreement into effect.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 73 OF 1990

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

So, Mr Speaker, the intention is to virtually privatise the Crown Lands Department?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker, that is not correct.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Department going to move away from the Official Sector and receive fees and become self-financing?

HON M A FEETHAM:

That is correct, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, and that change to a self-financing agency, so to speak, is that part of the change that will be reflected, for example, in this year's Estimates?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker, because as I have said, we are still in the process of putting this proposal into effect and we may overlap.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

And the idea, Mr Speaker, is that as far as that 'agency' is concerned, the employees will be considered private sector employees?

HON M A FEETHAM:

They will all be self-employed, Mr Speaker. It is their initiative. It is the same as if the Government wanted to look towards a Property Management Company in Gibraltar to manage their property, as indeed other landlords look towards Property Managers to manage their properties.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

And those fees and functions of the 'agency', Mr Speaker, will cover not only the management of Government properties but presumably the assessing and analysing of Building Applications, etc?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker. I have said that it is only related to land and property management and related matters. The question of building control and planning will continue to be under my Ministry.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I am grateful to the Hon Minister for that explanation, Mr Speaker. Could the Minister confirm whether the profits of the 'agency'

HON M A FEETHAM:

It is not an 'agency', Mr Speaker. They are all self-employed.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

... Of the company, will the Government enter into a contract and have a clawback on any profits made?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Is it then, basically, a situation whereby in return for a fee, fixed annually or by some other means, they will manage the Government's property?

HON M A FEETHAM:

That is correct, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

The question of Building Control, that will continue to operate as at present and no fees will be charged? Other than whatever fees are being charged at the moment?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Yes, Mr Speaker, that has nothing to do, as I have already explained, with the question that has been put.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, now that the Hon Minister is in a generous mood of providing information the temptation is too great. Could the Hon Minister say if the Housing Estates form part of the properties to be managed by the new company?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker. We are talking of the commercial related properties of the Government, not the residential aspect.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Would it include areas like the Dockyard area?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Will Government have any control on the scale of fees being charged by the 'privatised section' of the Crown Lands Department?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, the fees to be paid have been agreed by both sides. This involves the breakdown of the fee for various things. But anything else in terms of rent, etc which belong to the Government is a matter for the Government.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, I think the Hon Minister may not be distinguishing between fee and fees. The way that I understand it is that the employees are going to be paying Government for the privilege of carrying out these services on their own. Paying a management fee. What I am now asking about are the fees that they will be charging the public for the service they are going to provide

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker, they are not going to charge the public anything. We have a number of properties and the units which compose these properties, commercial units, stores, etc which have to have leases drawn up, rental reviews, etc. These rental levels, etc will be decided by the Government. What the group composing the company on a fee basis will be charging the Government for is the work undertaken on their behalf. They will not have any contact with the Government's clients, if I can put it that way, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

In view of the change involved, will Government, once the negotiations are completed, agree to provide information on the fees involved, etc?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, what I am prepared to do is that within the existing budget, within the Estimates, give Hon Members an indication of what we are talking about. But I am sure that neither the Hon Member or anyone else would wish me to make known information, on a commercial agreement, entered into between two parties. That should be something for the parties involved.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I was not asking that the information be made public but provided to Hon Members because it is of enormous importance to us in assessing that the return which we, as a people, get on Government land. At least let Hon Members know what type of arrangements have been made for the management of public property.

HON M A FEETHAM:

Let me inform the Hon Member that it has been on the initiative of the staff and which we have found acceptable, it will be within the constraint of the wages presently being paid to them by Government and if you look at the

Estimates it is not going to cost any more than it is already costing the Government. In fact, the situation is that it will improve the service presently available. There is no need for the Hon member to know anything else.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I am not suggesting that it is going to cost us more or less. On the contrary, I am suggesting that there is an element of benefit that could be quantified and I am prepared to accept, at this stage, that people in the street should not have all the details of how our land, all our land, is being managed then at least what I am saying is why should Members on this side of the House, unless you mistrust us, should not be given details of the arrangement entered into. So that we at least know how public land is being managed and the arrangement established?

HON M A FEETHAM:

First of all, Mr Speaker, the question of land in its wider implications is a matter for the Government and it is the Government who will be carrying out the negotiations in terms of disposal of the land. What we are now talking about is property management and I will accept that there might be a slight overlap on the question of the land but the major issues will still remain under the responsibility of the Government. What we are entering into is basically a property management contract with our own staff who are going into a commercial situation. That aspect of it will remain confidential between the Government, as the client, and the Company, as the people undertaking the work. In the same way as any other landlord who enters into a property management contract in Gibraltar. If in time, for example, and which does not arise, but if it were to and the Government wished to change its property managers why should everybody else know the fees that we are paying? Why should other property managers know?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, are these changes being reflected in these Estimates?

HON M A FEETHAM:

No, Mr Speaker, because as I have already stated, we are still not ready and a number of things have still to be done. There is still some legislation which requires change to take into account the formal agreement. In terms of what is now known as "the Director of Crown Lands" will require to be changed.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Apart, Mr Speaker, of helping to reduce the Civil Service, what other major advantage is there from Government's point of view? I would have thought that there was a financial saving but the Hon Minister has already ruled that out. Is there any other advantage?

HON M A FEETHAM:

Mr Speaker, we would not be doing this unless there were advantages in proceeding with the proposal. Also let me say that when we talk about restructuring, when we talk about finding people alternative areas of employment in Gibraltar, we also take into account that if there is going to be a particular sector of our economy that is going to experience growth, that it would be quite frankly unfortunate that the Gibraltarians should not be ready to grasp those opportunities. It is clear that the property aspects of the economy are increasing as can be seen by the number of developments that have started and will start. Therefore we are giving the staff the opportunity, in being our property managers, of also competing for the growth which there will be in the private sector and therefore increase their security by the steps that we have taken. They will therefore be given the opportunity to make more money in the process. It is therefore, Mr Speaker, a matter of joint benefit.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON LT-COL E M BRITTO

Will Government say whether the revision of the Housing Waiting List has now been completed and, if not, give an estimated date of completion?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 74 OF 1990

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Will the Minister undertake to provide me with a copy of the revised Waiting List?

