

**GIBRALTAR**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**



**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**20TH MARCH, 1998  
NO. 1 TO NO. 147**

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## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

20<sup>th</sup> March 1998

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NO. 1 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION**

Can Government state how much of the £4,470,000 contribution to the Gibraltar Health Authority has been paid to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

To the end of February 1998, 11 instalments of £372,500 have been credited to the Gibraltar Health Authority and debited from Head 3B, Subhead 3, totalling £4,097,500.

NO. 2 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state how much money was spent by the Gibraltar Health Authority on sponsored patients sent to the UK, in the period 1 December 1997 to the end of February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 5 of 1998.

NO. 3 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government state what has been the expenditure of the Gibraltar Health Authority on GPMS prescriptions for the period 1 December 1997 to the end of February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

During the period 1 December 1997 to end of February 1998 the GHA spent approximately £1.6 million on GPMS prescriptions.

NO. 4 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state what is the estimated total expenditure of the Gibraltar Health Authority in the current financial year to the end of February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The estimated expenditure of the GHA from 1 April to end of February is approximately £20.8 million. Again, financial adjustments and corrections to this figure may be necessary once all transactions are processed and rechecked.



NO. 5 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - REFERRALS TO UK**

Can Government state on how many occasions patients have been referred to the UK for specialised treatment by the Gibraltar Health Authority in the period 1 December 1997 to the end of February 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

From 1 December 1997 to end February 1998 the GHA referred patients on 168 occasions for specialised treatment to the United Kingdom. These referrals represented expenditure of approximately £480,000. Financial adjustment to this figure and the figures given in answer to other subsequent questions may be necessary to ensure accuracy once all transactions have been rechecked in due course.

In that same vein, I would also like to correct the figure given in answer to Question No. 361 of 1997 in relation to the period 1 April 1997 to 30 November 1997. Patients were referred on 537 occasions during this period.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 2 AND 5 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

When the Minister refers to certain transactions having to be carried out, is he referring to transactions within the reciprocal agreement?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Not really, these are general checking of the numbers of patients that have been sent and so on. The hon Lady will have seen that I have just rectified the answer that I gave in answer to Question No. 361 of 1997, that is because the information given to me by the Authority at that stage when she asked the question last year was that 590 patients had been referred. That has now been checked and the Authority now gives me the information that it was 537. It is in the general parameters of their usual administrative tasks and they placed the caveat when giving me the information to answer these questions, that the hon Lady placed before this meeting of the House, that we may have the same difficulty this time and so I just wanted to make the point that it may be necessary to recheck those positions in two or three months time when the figures may be clearer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In answer to Question No. 361 the Minister said that the cost of the 590, as it was taken to be then, was £1.3 million. Is there a difference to the cost now that the figure is 537?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I do not have the question in front of me but I believe the figure I gave was £3.3 million not £1.3 million.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, the Minister said in answer to Question No. 131 that the cost in both the year April to November 1996 and the year April to November 1997 approximately £1.3 million had been spent on sponsored patients.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, I remember now. Yes, obviously there is I think a slight reduction in cost commensurate with the reduction in the figures that I have been given but I do not have the information with me. If the hon Member wants the information and wants to write to me I will supply that information to him.

NO. 6 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state how many sponsored patients have been treated in UK, in the current financial year, with the costs being met by the UK Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of 1998.

NO. 7 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - UK SOCIAL SECURITY PENSIONERS**

Can Government state how many UK social security pensioners, who were not also in receipt of a Gibraltar Social Security Pension were resident at 31 December 1996 and registered with the Group Practice Medical Scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of 1998.

NO. 8 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GIBRALTAR SOCIAL SECURITY PENSIONERS**

Can Government state how many Gibraltar social security pensioners who were not also in receipt of a UK Social Security Pension were resident in UK as at 31 December 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11 of 1998.

NO. 9 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - COST TO UK FOR TREATMENT TO TEMPORARY VISITORS**

Can Government state what is the latest available cost to the UK of treating temporary visitors from Gibraltar and in respect of what year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11 of 1998.

NO. 10 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - COST TO UK FOR TREATMENT TO REFERRED PATIENTS**

Can Government state what is the latest available cost to the UK of treating patients referred to UK for treatment and in respect of what year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9 and 11 of 1998.

NO. 11 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - COST OF TREATING A PENSIONER IN UK**

Can Government state what is the latest average annum cost of treating a pensioner in UK and in respect of what year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

One hundred and twenty-five sponsored patients have been treated with the costs being met by the United Kingdom in this financial year.

There were 278 UK pensioners not in receipt of a Gibraltar pension entitled to receive health care under the Group Practice Medical Scheme at 31 December 1996. At the same date there were 24 Gibraltar pensioners resident in the United Kingdom who were not in receipt of a UK social security pension. The latest available cost to the United Kingdom of treating temporary visitors from Gibraltar is £65,644 in respect of 1997.

The latest available cost to the United Kingdom of treating patients referred to the UK for treatment was £474,427 in respect of 1997. To this figure we would also have to add further costs in the region of £136,000 in respect of referrals from 1994 to 1996 actually paid in 1997.

The latest average annum cost of treating a pensioner in UK was £1,758.95 in 1995.



NO. 12 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - IN-PATIENT ADMISSIONS, ST BERNARD'S HOSPITAL**

Can Government state what was the total number of in-patient admissions and the average number of patients per day at St Bernard's Hospital in 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 13 and 14 of 1998.

NO. 13 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - OUT-PATIENT ATTENDANCES, ST BERNARD'S HOSPITAL**

Can Government state what was the total number of out-patient attendances at St Bernard's Hospital in 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 12 and 14 of 1998.

NO. 14 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - OUT-PATIENT ATTENDANCES, HEALTH CENTRE**

Can Government state what was the total number of out-patient attendances at the Health Centre in 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The number of in-patient admissions at St Bernard's Hospital in 1997 was 4,838. The average number of in-patients per day was 108. There were 13,531 out-patient attendances, excluding accidents and emergencies, at St Bernard's Hospital in 1997. The number of out-patient attendances at the Health Centre in 1997 was 88,979.

NO. 15 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

Have Government now decided whether they will make public the Report of the Nursing Review?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Government expect to take a decision in relation to this matter within the next three months.

NO. 16 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - MEDICAL REVIEW 1996 - RECOMMENDATIONS**

Can Government give a detailed account of those recommendations made in the Medical Review Report of 1996, which they will not be implementing?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

When making the report public in January 1997, the Government stated that it was our aim to implement about 35 per cent of the report's recommendations by March 1998. This will have been achieved by the end of this financial year.

Beyond that the Government also stated that we would look to the Chief Executive and the management team to advise Government on the process and pace of implementation of other recommendations. The Health Authority management are currently studying those issues with a view to advising Government.

While Government have previously expressed our view that the number of recommendations that will not be implemented will be few in number, it is, for the reasons expressed, impossible at the moment to describe the specific recommendations that will not be put in place.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 16 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I have put this question on other occasions and I have never had any joy with the answer in relation to my question. I have put this question this time because the Minister in the last House of Assembly meeting when I actually asked him if he could give a detailed account of the recommendations the Government would not be implementing answered as follows: "No, as I say, I have not counted them, neither do I have the list because that is not the question that the hon Member was putting to the House today. Perhaps she can ask the question on another occasion and I will be glad to go into that detail". Will the Minister be able to provide me with that detail?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Well, what I have also said - I have given a flavour on occasions when the hon Lady has asked a general question on matters that the Government consider that we will not implement and that that is the Government's view, things like, for example, the change in the composition of the Management Board in the Health Authority, matters such as that. But I have been reluctant to go into detail because we stated that the policy of the Government when launching and making public the Medical Review Report was that the first step was to implement 35 per cent of the report and to recruit the management team. Now it has taken longer than expected to do so, the Chief Executive was in post only in October. He has not had an opportunity to advise the Government on the way that he sees the process of implementation over the next couple of years or what his specific views are in relation to other recommendations. So I would be reticent to state

exactly which would not be implemented, even though the Government have formed our own initial view, pending the advice of the Health Authority Chief Executive and the new management team. That is the policy of the Government that we announced in January 1997 and we have not departed from that. It is just taking longer for that new managerial structure to render its view on the process of implementation and that is why the answer to the hon Lady's question is that at the moment it is not possible for the Government to state precisely which recommendations will not be implemented.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

In view that the Minister is not willing to honour the answer that I got in the last House of Assembly meeting, can I ask him whether he will honour the same question when I put it to him when the Chief Executive has actually made his recommendations, can I get an answer to that?

HON K AZOPARDI:

When the Chief Executive renders his view on the pace and process of implementation I will certainly be happy to discuss the recommendations that will not be implemented by the Government in this House.

NO. 17 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - NURSING QUALIFICATIONS**

Have Government now received confirmation from the UKCC that Gibraltar nurses, as defined by the Medical and Health Ordinance 1997, will have their Gibraltar qualifications accepted by the EU?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

While it is not up to the UKCC to confirm that Gibraltar nursing qualifications are accepted by EU member states, the Government are in contact with that body to enlist their assistance should circumstances arise when this is challenged.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 17 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

In the last House of Assembly meeting the Minister said that he would actually be contacting the UKCC on the matter in order to clarify the position as far as Gibraltar qualifications were concerned. Has he actually put the question to the UKCC?

HON K AZOPARDI:

In the first place, yes I do confirm that the Government have been in contact with the UKCC. The two purposes were to clarify the position in relation to Gibraltar trained nurses who wanted to register in the UK because, as the hon Lady will recall, there were some difficulties before for those Gibraltar trained nurses to be given automatic registration. That registration is within the gift of the UKCC because they are the competent authority to register nurses in the UK. In relation to the second matter, which is the EU matter, it is not up to them to tell us whether the other EU member states will accept Gibraltar nursing qualifications. All that they can do is to assist us if problems arise like they did, for example, in the 1991 Catherine Gordon case. The Authority and the Government have indeed been in contact with the UKCC on that basis and we hope that should a situation arise, yes they will indeed assist us with any eventuality should circumstances arise that need to be addressed.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

But is the Minister not able to get the UKCC to confirm that if a Gibraltar qualified nurse goes to work in the EU her Gibraltar qualifications would be accepted?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The UKCC are an independent body which are standing in the shoes of the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Registration Board in Gibraltar. They express their own personal view that they see no reason why Gibraltar nurses should not be recognised by other EU member states if we have transposed the relevant directives and the system of training is in accordance with other directives. But it is not up to them to give

confirmation, it will be up to the competent authorities in the separate jurisdictions where those nurses attempt to register. If there are problems then there are procedures envisaged by the directive on how we can address that and we may need the assistance of the UKCC but it is really the UK Government, at that stage, who will have to seize the nettle and it is they who have the locus, if one likes, under the directives to pursue the matter of recognition. It is not up to the UKCC.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Minister whether he is aware if either in the UK legislation or in the legislation of another member state there is a comparable reference to qualifications obtained in Gibraltar similar to the one that he has introduced in the laws of Gibraltar in respect of qualifications obtained in other member states of the European Economic area?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, I am not aware that there is a reference to Gibraltar in legislation of other EU member states.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister not agree that for the legal right to exist in the UK or in other member states, the wording of their recognition of comparable qualifications would presumably need to be reflected in the same way that he has introduced in the laws of Gibraltar in order to comply with that directive?

HON K AZOPARDI:

That is not the position of the Government. Our position is as reflected in answer to other questions in the House, that the directive imposes on member states an obligation to ensure that there is mutual recognition of qualifications. The directive leaves up to the member state how they should pursue that transposition. We have transposed the directives and by that very nature of transposition our nurses are entitled to be registered in other EU member states without the necessity of a reference in the legislation of each particular member state providing for that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Let me see if I have understood the answer correctly. The Minister is saying that if we say we recognise somebody else automatically that means that they recognise us without them having to do anything? Then surely if that is indeed the legal advice that he has, this must be something that transforms entirely the whole nature of recognition of Gibraltar qualifications and institutions in every sphere not just in this sphere?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The hon Member has misunderstood me. The position of the Government is that qualifications of nurses obtained in Gibraltar are transposable, in other words, people can register in other member states if they so wish. We are clarifying certain aspects of that because the hon Member may be aware that the EU generally is reviewing the sectoral directives which relate to doctors, nurses, midwives and pharmacists and they are discussing the replacement of those directives by other general directives and we are taking the opportunity of liaising with the UK Government to clarify certain aspects of those directives. But the position of the Government remains that our nurses are entitled to be registered in other EU member states and we stand by that decision.



HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not questioning whether we believe they are entitled to or not. Of course we believe they are entitled to, that is obvious and has been obvious just like we believe we enjoy every EEC right since we joined in 1973. The point is that if the Minister felt that there was a need for us to amend the laws of Gibraltar in order to give a right in Gibraltar to Community nationals then surely it must be because that is what the directive requires us to do and if it requires us to do it for other people it must require other people to do it for us. If, in fact, it has not been done and it would not be peculiar if it had not because there have been so many examples in the past of us being left out by an oversight or by omission, would the Minister not agree that this is something that requires to be established one way or the other? Whether in fact the wording of the provisions in other member states is such that it does not preclude Gibraltar qualifications by simply being limited to the qualifications of the member state UK? That is the point I am making.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, I take the hon Member's point but the position of the Government is to try to clarify the issue at its root and not once the root has been spread about the EU member states. Our position is that if an issue arises we would like to tackle it at the directive which is the source of any other legislation in other member states. There is a procedure envisaged by the directive and we would like to clarify certain aspects of the potential course of action that the UK could take on our behalf attacking the root of the issue rather than going off on a wild goose chase trying to look at all other legislation around EU member states. I think it is the source rather than the offspring that needs to be tackled.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It is a matter of judgement whether the information that I am trying to find out whether he has is a wild goose chase or not. All I am asking him is whether he knows if other member states recognise our qualifications or this is just a one way ticket, we recognise everybody else's in our law but the laws of other people do not recognise ours? He does not even know whether the answer to that is yes or no, in fact.

HON K AZOPARDI:

The matter has not been tested in other EU member states apart from Spain because there was an issue in 1991. The matter has not been tested and so therefore the answer to his question is the Government are not aware whether we would expect people to be registered but as the matter has not been tested we cannot take it further at the moment. If Gibraltar nurses want to register in Belgium or Holland then we will be able to clarify that issue. At the moment it is a hypothetical question.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it under the directive, that it states that the national laws of a country have to put the nationality and the qualifications of that national under the local laws? Is that not the same for everybody or is it that Gibraltar has done something different to what the directive directs to do?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The directive establishes the principle of mutual recognition of qualifications based on training in particular EU member states. We have done nothing different to what other people have done. I do not understand the hon Member's question.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The question is if we have done what the directive tells us that we should do then obviously we are putting the nationality and the qualifications of those nationals in their original countries of the EU therefore if no reference is made to Gibraltar then obviously in the national laws of the other EEC countries Gibraltar will not be mentioned so how does Gibraltar fit into that?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The hon Member is arguing against the Gibraltar position. If the hon Member is right because Gibraltar is not mentioned in the directive and therefore is not mentioned in other legislation that member states have enacted to transpose this directive, we cannot register our nurses and if that analysis is correct well then our nurses cannot register in other member states. The position of the Government is that that is not correct. The omission of Gibraltar in the list of competent authorities in the directive, the position of the Government is that it is immaterial to the recognition of Gibraltar nurses. Our Gibraltar nurses deserve to be recognised in other EU member states whether or not it is mentioned in the directive that the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Registration Board is a competent authority. Of course it would have been much better, for the purposes of clarification and clarity, for the Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors Registration Board to be mentioned, I have said that in the House before. It would have been easier because it would have been black upon white but the position of the Government is that the entitlement to register in other member states is irrespective of that and we stand by that.

NO. 18 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - RELOCATION OF HEALTH CENTRE**

Can Government now confirm where the Health Centre will be relocated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Subject to satisfactory conclusion of the negotiations that continue between Government and landlord, the Government intend to relocate the Health Centre to the ICC.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 18 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Will the Government be prepared to give the Opposition the nature of the conditions by which they will acquire the second floor at the ICC Centre?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Once the negotiations are concluded then the general parameters of the Government's agreement with the landlords will of course have to be made public because it includes some terms that directly benefit patients.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister give some sort of indication of when the Government expect the Health Centre to be functioning in the ICC Centre?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I would imagine that once there is a satisfactory conclusion to the negotiations, I would suspect it would take about six to eight months to have the ICC ready. I think that general parameter of time scale, so assuming an agreement could be made relatively quickly, it might be by the end of the year.

HON A J ISOLA:

Are Government considering the purchase or a long lease or a short-term lease?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The Government are considering at the moment a short lease, a lease of six years.

NO. 19 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA/MOD - SECONDARY HEALTH CARE**

Are Government now in a position to state whether they will be taking a decision by the 30 April 1998 to finalise the long-term agreement with the MOD for providing them with secondary health care?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Government are not in a position to state whether a final outcome to the negotiations with the MOD will be evident by 30 April 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 19 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Health Authority encountering any problems at all in providing the MOD with secondary health care?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, the Health Authority is not encountering problems. There are, as I said in answer to a question from the Leader of the Opposition last time in this House, teething problems which are natural teething problems between partners to an agreement; it is not uncommon and indeed it is not unique to Gibraltar, as I mentioned last time, there are similar teething problems at Brimley Park where the MOD entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the NHS Hospital. But in general terms the interim trial period is going well.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm that the Government are indeed keen in finalising a long-term agreement with the MOD?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The Government are considering our position. Our keenness will depend on how favourable the terms for a long-term arrangement are. At the moment that is not clear and the matter is still in the air and subject to negotiation. We are available for discussion, indeed we are discussing the matter with the MOD and we will review the matter when it becomes clear where the MOD are going. Let me say for the information of the House that since the last time the hon Lady put that question in the House, at the latest meeting that I held with the MOD they mentioned that they may not be able to take a final view because of the defence strategic review and so I am waiting for them to have their own thoughts clarified before we can take the matter further. I am not sure when that will be.

NO. 20 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**WELLINGTON FRONT - REFURBISHMENT**

Have the Government now come to a conclusion in respect of the refurbishment plans for Wellington Front?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

There are no current plans to refurbish Wellington Front.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 20 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I asked the question because in a reply on 25 November to Question No. 126 of 1997 the Minister said, "In a few months time I am sure I could give him an answer". It seems strange, does it not, that it should have taken so long to give a negative answer? Could he assure us that at least he has actually studied the very detailed plans that took two years to work out by the Department under the leadership of the Town Planner and in conjunction with the advice given at the time by Sir William Jackson and the Heritage Trust?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, I have seen the plans. The reason that this answer has not been evident before is because the hon Member has not asked me this question before since that time that he did. But the Government have no plans to refurbish Wellington Front.

HON J J GABAY:

As relevant to the main question he did say at the time, in the same breath, "The uncluttering of the City walls is certainly something foremost in the mind of the Government". Is not the expression somewhat amusing when nothing appears to have been done to unclutter the City walls, perhaps the direction has been more cluttering, in fact?

HON K AZOPARDI:

It is the policy of the Government to unclutter the City walls and we are working towards that. I do not accept the basic assertion that the hon Member makes that far from uncluttering we have cluttered the City walls further. I think he will find that the contrary is the case, we are moving towards demolition of the pre-fabs; we have demolished the old historic garages on Queensway; and the policy of the Government continues to move towards that end where it is reasonable and practicable to do so.

HON J J GABAY:

Would the Minister not accept that one of the major monstrosities actually defacing the walls is in fact King's Bastion and on that score, despite the views of the Trust, it is not to be demolished and perhaps I may add that although the Government said that they were consulting public opinion, could he give us some details of what that public opinion was because according to the Gibraltar Heritage Trust the Government have published no details of this so-called preference on the part of the public to preserve the monstrosity?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The hon Member has an extraordinary ability to move from the basic round of his question to other fields around Gibraltar but I will answer his question. I do not accept that King's Bastion is a monstrosity, it is part of the listed city walls.

HON J J GABAY:

I mean the electricity generating station.

HON K AZOPARDI:

I see. The hon Member said King's Bastion.

HON J J GABAY:

Because it is part of it.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, indeed, there was a public consultation exercise to establish what the views of the public were. I do not have the figures to hand precisely because the hon Member has moved from his original terrain, but I would certainly be glad to give him the specifics of that on another occasion. From memory I think that in general terms about 50 per cent of people wanted demolition and 50 per cent of people who responded wanted it converted into a music/entertainment/sports leisure complex if it was possible. The Government are considering the possibilities in relation to that building but it is better to reach a final decision on that while the building is still erect. So I am sure the hon Member will accept that that is a sensible decision to take, it would be pointless to decide to sway towards the view that it should be a sports/music/entertainment centre if it has already been demolished. So the hon Member will bear with us until we take a final decision on that matter. But the public consultation exercise was by no means conclusive.

HON J J GABAY:

May I just simply add to this that I was not straying from the original question. The walls form a circle round most of the western side of our city and therefore when we talk about uncluttering, central to that, you would agree Mr Speaker, is of course Wellington Front and since so much work was done on that I think it is relevant to bring it up and to extend it obviously to the periphery and the limits of the city so I hope this will be borne in mind when we talk about the uncluttering of the walls.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Given that the hon Member makes that analysis next time he asks about Southport Gates I will expect a supplementary question on Devil's Tower Road given that the city walls circle Gibraltar.

HON J J GABAY:

I can assure the Minister that it will be forthcoming.

NO. 21 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**GIBRALTAR HERITAGE ORDINANCE**

Have the Government now considered amendments to the Gibraltar Heritage Ordinance?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Government have been discussing amendments to the Heritage Ordinance with the Heritage Trust. The drafting of proposed legislative changes to the Ordinance is at an advanced stage.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 21 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Since again a considerable amount of time has elapsed, could he give us some idea when something positive to discuss will be appearing?

HON K AZOPARDI:

While the legislative changes are being discussed and it is at an advanced stage it is not in final form yet so it cannot be presented before the House. There are basic principles which the Government are considering, matters such as the wider protection of buildings and a review of the listing procedure; we are looking at the appellate structure of listing decisions; we are looking at the role and powers and duties of the Trust; generally an emulation to the museum and antiquities areas and we are also looking at the fulfilment of our manifesto commitments in relation to the Heritage Commission and so on. I think that I would not be in a position to give the hon Member a time scale because it really depends on my discussions with the Heritage Trust and these go in phases. From time to time we have several meetings and then the pace of meetings tends to abate and so it would, I think, be unrealistic. Once we are happy with the final form the Government will consider our position in relation to the legislation that the department and the Trust are happy with.

HON J J GABAY:

As an interim measure, I presume, the Commission on Heritage is in action and would he not agree that it has become a talking shop and in fact an instrument of the Government and is he aware that the report from the Heritage Trust defines it, and I would have thought rather euphemistically, a quasi Government advisory forum?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The Heritage Trust may describe it like that but that is actually the form that they favour. The Heritage Trust's position - I do not think I speak out of turn - is that a completely independent Heritage Commission would encroach on the areas that the Trust is



tutorily responsible for and they would prefer a Heritage Commission which is made up as it is of Government officials as a co-ordinating body for the assistance of the Minister for Heritage. So whether they describe it in that way or not, it is certainly, in my view, would not be a description which they would not favour. Indeed they have personally expressed to me that they would rather have a Heritage Commission which is not one that is able to overlap with their own duties.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Could I just add to that answer that I notice the hon Member is reading from the accounts of the Trust that have just been laid before the House, if he reads it all he will see that at paragraph 6 the Trust say, "The Gibraltar Heritage Trust Ordinance of 1989", introduced by the Opposition Members when they were then in Government, "which replaced the Gibraltar Museum and Antiquities Ordinance, effectively emasculated the Trust's powers and this has been, for years, a bone of contention". So anything that we do will be to restore the powers that the Opposition Members emasculated.

HON J J GABAY:

The Chief Minister, as usual, has a knack in the same way as I stray in other directions, of being omniscient. Is it not so that we are here discussing the claims on heritage and the direction in the future and not simply returning to what has happened in the past.

MR SPEAKER:

The question is whether the Government have now considered amendments to the Heritage Ordinance. I have allowed all the others but they are not part of the question really. The answer is no.

NO. 22 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state how much of the £4,611,000 budget of the ETB has been spent to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Up to the end of February 1998 the total spent is £2,257,000.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 22 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

What does the Minister think that the ETB will spend of the £4.6 million by the end of this financial year?

HON J J NETTO:

I have not got that information with me but I will be glad to give it to the hon Member.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Does the Minister consider that the whole of the £4.6 million will be spent or does he estimate that there will be a shortfall of expenditure?

HON J J NETTO:

There will be a shortfall.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Obviously at this stage he has not got the information by how much. Would it be possible for him to pass on to me by how much the shortfall will be once he has that information?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Also, I suppose he has not got it, but could he also provide me where he thinks the under-spending will be?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.

NO. 23 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - APPROVED ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE CONTRIBUTION**

Can Government state how much of the £2,311,000 contribution to the ETB in the approved estimates of expenditure has been provided to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

£1,055,230.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 23 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I must ask the same question as I asked before, does he estimate that the ETB will spend the whole contribution in the approved estimates of expenditure or will there be a shortfall?

HON J J NETTO:

No, the whole contribution will not be spent and if the hon Member wants the forecast outturn I will be glad to give it to him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say why there has been a need to increase the training levy in January by £1 if neither the budget of the ETB nor the Government contribution to the ETB are going to be spent? Surely there is no shortage of funds in the ETB so why does he need to increase the income of the ETB by £1 levy?