HON J L BALDACHINO:

No problem, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member will be provided with a copy.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I thank the Hon Minister for his cooperation.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON LT-COL E M BRITTO

Will Government say whether the resignations of the two UK Directors from the Board of GSL was on the initiative of those directors or at the request of the Minister for GSL in his capacity as Chairman of the Board?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GSL AND TOURISM

Mr Speaker, the resignation of the two UK directors from the Board of GSL was at my request but after discussion with them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 75 OF 1990

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, is the Government prepared to make any further disclosures other than what the Hon Minister has just said as to why the resignations were requested?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, at the time I gave GBC an extensive interview on the matter, so it is public knowledge.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, I do not think that I was in Gibraltar at the time and I did not definitely hear what the Minister said on television and by the way that, as I understand it, is not a public record.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, there is no problem. I will explain the reasons again. After the final restructuring in December last year the company is now a much smaller company and there were three elements involved: (a) a smaller company did not need as big a Board of Directors as it required when it was a bigger company; (b) because we were looking at every aspect of expenditure the financial outlay of bringing UK directors to Gibraltar, although minimal, still incurred travel and accommodation costs plus their fees; and (c) if one goes back to 1988, I remember advising the House that we were keeping Mr Peter Simonis and Mr John Steele with us, as part of the Board of Directors, because we felt that there was a requirement for a transitional stage between what there existed and what there now was. I think that that transitional stage was amply satisfied by that stage.

Therefore for the above three factors, I spoke at length, to both John Steele and Peter Simonis and after that discussion they agreed to resign. Let me add that both Mr John Steele and Mr Peter Simonis have written to me personally and to the company thanking us for the relationship and the work done with us.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that there is a fourth factor that these directors were unhappy with some aspects of the operation of GSL and that the resignations would have happened in any case?

HON J E PILCHER:

No, Mr Speaker, and if the Hon Member wishes I will make available, confidentially and privately, the letters of both the directors to me after their resignation from the Board. They show how delighted they had been working with us until the stage that they had to leave.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. There is obviously no need for that because I accept the Hon Minister's word for what he has just said.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P C MONTEGRIFFO

Will Government confirm the current monthly losses at GSL and its associated joint venture companies and their present extent of liability to Government and other creditors?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GSL AND TOURISM

Mr Speaker, as we have already said on countless occasions, the Government is not prepared to give the information the Hon Member is asking for.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 76 OF 1990

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government not accept that the yard is in a situation of deepening crisis?

HON J E PILCHER:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Does the Government not accept, Mr Speaker, that Members on this side of the House have a duty to monitor, as closely as Mr Pilcher, the state of the yard and the wellbeing of the workers?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

And to that end how does the Hon Minister expect us to do that if they refuse to give basic information about losses in a fast deteriorating situation? Are we supposed to be magicians?

HON J E PILCHER:

The Hon Member opposite, Mr Speaker, is again making wide sweeping statements which are not correct. As regards the monitoring we have a situation today, which we have always had at GSL, from the point of view of the House of Assembly where the situation at GSL will be discussed, at length, when we have finished the six months period of the final phase of the restructuring and when I bring the audited

accounts for 1989 to the House. In the meantime it is my responsibility to monitor GSL and the responsibility of the Government and that is being done on a day-to-day basis, on an hour-to-hour basis and on a minute-to-minute basis. Mr Speaker, therefore none of the statements that the Hon Member made a minute ago are correct.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Government aware, Mr Speaker, that there are or have been, large numbers of workers coming into GSL to work every morning and then lying idle for weeks on end because there is no work for them to do?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, that is utter nonsense.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I have information that, in fact, as a result of changes within the yard, the situation arises where many people are simply lying idle with nothing to do, effectively unemployed but still on GSL's payroll?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member opposite, obviously, makes himself responsible for that statement but that is not the information that we have.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

So, Mr Speaker, as far as the Government is concerned every single GSL worker and every single joint venture GSL worker is gainfully employed in useful occupation at present?

HON J E PILCHER:

At different levels, Mr Speaker, but certainly, yes. And as far as GSL is concerned absolutely yes.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister prepared, even on a confidential basis, to make available to us, Members of the House, copies of Management Agreements for GSL? Because would the Hon Minister not accept, Mr Speaker, that in a situation where the matter is moving so quickly that looking at Accounts that are even six months old is an artificial picture and that if he wants people on this side of the House to understand the position then there should be a commitment that Management Accounts be provided albeit on a confidential basis?

HON J E PILCHER:

No, Sir, for two reasons. On the one hand because, obviously, as I have already mentioned, this is the responsibility of the company and not the Government, in its role as Government. Therefore by sharing it with the Members opposite it goes beyond company responsibility. However, the second position, which I think the Hon Member is aware of, is that Management Accounts are virtually that, Accounts that reflect on a month-to-month basis, what is happening to the company but are subject, obviously, to major amendments the following month as one sees the transactions occurring and the contracts closing. This is particularly pertinent to an area like Gibraltar Shiprepair which is an area where you open and close contracts and are working on a vast range of work in progress. Therefore we felt that the best possible way was to present the picture of six months and which we will be doing, like we did last year, reviewing the business, not only in 1989 when we present the Accounts but reviewing the business like we did when we presented the 1988 Accounts.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the Hon Minister then in a position to project whether come June 1990, the company will be suffering the same or greater levels of losses than has been the case in its recent history? He was reluctant on television to give a view but we are now very close to June and is he in a position to make a prediction on the position?

HON J E PILCHER:

No, Mr Speaker, I would prefer not to.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J CANEPA

Is the Minister for GSL in a position to give information explaining progress made in achieving the objectives which he set himself last December?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GSL AND TOURISM

Mr Speaker, we have just been discussing the matter and as I have said the position will be reviewed in June.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 77 OF 1990

HON A J CANEPA:

And in the last four months has there been no progress in achieving these objectives, Mr Speaker? Or is it that the Hon Minister is not prepared to say whether there has been progress?

HON J E PILCHER:

Of course, Mr Speaker, there has been progress. But I think that the monitoring exercise has to go over the six months. And as I have mentioned in the previous question, we feel that until such time as we have the six month accounts and we do a six monthly audit of the company, we shall not be in a position to make comments or statements which could be misleading and their accuracy have to be amended for the reasons stated before in answer to the previous question.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, last December we were debating the Accounts and the Auditor's Report for 1988, does the Hon Minister now have some information relating to the financial outturn for 1989?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, we do not yet have even the first draft of the 1989 Accounts.

HON A J CANEPA:

But, Mr Speaker, the review that is taking place and the decision of monitoring over a period of six months ending in June, is that not likely to be affected by the outturn for 1989? And does he not need to have the information that I am talking about before June?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Mr Speaker, that is another of the elements. The opening position for GSL on the 1st January, which will not be finally identified until we have the Audited Accounts for 1989, is absolutely essential in that monitoring process from January to June, 1990. We hope to have the 1989 Accounts before the end of June even if they are in first or second draft form.