HON J J NETTO:

There are two sides to that question. The first part in relation to the increase on the training levy, it is a matter of taxes and therefore I am not in a position to answer that side of the question. On the second part of the question, inasmuch as the money spent so far in terms of the contribution allocated, I can only say that the reason why it has not been spent on the one hand is because the management at the Ministry has had very good financial and management control of its budget and the fact that not many employers have been using the funds available or allocated inasmuch as to things like wage subsidy and the vocational cadet training scheme.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I had not asked why they had not spent the money, what I am asking is since they have not spent the money they obviously do not need more because they are not going to be able to spend it. Presumably if the levy had been kept at £2 instead of being increased to £3 they would still have had enough money because with the £2 they are not spending all the budget.

HON J J NETTO:

I do not link the two within the training levy. As I said before, I believe that the training levy increase is a matter of taxation which falls outside my jurisdiction.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In the past the budget for the ETB fund used for the purpose of wage subsidy and training did not draw from the Consolidated Fund. Following the structure of Government finances it now does and the increase is in order to reduce the burden of wage subsidy on items which would otherwise have to be paid from other forms of direct and indirect taxation and indeed in preparation for the introduction of the Government's enhanced training and wage subsidy schemes which I announced in my new year address.

HON J J BOSSANO:

That may well be so but the fact is that the Government, having decided to make a contribution for this year of £4.6 million are clearly not going to have to make it because the figure to date is £2.6 million. So without having to increase the £4.6 million they would still have, on the basis of the figures for this year, plenty of leeway for providing more money than in the past and it would presumably remain to be seen whether the take-up of any new scheme was any greater than the take-up that there has been at present since the answer we have been given is that more money has not been spent because employers have chosen not to take advantage of what was there. The point therefore then is that the money that is being raised is not to increase the budget of the ETB beyond the £4.6 million but to reduce the amount that comes from the Consolidated Fund, is that correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Absolutely correct. A device for which I cannot claim the credit for having invented given that the Opposition Members did it with practically the whole of the Health Authority budget during the last eight years.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Although that is not a matter which arises from the question let me say do the Government not know that there is on the Order Paper a question about the contribution to the Health Authority when the Chief Minister will have an opportunity of admitting to the House that he is mistaken in the answer he has just given?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, he is entirely correct as he knows.

NO. 24 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - WAGE SUBSIDY**

Can Government state the number of employers receiving a wage subsidy from the ETB and in respect of how many employees since the 1 October 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The number of employers receiving a wage subsidy since 1 October 1997 is 19 employers, employing a total of 28 employees.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 24 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Since I asked the question last time this has been reducing all the time. Is it that the employers do not find it attractive that they should get a wage subsidy?

HON J J NETTO:

Correct.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The figure I have just been given is for October, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

Correct, that is right, this is for October.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Since I am asking since 1 October will the Minister, I suppose he has not got the information there, can he give me the other months, November, December, January and February?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, provided a question is being asked.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

In any case, will the Minister provide me with the information I am asking for the other months even though it is not here today?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, fine.

NO. 25 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - WAGE SUBSIDY**

Can Government state what was the expenditure by the ETB on wage subsidy in each month since the month of November 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Expenditure on wage subsidy each month since the month of November is as follows:-

November 1997	-	£24,499.38
December 1997	-	£ 9,054.34
January 1998	-	£20,266.13
February 1998	-	£ 5,727.57

NO. 26 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians unemployed actually registered with the ETB at the end of December 1997, giving a breakdown of males and females aged under 18, 18 to 25 and over 25 years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:-

Average registered unemployed Gibraltarians for the fourth quarter, October to December 1997, is as follows:-

	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>18 to 24</u>	<u>Over 25</u>	<u>Total</u>
Males	<u>33</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>206</u>	<u>315</u>
Females	<u>30</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>123</u>	<u>221</u>
Total	<u>63</u>	<u>144</u>	<u>329</u>	<u>536</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 26 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister confirm that in fact he refuses to say how many people were actually out of work at the end of December? He is not prepared to provide that information, is that right?

HON J J NETTO:

I have already answered that question previously.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, he has not answered that question previously. The answer to that is either yes or no. The question on the Order Paper is, that we would like to know how many people were actually registered out of work. The answer given is the average number over the last three months of the year which means that there could have been a decline in the last three months or an increase in the last three months and it is impossible to tell from the answer, it does not answer the original question. I would like to be clear that it is that he is not prepared to say how many people there are registered unemployed at the end of December or at any particular point.

HON J J NETTO:

As I have said previously in the House the figures for unemployed Gibraltarians do oscillate tremendously from month to month and from the debate we had in the previous session I said that from now on Government policy was that they were going to be given on an average quarterly basis and not on a monthly basis.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, the Minister is incorrect. He said it would be given on a quarterly basis but he said nothing about average. In fact, is it not the case that the figures that he has provided on a monthly basis between January and September do not show the fluctuation that he talks about, in fact it hardly changes from one month to another? The figures that he has provided in the first nine months of the year hardly change, they are constantly around the 450 mark give or take 20 or 30 up or down. So where is the evidence of this fluctuation, it must be in the last three months because there is no evidence in the previous nine months of the year, is that not the case?

HON J J NETTO:

No, it is not the case. I have not got the figures with me but it does not fluctuate between 20 or 30, at some times it does fluctuate beyond that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the Minister does not have the figures with him, will the Minister look at the figures that he has provided us with and satisfy himself of the accuracy of what I am saying and if indeed it is the case, can I remind the Minister that in the previous House of Assembly when I pointed out to him the same thing he did not deny it. I was told in the previous House of Assembly that the upsurge had happened in October, not before October, and that they were going to wait until December to see whether it was a hiccup in the figures for some unexplained reason which can happen. Will the Minister not accept that indeed in the supplementaries that I put the Government made the point that we were recognising that one month's figure means nothing? We are not suggesting that one month's figure indicates a trend, a trend has to be indicated over a period of time. But there is the trend that the Minister says exists does not exist in the nine months of the year, we are unable to make any sense of the answer we have been given because we have got nothing to compare it with.

MR SPEAKER:

What is your supplementary question?

HON J J BOSSANO:

My question is, given the fact that I have put the same argument in the last House and it has been accepted, will the Minister now go back and check the figures which he says he does not have in front of him and if he finds that I am correct, that there is not this wild fluctuation in figures, will he be prepared - if that is the only reason that he can give - to give us the actual number of people out of work at the end of the year?

HON J J NETTO:

I will definitely look at the figures again but as I said before it is now Government policy that the figures from now on will be given as an average quarterly.



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government present statistics as we consider appropriate, that is to say, in documents that we publish. The documents that the Government publish regularly, for example, the employment and unemployment statistics, those are going to be done on the basis of quarterly average. But if the hon Member is particularly interested in having the statistic on a specified day of the year, the 31 December 1997, for example, I see no reason why he cannot have that provided he understands that that is not how the Government present the statistics and therefore there will be a difference. But if he wants the statistic at a certain date and the department has that information available without undue administrative effort it can be given to him in answer to question and I suppose the answer to his original supplementary is, there is no reason why the answer to this question, given that he has asked specifically for the information at the end of December on a specific date could not have been given on that basis and not as an average. But the answer was formulated by the department on the basis of the departmental practice now for publishing statistics as opposed to specifically the method in which the hon Member asked for it. I accept that he is entitled to the information in the form in which he seeks it if it is reasonably available and I believe that that is reasonably available.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are the Government aware that nobody else anywhere else publishes unemployment statistics in this manner?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether the hon Member has made that statement on the basis of a consideration and the practices of all 185 members of the global community, I do not suppose he has and therefore he is taking a degree of licence when he makes that assertion. I certainly am not in a position to agree with him because I am not familiar with the practices in 185 countries around the world.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I can assure the Chief Minister that if he takes the trouble to do so he will find that nobody anywhere publishes a figure of average unemployment which effectively makes it impossible to know what is the actual number of people out of work. It is certainly not done in the EEC and it is certainly not done in the UK so he does not have to take the trouble to look at all 185, he can limit himself to UK and it has certainly never been done in Gibraltar before like this. Does he accept that this is the case?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I do accept that he asserted that this was not done anywhere else in the world because that is what he said and that is what I addressed. It is a little late for the hon Members to start comparing the practices in Gibraltar with the practices in the rest of the world because although I am not aware what the practices are in the rest of the world today, I am aware of what the practice was of the Government of Gibraltar before 16 May 1996 and that is, that they published no statistics at all. So certainly any form of statistics that we publish is a good deal of an improvement on the previous situation.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact the Chief Minister has forgotten that the question which is being asked and has not been answered is the question that they used to put regularly every three months asking for the quarterly breakdown?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have not forgotten. There is a difference between the voluntary publication of information by Government, which is what we now do regularly, and have to be asked a parliamentary question by the Opposition, which is what I was forced to do. If they ask for information in the House they get it. We do not wait for Opposition Members to ask for it, we publish it because we are committed to open and informative Government.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, that may well be the case and that is his business but what I am asking is, irrespective of what he chooses to publish voluntarily, does he not agree that what has been refused today is the information that we used to publish in answer to the questions which he apparently thought was a burden that he was forced to ask and which we think is our duty to ask in this House? All I am asking is that we should be given in the House the information that we provided here. On top of that they can choose to publish whatever other figures they want, we are not asking for that to be done.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member is partly right. It is true that he has not had the information in the form in which he asked it in his question but it is not true that the reason for that is that the Government refuse to give it to him. The Government, in fact, the answer has been formulated in terms which in fact, I agree with him, does not answer the question that he asked. That does not mean that the Government have refused to give it to him. As he knows the Government give him, he is carrying in his pocket an envelope containing information which used not to be available. The Government do not refuse to publish information unless it is against public interest of Gibraltar to do so and he clearly knows that this is not such information and he ought to be able to distinguish between what is a refusal and what is an omission which may not be intended or a matter of policy. I have told him 10 minutes ago that he was entitled, having asked for the information, to have the answer to the question that he has asked. I recognise that this falls short of that standard and it will be rectified, he will have his information.

HON J J BOSSANO:

When the Chief Minister made the statement he also said we could have it on a particular day if it did not cause a great deal of disruption to the department.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I also said that I did not think that that was the case in the case of unemployment statistics.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Obviously because they have been providing it since the 1 January. Is in fact the Chief Minister prepared to provide this information quarterly just like we provided it to them quarterly before? We are not asking for more than we provided, nothing more or less.

MR SPEAKER:

You have the last word Chief Minister on this.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well the answer is that the Government will answer whatever questions are put to us in the House by the Opposition provided it does not impose disproportionate administrative effort and cost. I have indicated to him that I do not think providing him with the employment information on a quarterly basis falls into that category and therefore it would be available to him upon request.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am grateful for that clarification.

NO. 27 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state the number of work permits issued each month since 1 April 1997 giving a breakdown by nationality and trade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The number of work permits issued since 1 April 1997 by nationality and trade groups is as follows:-

April 1997

Moroccan	13	Caterer	-	5
		Construction	-	5
		Domestic	-	1
		Self employed	-	1
		Administration	-	1
Indian	2	Manager	-	2
Norwegian	1	Catering	-	1
Bulgarian	1	Professional	-	1
Swiss	1	Marketing	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>18</u>

May 1997

Moroccan	16	Domestic	-	6
		Catering	-	4
		Construction	-	4
		Self employed	-	1
		Manager	-	1
Americian	1	Manager	-	1
Indian	1	Manager	-	1
Swiss	2	Manager	-	1
		Administration	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>20</u>

June 1997

Moroccan	10	Construction	-	8
		Mechanical	-	1
		Other trades	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>10</u>

July 1997

Moroccan	9	Domestic	-	2
		Construction	-	4
		Catering	-	2
		Retail	-	1
Russian	2	Consultant	-	2
American	1	Director	-	1
Brazilian	1	Catering	-	1
Indian	3	Manager	-	<u>3</u>
		Total		<u>16</u>

August 1997

Moroccan	14	Construction	-	3
		Catering	-	7
		Self employed	-	1
		Mechanic	-	1
		Domestic	-	1
		Retail	-	1
Malaysian	2	Manager	-	2
Swiss	1	Administration	-	1
Russian	1	Manager	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>18</u>

September 1997

Moroccan	11	Construction	-	5
		Catering	-	2
		Manager	-	2
		Transport	-	2
Sri Lankan	1	Administration	-	1
Indian	3	Manager	-	2
		Catering	-	1
Brazilian	1	Manager	-	1
Philippine	1	Catering	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>17</u>

October 1997

Moroccan	23	Catering	-	5
		Construction	-	15
		Domestic	-	2
		Retail	-	1
Russian	2	Legal/Professional	-	2
Indian	1	Sales	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>26</u>

November 1997

Moroccan	12	Construction	-	7
		Catering	-	1
		Domestic	-	2
		Mechanic	-	1
		Manager	-	1
Indian	2	Construction	-	1
		Manager	-	1
Russian	2	Manager	-	2
Swiss	2	Director	-	<u>2</u>
		Total		<u>18</u>

December 1997

Moroccan	5	Construction	-	3
		Domestic	-	2
Indian	1	Sales	-	1
Russian	1	Administration	-	1
Israeli	1	Director	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>8</u>

January 1998

Moroccan	13	Construction	-	4
		Catering	-	4
		Sales	-	3
		Transport	-	1
		Other trades	-	1
Indian	2	Catering	-	1
		Sales	-	1
Chinese	1	Catering	-	1
Canadian	1	Administration	-	1
Jamaican	1	Catering	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>18</u>

February 1998

Moroccan	10	Sales	-	2
		Construction	-	4
		Catering	-	2
		Director	-	1
		Mechanic	-	1
Indian	1	Sales	-	1
Sri Lankan	1	Manager	-	1
New Zealander	1	Accountant	-	1
Israeli	1	Education	-	1
USA	1	Director	-	<u>1</u>
		Total		<u>15</u>

NO. 28 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - VACANCIES AT CAMELL LAIRD**

Can Government state how many vacancies have been notified to the ETB by Cammell Laird?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Vacancies notified 79.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 28 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Are the 79 including managers? Could we have a breakdown of those 79, has he got the information?

HON J J NETTO:

The question refers to vacancies notified which is not vacancies filled. I can give him a breakdown of vacancies filled by nationalities but not in trades. So far we have Gibraltarians - 39; Italian - 1; Moroccan - 5; Spaniards - 7; and that brings a total of 52. I should however say that the number is probably about 60. Unfortunately there are some people who have just started who are working different shifts which do not coincide with the administrative office normal hours of work. However, within a day or two the forms will be filled and my guess would be that the total will then go up to about 60.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Minister clarify of the 79 that have been notified and 52 that have been filled, does it mean that the remaining 27 still need to be filled, is that the position?

HON J J NETTO:

Of course. As soon as the employer notifies the vacancies it means that those vacancies will be filled in due course.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

What I am asking is, he gave us a total figure of 79 originally and then he has told us there are 52 filled, does that mean the notification to the ETB are 27 and not the 79, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.



HON J L BALDACHINO:

Obviously by the figures that he has given me on people who have been employed, how is that done, is it that the ETB does it as they used to do it by sending people or is it that the employer is also employing people directly?

HON J J NETTO:

Well, it is normal practice for the ETB to send people for the vacancy when the vacancy has been notified with us but I have to say that recruitment lies with the company and not with the ETB as an individual employer.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I accept that. What I am saying is, by looking at the nationalities that have been employed by Cammell Laird, is it that the 52 posts that have been filled are by people that the ETB has sent or is it that some of those have been directly employed by the company itself?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, some of them have been employed by the company.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

So those who are not Gibraltarian, am I to understand that those have been directly employed by the company and not persons who have been sent by the ETB?

HON J J NETTO:

I do not know because I do not get involved in the administration when a vacancy gets registered, it is the staff in the ETB that process them and I am sure that they do it in the normal manner as they have done it before.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

When people register as unemployed and then the ETB have 14 days to send persons who have registered unemployed to any employer, is it that now they are sending other nationalities apart from Gibraltarians or is it that they still keep to that commitment and therefore the others might have been employed directly by the company?

HON J J NETTO:

It is not the policy of this Government, as it was not the policy of the previous Government, to send other nationals.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether, in fact, the ETB has submitted candidates for all the 79 vacancies or does he not know that?

HON J J NETTO:

I simply do not know that because I do not get involved with the administrative tasks.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Fine, I am not asking for the Minister to be behind the counter but surely the Minister must be interested particularly in this area to see to what extent the numbers of unemployed can be reduced as a result of Cammell Laird vacancies, has he not asked whether there have been enough people on his books to be able to send people to all the vacancies? Can he find out and tell us?

HON J J NETTO:

Definitely I can find out but I have to say that the normal practice and procedure is that the ETB staff in the Job Centre side would tend to send local unemployed registered persons to vacancies if they have got the right skills.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Precisely, we do not know if they have got the right skills so they might not have enough people to send because they have not the right skills. Without knowing whether they have been sent, we do not know whether they think there are amongst the numbers that they have got registered unemployed sufficient persons with the range of skills looked for by the employer in the vacancies that have been opened to be able to submit candidates for all the jobs or not. It is obviously useful to know if some of those jobs are not filled from within the unemployed at the ETB, whether it is because they have not been found suitable or because they are simply not available. So without knowing whether.....

MR SPEAKER:

There is no need to answer that question because it goes beyond the number of people vacancies. You are asking for a supplementary on the work and that is not the original question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If 79 vacancies have been notified I do not think it is an unusual supplementary to ask whether 79 candidates have been sent for the 79 vacancies, that is the question. If he does not have the answer then what I am asking the Minister is can he provide it when he gets it?

MR SPEAKER:

He had the answer to the original question, there is no doubt about that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The answer to the original question is that Cammell Laird has told the ETB, "I want 79 workers".

MR SPEAKER:

I am not going to argue.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not arguing.

MR SPEAKER:

You are having the last word and you are not having it with me.

HON J J BOSSANO:

With due respect, I am not trying to have the last word with anybody.

MR SPEAKER:

You are still having the last word.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I see. Well, I will sit down and then I will stand up presumably when you finish speaking?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes. Next question.

NO. 29 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets were engaged by the ETB for the month of December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 30 and 31 of 1998.

NO. 30 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets were engaged by the ETB for the month of January 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 29 and 31 of 1998.

NO. 31 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets were engaged by the ETB for the month of February 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Cadets engaged are as follows:

December 1997	-	4
January 1998	-	22
February 1998	-	15

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 29, 30 AND 31 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

For the December figure which is four that is actually a low figure, is it that still the employers are not finding it attractive to take on cadets or is it something else?

HON J J NETTO:

December figures traditionally tend to be low anyway.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I accept that but not as low as four. He does not see anything abnormal for that figure being so low?

HON J J NETTO:

No.

NO. 32 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 33 and 34 of 1998.

NO. 33 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of January 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 32 and 34 of 1998.



NO. 34 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The number of vocational cadets who have terminated their employment with the ETB is as follows:

December 1997	-	20
January 1998	-	42
February 1998	-	26

NO. 35 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 36 and 37 of 1998.

NO. 36 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of January 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 35 and 37 of 1998.

NO. 37 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The total cost of vocational cadets (gross including social insurance contributions) is as follows:-

December 1997	-	£89,851.32
January 1998	-	£79,105.15
February 1998	-	£75,793.88

NO. 38 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**BUILDINGS AND WORKS - HIRING OF MOTOR VEHICLES**

Can Government state how much has Buildings and Works spent in the current financial year on the hiring of motor vehicles?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The total amount spent by Buildings and Works in hire of transport as at 13 March 1998 was £4,735.

However, the department intends to pay an outstanding bill of £3,680 before the end of this financial year.

At present the department has on hire five pick-up vans and one van.

NO. 39 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 1**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, Subhead 1 - Replacement of Balconies and Windows, for the month of December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 40 and 41 of 1998.

NO. 40 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 1**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, Subhead 1 - Replacement of Balconies and Windows, for the month of January 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 39 and 41 of 1998.

NO. 41 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 1**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, Subhead 1 - Replacement of Balconies and Windows, for the month of February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The total spent is as follows:-

December 1997	-	£38,434
January 1998	-	£10,267
February 1998	-	£29,512

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 39, 40 AND 41 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Does the Minister expect to spend all the money allocated for balconies and windows during this financial year or does he estimate that there will be an underspending?

HON J J NETTO:

I estimate that there will be an underspending.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Does he know by how much the underspending will be? If he has not got that information here, once he gets it could he pass it on to me?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.



NO. 42 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of October 1997 receiving:

- (a) Unemployment Benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 43 and 44 of 1998.

NO. 43 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of November 1997 receiving:

- (a) Unemployment Benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 42 and 44 of 1998.

NO. 44 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of December 1997 receiving:

- (a) Unemployment Benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Just before I answer the question, I am giving this information on an average figure for the end of 1997 quarter. As was said before by the learned Chief Minister, if I find that the information is not disproportionate in effort, I will then provide it in the other manner but as I have it here at the moment it is as follows:

Numbers of males and females unemployed Gibraltarians, average figure for end of 1997 quarter is as follows:-

- |                          |   |     |
|--------------------------|---|-----|
| (a) Unemployment Benefit | - | 69  |
| (b) Social Assistance    | - | 166 |
| (c) No payments          | - | 238 |

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 42, 43 AND 44 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Obviously those people who are receiving unemployment benefits and those people who are receiving social assistance, I would suppose that the Department of Social Services would have the number of people receiving that? Why is it that it needs to be an average? What we want is how many are actually receiving payments, I do not think that is too laborious in a department, they have to do it anyway.

HON J J NETTO:

As I said before, if I find that it does not cause disproportionate effort to get the information, I will pass it.

NO. 45 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of January 1998 receiving:

- (a) Unemployment Benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question No. 46 of 1998.

NO. 46 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of February 1998 receiving:

- (a) Unemployment Benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information will be passed on to him at the end of the first quarter. As I have said just now in the previous question, in the manner whether we think we can give them exactly what they want in relation to getting the information.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 45 AND 46 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Presumably if we take the system that they are using, they need to get the figure for each month, add the months and divide by three so they have to have the information in order to arrive at the average. It is not less work, it is more work. Is that not correct?

NO. 47 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**ETB - FRONTIER WORKERS**

Can Government state what is the latest number of frontier workers classified as self-employed broken down as follows:

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK Nationals
- (c) Spanish Nationals
- (d) Other EU Nationals
- (e) Non-EU Nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Self-employed frontier workers registered with a Spanish address is as follows:

- |                        |   |      |
|------------------------|---|------|
| (a) Gibraltarians      | - | None |
| (b) UK nationals       | - | 4    |
| (c) Spanish Nationals  | - | 3    |
| (d) Other EU Nationals | - | 1    |
| (e) Non-EU Nationals   | - | None |

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 47 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

Is the Minister suggesting that there are only eight frontier workers?

HON J J NETTO:

What I am suggesting is that self-employed workers with a registered Spanish address in the database that we have available, the number is as I have just read out.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister confirm that in fact when he says the database what he is really saying is that they are registered with the ETB?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We are talking about self-employed so his surprise about frontier workers is not exactly accurate. This is not the number of frontier workers, this is the number of self-employed frontier workers which is slightly different.

HON R MOR:

My surprise stems from the figures we have been provided before.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I was not thinking in terms of the figures, simply that he should not misinterpret the answer. The answer relates to self-employed persons not to employed workers.

NO. 48 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state whether since May 1996, any work permits have been issued for the employment of any Moroccan nationals in respect of whom no such permit had been previously issued?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 48 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

How many?

HON J J NETTO:

Seventeen.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would this be 17 new arrivals from Morocco or is there a breakdown showing that some were new arrivals and some were people who might have been here illegally before and have now been legalised?

HON J J NETTO:

It is a combination of the two factors.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not rather inconsistent to be looking at repatriating Moroccans and at the same time we are actually being able to provide work for newcomers?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The newcomers, in other words, of those 17, the ones who are new arrivals - if I can call them that - are necessarily persons with specialist skills that were not previously available in Gibraltar. The ones who are not new arrivals, out of those 17, are people who have been working in Gibraltar for many years on an irregular basis and the Government have simply regularised their position. After all, if they are people in employment in Gibraltar and they are actually working out in the economy and have been doing so for the last 15 years, the only loser in not registering them is the Government who fails to collect PAYE and social insurance contributions.



HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the reference to 15 years an indication? [*HON CHIEF MINISTER: No.*] I see, so we are not talking about people who have been therefore 15 years then?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, some of them are; some of them are people who have been in Gibraltar for many years; the figure 15 is a figure that I have plucked from the clouds on my feet, I am not saying that it is Government policy to regularise the position of everybody who has been here working in unregistered employment for over 15 years. It is just people who are established as employees in the economy and the Government are satisfied that that has been the case and therefore the Government permit their position to be regularised.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government say how many of the 17 are new and how many were already here?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, I could but I have not got the information with me so I can pass it on to him as soon as I have it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Of those that were here - which we do not know how many they are - are the Government aware whether they are people who entered illegally in the first instance, presumably as visitors or something else, or people who actually were employed, became unemployed and were thought to have left - which I know is something that sometimes happens, that people are thought to have left the economy but in fact they have not really left the economy and they might have been doing odd jobs since then. Will it be possible to identify the two categories since I think there is a difference between the two?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member puts his finger on a difficult issue. In principle the general immigration control policy of the Government is that persons who arrived in Gibraltar legally in the first place and who simply became illegal as a result of losing their work and therefore their theoretical entitlement to a residence permit, as in operation of Gibraltar's immigration laws, are not expelled. In that sense we are continuing the policy that has been there for some time and I think a proper one in humane terms. On the other hand, the Government's policy is that people who abuse entering and then remain on a basis other than on the basis upon which they were allowed entry, for example, wives and children who are allowed to visit their working husbands or vice versa, during the

summer holidays, stay, the general policy of the Government is that such people when they are discovered are deported, they are required to leave. That is, in principle, the policy position of the Government. However, from time to time, and they are very much the exception, one comes across instances of the latter deportable, if I can call them that, in accordance with policy cases which for exceptional and extraordinary humanitarian reasons suggest themselves to the Government as worthy of making exceptions. Exceptions which the Government are normally loathe to make, but whilst I have explained what the Government's policy is and indeed recently such people have been made to leave Gibraltar in the second category, I would not like to mislead the House by suggesting that there can be no case of such people who are not allowed to stay. In other words, some such people are exceptionally allowed to stay, may be exceptionally allowed to stay, but the policy certainly is not to reward a flagrant breach of our immigration procedures by allowing that to be regularised.

NO. 49 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**MOD - REDUNDANCIES**

Can Government state how many jobs have been lost in the MOD in the current financial year as a result of:-

- (a) Early retirement
- (b) Voluntary redundancy
- (c) Compulsory redundancy?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information available by the MOD is as follows:-

(a) Early retirement	-	4
(b) Voluntary redundancy	-	52
(c) Compulsory redundancy	-	1

It has been pointed out to me that people who are counted under the voluntary redundancy numbers could have opted for the early retirement scheme if it would have been more advantageous to them. Each individual is given an indication (estimate) of what benefits he/she would receive under the various schemes and can then choose which one is the most favourable to him/her. With regard to the compulsory redundancy, this was one of the RMAS members, who MOD managed to find a job with GIBUNCO, in relation to the sale of the SEALYHAM to GIBUNCO.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 49 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, in fact, are these job losses reflected in people in this kind of numbers registering with the ETB as unemployed to look for alternative employment?

HON J J NETTO:

If they are so registered themselves.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, I am asking that. I am asking whether in fact the ETB has seen the reflection of these redundancies. I am trying to find out whether, in fact, this results in people moving into the labour market as unemployed and looking for work or not, does he know whether this is happening?

HON J J NETTO:

No, the source of information, as I said before, has been provided by the MOD. I have not double checked, if that is the supplementary question by the Leader of the Opposition, to see whether the individuals have bothered to register or not.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If I could add, I think my hon Colleague may not be grasping the exact point of the supplementary, there is no policy to deny registration obviously to voluntary redundancies so they are free and one would expect that anybody who accepts voluntary redundancy from the MOD at a stage in their life when they are still more or less of working age, would register as unemployed and therefore would enlarge the unemployment statistics. An assessment of exactly the extent to which that may have happened with these particular 57 people would require a name by name check or at least an analysis of the age profile of the people involved. But certainly it would be a useful exercise to do, just to keep an eye on how many people come out from the MOD straight into the civilian side of the economy through this route.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it not the case, because obviously some of them would be entitled to unemployment benefit, that they would have to register with the ETB to get the unemployment benefit which they are entitled to?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think I should say, as a contribution by the Government to these schemes, particularly the early retirement scheme, the Government have agreed to extend the 13 weeks unemployment benefit to people who would otherwise not have been entitled to it by virtue of opting for early retirement or for voluntary redundancy.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I am asking the question because therefore it would not be such a difficult task for the ETB to find how many of the 57 are registered looking for work.

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, and if the Opposition Member wants the information it can be provided.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the Government have got as a matter of policy, which is a declared policy, the need to deal with job losses in the MOD and to see what alternatives can be provided, surely it ought to be something that is happening, that as people come off the MOD employment some analysis is made of whether, in fact, they have actually got other jobs already lined up which they are going to or an effort needs to be made to see what can be provided in the labour market for the people who are coming out as part of the exercise of dealing with the MOD cuts? Is that not something that is happening?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think we have previously answered in the House, in answer to a similar point that the hon Member made previously, that the Government are not engaging in positive discrimination in favour of redundant MOD workers. That would be unfair on people who have been unemployed for longer than redundant MOD workers. The position of the Government is that redundant MOD workers simply join the list of the unemployed in a privileged way because they come with a very generous redundancy or early retirement package and are therefore better able to sustain the burdens of unemployment and then the Government deploy economic policies calculated to help all the unemployed including the persons who have become unemployed as a result of losing their jobs in the MOD but not particularly them.

NO. 50 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**TOURISM - HEAD 6A, SUBHEAD 8**

Can Government state how much of subhead 8 in Head 6A of the approved estimates of expenditure for 1997/98 has been spent and in respect of which items?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The total expenditure incurred from 1 April 1997 to 28 February 1998 and charged to Head 6A, subhead 8, was £737,234. This is divided as follows:-

Literature production	-	£91,774
Promotional material	-	£56,630
Promotional video for US market	-	£43,146
Trade activity	-	£45,818
Familiarisation trips	-	£10,355
Advertising	-	£204,807
Travel fairs and exhibitions	-	£150,588
Events	-	£22,915
PR services	-	£30,750
Contingencies and Gibraltar-based activity	-	£80,451

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 50 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

The £43,000, what is that in respect of?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Video promotion for US market.

HON A J ISOLA:

That is what, distribution?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

We were approached by a television channel in the USA who were producing promotional films to carry out a series of programmes of destinations within Europe and Gibraltar opted to go down that route and they have produced a video which will obviously be used for the filming of this event in the USA and also by satellite to Europe. This will happen later this year but obviously as part of our contract with this company we have acquired rights to be able to use this for our own promotional activities and, in fact, the video is obviously controlled by the Gibraltar Tourist Board in terms of editing and ensuring that the message that we are trying to portray is what actually is exposed to the public.

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I ask if any of what was announced I think some time last year, the Mediterranean Yacht Race, is that coming anywhere here?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, that is not coming here because although we have an in principle agreement to participate in this, the organisers of the event have not received the same support from other ports of call and it looks as if the whole programme has been aborted.

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I ask, under the heading "events" does that refer to something in particular?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The heading "events" is a heading that covers things like the Gibraltar regatta; the trade winds rally; the opening of the cruise liner terminal and the literature that was produced for that and that comes to a figure of £22,915.

NO. 51 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - COACH/PASSENGER ARRIVALS**

Will Government give the statistics for arrivals to Gibraltar for 1996 and 1997 in respect of the following:-

1. Number of coaches coming to Gibraltar
2. Number of passengers arriving on coaches?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of tourist coaches which entered Gibraltar for the two years in question are as follows:-

1996	11,597 coaches
1997	11,685 coaches

Records are not kept by the Statistics Office in respect of non-resident arrivals through the land frontier by coach.

However, on the assumption that the average number of persons on a coach is about 45, then the number of arrivals on board coaches would be approximately as follows:-

1996	521,865 persons
1997	525,825 persons



NO. 52 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**CANCELLATION OF SCHEDULED FLIGHTS**

How many flights to or from Gibraltar have been cancelled since the 30 June 1997, and on what dates?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Other than cancellations due to adverse weather conditions, there was one Monarch flight and three GB Airways flights that were cancelled in the period in question and these were as follows:

The Monarch flight was on Wednesday 24 December 1997, and the GB Airways flights were on 22 January, 29 January and 25 February 1998.

In fact, the Monarch flight was cancelled as part of a rescheduling of Christmas flights when three additional flights were laid on by the airline on three successive Sundays, on 21 December, 28 December and 4 January.

The GB Airways flights were cancelled due to commercial reasons due to weak loads.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 52 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Have Government been successful in their communications with both airlines to increase the number of flights or the frequency of scheduled services?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

We are in regular contact with the airlines in obviously trying to increase capacity on the route. I can tell the House that later this month I have meetings laid on with both GB Airways and Monarch in trying to look at new opportunities and new routes that could be developed. However, it remains to be seen whether these airlines will see any of the options and opportunities that we are going to put to them as being commercially viable or not. Obviously it is Government policy to try and increase the availability of seats on the London/Luton and London/Gatwick and London/Heathrow availability of seats to Gibraltar.

HON A J ISOLA:

Bearing in mind, as the Minister has said, that it is Government policy to seek to increase the capacity, obviously it is up to the operators, and he specifically mentioned Heathrow. Will the Minister at his next meeting with the operators seek to restore the Heathrow flight to Gibraltar which I understand may or may not be directly linked but it appears that the operator is now flying daily flights from Heathrow to Malaga at the same time almost as he withdraws from Gibraltar and this does cause the business community particularly, who have the need for connecting flights, some concerns. Would the Minister make every effort to seek to restore those flights to Heathrow from Gibraltar?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I can assure the hon Member that this matter has already been raised with GB Airways both in meetings and actually in writing to them. Their verbal reply is that there is no connection between the discontinuation of some of the Heathrow flights to Gibraltar and the increase on the route from Malaga to Heathrow. However, obviously we would very much like to see some of these Heathrow routes restored. The airline claims that some of these commercial decisions have had to be taken on the fact that operating from Gatwick is far more economical to run and therefore they hope to be able to offer a far more competitive price structure on the Gibraltar route which is something that the business community and tour operators have been asking for some time. So it remains to be seen whether these fares will actually drop and whether we would be able to create a far more competitive price structure on the specific routes but obviously I understand that Heathrow is something that we would like definitely restored.

HON A J ISOLA:

I am grateful for that answer. The reasons as to why the flights were stopped from Heathrow is obviously commercial and whether it is a coincidence or not, that the flights were stopped, remains to be seen. Bearing in mind that the two airlines operating in Gibraltar today are both in receipt of a form of subsidy is that not part of the lever that the Government should be seeking to use to put pressure on the airlines to continue to service Gibraltar from every possible entry or exit point be it Gatwick, Heathrow, Luton or whatever others may be added to that in the future?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Does the hon Member mean that we should apply pressure on both Monarch and GB Airways to fly from Heathrow or does he mean only pressure on GB Airways?

HON A J ISOLA:

If they can put pressure on Monarch to fly from Heathrow it would be better for Gibraltar and we would support that obviously. The fact that Monarch had never flown from Heathrow, they have always come in from Luton, which we welcome if they were to fly from the north of England as well, that would also be welcome. But the fact is that the only operator flying to Gibraltar from Heathrow was GB Airways, they have ceased that operation and they are now running it on a daily basis from Malaga. Bearing in mind the subsidy it would seem to us that there is a lever that the Government can exercise to seek to put pressure, not to force, on them to open up the Heathrow service once again.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I make this point as a user of airlines rather than from any sort of detailed knowledge that I have of it in a ministerial sense, but my understanding is that the flights that used to service Gibraltar from Heathrow were only the flights that were really destined for Morocco. In other words, Gibraltar was serviced from Heathrow from flights which touched down at Gibraltar on their way to Casablanca or Marrakech. The way the hon Member has presented his observations gives the impression that what has happened is that the operator has stopped using that slot for the benefit of Gibraltar in order to transfer the benefit of that slot to Malaga whereas in fact that is not the case. What I believe the operator has done is stopped touching down in Gibraltar and now uses those slots to go directly to Moroccan destinations from Heathrow. That is my understanding, I would ask him not to hold me to that because it is what I have analysed as a user because, as he knows, I travel to the UK frequently and certainly Heathrow is certainly more convenient and I share the observations that he has made about how much more

convenient Heathrow is. I am not aware that there has been any relinquishment of slots from Heathrow that were previously allocated for Gibraltar simply to transfer them to Malaga. The hon Member knows that the Malaga routes from Heathrow were previously operated by British Airways and presumably the slots exist.

HON A J ISOLA:

The Chief Minister is absolutely right, the flights from Heathrow did subsequently go on to Morocco and those are the flights that were invariably fully booked because of the need there was to have a link between Gibraltar and Heathrow. That link has now been lost. Whether the slots are still there or not, as far as I am concerned, is of no consequence; they are now flying directly - from what the Chief Minister has said, I am not too sure myself - to Morocco is in no doubt but what they are certainly doing is having daily flights from London to Malaga which they did not have previously. Therefore it looks as if they have stopped the Gibraltar ones and fly direct to Malaga on a daily basis whereas what he said before the only flights coming from Heathrow were subsequently on to Morocco. The question is to request Government basically to see if that link in one way or another, with Heathrow on a limited basis, can be restored to at least enable people to plan their business around those new flights.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Those representations have been done in the first instance. Secondly, the Gibraltar/Gatwick increase in flights, where they are purely destined for Gibraltar, will mean that there will be far more available seats on the route than there were previously. As the hon Member clearly pointed out, most of the seats that were used on the Heathrow/Gibraltar/Casablanca flight were booked to Morocco and not to Gibraltar so one used to find that there was not availability for Gibraltar as such. Now the flights will actually come in from Gatwick straight to Gibraltar so the availability on the actual Gatwick/Gibraltar route or UK/Gibraltar will be far higher than it was previously particularly because of this idea that they will not be carrying on to Morocco.

HON A J ISOLA:

One final observation, I think the point is that there may be more seats but there is not more choice in the sense that the planes are bigger so there are more seats on the planes, the passenger does not have any greater choice. He has lost the choice that he had before through Heathrow but the Gatwick planes are bigger so one has more seats, that is my understanding. But certainly we would support the representations and hope that they are successful.

NO. 53 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**CRUISE LINER VISITS - 1997**

What was the final number of cruise liners that called at Gibraltar in 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

There were 99 cruise liners during 1997.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 53 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Is there any reason for the numbers being slightly less than anticipated by the Minister in answer to a previous question in September 1997 where he indicated that he expected the number to be about 107?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I really cannot give the hon Member a clear answer on this. I have assumed that there are some last minute changes to some of these itineraries and possibly this has led to a drop in some of the cruises that were programmed coming to Gibraltar but these figures fluctuate throughout the year and it can only be an estimate of what we expect.

HON A J ISOLA:

So the Minister is not aware of any specific reason as to why it is from 107 to 99?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, not at all.

NO. 54 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**CRUISE LINER VISITS - 1998**

How many cruise liners are now expected to call at Gibraltar in 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

As at 16 March 1998, there are 124 bookings for cruise calls at Gibraltar for 1998.

It only requires a further 16 cruise calls during the course of the next nine months to make 1998 an all-time record year for cruise calls. This I believe is achievable.

NO. 55 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**TOURISM - MADRID OFFICE**

When do Government expect the Gibraltar Government Madrid Office to commence operations?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

As soon as this is logistically possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 55 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister what that means?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

As soon as the necessary permits called the "licencia de apertura" have been approved.

HON A J ISOLA:

Could I ask, when the "licencia de apertura" was requested?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

We expect that this will probably be forthcoming by the end of next month. If I can just give the hon Member a slight history into the delays that have been incurred he may be able to understand the position of the Government. An office was identified in Torre de Madrid which is in the Plaza de España in central Madrid and the whole building had been refurbished therefore the building needed to have its "licencia de apertura" for the whole building and people occupying the building then had to apply for another "licencia de apertura" on an individual basis. The "licencia de apertura" for individual occupiers cannot be granted until the main "licencia de apertura" has been granted. This has experienced some setbacks in that some fire regulations minimum standards had not been achieved by the landlords and therefore we found ourselves in a position where we, as new occupiers of the building, could not obtain the "licencia de apertura" until the main licence had been granted. Our office is one of the offices that is actually affected by the minimum fire regulations and so we, in applying pressure to the landlord, were offered alternative offices only two or three weeks ago. Last week the new offices were inspected by us as being suitable; these have now been approved and we have now instructed our solicitors to reapply for the "licencia de apertura". I can tell the House that this is not in any way targeted at Gibraltar in that there are other new occupiers of the building which are in the same position as we were. Some of these new occupiers have taken the decision to just occupy the building because they were informed that there would not be any problem. We as a Government felt that due to the sensitivity of the issue could not occupy an office unless we have everything totally in order. We could not risk the possibility of being accused of having set up an office without the necessary approval and therefore this, hopefully, will happen now in a matter of weeks.

HON A J ISOLA:

May I ask, bearing in mind I assume it is one of the factors relating to logistics, have Government now made a decision in respect of the personnel posts that were advertised last year?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Could we not lose sight of the fact that although we use the word "Government" the office is actually being set up by the Gibraltar Development Corporation. *[HON A J ISOLA: I will make note for the future.]*

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The staff has already been earmarked for the Madrid Office but I have taken the decision that no formal appointment will be forthcoming until we actually have the office permit to be able to start operating. The relevant persons concerned have been explained the situation, we have informed them that subject to achieving our objective for opening the office they would be offered employment and both persons concerned continue to express an interest in accepting the jobs. It would be totally unacceptable of me to divulge who these people are as they are still in employment.

HON A J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that the persons he is in contact with are people who applied for the positions originally, they are from that same list?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON A J ISOLA:

Will the announcement then of the people be made after the offices have been completed and the 'licencia' has been obtained?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

As soon as the "licencia de apertura" has been obtained, which means that basically we have the go ahead to open an office, we will obviously announce the appointments of the relevant personnel.

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I ask if the positions have actually been offered to those individuals or not as yet?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, there has not been any formal offer given to these individuals. These individuals have been explained the situation, they have been informed that they are the selected candidates subject to the approval being obtained and basically we wanted to find out, because of the time that had elapsed, whether these people were still interested in taking up the job. In both cases they have confirmed that they are still interested in accepting the vacancies which will be obviously forthcoming.

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I ask if the two positions are as originally envisaged which was a manager and a personal assistant?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I think I would rather leave that until the announcement is actually made because there could be implications if I make any form of comment on that. But there are not a lot of major alterations to them.



NO. 56 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**HOTEL INDUSTRY - IMPORT DUTY CONCESSIONS**

What steps have Government taken to ensure that recipients of Government grants and import duty concessions in the hotel industry support local suppliers of goods?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

A number of measures have been put in place.

When hoteliers started to import materials and goods for the refurbishment of hotels, which was mainly from mid-January 1998 onwards, a letter issued to them from the Ministry for Tourism and Transport dated 13 February 1998 to clarify, for the avoidance of doubt, that not all goods imported to Gibraltar would be covered by import duty waivers.

Then, on 26 February 1998, guidelines to clarify what would be entitled to import duty waivers was issued. These guidelines distinguished between goods or materials which formed part of a package arrangement with a hotel refurbishment designer (all of which goods or materials would be granted an import duty waiver) and all "non-package" goods or materials which would need to be imported by a local supplier in order to qualify for an import duty waiver.

Subsequently, on 5 March 1998, a further clarification issued from the Ministry for Tourism and Transport to the effect that only goods or materials procured for the purpose of hotel refurbishment through a local wholesaler or retailer would be eligible for import duty waivers.

This position remains except that if goods or materials cannot be reasonably provided through local traders, the import duty waiver will apply.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 56 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

The clarification that the Minister referred to, I think in March I am not sure of the date it was issued, was as a result of concerns expressed by wholesalers and distributors in Gibraltar that import duty waivers were making their products uncompetitive?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Guidelines issued in February 1998, I do not know whether those are the ones because as the hon Member referred to the word "guidelines" and that was the only time that we have issued guidelines because there was a lot of misunderstanding as to what qualified and what did not. So we set up some guidelines which we hoped would clear all these misunderstandings. But if he is referring to a letter on 5 March which was issued to all the hotels in respect of the import duty waiver, this was as a result of representations that were made from local traders in this respect.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister state then whether all the imports of materials received by hotels adhered to those guidelines or were there breaches to those guidelines before they were issued and that was the result of complaints that the Government received?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, I think the confusion came because hoteliers were not clear as to what was and what was not available to import duty waiver. All imports into Gibraltar under the scheme are subjected to scrutiny by the Ministry for Tourism and Transport and if they comply with the guidelines then passed on to the Ministry for Trade and Industry for the actual exempt certificate to be issued. So therefore there was no misunderstanding once the document had been accepted by the Ministry for Tourism and Transport. The confusion came prior to that in that hoteliers came saying, "I want an import duty waiver for this" and the Ministry would say, "Well, this is not available for waiver" and that is where the confusion arose. So there was no need for us to rectify anything that went back because that had been accepted previously by the Ministry and fell within the guidelines that we had issued previously.

HON A J ISOLA:

Is the Minister saying then, that prior to any import duty waiver certificates being granted, those products are scrutinised by the Ministry for Tourism and if that is the case, have then no products been imported into Gibraltar with the import duty waiver before, that can be now? In other words, since the clarification, are there any products not qualifying today that did not qualify prior to that clarification in March?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Obviously being far more observant in making sure that they cannot be sourced locally because before we were allowing goods to enjoy import duty waiver which today are subjected to the fact whether they can be obtained locally or not. But one must understand that we are dealing with a sector that is a specialised area. When one walks into an hotel room it is not like walking into one's own bedroom; the type of carpets and type of fixtures and fittings are all what is called contract range and the durability of it is far, far superior to what we normally buy as consumers and therefore they do need specialist input into making sure that one is able to obtain supplies and one cannot just do that going into a shop in the High Street. Everywhere in the world there are specialist hotel suppliers which deal with a certain category of goods and materials to be able to cater for the needs of what is, after all, the usage that is subjected to by the use of hotels.

HON J C PEREZ:

Prior to these guidelines being issued, it seems that an hotel did import directly television sets and that the department did give the waiver of import duty on those TV sets and as a result the complaint arose from one of the local distributors, is that not the case?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, that is not the case. The television problem arose as a result of a specific hotel in Gibraltar who wanted to upgrade the television systems in their hotel by actually bringing in a very sophisticated system and found that they had prior to that hired TV sets which they informed the hiring company that they would no longer be requiring as they would be obtaining a system which met their requirements. I understand that even though there was an offer put to the hotel by the local hiring TV company, this did not meet their requirements and, in fact, I have met the hotel themselves, I have met the TV hiring company because I really wanted to get to the grass roots of the problem and to see whether I could mend any of the damage that had been done initially. But after all, the hotel has I think convinced me of the idea that the hotel system which they wished to put in place is not even available in the majority of European countries and I did this because there were a lot of rumours going round and different stories of what was happening and really I wanted to get down to the root of the problem. The hiring company in Gibraltar of televisions is quite satisfied that really the situation is something that they cannot really meet and the hotel has gone down the route of wanting and needing a system which is not readily available in Gibraltar, in fact is not readily available in most European countries.

NO. 57 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**I&D FUND - HEAD 103(5), TRANSPORT - ROADS**

Can Government state how much of the funds provided under Head 103(4), Transport - Roads, is expected to have been spent by the 31 March and what amounts are in respect of works done by direct labour and works done by contractors?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

I presume the hon Member refers to Head 103(5) of the Improvement and Development Fund. The expected expenditure until the end of March in this subhead is £33,835. All the works carried out under this subhead have been carried out by contractors.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 57 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister state, I know it might not be easily available to him now, whether other works connected with road resurfacing and road repairs have been carried out and not paid for from the Improvement and Development Fund but from other subheads which might be connected to beautification or tourism projects? That is to say, road works which have been road works but have come under other subheads because it might be part of a beautification plan or part of a tourist project?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I believe I need notice of that question, I cannot really reply to that but there could have been the case if the actual road resurfacing was as a result of a wider beautification project.

HON J C PEREZ:

If I write to him could the Minister provide me the information?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, I will.

NO. 58 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TOURISM AND TRANSPORT - HEAD 6C**

Can Government state how much of the funds provided under Head 6C for Roads Maintenance and Repairs has been spent on works undertaken by contractors?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The amount spent on works undertaken by contractors to 17 March 1998 was £49,126.

NO. 59 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**ACCESS TO SANDY BAY**

Will access to Sandy bay continue to be via Dudley Ward Tunnel throughout the summer?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The answer is yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 59 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ:

Does the Minister have an estimated time of when the works are to be completed so that the access from the other side is available?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

According to the programme of works for the widening of Sir Herbert Miles Road, this programme should be completed in December 1998.

NO. 60 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**OFFICIAL BATHING SEASON**

Will Government state when they expect to be in a position to open beaches to the public this year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

All beach facilities will be functional for the 13 weeks of the official bathing season which commences this year on Friday 12 June 1998. This includes the lifeguard service and the intense summer beach cleaning programme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 60 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Do the government not intend to clean beaches prior to that date? Is it that the official summer period is the only period in which beaches are to be cleaned?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The new contractual arrangements that have been in place this summer, have ensured that the beaches are maintained at a reasonable level of cleanliness. This has been achieved despite the storms in the month of February. Cleaning of the beaches and opening of some changing rooms and toilets will be available during the school holidays at Easter. However, because refurbishment works have already commenced at some beaches, the possibility exists of some changing rooms may not be available due to on-going works in preparation for the summer months. Weather permitting the beach cleaning machine acquired last summer will be deployed to the beaches before the Easter break.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

As I understand it, there will not be any lifeguards in operation before 12 June, is that correct?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

NO. 61 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**PEDESTRAINISATION - PHASE I**

Can Government state whether Phase I of the pedestrianisation works presently being carried out by Amey Construction Ltd is to be completed on time?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Yes, subject to snagging and other minor matters.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 61 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

When will that be? Has the Minister got a date?

HON K AZOPARDI:

For the snagging and all of that.....

HON J C PEREZ:

The completion date?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The streets are themselves complete subject to minor matters like, for example, the curve at Tuckey's Lane that is being reassessed and we are looking at replacing at least the form of that and other minor matters such as the lighting and there are some problems with some property owners who the project managers are liaising with. But other than that the actual repaving has been completed now so what we are awaiting now is to commence Phase II which is Irish Town.

HON J C PEREZ:

Frankly, neither of the two areas but particularly Tuckey's Lane does not look as if it is a finished product at all, that is the issue that I have been raising. Perhaps the matters that the Minister is talking about now might get a more agreeable look to the finished product. It is certainly not of the quality that Main Street is, certainly it does not look like it anyway.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, I agree with the hon member's observation. That is why we say it has been completed as far as repaving is concerned. But, of course, there are the final touches; the curve being one which I think will be a major issue which will achieve a different look. We are at the moment discussing different possibilities to see whether we can make the street look much better than it is looking at the moment.