HON A J CANEPA:

Will the Hon Minister therefore undertake, Mr Speaker, to make a detailed statement here in the House before the summer recess? I do not know when the meeting of the House will be but the period under review ends on the 30th June. Assuming that the House meets before we recess, let us say in July or August, will the Hon Minister undertake to make a detailed statement in the House that will update the situation in the light of the monitoring exercise and in the light of the Auditor's Report for 1989?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Mr Speaker. I will commit myself to that with the exception that I cannot commit myself to the date because obviously I will not be able to come back to the House immediately after June. I would not want to commit myself because I would be misleading the House in saying that it could be ready by July when it may not. Because as the Hon Member opposite understands, the June Accounts for the company will not be ready until at least the second or third week in July. That is the normal Management Accounts. And if we are going to do a six monthly interim audit then that might take even longer, Mr Speaker. So I cannot commit myself to a timescale before the summer. If that were possible then I would be more than happy to do so. But I cannot commit myself, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

Will the Hon Minister further undertake, having regard to the importance and the relevance of Accounts for 1989 in the decisions that he has to take, to try to ensure that that Report is tabled here in the House by that date? To enable us, even if we are not ready to debate the Accounts, to understand the position and what the Hon Minister will say?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, if the company's final Audited Accounts are not ready at the time when we give a full statement of what has happened between January and June we will provide some kind of statement for 1989 to help Members opposite

HON A J CANEPA:

An interim statement?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes. If the Report is ready then it will be tabled at the same time.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am grateful for that, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

26.4.90

NO. 78 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON A J CANEPA

Will the Government undertake to honour their electoral pledge that there will be no compulsory redundancies at GSL?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GSL AND TOURISM

Answered together with Question No. 79 of 1990.

THE HON P C MONTEGRIFFO

What is the Government's position on its previous guarantee to the workforce that there would be no redundancies at the yard?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GSL AND TOURISM

Mr Speaker, during the course of the election campaign in 1988, the GSLP gave a commitment to the permanent resident workforce, that if it won the election it would stop the redundancies proposed by the Board of the company and approved by the AACR Government. This commitment has been honoured.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 78 AND 79 OF 1990

HON A J CANEPA:

Will the Hon Minister explain, Mr Speaker, who are the permanent resident workforce of GSL? Permanently resident in Gibraltar? Who are they?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, those who are permanent employees and resident in Gibraltar.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, does that commitment apply if workers are conveniently transferred to a joint venture company, such as GLS, after the event?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

It does apply. So no one at GLS, or any other joint venture company, will be made compulsorily redundant?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, what is happening with Gibraltar Labour Services, which is the company that the Hon Member opposite is referring to, is that the company is looking for suitable alternative employment for those individuals. The only

situation that might arise, and which to a point contradicts the statement that I have just made, is if the people who are found suitable employment refuse to accept it. In which case, obviously, we cannot guarantee anybody a job for life, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

Suitable employment, as deemed by Management, by the Union or by the men concerned?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, in consultation obviously with the Union and the individual concerned.

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, does the Hon Minister not consider that what he has said here in the House should have been made public, and properly clarified, when the controversy arose a few weeks ago?

HON J E PILCHER:

No, Mr Speaker. There was a controversy apparently in "Area" and which the Hon Member has reminded me, on various occasions in this House, we should not even talk to. I assure the Hon Member opposite that as far as I am concerned the people who have to know are the people concerned and I assure him that the people working at the moment in GLS have been consulted and have been advised since day one, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is the guarantee one that will apply even in the event of the yard being sold or a change of ownership taking place? As reports have it?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Mr Speaker, the guarantee applies.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

As well as in the case of those joint venture companies that would be affected in such a situation?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

NO. 80 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON G MASCARENHAS

Will Government state the amount collected in airport departure tax for the calendar year 1989?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GSL AND TOURISM

Mr Speaker, the Government collected £487,185 in departure tax for the calendar year 1989.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 80 OF 1990

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Minister confirm that the £5 tax was introduced in April of last year?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Sir.

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, having regard to the tabling this morning of the Air Traffic Survey, would the Hon Minister try to explain, if not right now perhaps at a later stage, that in reply to Question No. 36 of this year between the 1st April and the 31st December, 1989, the answer to the same question was £415,572 and I am not misleading the Hon Minister, it is in Hansard, and the Government had budgetted for 1989 £600,000. Having regard to what the Hon Minister has tabled this morning in this House, will he clarify the reason why the number of seats used, that I have taken the figure from between April and December, 1989, which I make out to be a total of 139,600 which multiplied by £5 would make the revenue total £698,000, I repeat, £698,000. Why the figure of only £415,000 has been recovered? There is a shortfall of £282,000, Mr Speaker.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, I think the confusion in the Hon Member's mind is that we had a situation in January, February and March, 1989, when the departure tax was at £2. On the 1st April the departure tax was increased from £2 to £5 but the Government share of that departure tax is £3 and £2 is passenger service payment paid to Gibraltar Airport Services Ltd. If the Hon Member does his figures in this manner he will arrive at the figure I provided.

ORAL

NO. 81 OF 1990HON G MASCARENHAS

Will the Minister for GSL and Tourism give details about the proposed fee for access to the Upper Rock?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GSL AND TOURISM

No, Sir, there are no details because at this stage there is no proposed fee for access to the Upper Rock.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 81 OF 1990

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Will the Hon Minister confirm whether he has had meetings with the people concerned, the taxi drivers and the public service vehicle operators, about the introduction of a fee to gain access to the Upper Rock?

HON J E PILCHER:

No, Sir. I have not held meetings with the taxi drivers or the public service vehicle operators as regards payment for access to the Upper Rock. What I have had is long and detailed meetings with the public service vehicle operators and the taxi drivers as a result of the Traffic Guides Regulations 1989 and the Traffic Tour Regulations 1989. These involved administrative charges for a Rock Tour and controls Rock Tours in Gibraltar. This is something about which I made a public statement some two months ago when I spoke about the introduction of the Apes Den on the 1st June. It concerns a charge which, in any case we are not going to levy because we have decided, in conjunction with the public service vehicle operators and the Taxi Association that the administrative charge which is included in the Regulations will not be levied. We have discarded that possibility. I think those meetings are the ones that the Hon Member opposite is referring to, not about a charge for access to the Upper Rock.

HON G MASCARENHAS:

What the Hon Minister is actually saying is that there will be no charge to gain access to the Upper Rock?

HON J E PILCHER:

Yes, Mr Speaker, that is what I said in my initial answer but I have explained the position further to clear the confusion in the mind of the Hon Member opposite about the access to the Upper Rock.

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, there was no confusion in my mind whatsoever. I declare an interest in the matter, Mr Speaker ...

HON A J CANEPA:

The present Members of the AACR are never confused, Mr Speaker.

HON J E PILCHER:

Do I then take it, Mr Speaker, that anybody who is a past member of the AACR can be confused?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I decline to answer.