NO. 62 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRAFFIC FLOW - THIRD PHASE**

Have Government taken heed of the general concern that exists amongst motorists and pedestrians alike to the existing and planned changes to traffic flows announced in their Press Release No. 284/97, and will they freeze the third and final phase of these changes pending a complete review?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government do not intend to freeze the third and final phase of the changes announced in Press Release No. 284/97. There has been a delay in the implementation of this as a result of the necessary road closures in Winston Churchill Avenue consequent on the beautification works being carried out; the road resurfacing at Fish Market Road, and the pavement which is being built in Secretary's Lane.

It was not thought appropriate to introduce changes in traffic flows at a time when motorists were being necessarily inconvenienced elsewhere. Once these projects are completed, the third phase of changes to traffic flows will be implemented.

Government do not understand why the Opposition Member feels that there is a need for a complete review. A careful and complete study of traffic flows in the area of the old town has been undertaken by properly qualified persons who have advised Government in this regard. Decisions were consequently taken by Government and they are being implemented. I believe that when all changes in traffic flows are in operation they will be for the benefit of the majority.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 62 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

All I can say is that I put it to the Government that the commonly held view is that it is going to be a disaster for traffic; that in some instances it is going to be dangerous for pedestrians and for motorists alike and that I think the Minister should go back to the drawing board and review it given that he said in the press release that before that, that these were changes that they would have to be monitored and that the Traffic Commission would be monitoring all of them. Well, I think, all right phase III has not been implemented but already there are problems existing with the phases that have been implemented and there does not seem to be a lot of monitoring or, if there is some monitoring, they do not take into account the real problems that are being encountered by motorists and pedestrians alike. I think it is a complete disaster and if the Minister wishes to ignore the remarks that I make and that people make and go ahead with it so be it but it is a complete disaster and I warn the Government that there are dire consequences to the moves that they are going to make.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Which of the existing changes to traffic flows which have been implemented does the hon Member regard to be dangerous to pedestrians and a disaster?

HON J C PEREZ:

A few of them of which I mentioned in my TV interview and in my press release, if the Chief Minister had bothered to check. I mentioned them in the press release and I mentioned them in the TV interview. I am not prepared to discuss detail by detail here with him the matter unless..... *[Interruption]* No, there are and I mentioned them in the press release and in the GBC interview unless, of course, he is prepared to have a whole review and I participate and then, yes.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What the hon Member does not do is that he does not distinguish, in his desire to create this atmosphere of chaos, between obvious inconvenience that motorists are presently being subjected to necessarily as a result of much needed road resurfacing programmes, as a result of much needed street embellishment and beautification programmes and he uses the traffic jams that are being caused for a limited period of time inevitably as a result of improvements being carried out to the public infrastructure and he confuses all of that with supposed problems premeditatedly brought about by the Government as a result of changes in traffic flows. Well, what are the changes in traffic flows that he believes the Government have introduced other than by the Police as diversions because of temporary needs of building projects here or building projects there? What are they? Because, frankly.....

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, can I answer questions or is he the one supposed to be answering questions from me?

MR SPEAKER:

No, you ask the questions and he answers them.

HON J C PEREZ:

I put it to the Chief Minister that I do not need to add to the chaos already created by the Government's own actions and that the third stage of it is going to prove that it is more chaotic than what even I think it is.

MR SPEAKER:

The Minister can have a final word if he wants.

NO. 63 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**MOT TEST - PRIVATE VEHICLES**

Have Government now taken a decision on whether to reduce the MOT test requirements for four year old private vehicles, from yearly to once every two years, which is the minimum standard provided for in the relevant EU Directive?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

A decision has now been taken in this regard. Testing will continue to be carried out every year, as is the case in the United Kingdom, and as was the case in Gibraltar previously in respect of vehicles which are more than 10 years old.

The EC sets out minimum requirements and it is up to the member state, and in this instance for the Gibraltar Government, to determine what the frequency of tests should be provided that it does not fall within the minimum standards set.

The basis on which it was decided that there should continue to be annual testing for vehicles is one of safety. Experts in the field advise that in order to maintain vehicle safety on our roads, vehicles which are over three years should be examined on an annual basis. In fact, I am informed that in the United Kingdom annual testing is carried out on vehicles which are three or more years old and not four. There is, however, no intention to reduce the test limit in Gibraltar to three years from the present four years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 63 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Then I take it that the introduction of the new measure is not as the Government announced it to be only to comply with EU regulations but that the Government actually want to apply this per se and they are actually going further than the EU stated?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

What we have done is consult the experts in this field and seek their advice. I am not an expert on road worthiness MOT test and if the experts that we have here in Gibraltar have advised that it should be done annually and therefore, on safety grounds, this is the decision the Government have taken.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that the last time when this was brought to the attention of the Government the answer that they gave was that they had acted on the advice that they had been given but that that did not mean they had to take that advice and that they were going to go back and reconsider it? They have had the advice all the time, it is not that the advice has been provided now. Is there, in fact, any evidence to suggest that there would be more road accidents if it was done every two years than if it was one, given that until now it has been done after the tenth year? There cannot possibly be any evidence because it has not been tested in Gibraltar.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Bill as originally tabled in the House was drafted with the input of Gibraltar's own officials. That is to say, it was Gibraltar's own officials who inserted into the Bill to transpose the directive the yearly requirement as opposed to the two year requirements. When Opposition Members raised in the House why we were doing this given that it was in excess of the minimal requirements in the directive, we said that we would look into this and reconsider it. When we did that we were very firmly advised by our own - the UK has got nothing to do with this - local motor vehicle senior officials that in their professional judgement one could not ensure the road safety of a motor vehicle on the basis of a test only every two years and that indeed the widespread practice across Europe supported that view because I think it is only Spain, certainly the vast majority of European Union countries including the UK but not obviously limited to the UK, have transposed this directive on an annual basis and not on a biennial basis. Certainly the position of the Government is that we do not pretend to be, as politicians, experts on technical matters and that if we are receiving advice from our own local officials on a matter of this nature, the logical thing for a prudent and responsible Government to do is, in the absence of technical advice to the contrary, to accept that advice and that is exactly what the Government have done. This is not a matter of Government policy. Government's policy is to transpose the directive; we are then told that in the interests of public safety that tests ought to be annual and certainly we, as a Government, are not in a position to quarrel with that advice especially when it seems to be advice which is shared by most other European Union countries. Therefore we do not feel, on the basis of the information available to us, that the Government would be justified - although of course we are able to do it if we made the decision - but we do not feel that it would be right, prudent or justified to overrule the technical advice and simply impose it as a matter of political policy. Therefore we have made the decision to leave it as it was originally presented.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Surely it is not a question of imposing. If it is the political responsibility of the Government to take a decision on whether to have a test every two years for a four year old vehicle or every year, they take the advice and then they take the responsibility for that decision. It is not a question of imposing it. Surely, there must be lots of occasions when in the exercise of their political judgement they decide to do something and that is not some heinous crime otherwise we do not need policy makers, we just need technicians who will simply direct what needs to be done and we all do it. Is it not the case that, in fact, if the directive had not been there we would not be moving to test after four years, we would be doing it after every 10 years as we have been doing until now? There is no evidence, is there? There has been no attempt to say, "Look, what would be the effect of the accident rate, since it is safety that we are talking about, if we had it every two years given that until now we have been doing it after 10 years of age of the vehicle?"

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Change is imposed by the directive and once the Government are looking at change we look at how everybody else has managed that change and the consensus view across the whole of the European Union, with three exceptions of which Spain is one, is that vehicles should be tested annually even though the minimum requirement imposed by the directive requires it only to be done every two and the Government have indeed made the decision that the hon Member says it is our responsibility and I have just spelt out what that decision has been.

NO. 64 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - POST-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many post-war flats were allocated in the month of December 1997 and how many of these were given to:

- (a) waiting list applicants
- (b) on medical grounds
- (c) used for decanting?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

During the month of December there were five post-war flats allocated. Of these, three were allocated to housing applicants; none was allocated on medical grounds and two were used for decanting purposes.

NO. 65 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - POST-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many post-war flats were allocated in the month of January 1998 and how many of these were given to:

- (a) waiting list applicants
- (b) on medical grounds
- (c) used for decanting?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

During the month of January there was a total of seven post-war flats allocated. Of these, five were allocated to housing applicants; one was allocated on medical grounds and one was used for decanting purposes.

NO. 66 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**HOUSING - POST-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many post-war flats were allocated in the month of February 1998 and how many of these were given to:

- (a) waiting list applicants
- (b) on medical grounds
- (c) used for decanting?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

During the month of February two post-war flats were allocated. One was allocated on medical grounds and one was allocated as a pensioner exchange.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 66 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

When the Minister said a pensioner exchange, does he mean that the pensioner actually released another Government accommodation because if it was an exchange it must be from one place to another?

HON H CORBY:

He exchanged a bigger flat because this was at 20 Alameda House which was a ground floor flat.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Therefore obviously I suppose that the Government accommodation that was released by the pensioner must either have been allocated to somebody or still is with the Housing Allocation Committee to be allocated.

HON H CORBY:

It is with the Housing Allocation Committee to allocate for another family in the housing list.

NO. 67 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - PRE-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many pre-war flats were allocated in the month of December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

A total of four pre-war flats were allocated in December 1997.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 67 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I presume that they were all allocated to social cases?

HON H CORBY:

That is correct.



NO. 68 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - PRE-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many pre-war flats were allocated in the month of January 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Two pre-war flats were allocated in January 1998.

NO. 69 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - PRE-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many pre-war flats were allocated in the month of February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

In February 1998 three pre-war flats were allocated.

NO. 70 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**HOUSING - POST-WAR FLATS VACANT**

Can Government state how many post-war flats are vacant at present stating their area location and by room composition?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There are presently 32 post-war flats that are vacant. These can be broken down into areas as follows:

South District:	5 x 2RKB 1 x 3RKB 1 x 4RKB
Varyl Begg Estate:	3 x Bedsits 1 x 2RKB
Laguna/Glaciis:	1 x 2RKB 6 x 3RKB 3 x 4RKB 1 x 4/5RKB
Town Area:	1 x Bedsit 1 x 4RKB
Upper Town Area:	3 x Bedsit 2 x 2RKB 1 x 3RKB 1 x 4RKB 1 x 4/5RKB

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 70 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The Minister said that there are three bedsits in the Upper Town area. Normally people on the waiting list for bedsits are elderly people and therefore those bedsits in the Upper Town area would not be suitable. Would Government consider those for social cases especially those people who might be living in the hostel?

HON H CORBY:

At the moment what happens with social cases is that we use pre-war flats. There is also availability for other people for bedsits who are not elderly persons but who are also on the waiting list as applicants and those can be used as well for people on the waiting list who want a bedsit.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I understand that that would be the case. What I am suggesting, if the Minister would take into consideration, normally people in 1RKB or bedsitters are either elderly people or people who have recently joined the waiting list which might be before the two years waiting time. In between that if there is nobody on the waiting list who might require that, rather than having them vacant, would it not be better to use them for people in those categories?

HON H CORBY:

If there is nobody on the waiting list we will consider that as well.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

How many of the 33 post-war flats, which the Minister said were vacant in answer to Question No. 398 of 1997, are still waiting to be allocated?

HON H CORBY:

No, this is the position as it is at the moment. There are seven houses which are now for allocation and the 25 remaining are being refurbished by Buildings and Works.

NO. 71 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**HOUSING - APPLICATIONS**

Can Government state how many housing applicants at present are recommended as medical cases broken down into the categories 'A', 'B' and 'C' and how many of these are pensioners?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Presently there are six housing applicants who are medically categorised 'A' of which three are pensioners; four medically categorised 'B' of which one is a pensioner and 12 are medically categorised 'C' of which six are pensioners.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 71 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

On the question of pensioners, has the Minister just given people who have applied for housing or are those also people who are asking for an exchange?

HON H CORBY:

No, these are applicants at present on the housing list.

NO. 72 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**HOUSING - PENSIONERS**

Can Government state how many Government tenants who are pensioners have shown an interest in releasing Government accommodation and moving into smaller accommodation or from their area of residence?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

At present there are 234 Government tenants who are pensioners and are interested in moving from their area of residence. Of these, there are 157 who are interested in moving into smaller accommodation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 72 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Am I correct in assuming that out of the 234, even though they are pensioners, that their room requirements is greater than obviously a 2RKB because families are living with them?

HON H CORBY:

Of the 234, 157 want to move into smaller flats and the others are like for like.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Maybe I have not explained myself properly. What I am saying is, the remainder of the 234 from the 157 is that even though they are pensioners they still require the same room composition of what they are prepared to release to move out because their family composition is still bigger than just the husband and wife, is that correct?

HON H CORBY:

Yes, correct.

NO. 73 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**PRISON - NUMBER OF INMATES**

What is the current number of Gibraltarians and other different nationalities held in prison?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The current number of inmates in custody by nationality are as follows:-

British (local)	17
British (UK)	2
Spanish	9
Moroccan	2
French	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>31</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 73 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

What is the situation as regards those Russians who were held in prison because of the fact that they were illegal immigrants and they were allowed to stay?

HON H CORBY:

The answer to that is the same as given by the Chief Minister last time the hon Member asked the question. They are on a renewable monthly residence permit by Governor's permission.

HON R MOR:

So what the Government are saying is that they are still here in Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is no change. We can have this debate every time there is a Question Time if the hon Member likes. The position is that the British Government have ruled that they cannot be deported because they face political persecution or whatever, back in that part of Georgia, there is a small enclave in Georgia from where they come which is subject to some political - I cannot recall the name of it precisely - and the British Government are neither willing to deport nor indeed to accept them into the UK so they are just physically here. We do not have either the legal or the practical means to remove them from the jurisdiction, they are just here in fact and as they are here, the Government have allowed them to seek employment if they can find it. I do not think they have found any but the position that the Government have taken is that if these people are in Gibraltar "lawfully" in the sense that the law of Gibraltar is not capable of removing them, then it is not, on humanitarian basis, proper that we should neither move to remove them nor allow them to earn a livelihood here and that is the position. I fully expect that that will remain the position indefinitely. I do not expect change from one question time to another, there is nothing that we can do about it.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

If they are here, and I accept the explanation that has been given, out of curiosity, how do they survive economically, et cetera? Is there any help given to them?

HON H CORBY:

From what I understand, they go to Nazareth House for meals, et cetera and at times they are taken in by Gibraltar families.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

So it depends on the charity of people?

HON H CORBY:

They receive no benefits from Government.



NO. 74 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**PRISON - NUMBER OF INMATES - 1997**

Can Government state what is the total number of Gibraltarians and other different nationalities who served prison sentences during 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

In respect to the above please note that a total of 230 inmates were received into custody during 1997 of different nationalities as follows:-

British (local)	48
British (UK)	33
Spanish	70
Moroccan	73
Belgian	3
Indian	1
Italian	1
German	1

NO. 75 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - NUMBER OF INSURANCE CARDS**

How many of the social insurance cards in issue as at 31 December 1996, were renewed in 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Of the 12,500 social insurance cards in issue as at 31 December 1996, 12,101 were renewed in 1997.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 75 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

Are the Government taking any measures to ensure that the remaining 399 are renewed?

HON H CORBY:

Yes, as the hon Member knows, the procedure is that a letter is sent to the employer and then a second letter is sent to the employer. Then pending cases are referred to the inspectorate which we have at the Central Arrears Unit.

NO. 76 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - NUMBER OF INSURANCE CARDS**

How many social insurance cards were in issue as at 31 December 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The information requested is not available at this moment in time. Figures will be available once the posting of the 1997 cards has been completed. We will then be in a position to establish how many insurance cards were in issue.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 76 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say how many have been renewed in January 1998 where there have been a number of advertisements reminding employers that they needed to renew their cards? Has he got a figure for that?

HON H CORBY:

No, I have not got a figure for that but I will tell the hon Member how it is done. The cards are placed in alphabetical order and we wait for the bulk of the cards to come in so that they do not have to be put in alphabetical order again. They come in and we take it as at the end of February which is when most of the cards have come in and then what we do is we post them manually and we arrive at a figure roughly in June or July. That work has to be done in overtime because the staff is working in their normal jobs all day. Then when everything is posted we look at the ledger and we know how many cards are still to come and then we start the process of sending letters, et cetera.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact at this point in time the Government do not know how many have already renewed the 1997 card in 1998?

HON H CORBY:

No, we will know this very shortly. Now at the end of February, we are starting now to do it in March and posting them so we will know and I will give the figure to the hon Member.

NO. 77 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - NUMBER OF INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards issued in 1997 to persons not previously in employment and how many were issued to:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) non-Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There were 1,238 insurance cards issued to persons not previously in employment during 1997 broken up as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians - 361
- (b) non-Gibraltarians - 877

I would like to refer to my previous answer to Question No. 407 of 1997 where I stated that there were 109 social insurance cards issued to Gibraltarians not previously in employment during the period 3 October 1997 to December 1997. It has now come to light that due to an oversight the figure quoted at the time was incorrect. The correct figure is 63 instead of 109 for Gibraltarians and 177 instead of 131 for non-Gibraltarians. I will tell the House why this happened, because some British non-Gibraltarian nationals were regarded as Gibraltarians when compiling the information. Since then there has only been one social insurance card for 1997 that has been issued to a non-Gibraltarian.

NO. 78 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - NUMBER OF INSURANCE CARDS**

How many of the social insurance cards in issue as at 31 December 1997, have been renewed to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question No. 79 of 1998.

NO. 79 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - NUMBER OF INSURANCE CARDS**

Of the total number of social insurance cards in issue as at 31 December 1997, how many were issued to:

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) non-Gibraltarians?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

As I explained in my answer to Question No. 76 of 1998, the information requested, ie the total of the cards in issue as at 31 December 1997, is not available at this moment in time.

However, I can confirm that to date 10,253 insurance cards for 1997 have been returned. This is broken up as follows:

Gibraltarians and British	8,884
Other nationalities	1,369

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 78 AND 79 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

In a previous answer to a similar question the Minister did qualify the reply by saying it was difficult to distinguish between Gibraltarians and British. May I suggest that since now the new identity card is in issue it is quite simple to identify the Gibraltarians individually and perhaps the information could be made available.

HON H CORBY:

It is being considered but my preference is to do away with the manual posting and convert it into a computer system. By that I mean that instead of having it by employees we have it by employers and it is much easier to check an employer than an employee on that basis. I would like to have that computerised because it is done manually now and to come up to a figure we have got to look through 15,000 insurance cards.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Perhaps the Minister can clarify something for me. He has just told us that, in fact, 10,253 cards for 1997 were returned to date but he was not able to tell us how many had been renewed when I asked him earlier which is really the same question as Question No. 78 and he said we had to wait until June to have the information. Is it that the fact that they have been returned does not necessarily mean that the 10,253 are still working in 1998 and have been issued with new cards or is there some other explanation?

HON H CORBY:

No, that is the explanation.

NO. 80 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the number of pensions being paid or with entitlement to payment in December 1997, January and February 1998, from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund, giving a breakdown of pre-1969 Spanish pensions and locally funded pensions, showing the number of Gibraltarians/UK nationals, Moroccans and other nationalities?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The following pensioners were in receipt of payments from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund in December 1997, January and February 1998, as follows:-

	<u>December</u>	<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>
Pre-1969 Spanish pensioners	8742	8787	8785
British pensions (Gib & UK nationals)	4669	4642	4651
Moroccan pensioners	850	864	874
Other nationalities	247	246	248

NO. 81 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - INCOMPLETE PAYMENT RECORDS**

Can Government state whether any applicants who have given notice of wishing to exercise the election to pay pre-1975 arrears of social insurance contributions have been prevented from doing so because they were not required to be insured on the 6 January 1975?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Department of Social Services has received 77 applications of persons who were not liable to pay the pre-1995 arrears of social insurance contributions as they were not required to be insured on 6 January 1975.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 81 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

What precisely is the reason they are being denied from paying these arrears?

HON H CORBY:

The reason is that the 77 persons who have now applied and not eligible to pay the pre-1975 arrears were also in the same position when the opportunity arose to pay arrears in 1975 as well. The object of the recent amendment to the Social Security (Closed Long-Term Benefits and Scheme) Ordinance was to provide a further opportunity for payment of arrears to those persons who had incomplete contribution records when they became compulsorily insured on 6 January 1975 either because they were previously self-employed or earning more than £500 per annum. It also provided further opportunities for those persons who were previously exempted because of the £500 earning ceiling but opted not to re-enter the insurance on a voluntary basis on 2 July 1973. These provisions of the arrears amendments only apply to those who are eligible to pay arrears on 6 January 1975 or 2 July 1973 but did not elect to do so at the time.

HON R MOR:

What is the situation as regards somebody who had been denied access to the scheme because of what the Minister has mentioned, the earnings limit and the fact that they were self-employed? What is the situation of someone who had not paid because he could not pay; on 6 January he just did not happen to be compelled to be insured but subsequently he came into employment and with effect from 6 January 1975 he was compulsorily required to contribute, so what is the position of someone in that situation?



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There are several points that need to be made in response to this. The first is that there has to be a cut-off date at some stage and the observation the hon Member is making would be true of people on the wrong side of the cut-off date whatever one makes the cut-off date. All that the Government have done is to reopen the same opportunity as has historically been open - I do not recall if it is two or three times, I think this is the third opportunity - using the same cut-off date of 1 January 1975 and the same criteria. I think both were in the days of the AACR Government. The scheme was designed with the chosen cut-off date of 1 January 1975, not an irrelevant cut-off date as the hon Member will be aware because there was a desire to give people, in particular circumstances, to make up their contribution arrears. Not everybody who was not in receipt of a full pension. In other words, it had to be for two reasons: either because prior to that date they had not been compulsorily insurable or because they were disqualified from participating in this scheme. It is not an opportunity for people who for one reason or another were defaulters; this is for people who had a choice and did not take it up. The hon Member will be aware that it was necessary to choose a criteria which would not extend to people whom the measure was not intended to benefit in terms of connection with Gibraltar. All that the Government have done is implement that policy which is a third opportunity for people in that category. There are many other people, as there are indeed in all countries in Europe, who do not receive a full pension for one reason or another. The cut-off date was that one had to satisfy those two conditions and in addition it had to relate to a period prior to 1 January 1975 and that is the policy decision that the Government have made, in effect simply to repeat the offer that had existed twice before. The Government have not considered extending the category of beneficiaries from such a concession beyond people who have had the opportunity twice before, that is the reason for it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It would seem that the date of 6 January 1975 must be because that was the first contribution week in 1975 in which insurance became compulsory. But, of course, if somebody was unemployed in that particular week they were not required to be covered. Do we have a situation where somebody who might have been working in 1974 could not come in because of the £500 limit and then in 1975 could not come in because they were not required to pay insurance in that particular first week but they might have been required to pay insurance later on in the year and were not able to do so because of the choice of that particular date. Is that set of circumstances a possibility because if that is the case then it seems to us that that, which might have been something that was overlooked, if we simply repeat the way it was done before it will continue to be overlooked and we are not really widening the net, opening it to other categories, allowing people who have no connection with Gibraltar. We are just wondering whether, in fact, the choice of a specific day in 1975, the first week as opposed to the second week, is not just where one draws the line but a situation where one could actually have been ineligible before and after that particular day. It may not be the case that any of the people who have been denied fall into that category but we would have thought if that is the case that is something that is worth looking into.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Such people would have had, I suppose, a historical opportunity to pay their contributions voluntarily even if they were out of work but it is true they would not have been required to contribute if they happened to be out of work in that week. I do not know if there is anybody in such category but certainly if it has been overlooked, it has been overlooked on three occasions and it has been overlooked by us all in this House when we were debating the Bill on both sides of the House. Having said that, I do not know if there are people in such a category. The point that the hon Member makes would apply equally whenever one applies a cut-off date, this is the first point that I made in my last intervention. If the cut-off date had been the 6 June 1975, wherever one draws the line there are people who only just miss out for one circumstance or another. It may well be that there are people who have been prejudiced by fortuitous personal circumstances affecting them at that particular time and that they simply fall outside the net. That may be the case but certainly the Government did this in the knowledge that this was a cut-off date and that there were people who might be left just on the other side of it just as I am sure that those who opened the opportunities - I think the opportunities were opened in 1983 - also must have known that that was the consequence of what they were doing. Given the sensitivity of all matters relating to interfering with pensions vis-à-vis the Spanish pensions case, this Government took the view that the safest way to proceed was to simply repeat an exercise which had already been tested. In other words, that no one could accuse us of doing something brand new which might somehow be thought to have been targeted or aimed or some act of discrimination. We took the view that if we kept to the same set of circumstances and if we kept to the same cut-off date and we used exactly the same legislative provision - hon Members will recall when we debated the legislation that it an exact replica of that section and the old Ordinance that facilitated the previous windows of opportunity - that no one, either in Brussels, in Madrid or in London could accuse us of doing anything which was provocative in relation to any wider issue affecting pensions. We could simply say, "This has been done twice before, it has never been challenged, London has never said, "If you offer this to this you have got to offer that to the other"." We just took the view that it was the safest way to proceed at that moment in time.

NO. 82 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 31 December 1997, 31 January and 28 February 1998, showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The revised forecast balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 30 November 1997 was £869,000.

Receipts from the UK for the month of December 1997, January 1998 and February 1998 were £1.1 million, £500,000 and £900,000 respectively from which the expenditure of Spanish pensions totalled £1,432,000, £349,000 and £480,000 during December 1997, January 1998 and February 1998 respectively.

Payments of local pensions totalled £877,000, £720,000 and £825,000 for the months of December 1997, January 1998 and February 1998 respectively.

Other receipts of the Fund include transfers from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund totally £704,000 and £769,000 for January 1998 and February 1998 respectively to offset the shortfall of the local pensions element. Arrears of contributions collected during December 1997, January 1998 and February 1998 were £1,000, £6,000 and £54,000. Interest earned during these months were £4,000, £3,000 and £2,000.

The tentative balance of the Fund in respect of the local pensions as at 31 December 1997, 31 January 1998 and 28 February 1998 was £8,000, deficit £704,000 and deficit £1,473,000. These shortfalls have been covered by transfers from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund.

NO. 83 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**MOROCCAN HOSTEL - BUENA VISTA STONE BLOCK**

What has been the cost to Government of the works to the Buena Vista Stone Block to provide the Moroccan Hostel and when will this hostel be completed and in respect of how many people will it provide accommodation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The original contract for the works to the Buena Vista Stone Block was £218,833. However, it has now been amended to include variations to the initial requirements, inclusive of the electrical installations, for which tenders were invited since it was not possible to undertake such works in-house. Consequently, the revised contract sum is now projected at £331,000. This sum excludes builders work in connection with the electrical installation as well as the cost of the furniture.

It is envisaged the works will be completed by the end of April 1998. The project has been designed to accommodate 250 workers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 83 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

I may have been given a figure but what is the estimated global cost?

HON H CORBY:

The sum excludes the builders works in connection with the electrical installations as well as the cost of the furniture. *[HON CHIEF MINISTER: But that is the global sum.]*

HON J L BALDACHINO:

When the Minister said that 250 workers will be accommodated in the Stone Block, will it be four to a room or will it be more like a barrack room?

HON H CORBY:

They are cubicles with bunk beds, so two will sleep in each cubicle.

HON A J ISOLA:

May I ask for the current population at the Casemates Hostel?

HON H CORBY:

I have got a figure roughly of 254.

HON A J ISOLA:

Is it intended to relocate these there?

HON H CORBY:

As the hon Member may be aware the Minister for Education is dealing with the Moroccan repatriation and that might at least decrease the number of people. Then we can relocate other people from the Devil's Tower Hostel.

NO. 84 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**PRISON - RELOCATION**

Will Government identify what sites they have looked into, and at what dates, as possible alternative sites for Her Majesty's Prison?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Government have recently identified Dutch Magazine, opposite Police Headquarters, New Mole House, as a possible alternative site. However, currently this is being used by the MOD as a laundry.

The following sites were previously identified by previous Governments as possible alternative locations for the prison:-

1970 - Caroline's Magazine; 1971 - Tovey's Battery, Upper Rock; 1979 - Governor's Cottage Camp; 1985 - Isolation Hospital, Poca Roca; 1994 - Buena Vista Barracks Stone Block.

We think this site, if it is vacated, is suitable. It is just opposite the Police Station but we would have to make our sums and see if the relocation falls into the ambit of our expenses.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 84 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Given the fact that in answer to Question No. 148 of 1996 we were given this assurance that the Government were looking into a variety of places and not only the Stone Block, are we to interpret this as a firm commitment... [HON H CORBY: No.] May I finish the question, a firm commitment on the part of the Government to pursue this matter seriously and not just simply walk about visiting one place and another given the fact that I should imagine that there is agreement on one point in this and that is that we would all like to see released the heritage potential of the Moorish Castle and perhaps find a more effective and practical site for the prison?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government have a serious desire to relocate the prison and I think that that has been an aspiration of successive Gibraltar Governments for probably many decades. It is on our list, it is desirable not just from the point of view of heritage but I think perhaps more importantly in humane terms from the fact that the prison is simply not an adequate environment even for the retention of prisoners or indeed working conditions in certain respects for the Prison Officers. It lacks adequate segregated handling facilities for people in custody for immigration reasons. The whole thing has outlived its useful life and the Government certainly has it earmarked as a project right for doing. However, there are problems not just of finding a suitable alternative vacant but indeed of priority allocation of resources and although the reprovioning of the prison is quite high up the list of things that the Government would like to do, there are one or two projects which are higher up the list and which are likely to be done before we give that project any consideration. That is for a future term.

NO. 85 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**DEVIL'S TOWER HOSTEL - EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state how much of the £160,000 budgeted for the Devil's Tower Hostel has been spent to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The actual expenditure up to the end of February 1998 is £83,262.35.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 85 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is any of this spent on wages or is this for materials given that Community Projects has got a separate budget and looks after the hostel, is any of this amount of money for wages or is it just for materials?

HON H CORBY:

The wages side of Community Projects is not included in this.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So none of it is for wages?

HON H CORBY:

No.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is any of the money that has been spent to date on Devil's Tower Hostel in making preparation for the demolition of part of it?

HON H CORBY:

No, none.

NO. 86 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**CASEMATES HOSTEL - EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state how much of the £160,000 budgeted for the Casemates Hostel has been spent to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The actual expenditure up to the end of February 1998 is £163,912.96.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 86 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

Does the same situation apply that none of this money spent on the Hostel has gone towards the payment of wages?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes.

HON R MOR:

So he can confirm that no element of wages is in that amount?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, from my knowledge of the GCP budget which is administered by my department, I understand that the wages and overtime as such has been taken from my budget.



NO. 87 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**EDUCATION - CO-OPERATION WITH MANCOMUNIDAD DE MUNICIPIOS**

Will Government state in respect of the Working Commission established between Government and the Mancomunidad de Municipios (with a view to inter-regional co-operation in matters related to education) how many times it has met formally since April 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Eight working meetings have been held since April 1997 under the auspices of the Commission established between the Gibraltar Government and the Mancomunidad de Municipios with a view to inter-regional co-operation in matters of education, culture and youth.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 87 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Could the Minister give us some idea as to the level of the representatives involved in these formal meetings or were they relegated lower down the scale?

HON DR B A LINARES:

It was decided at one of the initial meetings of the Working Commission, in December 1996, that the most effective manner to achieve the objective, that is, close practical co-operation between ourselves and the municipios would be for the relevant departments in Gibraltar to link up with the corresponding departments, in particular municipios. As a result a number of joint working sessions have been held, attended in some cases either by myself or one of our departmental heads together with Mayors and/or officers from La Linea, Algeciras, San Roque and Los Barrios and numerous activities and debates have resulted from these meetings.

HON J J GABAY:

Could the Minister substantiate or highlight important activities or events that have occurred? After all, this was to commit to be serious regional co-operation not just simply visits from one side to the other. Can he actually quote anything of real substance that might really form the basis of the claims initially made for this co-operation?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, as I said, there are numerous activities and events which have been organised as a result of these planning sessions. I can give examples; in the question that follows actually I will be giving specific cases of inter-regional co-operation at an educational level, mainly concerning school children but in other spheres in the area of culture, for instance, local painters have taken part in a competition to design a logo for a sports tournament that was held in Algeciras and the Director of Culture was one of the judges in the adjudication which took place recently in Algeciras. Spanish artists have taken part more than ever before in the Annual Open Art Exhibition and indeed one of them actually won the first prize. A number of Spanish sculptors from the region took part in a recent exhibition of sculptures organised at the John Mackintosh Hall and aptly called "Encuentros". We are working with the Municipio of La Linea to hold a joint exhibition in La Linea and Gibraltar of works of Gustavo Bacarisas. The Malaga Symphony Orchestra has recently played in a concert at the Holy Trinity Cathedral organised by the Calpe Singers. A local dance group has taken part in a popular dance festival in La Linea. A local young pianist has played in school concerts in La Linea. As I say, there are other activities involving school children which I will refer to in the context of the following question.

HON J J GABAY:

Would the Minister not agree, when one looks at the statements that he has made, that there is really nothing of substance in it? Absolutely nothing of substance other than a few exhibitions, a few walks in and a few walks out, but nothing really of substance where one would feel that there is a growing bond and understanding between the two sides.

HON DR B A LINARES:

Whether it is a matter of substance is a value judgement. I have given the facts, he is entitled to his own opinion and I am entitled to mine.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Did the Minister say, by what he has just read out, that none of these things would have happened unless there had been co-operation in those areas?

HON DR B A LINARES:

That is a very hypothetical question but I do certainly know that they have happened and they have happened within a spirit of understanding and co-operation between the relevant authorities.

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I ask, were these events that the Minister has recited actually organised by this joint working committee?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I thought I explained in the first part of the supplementary that the working commission actually devolved responsibility for the organisation to this at grass roots level involving the heads of department and not by the working commission globally but under the auspices of the - blessing is perhaps the wrong word - working commission of the mancomunidad.

HON J J GABAY:

May I come back to the point that whatever has been said on the subject and whatever the indirect interruptions of the Chief Minister, there is nothing of substance and I come back to the main point that in answer to a previous question we said that this would be a failure and we do consider it a failure but perhaps even moreso dangerous in the sense that there was a concessionary impression given in the enthusiasm with which it was presented at the highest of levels here which then does not surprise us when the Chief Minister is taken for an Alcalde of the other side. This is the reality of it, it creates certain expectations. On the one hand we are talking about creating an understanding and all we see is the most adverse reaction we have seen for a long time. I think it is a fair question to ask the Chief Minister whether it is not time to stop blowing hot and cold over these matters and to be realistic or is the fiasco now with the helicopter and the police launch also part of this wonderful inter-relationship.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I rule you out of order. That has nothing to do with the original question. If you want to answer you can.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

When the hon Member stood up to ask his question and his first supplementary I foolishly gave him credit for being genuine and sincere in his concern for culture and heritage which he likes to boast about. It is now self-evident that the hon Member was not concerned that the list of co-operative events that the Minister for Education recited, his concern was not that they were not big enough, his concern was that they had happened at all. Because it is now self-evident that he does not want, indeed he resents, indeed he considers it to be an act of political weakness on the part of Gibraltar to seek co-operation with the Spaniards even on matters of educational, cultural and sporting links. I believe that the hon Member's views on that matter are bigoted. He is entitled to them, good luck to him, let him pursue policies in support of those views, I am delighted that I head a Government with very different views on such matters to his.

HON J J GABAY:

May I.....

MR SPEAKER:

You can ask a supplementary.

HON J J GABAY:

It would be a very sad day when I have to explain my cultural credentials to the likes of the Chief Minister particularly where Spanish culture is concerned. The point I want to make is this, that of course I believe in true understanding based on a respect for Spanish culture, what I am protesting about is skimming on the surface and hypocritically, in a way, trying to create that there is an inter-regional meaningful cultural dimension because we hold one exhibition or a little play there. This is the point I am making. If it were genuine, of course I would have respect for it. It has nothing to do with bigotry, the bigotry is well practised by other Members in this House.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Is he saying that he regrets that there have only been three concerts, he would have liked there to have been 10 because that would be a genuine concern. What he is saying is that as there have only been three this shows that it is all a facade, it is all a farce, well three is better than none and 10 is better than three. The policy of regional co-operation was not invented by me, it was not me who received, indeed I have never received a box of oranges as a Christmas present from any Mayor unlike his leader when he was in Government. It was not I who formed the Regional Economic Council, it was not I who invented the practice of going for long goosey lunches in Marisquerias in Spain, it was the Leader of the Opposition. It is true that he was even less successful than I was in engaging the people across the border in that degree of co-operation which presumably he then thought worthwhile at the time. The fact that we have been slightly more successful than he has is not a reason for attacking the desirability of the policy because otherwise he would have to explain why they thought to pursue it as well albeit that they had even less success.

HON J J GABAY:

As usual has not the Chief Minister misunderstood the whole nature of the discussion and the reason for the question. We are not arguing here as to who is a better representative or who is keener on a cultural relationship. What we are talking about, would he not agree, is the significance of the initiatives taken and are we not being subjected to the idea that major initiatives are being taken when the whole thing is really a farce?

MR SPEAKER:

I think we have had enough of this question.

HON A J ISOLA:

I would like to ask a question to the Minister. Could I just ask when the last meeting was held?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Very recently I held a meeting in the Municipio of La Linea in connection with a planned joint concert of school children in Gibraltar with the students of the Conservatorio de Musica Muñoz Molleda in La Linea, I think it was a couple of weeks ago but I have not got the exact date. Actually I attended a reception in the municipio but not in a marisqueria.

NO. 88 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - CALENDARIO OF EDUCATIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Given the Calendario of Educational Events and Activities provided by the Ayuntamiento of La Linea to the Department of Education, will the Minister for Education state what particular schools have taken up the offer and the number and nature of the activities participated in since April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Calendario of the Ayuntamiento of La Linea as such has not found much of a response in our local schools. Our local pupils, however, regularly visit for study purposes the Museo de Cruz Herrera in La Linea and a local young pianist has played in a school concert in La Linea. Outside the ambit of the Calendario the following schools have organised trips, events and activities for social, leisure and study purposes in the neighbouring region and in most cases these activities are supported and sponsored by the municipal authorities.

Bayside School

Geography 'A' level trip to Jerez; Basketball matches in Puerto de Santa Maria; Religious Education Saturday Trip to Ronda to the Convent; University Awareness Seminar in the International Aloha College in Marbella; Geography Field Trip in Jimena.

Westside School

Volleyball Tournament in Puerto de Santa Maria; Geography 'A' level trip to Jerez; Biology 'A' level field trip in Refugio del Picacho in Alcala de los Gazules; UK University Information Tour in the International College of Marbella.

Bishop Fitzgerald Middle School

A skiing trip to Sierra Nevada.

St Anne's Middle School

A trip for outdoor pursuits in Aventerra, Grazalema.

We are presently planning environmental study courses in the Natural Park of Los Alcornocales and this is being sponsored by the Municipio de los Barrios.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 88 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Yet again we have been treated to a long list really of the usual trips and excursions that have always..... [*HON DR B A LINARES: That is what you have asked.*] Yes but I never thought that I was going to get a list of trips and excursions for true educational contact which was really what was meant, I think, to be the result of this commission. Otherwise this should have been passed on to the Ministry of Tourism rather than be kept under the banner of the Ministry of Education. So I would simply add this in the form of a question, that is it yet again not a symptom of this Government's misplaced enthusiasm when they took office and the feeling that there would be all these meaningful exchanges and none of them have materialised and therefore is this not a quixotic failure and an inability on the part of the Minister to distinguish between dragons and windmills?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Let me be allowed to say something. I always try to answer the hon Member's questions comprehensively, objectively, with as much information as possible and certainly with the utmost respect to his right to question and to him personally as a professional colleague and as a personal friend. I have to confess, however, that I am rather disappointed not always to enjoy the same type of response from him. He seems to be inclined to make a rhetorical meal out of every issue and if you would excuse, Mr Speaker, a deliberate pun, I am not given to after dinner speeches.

HON J J GABAY:

May I add.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, you may ask a supplementary question.

HON J J GABAY:

Is it not true that he is not given to after dinner speeches, he makes the speeches all day long.

NO. 89 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**EDUCATION - WORKING GROUP - SCHOOL HOURS**

Have the Government now received proposals from the Working Group set up to study the present pattern of school hours and, if so, what changes, if any, have been proposed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Government have not yet received proposals from the Working Group set up to study the present pattern of school hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 89 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Since in a previous answer we were told that the Government had already held discussions with the Women's Association, the Gibraltar Teachers' Association and were undertaking a survey on parental views which has been carried out by the GTA and they were also carrying out another survey to test the views of teachers and that they had also set up a Working Group of the Women's Association, the GTA, the Parent's Associations and Traffic Commission, is it not a pertinent question to ask what views have been coming his way and what the Government policy is?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Government's policy is to obtain definite proposals from the Working Group. The Working Group has met twice but they are not yet ready to issue definite proposals in an advisory capacity to Government. I have to wait for that and I am afraid he will have to wait for that as well.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

When is it envisaged that the Government will be receiving those proposals?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government could not possibly know that. The Minister has just said that he is awaiting proposals, when we receive them we will have them and as soon as we have them we will be in a position to answer the hon Member's question based on proposals. If the hon Member's question had asked what the Government's policy on the matter was, that would be a different debate but the question relates to the proposals and whether we have received them.

NO. 90 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - INCE'S HALL**

Will Government state how much of the £121,000 provided in the approved estimates of expenditure for improvements to Ince's Hall has been spent to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

£80,000 were budgeted for repairs to the roof of Ince's Hall. Of this £35,000 have already been spent on materials for these works which arrived from UK early this month. Work will start on the roof next week now that the rainy season is hopefully over.

£40,000 was also budgeted for a new fire curtain. This was a requirement from the Fire Prevention Department of the City Fire Brigade. Quotations were invited from specialist firms in UK during 1997 and the successful firm, Harkness Hall Ltd, arranged for their chief technician to visit Gibraltar in December last year for an on-site inspection.

This expert has submitted now a detailed report of works required on the stage for the installation of the fire curtain and works will start this summer after the May Festival when no further bookings for the use of the Hall have been made.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 90 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I am grateful for that information. I know that the scaffolding is up and that the roof is being repaired and so on and that attention will be given subsequently to the inside in terms, particularly of the lighting and also safety. In planning ahead, would the Minister for Education consider the possibility of employing a full-time caretaker? In discussing it with those concerned they feel that that would be something really worthwhile if we are to keep and maintain a certain standard after a degree of expenditure there.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I too have obtained that advice from regular users of the Hall and the Government will be considering that possibility.



NO. 91 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - STUDENT TUITION FEES**

Will Government now give a commitment that local students will not be charged undergraduate tuition fees irrespective of what is done in the UK?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

It has always been the policy of the Government that tuition fees would not be payable by the students. What has been in issue is the extent to which the new UK Rules were applicable to our students and indeed the need to establish what the UK Rules definitely are. All this has been largely clarified. Such fees as may be payable by our students in the UK will, in accordance with our policy as stated above, be paid by the Gibraltar Government.

NO. 92 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**EDUCATION - NEWLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS ON SUPPLY WORK**

Will the Minister for Education state in respect of the seven newly qualified teachers on supply work, whether they are employed for full terms and at what cost?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

All the seven newly qualified teachers have been engaged on a fixed long-term basis throughout the current academic year. Five in full-time and two in part-time employment. The cost of this in-built supply provision in our schools up to the end of February has been £41,670.63.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 92 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

There is one preoccupation in this respect and that is, there is obviously an element of anxiety in the newly qualified teachers on supply work since, as the Minister said in a previous answer, there is no guarantee of employment. May I suggest there should be a certain degree of pre-planning so that at least they could be given some fairly accurate forecast of the possibilities of employment at a future date even if there is no guarantee; a proper study of the teachers that will be leaving and retiring and the openings that might be available; in a small community like ours we would be able to give some fairly good idea as to what they can expect if only to allay their worries and wonder whether they will be able to stay in Gibraltar or have to emigrate. Might that not be a good idea?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Of course it is a good idea and I can assure the hon Member that these teachers have ready access to our offices and advisers in the Education Department where they hold regular meetings and interviews in which the prospects and the definite patterns and employment opportunities are put before them regularly. But of course it is a good idea and we shall continue to perhaps even improve that provision.

NO. 93 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - SUPPLY TEACHERS**

Will the Minister for Education state in respect of the 23 retired teachers on the supply list, how many have been called on to do supply work during this financial year, for how long on each occasion and what has been the total cost of this supply operation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

All the 23 retired teachers on the supply list were called at some time or another to do some supply cover work on a temporary basis and as the need arose during this financial year. This presents an extensive and complex database which I have here available and which I am prepared to provide for the Opposition Member as it would present some difficulty and take considerable time to read out in this House.

The total cost of this supply cover provision during this financial year up to the end of February was £147,485.92.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 93 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Yes, that would be very helpful. The only supplementary question I would like to ask is, for example, when we compare the supply work done by the retired teachers as contrasted with the newly qualified teachers, more or less what percentage in fact of supply work has been done by one side in comparison to the other even if it is a rough estimate, to get some idea?

HON DR B A LINARES:

It is difficult for me to say that offhand.

NO. 94 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**EDUCATION - MANDATORY SCHOLARSHIPS**

Will the Government state what is the expected total cost of mandatory scholarships awarded this year, the number of such scholarships awarded and how many of them were for a full grant without parental contribution?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

One hundred and fifty-nine mandatory scholarships were awarded this year at a total cost for the current academic year of £506,102.79; 33 of these received full grant.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 94 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Could the Minister give some idea, for example, by what number the number 33 of those receiving full grants, by what number it might grow if we consider that some parents may be having a token sort of grant, for example, would it be possible if not now perhaps to be provided later, to give me figures that would indicate, for example, how many of them are receiving a full grant or almost a full grant, say, below a 10 per cent margin so that we exclude really any token contribution?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, I have here also available an even more extensive, as he can imagine, database with full details of all the grants given to every single university undergraduate in universities in England.

NO. 95 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**EDUCATION - DISCRETIONARY SCHOLARSHIPS**

Will Government state what is the expected total cost of discretionary scholarships awarded this year, the number of such scholarships awarded and how many of them were for a full grant without parental contribution?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Twenty-one discretionary scholarships were awarded this year at a total cost for the current academic year of £97,818.69. Eleven of these received full grant.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 95 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

In terms of the students that get full grants, I know it is not a new problem, it is a problem that has been there for a very long time, has the Minister thought of any way in which it might be possible to get closer to identifying people who appear not to fall within the criteria that has been there all the time in terms of parental contributions notwithstanding the fact that their lifestyle would suggest that they are in a position to make parental contributions and that therefore it is something that, as I say, has been there a very long time and I know it is not an easy problem to crack but one which causes a lot of resentment where people sometimes find that they have to work long hours of overtime and then that is taken into account in the grants of their children and others they see, in a small place like ours, people who clearly are able to enjoy a higher lifestyle and yet their children seem to get the full grant. Has any thought been given to whether this can be tackled?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As the hon Member says, this is a long-standing and irritating problem that has dogged many administrations before ours but we are determined to tackle it. We have identified that one of the things that facilitates the practice is the exclusive reliance on tax returns and we are presently considering the possibility of abandoning that in favour of giving the Department of Education an element of investigative power so that they can do a sort of enquiry and means-test themselves. There are only roughly 140 new cases coming on stream a year, even if they just did it on a random basis 20 or 30 enquiries, it would not take forever to do that. We are determined to improve the system to minimise the risks of a perpetuation of what has been the long-standing practice of people on PAYE in effect being penalised because they do not get the opportunity to conceal the real extent of their earnings.

NO. 96 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**MOROCCAN WORKERS - RESETTLEMENT SCHEME**

Can Government state how they have calculated that there are 700 Moroccan nationals eligible to receive a lump sum payment if they return to Morocco?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

According to unemployment records, a total of around 700 Moroccans were at some stage during the past few years registered as unemployed on a long-term basis. It is not yet possible to say how many will actually become eligible for the resettlement scheme. The Government are currently engaged in processing applications from Moroccans who have applied to register for participation under the voluntary repatriation scheme publicly announced on 8 January 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 96 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

What criteria are Government going to use in order to say who qualifies or does not qualify for the repatriation scheme?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member may be interested to know that 418 Moroccans have registered an interest in participating in the scheme. That is not to say that they have applied for repatriation, simply that they had expressed an interest in getting more information and in being assessed, et cetera. The criteria is really quite simple. The criteria is a period of number of years of unemployment and then to all such people who have been unemployed for longer than that period of time, we have not yet decided what the period of time should be, the proposal at the moment is that it should be three years unemployed plus that they should have been in Gibraltar for at least five years but, of course, that is relatively easy because there have been very few entrants post-1985/86, certainly post-1988, so that criteria will be relatively easy to meet and then there is a table; everybody gets £500 plus a certain sum per year that they have been in residence in Gibraltar. So it is actually a very simple scheme, it is not particularly scientific, it does not purport to do justice or injustice to the particular facts of each case except that it is straightforward in the sense that one gets a certain amount of money per year if they have been in Gibraltar, so those that have been in Gibraltar longest will get more and those that have been in Gibraltar least will get less. But they have to have been unemployed for at least three years.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is no distinction being made between the Moroccans who were here prior to the reopening of the frontier in 1985 and those who arrived post-1985 when in fact the Spaniards had been given Community rights and consequently preferential access to the labour market? That is to say, the people who arrived after the opening of the frontier arrived in a situation in which already they knew they were entering a labour market in Gibraltar where the Spaniards had been given greater access to jobs. Is there no different treatment being given to those who were earlier who were the people who were here, as it were, to help Gibraltar on with the closed frontier?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the scheme as presently envisaged is not settled, it is still capable of improvement, nothing has been offered, does not make that distinction. In fact, there are not many that fall into that category. 1985 is 14 years ago, out of a total of 728 if that figure turns out to be a real figure, only 22 have been for less than 10, that would have brought them here in 1987/88. An additional 75 have been here for between 10 and 15 years which probably takes us back to 1985 which is the figure he has mentioned, so we are talking about 100 that fall into the post-1985 category. So they are certainly a smaller number but at the moment we have not envisaged drawing a distinction based on whether they were here before or after that date.

NO. 97 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**SPORTS DEVELOPMENT - CONSULTANCY REPORT**

Have Government now received the consultancy report in order to set up the Sports Development Unit?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

No, Government have not yet received the report on sports development to be submitted by the consultant, Mr Mike Lockhart. For the sake of clarification, I advise the hon Member that the report is on sports development in general in Gibraltar and not specifically on the setting up of a Sports Development Unit as the question implies.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 97 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Going back to the question of the Sports Development Unit, have the Government now decided whether that post will form part of the civil service establishment?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

No.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Government confirm whether the consultancy has cost them money and, if so, how much?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Yes, but off the top of my head of the order of between £3,000 and £5,000 but I have not got the exact figure with me.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Once the report is received by the Government, can the Minister confirm as regards the post of the Sports Development Officer, whether the Government have intentions of advertising it locally, in the UK or in both places?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Once again I refer the hon Member to the second sentence of my original reply as the focus of her supplementaries and indeed of her main question seems to be on the Sports Development Unit and the Sports Development Officer. Government have not yet decided whether to have a Sports Development Unit. That will arise subsequent to the



report on sports development. The decisions that had been made originally to go down that route because of reasons that are historic and well-known to the hon Member, were overtaken by the event of appointing a consultancy on sports development and we are literally starting with a clean sheet of paper. When that report is presented, considered, received the advice of the Sports Council and then eventually put before my hon Colleagues in Government, then we will make the decision but at the moment she should not anticipate things that have not even been considered, much less decided.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I am not anticipating anything, I am just following up questions that I have asked in the House previously on the question of the Sports Development Officer and the question of the Sports Development Unit which form part of the estimates of the Government.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Yes, a question that the hon Member has asked several times. I am tempted to go back in Hansard to find how often she is asking the same question and the answer is always the same and will continue to be the same until the report is received which is imminent, which is due to be received by me before the end of April and until that is received, I just simply cannot give information that is not available to me because until the report is received the matter cannot be taken any further.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I am asking the Government for their policy as regards the creation of a Sports Development Unit which the Minister announced in the House. Do I take it now that the Minister is saying that it could well be that there will not be a Sports Development Unit and not even a Sports Development Officer?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

At the risk of making myself repetitious and boring hon Members, let me say, that what the Minister is saying, is that there is nothing to say until the Sports Development Report is received.