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Mr Speaker, having declared an interest. My information was very clear that there was going to be a f2 charge with effect from the 1st June of this year to gain access to the Upper Rock. The charge would include entrance to the new Monkey Park, St Michael's Cave, etc.

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, the bottom line is that this idea has been discarded.

HON G MASCARENHAS:

When was it discarded, Mr Speaker?

HON J E PILCHER:

Mr Speaker, it was discarded certainly since three weeks ago when I wrote officially to the public service vehicle operators and the Taxi Association. In fact, a meeting was held to look at the final proposal which does not contain anything about administrative charges for visiting the Upper Rock. What I am saying to the Hon Member, for clarification, is that it was not a charge levied for entry into the Upper Rock. It was a charge levied under the Tour Guides Regulations, an administrative charge for the Rock Tours, which as part of the deal would have incorporated St Michael's Cave and the Apes Den. That is now historical because it has been discarded.

HON G MASCARENHAS:

Whilst on this question, Mr Speaker, may I ask the Hon Minister to confirm that the only new charge on the Upper Rock will be the Monkey Park when that becomes operational at 50p?

HON J E PILCHER:

That, Mr Speaker, is all that is being proposed as a new charge. I have already announced that it is our intention to increase the fee to St Michael's Cave from £1 to £1.50.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON LT-COL E M BRITTO

Will the Chief Minister confirm that the discussions taking place for an increased participation in the role that may be required in 1991 by the Gibraltar Regiment is on the basis that the Gibraltar Regiment will be a part of the British Army?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, there are no discussions taking place with the Gibraltar Government. The position as regards the discussions within MOD with the Gibraltar Regiment have already been made public by them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 82 OF 1990

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, during a debate in this House last February, I think it was, and I am quoting from Hansard, the Hon Chief Minister interjected precisely using the words which I have used in my question today. The Hon Chief Minister said: "Can I correct the Hon Member" - the Hon Member being myself - "let me say to him that in fact the discussions already taking place for an increased participation in the role that may be required in 1991 by the Gibraltar Regiment is on the basis that the Gibraltar Regiment will be part of the British Army". My question to the Hon Chief Minister is therefore: "Is the Hon Chief Minister now telling us that he is not involved in the discussions?" But, obviously, at that stage, he must have been aware of the discussions and what they were about? And if he, at that stage, was saying that the discussions were aimed at being a part of the British Army and we now know from the announcement made by General Ramsbottom when he was here some months ago and more recently from the Press Release issued by Fortress Headquarters, which is misleading, because it says that the Regiment is going to be an integral part of the British Army and then it says it is not going to change its status. Now, Mr Speaker, if it is not going to change its status it is not going to be part of the British Army. In the light of all that can the Hon the Chief Minister enlighten us on what has changed since last February?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, what has changed is that the Gibraltar Regiment and the MOD have reached an agreement, and I have not negotiated that agreement, and therefore I cannot say to the Hon Member why the Gibraltar Regiment has settled for

what it has settled. Except that I understand that they are as close as they can be to being in the British Army with being in Northern Ireland, which I understand, is a place nobody wants to be.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

With respect, Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar Regiment does not negotiate because that is not the way the Army works. The Gibraltar Regiment will have been told the results of what the MOD has decided. Let me say at this stage, Mr Speaker, whilst obviously declaring an interest in the matter, that I speak in my own personal capacity without any knowledge which has been acquired from the Regiment for whom I do not carry a brief and acting only from knowledge that I have acquired from the media. Mr Speaker, having clarified my position, let me say to the Hon Chief Minister that, as I mentioned last February, the Regiment cannot negotiate. My intention last February was to, through the Chief Minister ask the Gibraltar Government to do its utmost to influence the decisions that would be taking place by asking the Hon Chief Minister to play a significant part in the consultations and in the process of dialogue that had been announced as well as in influencing the British Government along the lines that he himself had indicated he would like to see happening.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Hon Member opposite is the former Commanding Officer of the Gibraltar Regiment and he must know how dictatorial the MOD was with him when he was in command of the Regiment. Mr Speaker, I am not and never have been, a military man and I am therefore not in a position to challenge his expertise in that field. Maybe in this new democratic era with the GSLP in Government the MOD is more of a listening partner than it used to be when he was there but my understanding is that the final settlement, which may not be 100% of what the Gibraltar Regiment wanted, is as close as possible to the 100% and is considered satisfactory by those affected. That is the informal feedback that I have. If it is not the informed feedback that the Hon Member has then I am afraid that if people want me to do something about that they should not wait for the Hon Member to put a question in the House. They have an open door.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 83 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON A J CANEPA

Has the Government now received details from the MOD regarding lands to be transferred, particularly in respect of housing units?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I have received a letter from Mr Hamilton, the MOD Minister, outlining proposed land releases as a basis for discussion but these do not include any housing units. I have been promised information on the proposed release of housing units in July.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 83 OF 1990

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr speaker, does the Hon the Chief Minister have any indications regarding the housing units and whether they could become available for the general housing waiting list or are they just earmarked for personnel to be employed by the Gibraltar Regiment?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No. I imagine that what they are proposing to release to us is in addition to whatever they retain as part of the MOD housing stock for Gibraltar Regiment personnel.

HON A J CANEPA:

In addition to what they are going to retain?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

They are going to retain housing stock that will be allocated to personnel of the Gibraltar Regiment?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is the case, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

And apart from that there may be some other housing units available for the general public?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

But at this stage, Mr Speaker, we do not know what they are talking about although I would not want to raise anybody's hopes because I think experience shows that when they release they tend to release what is in the worst state.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 84 OF 1990THE HON P C MONTEGRIFFO

Will Government give a breakdown of the contribution of each of the sectors of the economy to GDP for the years 1980/81 to 1988/89 and of its projections for the contribution of each sector for the next two years 1989/90 and 1990/91?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the information requested from 1980/81 is not readily available from past records. However, I will seek to give as accurate a picture as possible, with the data available when I present the Appropriation Bill. I will at the same time indicate the possible changes over the next two years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 84 OF 1990

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, can the Hon the Chief Minister indicate at this stage what statistical information he, basically, will have recourse to, in making these projections, bearing in mind my understanding which has been confirmed by him, that there is a dearth of reliable statistics in a whole variety of factors which are required for this?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I can only use what information there is.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I know, Mr Speaker, but even what there is from the Chief Minister's own assessment, for example, employment figures, contain a huge amount of discrepancy between the different types of assessment of employment levels. What I am trying, in all frankness, is ask the Chief Minister that in projecting the Government targets has he opted for a particular set of figures or is he using methods as were used prior to the GSIP coming into office?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, the employment figures to which the Hon Member is referring has absolutely nothing to do with the calculation of GDP. It is totally irrelevant.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I do not accept that but let me then try and build this case up. Does the Government accept the accuracy of the GDP and GNP figures as published in the Abstract of Statistics 1988? Is the Government's position that it accepts the accuracy of the figures as presently published up to the end of 1989?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member has just said that there are discrepancies in the calculation of employment level and I have told him that that has nothing to do with the GDP. He has then stood up and said that he does not accept it. Now, Mr Speaker, that indicates to me that his understanding of the subject matter on which he is questioning me is rather limited. The information that is published is the information that is available to the Government and is the information that was calculated using a certain methodology before we came into office. What I have promised the Hon Member is that I will look at what is available and I will try, between now and the debate on the Appropriation Bill, to produce as accurate a picture as possible. I do not know, Mr Speaker, what the Hon Member expects me to say.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