NO. 98 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GIBRALTAR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION - WATER-BASED SYNTHETIC TURF**

Have the government now decided whether they will make funds available for providing the Gibraltar Hockey Association with a water-based synthetic turf which requires watering?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

No, Government have not yet taken a decision on whether to provide a water-based synthetic turf pitch for use by the Gibraltar Hockey Association.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 98 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm that it is under consideration?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

No, I cannot confirm that. This is obviously a desirable objective, something which I as Minister and I am sure that she would have supported it in her time as Minister, would like to achieve. It is certainly something that I would like to see happening but at the moment it is not under active consideration. It is an objective of my Ministry but it is not something that the Government, as a whole, have yet considered.

NO. 99 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**KING'S BASTION - CONSULTING REPORT**

What was the cost of the Consultants Roger Quinton & Associates Report with regard to the King's Bastion and at which date was the report completed and will the report itself be made public?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The cost of the Consultants Roger Quinton & Associates Report was £11,309.48.

The preliminary report was completed on 27 January 1998. It is being considered by the Government and will be made public at a later date.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 99 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Have Government come to a decision yet on their preferred use of King's Bastion?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

The report identifies a number of development prospects for King's Bastion but, as I think has been commented in the House on other occasions, King's Bastion is not an easy site to develop. It is much too early to speculate on what might be done with King's Bastion. I think I should limit myself simply to saying that the Government are interested in seeing how the Bastion and its surrounding areas can be developed. We would be interested in bringing in some private sector investment but it is much too early to really say much more than that at this stage.

HON A J ISOLA:

In October last year the Minister indicated to me that this was actually a Government driven development and that they had at that stage already engaged a consultancy who had already been out to Gibraltar by October 1997. Is it not a fact that the Government do wish to see a leisure/sports/cultural centre at King's Bastion and if that is the case, is what is envisaged a Government lead project with private investment or will it be - I remember the public participation - how much of that has been heeded?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

It is Government lead to the extent only that the Government are initiating the development proposals and as we have mentioned in the House before, there would be the prospect of EU funds being available for the development. But it is not a project that will be capable of being within the public sector. It is not a project which would give rise to activities which would be run by the private sector. It is a complicated project, complicated in terms of heritage aspects, in terms of access to the site, in terms of the

structure of the bastion itself. The Government would very much like to see that area developed; it is in a strategic location between Main Street on the one side and the developments in Queensway which with the hand-over of the Cormorant area in due course will also have further development, but we have got to get it right. A leisure-type activity there that is commercially viable has to be looked at carefully. The consultants we have brought on board, as hon Members will know, are those that have worked and continue to work on the expansion of the Jersey leisure centre and it is best, I think at this stage, to limit ourselves to what I have said, we are trying to get some private sector interest and I am quite happy to make the report public at a future date with the prospects of levering in some investment.

HON A J ISOLA:

Two questions; firstly, how are Government going about trying to attract private sector investment, which is what the Minister has said, and secondly, by which time does the Minister hope to be in a position to give a definitive response as to the publication of the report and Government preferred use for the area?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Really, as far as Government are concerned, as soon as is practically possible which really means as soon as we can get private sector interest firmed up. I would have thought that in the context of the next two months we should be able to have a much clearer indication as to whether this is a project that the private sector developers that we are approaching feel they can support and at that stage decisions would have to be taken as to precisely what areas are included within the project and the minutiae of the detail that will evolve as the project is finalised. So we are not talking about a long-time scale and I think that within the context of the next two to three months it will become obvious whether in fact this area is capable of development in the way that we are seeking or whether the economic circumstances in Gibraltar at present cannot sustain that type of development we would like to see there.

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I just ask, the Minister has indicated that the Government themselves are initiating the contact with the private sector, would that contact be local or external for private sector interests?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

At this stage, it is entirely local. It is not a formal process, the government will be going to a couple of developers really by way of a sounding board to see whether there is in fact the prospect of interest. If there is then there will be a normal tender process, there will be a normal public invitation to the private sector to participate but we think it is useful, frankly, before going to that formal stage, to really sound out private sector opinion to see whether we are talking within the framework that is feasibly deliverable. I repeat, it is not an easy project, it has got its difficulties, it is something that has not been done in Gibraltar before and therefore we think it necessary to go through this sounding exercise before deciding to put it out formally in a tender basis.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister confirm if I have understood it right, that in fact what he is trying to sound out people on is their judgement as to the probability of such a thing being commercially viable?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Essentially yes and I can tell the House that one of the issues raised in the report and, of course, which we asked the consultants to look at, was the question of viability. To what extent would a centre of this type be viable looking at only the domestic market; would it require influx from visitors from Spain? To what extent it would have to be based around family activities and therefore bring in the children? It is essentially a matter of viability and as we have said, whilst the Government are happy to see EU funds being put into this and whilst we are happy to lead it in its design and its concept, it is not a facility other than on the question of the Generating Station which may be a sports hall run by the Government - that is a separate issue - but other than in the context of that, the Government are not in a position to run a leisure complex in King's Bastion in the way that that scheme is envisaged which would be a major development which would require commercial backing.

NO. 100 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**FIRE BRIGADE - DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Will Government state whether the five year development plan being prepared by the Fire Brigade is now ready?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The five year Brigade Development Plan was presented, accepted and actioned during 1997. In April of this year the Brigade shall start working on the key issues of year two of the plan. The main elements of which are training, the provision of appliances and equipment and revision of legislation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 100 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Since the Minister mentioned this at the time of the budget and he has said he would consider giving the Opposition a copy, can I ask him whether that consideration has already finalised or whether he is prepared to give the Opposition a copy of the report?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

The development plan is an on-going document which is for internal use and internal purposes for the Brigade. I can certainly make available to the hon Member the details of it as it has been circulated to all members of the Brigade. But the development plan is something that is for internal use by the Brigade itself so I do not think it would be appropriate to distribute it.

NO. 101 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**MOD - WATER STORAGE TANKS - DUDLEY WARD TUNNEL**

Have the MOD water storage tanks at the entrance to Dudley Ward Tunnel been handed over to Government?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

No, the MOD still require the one remaining tank, the two at the southern end having been demolished. The tank will need to be replaced in the next two to three years. It is foreseen that it will become obsolete before then if arrangements are successfully concluded under the rationalisation discussions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 101 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister state whether the difficulties with the widening of the road project that is currently being undertaken have now been overcome as a result? Because the Hon Col Britto, at the time of the budget, said that the handing over of the tanks could jeopardise that project.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Subject to what my hon Colleague might say who now has the day-to-day contact with that project, my understanding is that the tank does not present a problem in that the stages of the works that are funded and which are envisaged do not actually include that particular part of the road. I think it represents a problem as part of the logical extension of projects up to the mouth of the tunnel, so to speak, but I do not think it presents a problem in the context of the immediate works that are contracted.

NO. 102 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**CAMP BAY - ROCK FACE WORKS**

Will the works on the Rock face immediately above Camp Bay be completed before the commencement of the bathing season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The works on the Rock face above Camp Bay will not be completed before the commencement of the bathing season. Specialist geotechnical contractors have recently completed a geotechnical investigation of the remaining cliff face after the removal of the overhanging areas of cliff face remaining after the initial rockfall. The purpose of this investigation was to assess the geology and rock composition of the area in order to assess the stability of the remaining cliff to permit our consultants to finalise the design of the permanent stabilisation works. Our consultants are currently interpreting the information obtained during these exploratory works and the first indications are that there are still sections of the remaining cliff which need to be removed and this is likely to be using blasting techniques. A programme for the execution of the remaining works in the area is currently being prepared but the scope of the remaining works is such that it will not be possible to complete the same by this year's bathing season.

Although, it could be possible to commence the permanent works before the bathing season, it would be impractical to do so only to have to postpone the same during the summer. Consequently, permanent works are programmed to commence immediately after the bathing season with the removal of the remaining unstable cliff overhangs and the subsequent removal of the rockfall material for the subsequent construction of an engineered slope.



NO. 103 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**I&D FUND - HEAD 104 - SUBHEAD 13**

Can Government confirm that the provision for rock safety and coastal protection in the Improvement and Development Fund includes a sum for the purpose of re-enforcing the sea wall along Catalan Bay?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

No.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 103 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister not aware that there were representations made by the Village Council at the time of the big storm where the sea reached the houses above the wall and that there was a study made which indicated that there was reason for looking at the stabilisation of the sea wall which faces the sea?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Yes, I am aware of that but what maybe the hon Member is not aware is that subsequently the changes in sea patterns and because of the reclamation in that area and so on, the movement undermining of the sea wall that had occurred has in fact been reversed and the situation is no longer considered to be as critical as it seems to have been at some stage. At about this time last year there was consideration given whether to provide the funding or not provide it and the technical advise was that it was not essential and therefore funding was not provided.

HON J C PEREZ:

What reclamation is the Minister talking about? There has not been any reclamation in the area since the storm hit the houses.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

What I meant, if the hon Member will forgive me for not being too explicit, was that as a consequence of the sand movement in that area the undermining of the wall, that had originally occurred because of the storm, was in fact replaced by new movement of sand coming in. By this time last year it was no longer and still is not considered to be works that need to be done urgently or imminently. Having said that, it is an item that is within the department's bid in this year's expenditure in the estimates but one which has not yet been considered by Government.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Could I just ask, if I may, a supplementary to that. Is the Minister in a position to say, I know it is not strictly directly related in a sense, the amount that was actually provided which was quite substantial in the I&D Fund for Rock safety, is that an amount of money that is likely all to have been spent given that we are already towards the end of the financial year?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

No, I am afraid I am not in a position at this moment in time to provide that information but if it is of interest to the hon Member and I get some sort of reminder next week I will provide the information.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In fact, I can tell the hon Member that there has been very little spent on that and I think that is because there has been a delay in tackling the collapse of the Camp Bay rock face as a result of geological advice that we had to wait for it to settle down. In other words, one could not start, the whole thing had to settle down before geological studies could be done and work begin. So in fact I think there has been a very low spend against that Head, there is absolutely no question of it being fully spent let alone even substantially spent.

NO. 104 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GBC - SECOND TV CHANNEL**

Can Government state whether they have now considered the proposals from GBC for a second TV channel?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The Board of GBC has recently submitted a new proposal to Government regarding the way GBC could operate in the future. This proposal does not envisage a second channel being operated by GBC.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 104 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister perhaps illuminate us on what the basis of the proposal is; whether it is a mixture of programmes bought and compiled by GBC like it used to be in the old times or whether it still envisages taking a channel like Prime or something like that?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Yes, in very general terms, if the proposals for a second channel were to continue, as I am sure the hon Member knows, providing Prime on one channel and to provide locally produced programmes on a second channel. The new proposal, again in very broad terms and because Prime is becoming increasingly and readily available directly, would be to do away with Prime and to revert very broadly to the system as it used to be run previously where all the programmes are either of local origin or bought externally.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister says that the Government are now considering that proposal. Can he envisage when the Government will be in a position to respond to the Corporation? Is this proposal being made because there is a need for more funding?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

No, the proposal is not linked to the need for more funding. *[HON CHIEF MINISTER: Well, yes, it is linked to an index linked subvention.]* It is too difficult to be broad brush. Let me put it this way, based on an extended period of time it would involve more funding. I am not in a position to give dates on when we would be making a decision at this moment in time.

NO. 105 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**NYNEX/GIBTEL - POSSIBLE MERGER**

Can Government confirm that the negotiations taking place between Gibtel and Nynex about a possible merger are due to be completed by June?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

There are no negotiations about a possible merger taking place between Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex Communications. The negotiations taking place regarding the possible merger between Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex Communications involve the Government, British Telecom and Bell Atlantic, as shareholders of the two companies.

The shareholders are working together to finalise the negotiations on the possible merger of the two companies, and have set the 30th June as the target date by which to finalise the Shareholders Agreement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 105 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

But is there now agreement in principle between the three parties to work towards this? What is being done now is putting the paperwork in place or is it that between now and June any of the three parties can say, no and it might not happen?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

The position as at this moment is that there is agreement in principle on achieving a merger but that an MOU or a head of terms or a letter of intent has not yet been signed. When and if it is signed it will probably be not legally binding anyway. So in answer to the question, yes at any point before the final Shareholders Agreement either of the parties or any of the parties will be in a position to withdraw and in fact there is still some disagreement on fundamental points of principle.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it the Government's desire that there should be a merger as a shareholder in both of the local companies? Is it that the Government want to bring the merger about or are they, as it were, indifferent as to whether it happens or it does not happen but are going along with it provided the terms are ones that they find attractive?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

No, the Government are desirable of achieving a merger and as I have indicated so are the other parties because there is agreement in principle in working towards a merger and I am confident that we are well on the way to achieving it but there are still fundamental points of difference that have to be resolved.

NO. 106 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**NYNEX-GIBTEL - COMPLAINTS**

What further developments have there been on the two telecom matters before the European Commission, namely, the question of the numbering plan and the matter concerning roaming for mobile telephony?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Both matters are still with the European Commission. The Commission recently wrote to the Spanish administration requesting an explanation following the complaints from Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex. The Government understand that a reply to the Commission is due towards the end of this month.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 106 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Government confirm that they do not take the view of the British Government expressed again in a letter to Mr Emilio Peire which was published in the Chronicle that what they are waiting to do is for the Spanish Government to extend the Cadiz numbering code in order to give us more numbers and that the Government are still supporting the recognition of the 350 international code?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Yes, that is certainly the ultimate aim of the Government, for recognition of the 350 geographical code.

HON J C PEREZ:

In what way has that been expressed to the Commission, directly by the Gibraltar Government, through the British Government? Have the British Government told the Commission, "This is my view and this is the view of the Gibraltar Government"? Has there been any direct contact with the commission in order to make clear that at least the Gibraltar Government see the case in a different light from what the United Kingdom Government seem to see it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the United Kingdom Government tends to steer the line of least resistance and whereas the current proposals are a possible solution on an interim basis, the objective on the case itself as opposed to an interim relief basis is that, as I told the hon Member in the House when he last raised this, to decouple the Gibraltar numbering plan from the Spanish numbering plan which can only follow after the recognition of the 350. The hon Member asked specifically whether we had made our position separately known to the Commission. I can tell him that we have, he will recall that some time last year, I think it was in February, when I lead a Government delegation to Brussels, he will recall a very successful trip, that one of the meetings was precisely with DGIV on this area and the Government's position was fully and explicitly conveyed to the Commission through that meeting and indeed others that took place during that visit.

HON J C PEREZ:

Perhaps the Chief Minister might wish to inform those in the Foreign Office who do not seem to think so that certainly when I was Minister for telecommunications there was no reluctance on the part of Telefonica to give us more numbers when they themselves were ready to open their numbering plan and extend their own numbering plan. There has never been a problem with that at a commercial level between Gibtel and Nynex and Telefonica. So the fact that they think that that is a solution, it is a solution to what? It has been available to us except that they are not going to do it until they are ready for their own reasons and nothing to do with Gibraltar.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

With respect to the hon Member, I am not aware when the change may have taken place but certainly in the time that I have been Minister that solution has not been available. Gibraltar Nynex have been asking Telefonica to give additional numbers and Telefonica have not been prepared to make the numbers available.

HON J C PEREZ:

Yes, because there are no numbers available because of the scheme as it is but they have always said, "Once we extend it we will be providing the numbers". They are going to extend it for their own reasons and not to give us a solution but the British Government seem to be saying, "When they do it for their own reason we will solve the Gibraltar problem" because they are certainly not telling the Commission, "We want you to force Spain to extend the plan in Cadiz to solve the Gibraltar problem". They are saying, "When they do it for their own reason or for their own purpose we are going to solve the Gibraltar problem per se".

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think it is important that we keep the objectives here in perspective. The Gibraltar problem, I suppose he means the Gibraltar telephone problem... [HON J C PEREZ: Yes.] The Gibraltar problem is about the unavailability of numbers. In other words, that there are theoretically 29,999 numbers and they are nearly exhausted and that if there are people wanting to come into the market we physically do not have enough subscriber numbers to allocate. That problem, to the extent that that is a purely logistical resources problem of the telecommunications industry in Gibraltar, that problem would not be solved, it would be alleviated by having more numbers made available. So if the Gibraltar problem means only the unavailability of subscriber numbers, it would be resolved in that way but, of course, there are other aspects of this matter. We do not want to have to rely on the Spanish system every time we need to expand, it just gives them a way, in a sense, of controlling the growth potential of our telecommunications industry. Then, of course, there is the connected subject of the roaming agreement for mobile telecommunications which would not be resolved simply by giving us an extra 300,000 or 400,000 subscriber numbers.

HON J C PEREZ:

No, I was speaking specifically on the first part of it because and I am not being critical of the Government or of the position they have taken but I am being critical of the weakness of the British Government's position in this respect. But I accept that roaming is a separate issue completely.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Absolutely.

NO. 107 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMISSION - LICENCES**

How many insurance companies or insurance company managers have applied to be licensed by the Financial Services Commission since 31st May 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Since the 31st May 1997 two insurance companies have been granted a licence and two insurance company managers applications are currently under consideration.

In addition, applicants for insurance and insurance company managers licences are encouraged to submit applications in draft form before proceeding to a formal application. At present three draft applications are under active consideration for insurance company licences and one for insurance company management.

The level of interest shown by applicants, and potential applicants, in obtaining licences both as insurance companies and insurance company managers is considerably higher than at this time last year when Gibraltar insurers' ability to provide services and open branches in other EU territories had not been announced.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 107 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

By way of implication, if the Minister is aware, of the two insurance companies and the two insurance company managers, how many of these eventually set up in Gibraltar? In other words, are they employing people at this stage or they are not there yet?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I am not in a position to give him details of that. I think that the companies are not operative in the sense that he is suggesting but I am quite happy to provide the hon Member with details as to their de facto presence in Gibraltar physically rather than having passed the licensing hurdle. I am very happy to share that information with him if he wishes at a later stage when I have that to hand.

HON A J ISOLA:

I would be grateful for that. Could I also ask, in terms of the facilities for passporting available to Gibraltar licensees, have any of these or other companies already licensed in Gibraltar now succeeded in the passporting to other European jurisdictions?



HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

We are very happy with the progress that has been made practically of this issue of passporting following the reservations expressed towards the end of last year about how our rights would be respected in practice. There is business, I can tell the hon Member, being written from Gibraltar which can only be written because of our passporting rights. There are companies insuring risks across the European Union in a manner which is only possible because Gibraltar has passporting rights. In that respect really I can do no more than bolster this view by actually repeating what the Insurance Supervisor himself is on public record as saying - this was in a conference in London - which is to the effect that any Gibraltar insurer that notifies him of its desire to passport services into Europe, has discharged its obligation with regard to passporting, it is then a matter entirely for the regulator to ensure that any administrative issue that arises with the competent authority is dealt with. It is a very clear endorsement of the fact that a Gibraltar insurer, once he notifies our regulator, is open to business across Europe.

NO. 108 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

## **EU FUNDING - APPLICATIONS**

How many applications for EU funding have been received from the private sector in Gibraltar since 16 May 1996, and in respect of which projects?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A total of 16 applications have been received from the private sector in respect of EU funding.

Nine of these have been assessed and recommended by the Joint Local Advisory Group (JLAG) and approved by the Government. These are in respect of the following projects:-

- (1) Expansion of Stevedoring Company
- (2) Recycling of bottles, cans and plastics
- (3) Gibraltar Crystal
- (4) Options Initiative (training scheme)
- (5) Recycling of electronic skyline technologies
- (6) Wage subsidy- skyline technologies application
- (7) AC II (Savignon Insurance Brokers) - a training initiative
- (8) Company Training Initiative
- (9) Finance Centre Training Initiative

I should add that the last three I have read out are applications, although they are new applications post the date indicated by the hon Member are, in fact, a continuation of training schemes from the old programme.

These applications have been made in respect of the Objective 2 Programme.

Of the seven outstanding applications, five have been made under the Objective 2 and these are still pending approval. There is one project which is in respect of an Angling/Marketing Project, it is a fisheries project. (2) One that involves purchase of forklift. (3) Refurbishment of Garage. (4) Wage Subsidy - in respect of a video repair business. (5) Manufacture of Plaster of Paris facility.

Two applications have also been made under the Gibraltar/Morocco Interreg Programme which are also outstanding and have not been approved. These are-

- (1) Pilot Project - Feasibility Study on Education
- (2) Delivery of Training Schemes in English and Business Studies

The above does not include various applications that have been made to the Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme which, as hon Members will recall, is funded only by Gibraltar Government monies. It also does not include the large number of pre-application enquiries that have been received and which are being processed.

NO. 109 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**HEAD 7 SUBHEAD 5 - EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state how much of the Subhead 5 of Head 7 of the approved estimates of expenditure for 1997/98 has been spent and in respect of which items?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The amount spent in respect of Subhead 5 of Head 7 of the approved estimates of expenditure for 1997/98 was £318,520.85. The breakdown is as follows:-

South Africa Trip	£ 27,874.90
Urban Renewal Scheme	£ 8,375.00
Subsistence	£ 397.62
Fireworks	£ 28,507.54
Expenses Claimed	£ 3,164.66
Air Passage	£ 21,748.00
Accommodation	£ 764.00
Marketing	£169,368.89
Conferences	£ 29,013.11
Entertainment	£ 21,730.63
Miscellaneous	<u>£ 7,576.50</u>
	<u>£318,520.85</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 109 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I just ask, when he says air passage, accommodation, expenses, subsistence, these are all general but not related to any one specific programme so this is the total accommodation cost for the entertainment budget and for the air passages budget, it is all interlinked, there are bits and pieces?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Indeed the figures as they have been produced are figures that relate to the type of expenditure rather than the projects within which the expenditure was necessarily involved. As the hon Member will realise in his next question, for example, under the heading of marketing, part of the marketing figure will be the advertising aspect of it on which then there is obviously a much more detailed breakdown which is available.

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I just ask, in respect of the South Africa trip of £27,000, is the air passage included in that specific trip or is that also excluded?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I could not really say, frankly, it would seem to me logically that it should not be because there is a separate heading under air passages but it does seem a high figure if air passages were not to be included. I am happy to get the hon Member the information he requires but I have not got those details to hand.

NO. 110 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA

## DTI - PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE

How much has been spent within the Department of Trade and Industry on promotional literature since May 1996 and in respect of which items has this money been expended?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Since May 1996 the amount spent within the Department of Trade and Industry on promotional literature is as follows:

Insurance brochures produced for insurance conferences	£11,423
Islamic brochures prepared for British-Saudi Trade Mission	£ 8,135

Advertisements

Mediterranean Life (Two issues)	£ 3,415
Financial Services Handbook; Advertisement and purchase of handbooks	£ 1,260
Airport arrival halls and departure lounge	£ 3,900
Six poster sites outside airport terminal for Valderama	£ 3,200
Chamber of Commerce Annual Report	£ 495
Gibraltar Insurance Conference Brochure (this is where the Government supported the conference by way of a 50 per cent support)	£ 6,250
Financial Times Special supplement	£ 8,400
	<u>£46,478</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 110 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I just ask in respect of the first item, the insurance brochure and then the Gibraltar conference I think that is also the insurance, is that right? What is the difference between .....

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Well, the insurance brochure although produced for the insurance conference is the general insurance brochure. The first one, namely the actual main insurance brochure which is the standard promotional document, the hon Member will know, is what we are using now in insurance which really was prepared in the context of insurance passporting. The reference to the other brochure is, in fact, the brochure specifically for the conference held in November last year.

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I ask what method is used to select, for example, on the brochures who does the brochures for the Government, is it estimates cost?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

It is a combination. Obviously the Government are keen to extract value for money but we are very conscious of the fact that brochures are the frontline promotional weapon that the Government and the financial services industry has and therefore we look very much towards quality and we try to make sure that what we produce is going to have the desired effect. The approach has been to go to a number of different parties that are known in Gibraltar to produce brochures, to invite them to make proposals and the department has selected a number of proposals as a result of that process. It is not one which has involved a formal tendering process but it has been one which has involved a selection process giving the right balance between value for money and the type of quality that we think is necessary.

HON A J ISOLA:

Does the department in any way put as a condition that the material should be printed in Gibraltar when giving out these bids?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

No, although we are very keen that the material should be printed in Gibraltar. I should say that we have had difficulties with some of the printing of the material in Gibraltar. As hon Members may know printing high quality brochures is actually increasingly a very sophisticated process and requires ever more demanding machinery. We certainly do our best to try and support the local printing industry but it must be said that unfortunately we have not always been able to get the results we have required by accessing purely local facilities. I think it depends very much on what type of brochure one is producing. If one is producing something which really has to meet a sort of international level, one has to be a little bit more demanding but I can assure the hon Member that to the extent which it is possible we are most keen to make sure that the printing is effected here but it is not an inflexible rule. We are led primarily by the quality of what is going to be produced because it is really very much a frontline weapon, as I said, rather than dogmatic adherence to the money having to be spent within Gibraltar, it is our preference, but if the quality is right and if what we receive at the end of the day works for the promotion that we are undertaking. By and large, a lot of the printing has been done through the Gibraltar printers, I should add, but that has not invariably been the case.

NO. 111 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**TOURISM - YACHT ARRIVALS**

What are the statistics for yacht arrivals in respect of the years 1994, 1995, 1996 and 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The figures are as follows:

1994 - 3,893; 1995 - 4,110; 1996 - 4,234; 1997 - 3,998

The general picture is one of an increased number of calls. Had it not been for the strength of the pound sterling against the peseta, the trend established by 1995 and 1996 would have continued for 1997. As it is, despite the drop of 236 yacht arrivals compared with 1996, there were still a greater number of visiting yachts in 1997 than there was in 1994.

Furthermore, I am informed by persons who are particularly knowledgeable in the field that there has been a general drop in yacht movements between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and vice versa as a result of the weather phenomenon known as "El Niño".

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 111 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

May I ask, are these figures for full years, calendar years, January to December?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

These are calendar years provided by the Statistics Office.



NO. 112 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**GIBRALTAR BANKS - DEPOSITS**

What was the level of deposits in Gibraltar banks from (a) residents; and (b) non-residents as at 27 February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The level of deposits in Gibraltar banks are done on a quarterly basis.

As at December 1997 the figure for residents was £280,120,000 and for non-residents £2,494,451,000.

NO. 113 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**LATHBURY BARRACKS - PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

Have Government taken the final decision on the use of Lathbury Barracks following the receipt by it in October 1997 of the seven prospective developers bids?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

No. As previously announced the proposed development of Lathbury Barracks was invited in a two stage process. The second stage, which involves the submission of formal proposals, expires at the end of this month. At this time the Government will then be in a position to assess the merits of the shortlisted bids which have been received.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 113 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that the seven original listed bidders have been invited to put detailed bids by the end of this month?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes and no. Not all the seven, the seven that were originally, which eventually put in ideas to the Government, the first stage was very much a conceptual invitation. The Government shortlisted four and it is those four that have been invited to make fuller proposals as to their ideas. We are expecting, as I say, those proposals to be submitted by the end of the month and the Government will then be in a position to make a selection.

HON A J ISOLA:

Which four of the seven are the ones that Government have invited bids from?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I would not want to give details now of the precise companies that have been selected because they come under different consortia and they are headed by different names and I would be inaccurate if I were to indicate in actual name terms who they are. I can tell the hon Member that there are a range of different possibilities. One does include the university idea which is a revamped version of the proposal that hon Members are aware has been floated around for some time. The other projects are primarily of a touristic/residential type, some focusing more on a tourist park concept and others more on simple residential. That is really the sort of choice facing the Government. The development of that area potentially as an educational park or the development of it as a largely touristic/residential facility.

HON A J ISOLA:

I appreciate the concern of being accurate with the names but if we rely on the names that were given to us in December or in October, in Question No. 318 of 1997, if I refer generally to the names would the Minister be able to say yes or no? Montagu Group? Gibraltar Confectionery? Prime Trust? Abco? That is it then, and the university as well.

NO. 114 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**TELECOMS LICENCE - CALL BACK SERVICES**

Do Government consider that a telecoms licence is required for the provision of call back services for international telephony to businesses?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Under the provisions of section 57 of the Public Utility Undertakings Ordinance, any company providing telephonic communication must be contracted to do so by the Government. The definition of "telephonic communication" is very wide and would include "callback" services. There will be licensing provisions in the new Telecommunications Ordinance which transpose the provisions of the Licensing Directive and providers of callback services in Gibraltar would have to apply for a licence to provide the service.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 114 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

But they are not required to do so at present, is that the case?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I have a slight difficulty because of the terminology that the hon Member is using. Under the Public Utilities Undertakings Ordinance the word "licence" is not mentioned, the wording is that a service can only be provided if contracted by the Government. So in that loose sense of being licensed as applied to contracting, then yes it is required.

HON J C PEREZ:

Let me put it this way, the person or persons who are at present offering callback services to businesses in Gibraltar are doing so outside the law given that the law says that they need the contractual arrangement with the Government in order to be able to do that?

MR SPEAKER:

Under the Rules there is no need for you to answer that. It is a question of law but you can if you want to.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I would just say that the Government have not contracted anybody to provide callback services.

HON J C PEREZ:

Will the Minister or the Attorney-General make sure that the persons that are doing this are stopped from doing it because it is something that certainly I was aware when I was chairman of Gibtel and he must be aware as chairman of Gibtel that has been happening for some time and if as seems clearer now this is being done outside the law it ought to be stopped or regularised.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

As the hon Member knows, whatever callback is taking place is monitored by the telecommunications companies. Government have not been asked to take any steps neither have we received any information about any individual or any company providing callback services. If the hon Member is in possession of names and information and brings those to the attention of the Government then action will be taken.

HON J C PEREZ:

The only information I am in possession of is the one I was in possession of when I was sitting in his place so he must be in possession of exactly the same information that I am. The idea of putting this question was in fact to insist that it should be something that should be incorporated in the new legislation that is being prepared. What the hon Member tells me is that the old legislation prohibits it as well which is not information I had available when I was in his shoes. What I am saying is if that is the case, if the legal position is that it is outside the law today then it is the responsibility of the Government because Paul Canessa as the regulator to be knows about it and the managing director of Gibtel wrote to him when I was Minister for telecommunications then there is a case for the Government to take legal steps to stop this taking place. I did not have that information available to me when I was in his shoes. The purpose of raising this was to be able to incorporate it in the new legislation that is being prepared but if what the Minister is telling me is that it is illegal today then it ought to be able to be stopped today.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think there is an element of doubt about that but certainly it is as illegal today as it was at the time that he was the Minister for Government Services..... [*HON J C PEREZ: But that information was not available to me then.*] Well, but presumably it was available to the Telecoms Regulator designate. [*HON J C PEREZ: I do not think so, no.*] Yes, the point that I am making is that there has not been any change that would change the legal status.

HON J C PEREZ:

As I understand it, the Minister for telecommunications today says that the Public Utilities Ordinance disallows it, whereas, when I was there the view and the expert view that I got was that there was nothing to stop it. If that is the case because I was ill-informed about it then I hope that the Minister can take steps to stop it now.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I think there is a case for looking at it. My understanding of the position is that the existing Ordinance, of course, was drafted as a piece of legislation drafted at the time that the technology for callback services just did not exist and therefore I think the view that has been expressed is that it may sustain a prosecution but that it is a matter of interpretation and ambiguity and I think that is a sort of more accurate assessment of the position. But certainly there is no doubt that it does great damage to the economic interest of both telecommunications companies and indeed to the national interest and the economy of Gibraltar through loss of employment prospects and loss of revenue to the Government through taxation and if there is a legal means of stopping it, it ought to be explored and pursued.

NO. 115 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**GIBRALTAR AIRPORT - PROPOSALS**

Can Government confirm that they are currently working on proposals that they intend to put forward for the expansion of the Gibraltar airport?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Government are not currently working on such proposals.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 115 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

When did they stop?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well it is not so much a question of when we stopped as never really having started. This is something we would like to do. We have had the intention of, as I have answered the hon Member before I think and I have stated publicly, of putting together a set of proposals which are exclusively on a commercial basis and there is absolutely no prejudice to sovereignty, but it is one of those projects that time has simply not permitted the people that would have to do it from actually dedicating to it the time, other matters have cropped up and have taken priority. But it is something that the Government are interested in doing, would have liked to have done, has not yet done and simply need to find the time to dedicate to do it.

HON A J ISOLA:

In 1996, as the Chief Minister will remember, in answer to a question formulated in exactly the same words as this one, the indication given and the answer, in fact, given without quoting was that proposals were being prepared and I think the indication was that they were almost ready. There were two alternatives, one was a company in America called Strategic Partners and another was a group of local businessmen who were working with him at that time in 1996 to formulate these proposals which would be an entirely commercial basis with no sovereignty implications. The reason for my asking the question when did they stop was because the answer given was that it was actually taking place.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that there is a confusion here between two quite different things. The Government have received proposals from others, indeed the Opposition Members are aware of one of them because I believe that they received it as well, from somebody called Strategic Partners, it is there on the table, it is in a very nice glossy cover and it is a proposal, it contains aspects which are acceptable and aspects which are not. That is not what I meant, what I mean when I say the Government working on proposals or the Government would like to formulate proposals, certainly what I mean by that is that the Government wish to put on the table a set of its own proposals and there we have not been able to make the progress through lack of time really to have invested in it. But the fact that we have not done so, let me say, is a matter of regret to us, it has just been a question of lack of opportunity and we just need to prioritise some time for that in the not too distant future.

HON A J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that there is no further contact then basically with the group of local businessmen or the Americans? That has just been left there until the time.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No one is speaking to me and I am not speaking to anybody on any matter remotely connected with the airport in this context.



NO. 116 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**COST OF DRAFTING LEGISLATION TO TRANSPOSE EC DIRECTIVES**

What has been the cost to Government of the drafting of directives and the transposition of European Union laws in Gibraltar since May 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The cost to the Government of farming out the drafting of legislation to transpose EC directives into Gibraltar law to legal chambers since May 1996 is £902,144. The cost of the work involved in such transpositions by the Legislation Support Unit is difficult to quantify and is not readily available.

NO. 117 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - ADVERTISING**

Have Government any plans to place tourism adverts in other football stadiums similar to the one they placed at the Olympic Stadium in Rome at a cost of £12,000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The question raises the point of what the plural of stadium might be, whether it is stadiums or stadia but leaving questions of grammatical semantics to one side, the Government have no plans, at the moment, to advertise in other football stadia.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 117 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Are Government considering or have they received proposals in respect of advertising in any particular stadium during the forthcoming World Cup?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, we have not but it is a jolly good idea and if somebody makes a proposal that is within the financial means of the Government of Gibraltar it would certainly give it consideration.

HON A J ISOLA:

If Government think it is such a good idea why have they not done it themselves?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, there is not somebody in the Government that dedicates himself exclusively to advertising in football stadia but I have no doubt that those that manage and control the Government's advertising budget, the Minister for Trade and Industry in financial services and the Minister for Tourism and Transport in tourism, will no doubt be working as we speak on how they intend to spend their budget for the next financial year which is in good time for the World Cup.

ORAL

NO. 118 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

Question withdrawn.

NO. 119 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**ROCK CAR DRAW**

Will the Government confirm whether the company that operates the Rock Car Draw at the Gibraltar airport is still a qualifying company?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The company which operates the Rock Car Draw at the Gibraltar airport is still a qualifying company. The company was authorised by the Financial and Development Secretary on 6 February 1998 to sell tickets for the car lottery draw to residents of Gibraltar. That part of the business that is conducted with Gibraltar residents is subject to separate accounting arrangements to which the standard rates of Gibraltar company tax will be applied.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 119 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Are the owners or the company operating the draw therefore required to detail and ask each purchaser of the ticket whether they are resident or non-resident and depending on the response account for it in a different list?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is my understanding of what happens in practice, yes. They have to separate the residents from the non-residents.

NO. 120 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SPANISH PENSIONERS**

Can Government state what further developments there have been since September 1996, regarding the court case financed by the Junta de Andalucia in the name of a Spanish pensioner challenging the dissolution of the Social Insurance Fund?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

None.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 120 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does that answer mean that the case is still pending or that the case is now no longer in existence, which of the two?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, it means that there have been no further developments since September 1996. If the case had been formally discontinued that would constitute a development. It is there on the file, it theoretically exists but no one is taking any steps in it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it something that will stay there forever if nobody takes a step or is it something that eventually the court will have to decide that if nothing is happening it has to be ended?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Theoretically parties could initiate the step, the plaintiff could apply to discontinue or the defendant could apply that the action be struck out for want of prosecution, as it is called. But frankly I do not think it is in Gibraltar's interest for us at this stage to take that step because the longer it passes without a step being taken the stronger such an application would be and we risk getting the timing wrong and as in all pleasurable things timing is of the essence.

NO. 121 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS - PROJECTED EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state what is the projected expenditure in respect of personal emoluments in the current financial year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The projected expenditure on personal emoluments during the financial year ending 31 March 1998 amounts to just under £32 million.

NO. 122 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**BREATHALYSER TESTS**

When did Government decide to introduce breathalyser tests for motorists?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Government have not taken a final decision on whether to introduce breathalyser tests for motorists.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 122 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is this a matter that has been asked for by the Police or is it a matter under consideration as a matter of policy on the part of the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

A proposal has emerged basically from the health lobby, from the Health Department, from the Health Authority, from those concerned in public health that this might be a useful contribution to increase public safety and public health. It raises, especially in a small community like ours, many potentially fraught issues and I would not regard this development as anywhere near imminent and indeed I would think it needs a good deal further discussion and consideration before any decision is taken and that is euphemism for a long time.

NO. 123 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**ON THE SPOT FINES**

When did Government decide to introduce "on the spot" fines for litter and traffic offences?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Government have not decided to introduce "on the spot" fines for litter and traffic offences.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 123 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Are they considering it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I do not know whether the hon Member is using the phrase "on the spot fine" accurately or loosely. If by on the spot fine he means a system where people can be asked to pay on the spot, in other words, "I have seen you doing this give me right now £20 or else", the Government are not contemplating such a system. We have been asked by the Police to consider such a system and we have rejected the request and are not considering the system and in fact have made the policy decision of not doing it. If on the other hand by on the spot fine he means an extension to the fixed penalty system which of course does not result in on the spot fine but it does result in an on the spot penalty as opposed to the payment of it, then the hon member knows that there has recently been an extension of those offences almost all of them under the Traffic Ordinance and minor which have been included in the fixed penalty system which has always existed for such things as parking offences.

HON J C PEREZ:

I was using on the spot taken from statements by the Commissioner of Police himself. The Chief Minister is saying that it was put to the Government and the Government rejected this?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, Government have certainly rejected it, perhaps I should have qualified that answer, in respect of local registered vehicles. In other words, the idea that he or I should be driving in the streets and be subjected to an on the spot fine is entirely unacceptable to the Government. The Police have come back with a request that we consider something then in respect at least of non-residents. In other words, so that foreigners do not drive in commit an offence and then drive away and there will never be an opportunity to recover the fine. The Government's position on that is that we are willing to consider that provided we can be satisfied that it would not be unlawful as being discriminatory but that if in order to do it for non-residents we also have to do it for residents, then we would rather do it for neither than have to do it for residents.



HON J L BALDACHINO:

The consideration that the Government are taking, if I understand it correctly, is that if somebody is reported obviously he does not have to pay the officer but would have to go to the Supreme Court and pay it there as is normal.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, what we are talking here is the mechanics of payment. One incurs the liability by being given the ticket. There are procedures for challenging that, I think one can appeal to the Magistrates' Court or whoever but what we are not willing to allow is a situation where people have to pay there and then on the spot, pay the fine on the spot to whoever happens to give it, that is not acceptable.

NO. 124 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**PLANING OF ROADS - CONTRACT**

Can Government state whether the contract for planing of roads awarded this month was given to the lowest priced tenderer?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 124 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

The fact that the tender is for one month only, for a period of one month between 1 March 1998 and 31 March 1998, is this because it is for a specific job rather than for whatever planing is necessary and, if so, why should the tender come out for one month only?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Gentleman identifies a point that I myself had taken up when I saw this. It seemed extraordinarily peculiar to me. The explanation that I had received when I spotted this was that originally this contract was going to be advertised for tendering in the early year, either the end of last year or very early in January and the department in question thought that they should not extend the tender, for reasons which do not seem rational or logical to me, beyond the financial year given that there were no funds available to spend beyond that on procuring goods under the tender which seems odd because that is true of all tenders for a 12 month period that has travelled two financial years. In the event, by the time the tender documents, one thing and another and the delay, went out I think it was February and therefore it was adjudicated as intended to the 31 March but that turned out to be one month. I regard it as an extraordinary occurrence and steps have been taken to ensure that that does not reoccur. Apart from anything else, this is a tender for rates, for a job, they can be available there on the shelf and one uses them or not as the case may be. This does not commit the Government to procure the service or not to procure the service and I would have thought the longer that the Government held contractors to fixed rates, the better. But this apparently is not the view shared by those who initiated the tender.

HON J C PEREZ:

It seems to me that this is one of the very few ones that have come out for rates in this field, in roads works and so on and it seems to me that this is more like the intention if it were not limited to one month, more like a term contract where one uses the contractor for all the planing that one needs over a period of time rather than for a specific job which is how tenders have appeared in the past for this type of work, for specific jobs rather than for a particular type of job throughout a duration of a period.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

My understanding is that one of the reasons why this tender was needed and may provide a degree of justification for the way that the tender was done was that the Government's own planing machine is out of order. As the hon Member has himself noticed this is not a tender for the resurfacing of roads but simply for the planing of roads. In other words, the preparation of roads for resurfacing. It is the Government's intention to increasingly have recourse to the private sector for the major road resurfacing programme but that policy is not in any way indicated or the reason for this is not anything to do with that policy. This was an administrative act by the particular officer in a particular department who administers this area of Government activity.

NO. 125 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**NON-INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYEES - EXTENSION OF SERVICE**

What is the policy of the Government with regards to non-industrial employees who seek an extension to their service beyond the age of 60?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The policy of the Government with regard to non-industrial employees who seek an extension to their service beyond the age of 60 is as contained in General Orders and which has not been changed by this administration.

Every case is looked at on its own merits and taking into account primarily the public interest. In general the policy is that people should retire when they reach the age of 60.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 125 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Was in fact a policy decision taken by the Government after the election to, if you like, on the side of saying no rather than on the side of saying yes to requests? In fact, the position previously was that unless there was a compelling reason for saying no, if somebody wanted to carry on they should be given an opportunity particularly if they did not have the full service.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not aware of any such cases personally amongst non-industrials. I have had one or two cases brought to my attention in respect of industrials at the Health Authority. I am not aware of any case such as the one that the Leader of the Opposition has described. There has not been a firm policy. I suppose that if a case arose where an officer would be severely prejudiced if he was not allowed to serve for just a little bit longer, the Government would not wish to be unreasonable. In general terms the policy of the Government is that we need to create job opportunities and that includes the public sector for our youth and for people who need to make a start in life and that in that context people ought to retire when they reach retirement age especially in the public sector where one retires with the benefit of what is by any standards a generous occupational pension.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not a fact that for those who have not got full service retirement at 60 means retirement on a reduced income with the need to find alternative employment or become a community officer under Community Care Limited? Is that not the case with most of the civil servants at 60 particularly those with reduced pensions because they may not have done 30 years in the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That would be the case of such people. What I am telling the hon Member is that I am not aware of any such case in the last 20-odd months in terms of non-industrials. But my original answer was that every case is looked at on its own merits taking into account primarily the public interest but not exclusive in the public interest. So it is not that the rule is no, the rule is we would prefer it to be no but each case is still looked on its merits and a decision made in each case if the officer applies. Indeed, there are cases where the Government probably encourages officers not to retire the moment they reach 60. For example, the sensible policy of the Department of Education that if a teacher reaches retirement age halfway through the school year it is better if they stay on until the end of at least that academic year so as not to disrupt the educational service being rendered by that office and not start with the musical chairs and disrupt many classrooms in many schools, et cetera. So certainly it is not a hard and fast rule. The Government have a preference to make way for people coming in but we are certainly open to consider cases if officers apply but although I do not want the hon Member to hold me to this, a paper might have come across my desk, I am not aware that there had been any cases of officers that have applied and have been turned down on the non-industrial side.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact the impression that some people seem to have that there was a definitive policy change to say no as a general rule to people applying is not indeed the case. Each case, in fact, is still being given the same consideration as has been the case in the past where things like the fact that they are not blocking promotion and the fact that there is no union objection and the fact that the person may be coming out with a relatively small income are all taken into account, is that correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the rule has been applied quite strictly on the industrial side and certainly one of the factors that would be taken into account on the non-industrial side, if such a case arose, was whether there was a public interest in the officer not continuing.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I take it, although it is not in the original question, when the Chief Minister refers to the industrial side, of course, on the industrial side we are talking about 65 and not 60?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Indeed.

NO. 126 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**CIVIL SERVICE - VACANCIES**

Can Government list the vacancies that were created as a result of the 85 posts that had been or were about to be filled in October 1997 by internal promotion?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The 85 posts the hon Member refers to were obviously not all filled by internal promotion but rather as a result, at the end of the musical chairs, of all the promotions down the line, resulting in 21 further Administrative Assistants being employed from outside the Service.

The filling of the relevant technical posts on promotion, results in vacancies at the industrial level.

The hon Member will have seen the advertisements of some industrial posts, for example, scaffolder/labourers, mechanical fitters, and it may result in some further industrial vacancies being filled when Government finalise considering the manpower resources of its sections.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 126 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

So the amount of vacancies actually created as a result of the filling of those 85 posts are 21 AA's and a number of industrial jobs, is that what the Chief Minister is saying?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is what I am saying. In other words, the vacancies were at posts at various stages of the hierarchy in the civil service, they get filled on promotion with the result of musical chairs, leaving a number of vacancies at the bottom. That has resulted in 21 further AA's being employed. In other words, the induction, the number of new bodies inducted into the public service at the moment stands at 21.

HON J C PEREZ:

So the Chief Minister is saying that obviously none of the other vacancies are to be filled?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, more of them may be filled. In other words, many vacancies have been filled by promoting people in post and that does not generate the need for a new body. Other people have been promoted and the job from which they had come has not been replaced by an officer of the similar grade and therefore there has been a shuffling and reshuffling which has been serviced at the very bottom which is, of course, where the gaps are left.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister say, in fact, of the 85 posts that were listed on the provisional list of 30 May, there was a list of 93 posts given to the House at the time of the estimates and we were told subsequently about eight of those 93 being filled in a subsequent House and that left 85 and what we have been trying to find out since is, since these 85 or as many as have been filled, have been filled by internal promotion what was the first wave, that is, if there was, for example, if I may quote from the list, Postal Services Manager listed as vacant on 30 May and that is now occupied by someone, that someone left a vacancy in the service. The question now and the question that has been put previously is the result of that first movement of people. Is that information available?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

All will be revealed when the estimates are tabled soon because this will now contain an accurate statement of the current establishment as reflected by the bodies in post. The hon Member, I realise he just chooses an example but actually chooses a very unfortunate one because the Postal Services Manager is the case that we discussed at the last meeting and he was the same man on an acting basis. He could have chosen any other of the 84 but not that one. The hon Members may have noticed from the advertisements and from bulletins that the way that the Government did this was that we started off recruiting the Senior Officers, then the Senior Executive Officers, then the Higher Executive Officers, then the Executive Officers, in that fashion. Therefore after the Senior Executive Officer posts were created there was then an exercise, on how many SEO's did we now need? Some of the SEO's that we needed were in some cases the result of newly created SEO posts, in other cases it was the result of a Senior Officer being promoted, in other cases it was just a question of the SEO being promoted, a new post being created. For example, the Senior Officer in the Department of Tourism and Transport, that did not result in an increase in SEO's because the man in post got it and we did not replace the SEO which is what he was before he was promoted and so on and so forth. Actually just telling him what was the size of the first wave of SEO's for the reason that I have just been trying to explain, I do not know how clearly, would not enable him to work out the domino effect of that but if the hon Members will just be patient for a month or two longer we will be placing before the House, both in numerical and I hope in graphical form, the current look of the civil service showing the changes that there have been since all this process began which is what I promised the hon Member - I do not remember in the context of what debate - that we would do by the time of the next Budget session and then it will all be clear, we will indicate what bodies are in post at the moment, what vacancies there are of this type that we intend to fill as opposed to those historical vacancies that no one ever intended to fill so that the civil service obtains a new but visible shape and size and everybody knows where officers are, where real vacancies are and therefore what new recruitment there is likely to be in the forthcoming months.

In addition to that, we are committed with the GGCA to do a section by section review of staff resources to see if they can make a justifiable case which the government are willing to meet of the need for additional resources in particular departments. Those additional resources, if they can be identified in particular sections, will not necessarily be filled by new recruitment because the Government are working on changes to our

working systems which will spare labour in functions which are currently being done in a labour intensive manual systems which would save labour if they were computerised, et cetera. So whilst of course there is a complete assurance against redundancies and loss of jobs, we are in a process of redistribution of the existing manning levels between the various activities and that is the last part of it, the section by section review and the function by function review, that has not yet commenced. I understand, but I am not in a position to assure the hon Members, that the GGCA and the Personnel Manager may have started, certainly I have asked them to, therefore they may have started to work out how that review takes place when it actually commences.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am grateful for that information but it is not the information that we are seeking. The question No. 472 of December asked precisely the same thing as the question now, that is, of the first wave of vacancies filled what was the result? We know that when the whole process of musical chairs is finished we are going to see the chairs in a different place and we will be able to see where they were originally and where they were at the end but not where they have been in between. The Chief Minister in answer to a supplementary on Question No. 473 said in December that he would be happy to provide me information earlier than a few months, which was a few months ago, and that it could be put together relatively quickly. Would it be possible for him to provide the first effect which is what we have been asking since December so that we can start working ourselves out the pattern of what has happened by the time we get the estimates and we see the new picture?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am reluctant to give assurances on my feet to provide information because as he knows from a letter I handed in this morning one can forget but if he will write to me or if the Opposition Spokesman for Government Services will write to me or to the Chief Secretary if they prefer and ask for that information then that will certainly be dealt with. We are certainly able to tell them what new Senior Officers there are, what new SEO's there are and where they are, HEO's as well because already that process is complete, EO's I think is also now complete, all that certainly has been completed and that information can certainly be given to them, it is just a question of the Personnel Department writing a letter to him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am right in thinking that in fact all these changes eventually have to be gazetted, is that not the case? Every change, every promotion, every movement eventually appears in the Gazette, I think, it seems to be taking longer than normal.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think it has taken longer than normal. I think this edition of the Gazette with retirements, promotions and resignations, I think only comes out once or twice a year so I think they just store these things up but certainly I believe that there is a requirement to Gazette and I suspect that that will be taken care of in the usual way by the Personnel Manager.