What I expect, Mr Speaker, is that the Hon the Chief Minister answers my question. My supplementary question was "Does the Chief Minister accept, notwithstanding the reservations that we both have on the figures, that the figures as published in the Abstract of Statistics are correct, as far as the Government is concerned?" Does the Government feel they are accurate or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Right, Mr Speaker. Therefore if the Hon Member is able to think logically he must know that one can only judge whether something is correct if one is able to compare that something with something else. If one has only one set of figures, then one cannot know how accurate that particular figure is. All I can tell the Hon Member is that the figures that are available are the figures that have always been available. Consequently, if you have two sets of figures and what the Hon Member is interested is in the movement between Set A and Set B and if there is a margin of error in A and there is the same margin of error in B then that does not affect the movement between the two which is what he is asking me.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Then, Mr Speaker, as I understand it, the Government in making its projection for the next two years will use the same basis of statistical information as has been used in the last X

years as published in the Abstract and which will have the margin of error, unquantified at present, which we all understand is there. So if the Chief Minister will confirm that, Mr Speaker, I assume he is also confirming, therefore, that there is no fundamental change in the collection of statistics which was something that the Government was, as previously mentioned by them, interested in doing.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, there has been no fundamental change in the collection of statistics. There has been a review of the system in terms of the compilation of the GDP as opposed to the GNP and in respect of how the MOD is treated as part of the domestic economy. I will be able to explain that, Mr Speaker, when I give the statement I have promised to give when we consider the Appropriation Bill. Mr Speaker, this will be a statement which I am qualifying by saying, when the time comes, it has to be understood that I am doing that with a caveat that I will be doing it with the level of accuracy that it is possible to achieve.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

That being the case, Mr Speaker, since we are working within a level of accuracy not so dissimilar from the level of accuracy that we could obtain before, would the Chief Minister then accept, for example, that in the last four years, as published in the Abstract, GDP has seen a growth of about 50% as far as published figures are concerned?

MR SPEAKER:

I must stop the Hon Member because we are now anticipating what the Chief Minister has said he will actually go into when the Appropriation Bill is debated. That is the end of the matter. Next question.

NO. 85 OF 1990THE HON P C MONTEGRIFFO

What are the Government projections for increase in per capita output for the next two years, 1989/90 and 1990/91?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, Government does not make projections for increases in per capita output.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 85 OF 1990

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, in assessing the Government's targets for economic growth, a term I think, recognised by all as being fairly vague in itself and in identifying economic growth, a reference to GDP or GNP, is it not the Hon the Chief Minister's view that that figure only has any relevance to the real wealth which we create by reference to the per capita figure that each of us is responsible for and therefore is the Chief Minister not in a position to give some prediction for those figures?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker. The answer is the one that I have already given the Hon Member. The Government does not make projections on the basis of per capita output and the Government does not accept that in the nature of Gibraltar's economy per capita output has any meaning whatsoever. It is a totally irrelevant statistic.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

So as far as the statistic which appears in the Abstract is concerned, per capita output, I understand the Government's position to be that in assessing its own target of growth and in asking us to assess your performance on that basis regard should not be had at all, either to previous figures in respect of per capita output or as indeed those figures might appear in future years? The Government, Mr Speaker, will be looking at GDP and GNP primarily as a record for economic growth?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not entirely, Mr Speaker. The Government will be producing new statistics which it considers to be a more accurate reflection of what is happening in the economy but it will not be relying on the figures to which the Hon Member is referring which is per capita.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I am grateful for that, Mr Speaker. Precisely therefore in seeking to have the Government confirm what figures and what targets it will pin its performance on, could the Hon the Chief Minister indicate what is, in fact, the criteria by which the Government's growth performance is measured and assessed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether the Hon Member understands the terminology that he is using. The growth of the economy is not measured in per capita output, it is a global growth. So therefore in looking at the growth of the economy, the Government will not be dividing that growth by the size of the resident population. In any case in a situation where there is an element of frontier workers, measuring the output of the economy as if there were no frontier workers, which is what he is asking us to do, is of no use to anyone.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I am not asking him to do that and he knows that full well. I am asking the Chief Minister a simple question. The Chief Minister has set himself and his Government a target of 50% economic growth. That is one of the fundamental cornerstones of this Government's policy for better or for worse. I am asking the Chief Minister, bearing in mind the differences in assessment of that largely vague term, can the Chief Minister explain to this House by what criteria, by what terms of measurement does he expect us to put that target to the test?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I am trying to explain to the Hon Member opposite the terminology he is using because the nature of his questions clearly demonstrate to me that he does not understand what he is talking about. If we say the economy of Gibraltar is going to grow by 50% in real terms over four years, what we are talking about is either the GNP of Gibraltar or GDP of Gibraltar excluding inflation. That, Mr Speaker, is Question No.84 of 1990 to which I have already given a reply.....

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

But the Chief Minister has already.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have not finished, Mr Speaker. The Hon Member is a very impatient young man, so impatient that he could not wait for the Leader of the Opposition to bid us all farewell, but he has to wait for me to finish answering him. Mr Speaker, the

question he is asking me now is what are our projections for increase in per capita output. So he is therefore asking me to give him a projection. I know, Mr Speaker, that he does not understand anything about economics but he should understand the English language. He is saying to the Government: "What is the Government's projections for per capita output?" My reply to him, Mr Speaker, is that we do not have projections for per capita output. Why not? We are not saying that they are inaccurate, we are saying that they are useless. They serve no useful economic purpose and therefore we are not going to be saying to people "per capita output has gone up by so much". Because in case he does not understand it, I will tell him what the effects of measuring per capita output is.....

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I want my question answered.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

And I, Mr Speaker, am trying to answer the question in the Order Paper.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have not given way, Mr Speaker. The last question the Hon Member has put to me is: "How are we going to measure this 50% growth?" And he is putting that question in a supplementary where he is saying to me "What are our projections for per capita output?" I have told him that we do not make projections for per capita output. He then wants to know "Why we do not make projections for per capita output? Is it that we accept his interpretation of the statistics that they are inaccurate?" And I then have to explain to him why we do not make projections. And he then asks me "What is the relevance of the 50% economic growth if it is not related to per capita output?" I will tell him, Mr Speaker, why it is pointless to talk about per capita output. Because per capita output is the output of the economy of Gibraltar divided by the resident population of Gibraltar. That means that without any change in the economy, if you have more people moving from the Campo Area to Gibraltar, as a result of more housing, per capita output will go down. If you have an increased reliance on commuting frontier workers, per capita output will go up. That shift, unless you understand how the economy works, will not be telling us anything at all about the standard of living or the wealth of the economy. Therefore although per capita output might have been a useful figure with a closed frontier, it is a meaningless figure with an open frontier. That is why we do not make a projection for per capita output. If he understood how per capita output is calculated he would not be asking me, Mr Speaker.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I well understand how it is calculated, Mr Speaker, and the Hon the Chief Minister's replies are misleading and he does not answer the question. We have already dealt with the per capita point and I accept his view of that. I would now like an answer to the following and it is very simple. The Chief Minister has indicated that in measuring growth, which is a fundamental cornerstone of his Government's policy, regard would be had to GDP and GNP and he said, five minutes ago, to various other factors which, I think, are also important.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What is the question, Mr Speaker?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

In establishing the degree of growth. What I am saying, Mr Speaker, is can the Hon the Chief Minister indicate so that we can judge the performance of the Government, what other factors, to measure that growth, the Chief Minister has in mind apart from GDP and GNP?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I have not said various other factors. I have said that we will use other measures of growth than per capita output. When those measures are used I will give the Hon Member an explanation of what the measure is and how it is calculated so that he will be able to understand it. But we are not using anything else at the moment other than GDP and GNP because there is no other statistics, at the moment, in place published or being referred to. So it is not a question that we are saying to people "We are measuring the growth by reference to X" and the Hon Member does not know what "X" is. We are not doing that. When we do it I will explain it to him.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

That, Mr Speaker, is the answer I wanted.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P C MONTEGRIFFO

Will the Government confirm what percentage of the proposed increase in employment in the private sector to reach its stated target of 8,000 jobs in 1992, will be a replacement of employment lost in the public sector during that period?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the Government would expect that 8,000 jobs in 1992 will be sufficient to compensate for the jobs lost in the public sector.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 86 OF 1990

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I accept that, Mr Speaker. But in terms of percentage, the answer I am seeking is in the growth from present public and private sector employment to the projected private sector employment at the end of 1992, to what extent is the Government projecting that that increase will simply mop up public sector loss of jobs or increase in private sector jobs other than as a result of a move from the public sector? Is the Government not in a position to clarify that aspect of the matter?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, because the Government does not know what public sector jobs will be lost in the next two years. We therefore cannot relate one to the other. However, in our calculation it will not be more than the 1,200 odd jobs that the projection of 8,000 for 1992 implies. What I can tell the Hon Member is what we calculate has happened in the first twelve months of the Government and what happened in the twelve months before. Therefore I can say that in the last twelve months of the previous administration, according to the published statistics, the economy in terms of jobs, according to the Employment Surveys, grew by 151 jobs and of that 15 additional jobs in the public sector and 136 were additional jobs in the private sector. We calculate that the order of jobs in the subsequent twelve month period, ie from April 1988 to April 1989, will be that the economy has grown by 1,000 jobs and that the public sector has declined by 200 jobs giving us a net growth of 800. That is to say, that the 1,000 jobs would be 1,000 additional jobs in the private sector compensating for 200 lost in the public sector. We do not expect that that will be the trend over the next three years. What we are expecting in fact, is a much closer relationship between the additional jobs in the private sector and the job reductions in the public sector.

THE HON P C MONTEGRIFFO

Will Government indicate the number of reductions, abolitions or non-renewal of posts which it is seeking to make in the Government public sector over the next two years, identifying the posts and areas of present Government functions that will be primarily affected?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir, this is a matter for discussion between the Government and its employees.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 87 OF 1990

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I am not asking the Government for the specific way in which the reductions will take place. That, I understand, is a matter for negotiation. I am talking about the Government's projections for job increases in the private sector and job losses in the public sector. I am sure the Government has its own projections and targets? Surely, the Government can indicate the number of posts and the areas in which, as a matter of Government policy, it is seeking to make those savings? Those changes?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, the Government is not working towards a pre-planned blueprint of which I can give the Hon Member a copy. The Hon Member is talking about an indication of the number of reductions, the number of abolitions and the number of non-renewal of jobs. If the Hon Member knows anything about how the system works he would know that, in fact, abolitions, reductions and non-renewals are the result of a constant review of Government activities and which is taking place all the time. In fact, whilst I am talking here there might be a situation where a new job is not going to be renewed or abolished or reduced in grading. However, anything like that, as far as we are concerned as a matter of policy, we are not prepared to make public beforehand. As far as we are concerned, if we have any ideas in that direction then we discuss it with those affected. Then if we do not reach agreement and it does not happen it is irrelevant because, as far as we are concerned, when we announce something it is because it is going to happen.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, does the Chief Minister not accept in the light of his answer just now, that the prediction for the amount of employment in the private sector that will mop up from the public sector, looking at it or focussing it from the Government sector, are extremely vague and almost useless as instruments of explanations to people, if the Government is not now able to indicate the extent to which it thinks it can trim the public sector further? Because really what the Chief Minister is saying is that he does not know where he will be in a year's time. As far as I was aware, the Government knew where it would be in a year's time and in two year's time, I thought, Mr Speaker, that the bus had been stopped and we were now going in a new direction?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, Mr Speaker, we are going in a new direction. Since April 1988, and for the first time, private sector employment has exceeded public sector employment and we expect that trend to continue. All one can do, Mr Speaker, in making projections of this nature, is to give an order of events. I can say, Mr Speaker, that we are looking towards a situation where the number of jobs in the private sector will be of the order of 8,000. That does not, however, mean that I can tell the Hon Member that out of those 8,000 one will be the non-renewal of this job in the Government Secretariat. The other will be the abolition of this other job in that place. No business, Mr Speaker, runs or works like that. We have an overall target of 8,000 and that is the overall target, in our assessment, at this stage. However, that could change in three month's time if the MOD suddenly announces that they are going to introduce cuts in some places of which we are now not aware today. But in our assessment, on present knowledge, on the present level of job creation in the private sector, given that the main strategy of the Government is not the creation of jobs per se but the creation of economic activity, we think the economy will achieve 8,000 jobs in the private sector by 1992. And we think that that level of 8,000 will be more than sufficient to absorb any reduction in jobs in the Gibraltar Government, in the PSA and in MOD. As regards the internal restructuring of Gibraltar Government Departments, and which I think is what this question is about, the Government is identifying the areas over the next two years and the functions that will be affected, as a matter of Government policy, does make announcements beforehand. It discusses it with those affected and if it is able to reach a formula for moving forwards then it is reflected in the Estimates of Expenditure and it is announced when it happens. If, as a result of discussions, it is not possible to reach a suitable way forward then it does not happen and it is removed from the equation.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I do not expect the Government to tell me that one job that has been replaced in the Treasury has now found its way in the private sector. No, Mr Speaker. But what I do expect the Hon the Chief Minister when he tells the Nation that he is looking for a transfer of skills and that effectively means the transfer from public orientated employment to commercial or private sector employment then I do expect him to tell us that in assessing that transfer the figures and the functions involved are 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D'. Like, for example, the question of Land Management which is a matter that can be dealt with commercially and I would ask the Chief Minister, although I am under no illusion that I will get a reply, that details of that nature specifying the type of functions which Government intends to commercialise and hence mop into the private sector should be given now so that we can assess and measure what exactly those projections are?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have already told the Hon Member, Mr Speaker, that the only projection that is possible is an overall projection and that is what he can measure. That is more than what anybody has been able to measure before in Gibraltar's history because nobody has ever made projections about anything. I am therefore giving the Hon Member, for the first time, and to the rest of Gibraltar, an opportunity to know in the direction that we are intending to go and the extent to which we intend to go. In fact, the transfer of skills is taking place constantly as a matter of Government policy in the Youth Training Scheme. In that Scheme, Mr Speaker, in the first twelve months in the operation of the Scheme, 120 youngsters have found full-time permanent employment in the private sector. Those 120 youngsters would have either been unemployed or in the public sector if there had not been the Youth Training Scheme which I am glad to say is working very well because of the support and cooperation we are getting from private sector employees. In fact, in many instances these employees have actually offered permanent employment to the trainees even before the year was up. Therefore what is happening is that without anybody being moved out by a process of natural wastage there is growth in one area and contraction in the other. This is simply because there is no increase in one area and people retire and so on.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 88 OF 1990

ORAL

THE HON K B ANTHONY

Following the Chief Minister's statement that he intends to reduce the Civil Service from 600 to 200 personnel, will he now inform the House where he intends to re-employ the surplus 400?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, the surplus staff will retain their existing pay and conditions of service, personal to holder, and will be carried on a supernumerary basis within the Service.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 88 OF 1990

HON K B ANTHONY:

Mr Speaker, has Government any plans for re-training any of the 400 so that a new career prospect might be open to them if they do not want to move into the private sector or an equivalent job?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, we are looking at re-training of the industrial labour force rather than the non-industrial side. The 600 employees we are talking about are Administrative Grades. I think, Mr Speaker, that it might help the Hon Member if I were to tell him that I had an exercise done for the purpose of answering this question that he has asked me. The object was to find out the historical situation and, in fact, in the Administrative Grades there were 475 in 1982/83 and it grew to 593 in 1987/88, the last year of the previous administration. In our first year it grew again because of commitments already in the pipeline to 611

HON A J CANEPA:

That shows how progressive we were, Mr Speaker.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

So progressive that we would all have finished working in the Civil Service at that rate. In the 1988/89 Estimates of Expenditure, when we approved, if Members will recall, the Treasury allocation the figure provided for was 611. Now in 1989/90 the figure was reduced to 585 and in the Estimates that have been tabled in the House today there is a figure of 530, more or less. So what we are seeing,

Mr Speaker, is that in fact we are coming down from the 600 mark. I should have said 611 but I was using a round figure. We think that the public administration can, with the use of computers and more modern technology, be effectively carried out with 200 persons. It is not something that can be carried out tomorrow like pulling a switch and it is not that we are actually going to put 400 persons out in the street. There is a level of retirement and so on which is giving us an opportunity of not replacing people. In terms of training, the only area where we are providing valuable skills which are transferrable to the private sector are in the field of accountancy. We have a number of Clerical Grades that are, in fact, given day release to attend Accountancy Technician Qualifications at the College of Further Education. The policy of the Government is to send as many as want to go even if we, as a Government, do not need so many with those skills. It however provides them with more mathematical skills if they were to choose to move to the private sector.

HON K B ANTHONY:

I thank the Hon the Chief Minister for that answer, Mr Speaker. I fully accept that the Hon the Chief Minister does not expect to reach the figure of 200 tomorrow but could he give an indication of when this figure of 200 could be reached?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, Mr Speaker, the level of natural wastage is around no more than 50 a year so to reduce by 400 would take quite a long time. About one a week that is the average. It may be that you have a week that nobody goes but then you have three or four in one week. So obviously if it were purely on a policy of non-replacement it would take about eight years to reach the 400. We have, however, introduced a number of incentives in terms of better retirement terms for people seeking abolition of post and Members will recall that we brought an amendment to the Pensions Ordinance where it extended the scope of what could be done on restructuring or re-organisation. We expect that that will generate an increase in the level of natural wastage although perhaps not a very dramatic increase. It may go up from fifty a year to seventy-five a year. Apart from that what can make a much greater impact is when we have a group of people coming up with proposals to the Government like, for example, what was answered in response to a previous question concerning Crown Lands. There the officers that we today involved in the management of Government estates for a salary have suggested that they would be prepared to set up shop on their own and do it for a fee. This from the Government's point of view is not going to cost us more than what their salaries cost and in return gives them the flexibility of being able to operate in giving a service to the Government

and at the same time give a service to other people which today, strictly speaking, under Civil Service Rules they are not allowed to work for private customers.

HON K B ANTHONY:

I thank the Hon the Chief Minister for his reply, Mr Speaker. The Chief Minister's answer of fifty persons a year wastage almost answers my next question because I was concerned, Mr Speaker, with the potential redundancies situation in GSL, the MOD, PSA plus people leaving the Civil Service due to the proposed reduction to 200. Is the Chief Minister confident that all these potential redundancies will be able to obtain gainful employment in the future or are we likely to face a glut of unemployed people?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is a problem like there has always been of matching a variety of different factors and therefore we are talking of global figures. You can produce a match on global figures so we are reasonably confident that if we are able to maintain the level of economic growth there will be enough job creation to absorb the loss of job opportunities in the public sector. The easiest way to do this is if you have in the public sector natural wastage because of people retiring and you have in the private sector growth because of school leavers joining the private sector that, Mr Speaker, is the easiest equation. That will only account for a limited number of skilled labour transfers. I think it becomes increasingly difficult when you have chunks of people being made compulsorily redundant, like may happen with the MOD and PSA following the removal of the Resident Battalion next year. There, Mr Speaker, you have people whose ability to acquire new skills is function of age and whether they are male or female and the type of jobs. There is therefore a greater difficulty in this case and we are concerned that if we are not able to get the equation right we could finish up with a situation where, on paper, one could say: "Right, the total number of jobs in the economy has not gone down, it might even have gone up slightly, we have 1000 jobs less in the public sector but we have 1000 jobs more in the private sector". But, I think, if we are not able to really get to grips with proper opportunities for re-training, you could find that you have 500 unemployed of the 1000 that have lost jobs in the public sector whilst we have had to import 500 people from outside because of a skills mismatch. It is a real risk, it is no good denying it, we are conscious of it, and we are trying to see how that can be overcome. But it is not so easy when you are dealing with people who may be at a stage in life where, frankly, starting on a totally new business is difficult.

HON K B ANTHONY:

Thank you, Mr Speaker. One final question on this aspect. Out of the potential redundancies that may occur at the MOD etc, the only one over which the Government really has control of is the reduction in the Civil Service from 600 to 200. If we see a situation where we see we are getting a glut of unemployment in the market will the Hon the Chief Minister consider reducing his reduction of the Civil Service programme until that hurdle is overcome?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, because, frankly, the answer, and it is sometimes a difficult message to put across, but the answer to combatting unemployment cannot be to have non-jobs because, at the end of the day, you are masking the unemployment situation because the person may not appear on the statistics of the unemployed but the reality of it is that if he is not making a contribution to the economy positively his income is being provided by the rest of the community that are working. So it cannot be right to artificially maintain levels of employment that cannot be justified on economic grounds simply in order to make the unemployment situation look better. In any case, I do not think the real risk is in this area. The real risk is, I think, in that the bulk of the industrial jobs, over the next few years, are going to be in the construction industry. Mr Speaker, we are talking to the MOD and to PSA trying to persuade them that they should introduce in-house training before a state of redundancy is reached. We are looking ourselves at the people who we have in GSL and the other companies in order to try and provide them with a variety of skills where it is not a question of doing an apprenticeship but perhaps teaching somebody to do crane driving, fork lift driving, heavy goods vehicle driving, steel fixing, etc. These are short courses which then means that the person's employability is improved because there are a variety of different jobs in which he can be fitted. That is really our thinking. We see that, frankly, as a more serious problem amongst industrial workers who may be in their 40's or 50's than amongst clerical workers who in many cases, in the Civil Service, a very large proportion of these 600 are, in fact, young girls who are doing typing or routine clerical work for which there is an expanding demand from legal and accounting firms.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON P C MONTEGRIFFO

Will Government confirm what its projections are for total employment figures with a breakdown of sectors for the end of the year 1991/92?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, Government does not have projections for total employment or sectoral breakdown for the year ending 1991/92.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 89 OF 1990

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, is it the Government's intention to seek to make such projections as part of Government's policy to attract a certain type of tourism which will have a certain impact on the tourist product and people promoting the tourist industry? Does Government intend to work towards projections which will identify growth in employment trends in these different areas, or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, because the figures for the period that the Hon Member has asked me are not possible to compile. The Hon Member is using financial years and the only thing that we have relating to the end of financial years are the Employment Surveys and we know, because we have said so already in this House, that we expect shortly to find out what was the level of employment in the year 1988/89. So here we are in 1990 and we are still not sure what was the level of employment in 1988/89. How can we make a projection for 1991/92? It is not possible, Mr Speaker, to make such a projection.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I understand the difficulties the Chief Minister may have, but in the same breath we are told that we are looking towards a re-training scheme and a transfer of existing skills, how does the Hon the Chief Minister know whether to re-train people for ten waiters as opposed to one or fifty secretaries as opposed to five hundred fork lifter drivers? At the end of the day, Mr Speaker, I assume that in any forward planning there must be indications, and the Hon the Chief Minister has indicated that the construction trade over the next two years is going to see significant growth, the Finance Centre and Tourism, although there may be a bit of a question mark there but in marrying

re-training to people becoming available, whether leaving existing jobs or school leavers, you must have an idea in rough terms?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That, Mr Speaker, is not achieved by doing a projection of total employment figures with a breakdown of sectors for a year ending in March. That, Mr Speaker, is the question that the Hon Member has asked me. The Hon Member has asked me can I confirm what our projections are for the financial year 1991/92 with a breakdown by sectors. If I produce what he has asked me it would not help us at all in doing what he is asking me now. Because what he is asking me now is something that we do constantly by monitoring the vacancies that are opened with the Department of Labour and Social Security. There, Mr Speaker, we have a detailed daily breakdown of the number of jobs, by trade and by industry, and for the first time in our history we are involved in a substantial exercise of computerising insurance records which will enable us to obtain daily figures at the push of a button. However, that has nothing to do with making a projection for a financial year which would be of no use.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I do not think that the Hon the Chief Minister has understood me. Maybe it is my inability to express myself. The point simply is, if we are looking towards re-training people and giving them certain skills then unless the Government does project the size, the increase in the size of employment, then one is working in a sort of situation where one is shooting in the dark. For example, if we know that there is going to be a five star hotel at Queensway, and another series of hotels elsewhere, talking in general terms, then the Government must have an idea of the skill vacuum which that demand will create and therefore would have its own views as to how it would like to re-train in that area to cater for the increase. It is irrelevant whether you pin it to March 1990 or the end of 1990. I have used the two-year period for the sake of a workable period.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, if the Hon Member had listened to the answer that I gave the Hon Member sitting beside him he would know that without getting involved in doing the kind of projections the Hon Member was asking for in Question No.89 of 1990, which we do not do because it would be pointless, we are already monitoring employment trends. I have just told the Hon Member that we do it on a daily basis. We know how many vacancies are created every day in Gibraltar. We know how many work permits are given to new entrants and therefore we are able to map the skill shortages in the economy. I have already said that we are reflecting that

in providing skills, for example, for heavy goods vehicles drivers because we know that in the last 24 months there have been demand for heavy goods vehicle drivers and there are no unemployed heavy goods vehicle drivers. There are, however, unemployed van drivers. However, since it is not possible to become a truck driver unless someone gives you the necessary training and unless you pass a test, we know that that is one of the skills we need to provide. We do not need to make a forward projection for the next year to discover that. That is something that is part and parcel of the monitoring of employment trends which the Labour Department is doing and part and parcel of the strategy that we announced we intended to carry out with the Employment and Training Unit.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Mr Speaker, I think we must agree to disagree. My final question is, will Government confirm whether for the purposes of its employment figures, whether the Gibraltar Community Care figures will be deemed to be part of employment figures, in terms of the 60 to 65?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot answer that question without asking the Statistics Department when they do that measuring this year how they propose to show them, if at all. The figures that the Hon Member will get are figures which exist for a year when the Community Care did not exist. There is no way of knowing.