NO. 127 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**GIBRALTAR SAVINGS BANK - DEPOSITS**

Can Government state how much of the increase of deposits with the Gibraltar Savings Bank in (a) debentures; (b) fixed term bonds, and (c) ordinary accounts; in the financial year 1996/97, arose from members of the public and how much from Government controlled funds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The increase in deposits with the Gibraltar Savings Bank during 1996/97 was made up as follows:

	<u>Deposits on</u> <u>1 April 1996</u>	<u>Deposits on</u> <u>31 March 1997</u>	<u>Increase</u>
	£'million	£'million	£'million
Debentures	£25.51	£42.40	£16.89
Fixed Term Bonds	£ 4.63	£ 5.15	£ 0.52
Ordinary Deposits	£ 4.95	£ 6.42	<u>£ 1.47</u>
			<u>£18.88</u>

All these increases are attributable to deposits from members of the public.

NO. 128 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GIBRALTAR SAVINGS BANK - DEPOSITS**

Can Government state how much of the balance of deposits with the Gibraltar Savings Bank as at 31 March 1997 was from members of the public and how much from Government controlled funds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Of the total deposits in the Gibraltar Savings Bank of £125.4 million on 31 March 1997, around £70 million represented moneys controlled by the Government. These deposits included the Special Funds and deposits by Government companies and corporations.

NO. 129 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**PUBLIC DEBT - REDEMPTIONS**

Can Government list the issues of public debt that have been redeemed since May 1996?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The following are the redemptions of public debt since May 1996:

Capital Bonds issued to the Gibraltar Savings Bank

	£'million
Capital Bond No. 5	£ 1.9
Capital Bond No. 6	£ 1.0
Capital Bond No. 7	£ 7.1
Capital Bond No. 9	£ 1.8
Capital Bond No. 10	£ 2.1
	<u>£13.9</u>

Government Debentures

9.5 per cent debentures 1999	<u>£ 0.1</u>
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Other Loans

United Kingdom/Gibraltar loan 1971/91	<u>£ 0.3</u>
Total redemptions since May 1996	<u>£14.3</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 129 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

The UK loan, I take it, is the longstanding loan that was given, in fact, many years ago for the housing development of Varyl Begg on which a number of tranches had to be paid. Is this the amount that was due to be repaid or it is being paid before time?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would need notice of that question. I do not suppose the hon Member will stay awake in his bed tonight wondering about that, but I will certainly find that out and give it to him, I would not possibly know that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I take it then from that answer that there was not a political decision taken to repay the debt earlier otherwise he would know that he was repaying it earlier?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The political decision that there should be some public debt servicing, some public debt reduction, the exact way in which that is done is an administrative Treasury function dealt with by the Treasury. The political decision is to reduce the public debt by an amount. How that is done is a matter of what is most economical, what is most advantageous to redeem and what is most advantageous to retain and that is a Treasury function done by, I suspect, the Financial and Development Secretary or the Accountant General.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are the Government aware of what was the rate of interest being paid on this UK loan or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If by the Government he means the political Government the answer is that I personally do not have that information but if by the Government he means people who work for the Government then, of course, yes, the Accountant General is well aware of what the rate was and either it was redeemed because it was due to be redeemed or if it was not due to be redeemed, it was redeemed because it was considered financially attractive to redeem that as opposed to some other bit of public debt.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I take it from the answer that it is not something that the Government were asked to take a policy decision on, it was simply something that was done by the Treasury and in fact when the rate of interest is known it will be seen whether it was a wise thing to redeem early this debt or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Absolutely, as I say, the Government's policy decision was whether we wished to reduce the public debt or to maintain it and retain the cash for other purposes. Given the state of the Government finances at the time, and given the Government's desire to continue to service the public debt in a prudent manner the Government made the policy decision that there should be a reduction of public debt and there has been something of the order of £5 million net since May 1996 but the details of exactly which bond or which debenture or which loan is not something that I think Chief Ministers should personally trouble themselves with although I understand that my predecessor took a different view.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes but of course whether the Chief Minister chooses to trouble himself with it or not he accepts that he still has to answer for the decision whoever has troubled themselves for it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have full trust in my Treasury officials and I have no doubt that they would not do anything which was not in the financial interest of Gibraltar. If they do then of course I recognise that I would have to respond for their decisions in this House just as he had to respond for the officials in all the departments of Government, not just Treasury, when he was doing the job that I am now doing.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Therefore the point that I am making is that if a decision was taken by the Government to reduce some debt and there is a further question on the Order Paper to issue some debt so that the net reduction was considerably less than the £14 million, one would expect that the fact that something was being repaid at the same time as other money was being borrowed was on the premise that it cost less to borrow than it did to retain what was already old. I take it that that is not an unreasonable assumption to expect the Government to be working on, no?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, that is a view that would sound logical to anybody that administers even the average piggy-bank.

NO. 130 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**PUBLIC DEBT - ISSUES**

Can Government list the issues of public debt that have taken place since May 1996 giving the interest rate and maturity date of each issue?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Government have drawn down £10 million from the Barclays Bank revolving facility at an interest rate of LIBOR plus 0.25 per cent. This facility was recently extended on a fully revolving basis by five years and for a further £10 million to £20 million. After this five year period the loan agreement provides for the revolving facility to decrease by £4 million per annum until 10 October 2007.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 130 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

When the £10 million was borrowed in the financial year 1996/97, if I remember correctly or it might have been the previous one, I think the Chief Minister said in the estimates last year that in fact towards the end of that financial year £5 million, presumably of these £10 million, had been borrowed which was not strictly required because the facility was about to run out. Are we talking about that same money?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I think we are. That is how it rose from £5 million to £10 million, I believe.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In fact, is it not the case that the recently tabled loan agreement showed that the facility was not running out in March 1995 because it was not due to run out, I think, until October and in any case the fact that they have extended it means it did not run out in October so does that mean that there was some other reason for borrowing that £5 million and not the one that was given at the time in the House that the facility was about to run out?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether the Treasury uses revolving credit facilities for cash flow management purposes but certainly in terms of balance sheet borrowing requirements I can tell him that there has been a net reduction in the public debt and that therefore there has been no need to borrow the money for public expenditure other than perhaps for ordinary cash flow Treasury management purposes. So that is as much light as I can shed on his question. As to whether it was strictly necessary to have recourse to that facility at the time that the Treasury drew it down, again that is a matter for Treasury. I suspect that they might have taken the view that they could borrow it and hold it through the Gibraltar Savings Bank on terms that were not financially costly to hold the money.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the £10 million that is shown in the estimates of expenditure as credited to the Improvement and Development fund the same £10 million that we are still talking about?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I do not think so. There are several credits to the Consolidated Fund.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, I have not said the Consolidated Fund, if he will excuse me, I have said the Improvement and Development Fund 1996/97 estimates.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, that is the previous year's estimates or does he mean 1997/98, does he mean the current year's estimates?

HON J J BOSSANO:

If I may, my understanding is that the answer that I have been given is that £10 million is the only money that has been borrowed since May 1996 and we were told at the estimates last year that in the last financial year £10 million had been borrowed so I am assuming we are talking about the same £10 million and that there has been no borrowing since March 1997. That is, from the beginning of April 1997 in the current financial year no borrowing has taken place?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is my understanding of the position, yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

That is my understanding of the answer that I have been given. Therefore in my supplementary I asked for the reason for the £5 million being borrowed as opposed to the original intended £5 million so it became £10 million. Given that at the estimates time we had been told that the only reason why it was £10 million was because the revolving facility was about to expire and in fact it seems from the extension that was taking place with the Barclays Bank loan agreement to which the Chief Minister has made reference, that facility did not expire in March, it did not expire until October and in any case it was extended when it was due to expire so that was not the reason given. In my further questions when I have been told that in fact the money was not needed for expenditure but maybe for cash flow management, since there is in the estimates shown at last year's budget a sum of £10 million credited to the Improvement and Development Fund from the proceeds of loans, I am asking if that is the same £10 million and if in fact the £10 million that we are talking about was in fact put in the I&D Fund last year and, if so, more than £5 million of it must have been spent because there was not a surplus of £5 million?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would need notice of that question but my understanding is that it is not the same £10 million. Amongst other reasons for the reasons that the hon Member speculates, that the expenditure in the I&D Fund was simply not at that magnitude in that period.



NO. 131 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GOLD BULLION - IMPORTS**

Can Government state when they will be in a position to provide the information that was requested by letter dated 16 October 1997 in respect of the quantity of gold bullion imported in the financial year 1996/97 and the six months since 1 April 1997?

Let me say, that I have received the information this morning so the answer is I know now when it was possible to provide it.

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

As I said privately to the hon Member, I apologise to him for the delay in providing the information which has been due to an administrative oversight. As he has now himself said, he has had this information earlier today.

NO. 132 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**I&D FUND - EXPENDITURE**

What is the estimated expenditure of the Improvement and Development fund by Head of Expenditure in the current financial year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The latest tentative revised estimate expenditure of the Improvement and Development fund during the financial year ending 31 March 1998 is made up as follows:

<u>Expenditure Head</u>	<u>Revised Estimate</u> <u>1997/98</u>	<u>Approved Estimate</u> <u>1997/98</u>
101 - Housing	832,000	12,050,000
102 - Schools, Youth & Culture Facilities	1,231,000	1,231,000
103 - Tourism and Transport	2,719,000	4,990,000
104 - Infrastructure & General Capital Works	3,746,000	7,970,000
105 - Electricity	244,000	985,000
106 - Industry and Development	<u>2,255,000</u>	<u>9,750,000</u>
	<u>11,027,000</u>	<u>36,976,000</u>

The only point that I would add in the analysis of these figures is that, of course, of the approved estimate of £36.9 million, £10 million was in relation to Harbour Views provision which it has not been necessary to have recourse to.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 132 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Obviously the remaining £27 million is not going to be spent in the month of March. Is this slippage, I think they used to call it in the old days when it happened at enormous regularity, is it that there is, for example, lots of bills that need to come in or in fact there is a physical backlog of work that was intended to be done and has not been done?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think it is the latter. In terms of slippage this is not so much slippage as a sort of landslide. I think that we have found that we were simply too ambitious in assessing the capital projects that the Government had capacity to handle even having recourse as we have more recently been having to the private sector because they still have to be driven from within the public sector even if the technical and professional work is done out with the public sector. Therefore I think the lesson there was that there is simply a limit to the works that not only the Government can handle but indeed that the private sector can absorb without creating a market in which prices have just risen at the expense of the taxpayer because as contractors fill up with work the private sector never turn work down, if one keeps on sending them work what they do is simply raise their prices and everything keeps costing more.

NO. 133 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**MOTOR VEHICLES - IMPORTS**

What was the number and value of motor vehicles imported by licensed dealers since September 1997 and the import duty paid?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The number of vehicles imported by licensed dealers since September 1997 was as follows:

Vehicles imported, Quantity 999, Value £10,968,176.

Import duty was paid on 405 of those vehicles in the sum of £499,950.

The difference between the number of vehicles paying import duty and the number of vehicles imported lies in that 594 vehicles went into a private bonded store held by the importers. Duty is paid on the release of these vehicles for sale from time to time.

NO. 134 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**MOTOR VEHICLES - IMPORTS**

What was the value and number of motor vehicles imported by individuals since September 1997 and the import duty paid?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The value and number of motor vehicles imported by individuals since September 1997 and the import duty paid is as follows:

Value - £390,010;    Number - 89;    Import duty paid - £125,663

NO. 135 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**BUILDING MATERIALS - IMPORTS**

Can Government state the value of building materials imported since September 1997 and the amount of import duty paid?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The amount and value of import duty collected on building materials since September 1997 is as follows:

Amount - £56,555;                      Value - £2.939 million

On a quick re-reading, it is not exactly the question that he asked. I am sure he understands the answer. Building material with a value of £2.939 million were imported yielding import duty of £56,555. I am sure that is how he understands it although it is not exactly what he asks in this question.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 135 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, when the decision was taken to introduce import duty as part of the restructuring, it was said that on-going projects would not be affected. Is the figure of £2.939 million value of building materials only those materials subject to duty or in fact, does that include some that did not pay duty? Is there a relation between the two figures?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, all building materials are subject to import duty and therefore that could not be the figure. Indeed, the figure of building materials imported, the £2.939 million is the total amount of building materials imported. The reason why there is such a low yield from that, one would expect that 12 per cent would produce £300,000 or £400,000, the reason why it has only produced £56,000 is because the vast majority of that volume was for exempted projects because they were still on-going, because they were on-going projects in pursuit of the policy that he himself has described.

HON A J ISOLA:

The building materials in respect of the Hotel Assistance Scheme, are they exempted from import duty?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, but not pursuant to this rather pursuant to the Hotel Assistance Scheme itself. Well, to the extent that they had been imported, yes.

NO. 136 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

How much was collected in PAYE in each month since November 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The PAYE tax collected in each of the months November 1997 to February 1998 was:

November 1997	-	£3,014,000
December 1997	-	£3,511,959
January 1998	-	£3,469,701
February 1998	-	£3,167,442

In reply to Question No. 483 of 1997, I explained that these figures are not the final definitive figures as an important percentage of the total PAYE collected in any month is in respect of Gibraltar Government employees details of which are provided to the Income Tax Office by the Treasury. These details are currently being scrutinised to reconcile the Treasury figures with the Income Tax Office Records, so they may be subject to fluctuation if errors are found.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 136 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

But presumably, by and large, the Government pay themselves on time, they do not have the same problem as with the rest of Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Indeed, yes, of course that is true.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, in relation to the estimate that was made of £45 million, am I right in that in the £45 million is an element of non-PAYE which is the tax paid by the self-employed which is not in fact included in these monthly figures?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the £45 million is tax from all sources except companies.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So that in fact in the light of the information that has been provided since April and on the basis of the figure for non-PAYE reflected in last year's estimates, the figure of £45 million seems to be very close to what the result is expected to be, am I correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, indeed, that is true. There is a slight decrease in the yields from company tax but not here. But on the whole I think that the figure for income tax collections will be very much in line with the prudent estimate.

NO. 137 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how many of the 1,073 assessments for company tax for 1995/96 have not yet been paid and the total amount due?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Five hundred and eighty-seven assessments of the 1,073 issued as at December 1997 remain due and payable as at the 16 March 1998. The total amount due is £4.05 million.



NO. 138 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how many companies have now been issued with tax assessments for 1995/96 in addition to the 1,073 assessments on issue as at December 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The total number of companies which have had assessments for the tax year 1995/96 has now increased by 237 from 1,073 as at December 1997 to 1,310 as at the 14 March 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 138 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government state how many of the assessments for 1995/96 in respect of company profits are being contested by the companies concerned?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The management data available to the Commissioner of Income Tax does not contain the information on assessments in the manner in which the Leader of the Opposition requires. However, I can say that 500 corporation tax assessments in respect of 1995/96 were payable and outstanding as at 16 March 1998. I think what is being said is that they are payable and outstanding which may be because they are contested.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Did the Chief Minister not say in answer to Question No. 137 that in fact 587 of the 1,073 remained payable? How come it is now 500? Is it that in between his answer to No. 137 and his answer to No. 138, 87 have paid up?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The question that I am answering relates to tax assessments for 1995/96 that have been contested and No. 137 deals with assessments that have not yet been paid and the total amount due and I did say there were 587 assessments, the arithmetic would seem not to square. Certainly there would seem to be either a few more than 500, it may be that 500 is a typographical error. I do not see how the figure in answer No. 139 can be lower than the one in No. 137, it would not make sense. I will clarify that for him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In respect of any of these 587 that remain payable, assuming that to be the correct figure, the one I was given earlier, have any of these appealed against the assessment? I asked about contested but I mean presumably one way of contesting the assessment would be to use the appeal machinery that was set up.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Before I answer that I think I have been too generous to the hon Member in the concession that I have just made to him because, of course, the figure of 587 was out of the 1,073 but the figure of 1,073 grew by 237 as I told him in answer to Question No. 138 so it may well be.....

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the total assessments have grown the unpaid assessments cannot have shrunk, if anything the disparity is even greater, surely?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Indeed. But in answer to his supplementary, I do not have that information in front of me, I know that use is certainly being made of the new appeal system and there are many cases before it but I cannot tell how many cases there are on appeal and, of course, nor do I know because in respect of this year of assessment.... [*HON J J BOSSANO: Or previous years.*] No, the taxpayer has the option to refer the matter to the new Appeals Court even though it relates to a period prior, the taxpayer has the option but not the Commissioner. So I could not tell him how many assessments are of these alleged 500 but I agree it should be more than that are under appeal through the formal appeals procedure.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Am I right in thinking, from what I remember when it was presented in the House, the way the system is supposed to work is that there is first an attempt presumably to see if the Tax Department can be convinced when the assessment is challenged and it is only if that is not possible that then the appeal is, so that in fact if it was at the stage of people questioning the assessment it would not yet have gone to the appeal, am I correct in thinking that that is how it works?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is possible under the new system but not under the old system because although in one of his earlier supplementaries the hon Member drew a distinction between a contested and an appealed assessment, in fact, under the old system one could not contest except by way of appeal. One had 21 days from the date that one got the assessment and it is not that one could go and query it, one could only appeal and only when one had appealed could one contest it. But under the new system the hon Member is right, there is this process whereby the Commissioner and the taxpayer attempt to agree the position and only if there is no agreement does the taxpayer need to have recourse to the appeals procedure.

NO. 139 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how many of the tax assessments for 1995/96 in respect of company profits are being contested by the companies concerned?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The management data available to the Commissioner of Income Tax does not contain the information on assessments in the manner which the Leader of the Opposition requires.

However, I can say that 500 corporation tax assessments in respect of 1995/96 were payable and outstanding as at the 16 March 1998.

NO. 140 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how much, if any, of the assessments for 1995/96 on company profits in respect of 1,073 companies showed that no tax was payable?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Four hundred and eighty-nine corporation tax assessments of those issued as at December 1997 in respect of the tax year 1995/96 have, as at the 16 March 1998, been either paid or discharged by the Income Tax Office as not payable. The exact information which the hon Member seeks is not available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 140 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the Chief Minister will recall, in fact, the question is the one that I put to him in a supplementary in the December meeting of the House which he was not able to answer then and he told me that if I gave him notice, which was whether in fact the assessment means that the company has taxable profits or whether it is possible that there could be assessments which are made on the basis that no profits were made. I was not sure whether automatically if there is an assessment it means that there is tax due and the Chief Minister said that if I gave him notice he would be able to give me an answer. That is why I have put the question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, then I apologise to the hon Member, I have overlooked doing that. I will make it a point, obviously there are difficulties in giving the hon Member that information as to whether the fact of issuing an assessment means that the Commissioner has formed the view that there is taxable income or whether it is simply a means of getting people to react. I will certainly have that found out and report it to the hon Member.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Will the Chief Minister take note that the point that I am making is in trying to establish the market that there is for company taxation whether, in fact, if there were, say, several hundred companies that were not earning taxable profits either because they were not in a profitable situation or because they had offsetting allowances, they would not be included in the 1,073 but they might still be in existence. That is what I am trying really to find out.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am obliged. That is how I had understood his question.

NO. 141 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - QUALIFYING COMPANIES**

Can Government state how much of the tax payable of £258,147 for 1996/97 in respect of seven qualifying companies as at December 1997, has been paid to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The total amount of corporation tax paid to date by the seven qualifying companies assessed as at December 1997 is £120,334 as at March 1998.

NO. 142 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how much has been collected in respect of corporation tax in each month since November 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The sum of £192,476 was collected in respect of corporation tax in November 1997; the sum of £1,582,867 in December 1997; the sum of £1,064,423 in January 1998, and the sum of £457,121 in February 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 142 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given that the figure up to November I think was of the order of £5.8 million, do the Government expect to achieve the estimated £10 million by the end of March?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is always subject to last minute variations in trends. It is now March, subject to what March says, at the beginning of the year the view that I formed was that we would not meet the estimate of £10 million. The Financial and Development Secretary indicates to me, as I am on my feet, that he believes that we might just about get there. But frankly I have been of the view, during the last three or four months, that the yield from corporation tax threatened not to reach the £10 million mark that was provided in the Estimates.

NO. 143 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - SPANISH FRONTIER WORKERS**

Can Government state how many Spanish frontier workers paid PAYE in April 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Yes, a total of 515 Spanish frontier workers paid PAYE in April 1996.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 143 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government explain why it is they were not able to give a figure for June when I asked for that earlier and they are able to give it for April? At the time it was said that it was impossible to give the figure for one month because the returns are made for people in employment for the whole year?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I can happily. Somebody has had the presence of mind to speculate that that is the hon Member's objective and has provided me with the wherewithal to satisfy his curiosity here. It has been possible to extract a figure for April given that the PAYE deduction cards specifically require employers to provide information regarding the months of April and October for the purposes of the Employment Survey. So, on this occasion by choosing April, just as if he had chosen October, those are the only two months for which the information can actually be provided.

NO. 144 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state what is the latest figure for corporation tax payable on assessments raised for the tax year 1996/97 and how much has been collected to date?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The total tax payable on assessments raised to date for the tax year 1996/97 now totals £10,638,709, of which £7,191,306 has been paid.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 144 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

When the information was provided in answer to Question No. 488 of 1977, where the figure was £10,590,868, it was in respect of 962 assessments. Can the Government say how many assessments are covered by the new figure?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, but I can give him the information as to how that figure is arrived at. If we compare, not just with Question No. 488 of 1997 but indeed with Question No. 227 of 1997, which also sought the same information. By the time of this question now, the level of assessments had risen to £12,293,677 less discharged as being found not payable £1,654,968. If the hon Member compares that to the equivalent figure at the time of No. 488 will see that that subtraction is much higher than it was then and suggests that obviously there were a lot of assessments issued for the purposes of obtaining a reaction. That left a payable amount - the figure that he has already had in the answer which when one subtracts the figure that I have already told him of £7.91 million has been paid leaves outstanding £3.47 million as opposed to the £4.597 million that was left outstanding at the time that he asked Question No. 488. So there is less outstanding in total as a result of a higher level of assessments, a higher level of discharges and the fact that nearly an extra £1.2 million have actually been paid. But I cannot tell him the number of assessments involved although if he is interested in that information I am sure it is available and I can obtain it for him.

HON A J ISOLA:

Of the £3.447 million outstanding is it possible to see what element of that is being repaid on agreements?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I would be surprised if assessments for what is in effect almost for the current year, as far as companies are concerned, were already the subject matter of agreements. It is possible, some people get their assessments and immediately seek an agreement. I am sure that information is available and I will have it passed to the hon Member.



NO. 145 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**CROWN DEPENDENCY STATUS**

Have the Government been told by the UK Government whether there are practical difficulties in Gibraltar achieving decolonisation by obtaining Crown Dependency Status?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 145 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Did the Chief Minister ask the question when he was told there were practical difficulties in the way of integration or is it that the question has not been put?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member is aware, since he was told no to integration long before I was, of what the practical difficulties in the part of that option are, namely that the United Kingdom Government are not willing to countenance it. In the case of the Government's objective which is to achieve decolonisation by modernising the Constitution so that it no longer regulates a colonial relationship, the British Government have indicated that they are willing to enter into such a process. I have not been told that they see any practical difficulties although, of course, and if the hon Member believes that what I am about to say constitutes a statement of practical difficulty, then I hope that he will forgive me for not having said so in my previous answer, I do not believe that it is; the position of the United Kingdom is that whilst there is a relationship of dependency of any sort then the United Kingdom cannot be in a position of responsibility without any power whatsoever. In other words, there has to be some mechanisms in there which reflect the fact that Gibraltar would still be a Crown dependency or a dependent territory or in a relationship of dependence as opposed to independent. I do not interpret that as being practical difficulties but that in any process of constitutional modernisation short of independence, the United Kingdom has interests which if we want to ensure it has the constitutional mechanisms to say what we say is that fine, that those mechanisms cannot be colonial in nature. The exercise which now faces us all, including the Opposition Member when the Government conclude our initial discussions and on which I hope the Government and the Opposition will be able to work through a commission of this House together; what remains to be seen is the extent to which that is capable of delivering to get for Gibraltar a genuinely non-colonial constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom. I think that is the task that we all face. We are confident that the answer to that is yes. I know that the hon Member is a touch more cynical and it remains to be seen.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am sure the Chief Minister realises that what I am trying to establish is, in fact, whether the United Kingdom has in fact turned down the possibility of us achieving decolonisation not just by integration and by independence but also by a form of association with the UK such as a Crown dependency status which I am sure the Chief Minister knows has been turned down before in 1968?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If that is exactly what the hon Member meant by his principal question, the answer is that they have not told me that; on the contrary I have been encouraged to believe the contrary. I have been encouraged to believe that it is possible and that the United Kingdom Government are willing to enter into a process of constitutional modernisation such as will establish the Government's policy objectives. It remains to be seen whether there is coincidence between Gibraltar and the UK on that issue. It also remains to be seen whether the results that can be achieved in that direction are sufficient to satisfy that goal, that I know the hon Member attaches great importance to, which is to justify the request to remove Gibraltar from the list of non-self-governing territories of the United Nations and that is a matter which I think we cannot pre-empt at this stage. It is a process that needs to be gone through and I hope that the answer to both of those will be yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But is it in fact the case then that the United Kingdom is prepared to look at the question of constitutional change - I will not use the word 'modernisation' because it does not mean anything as far as I am concerned - so that we stop being a colony and we become something that is not a colony? Is the UK clear that that is the purpose of the exercise?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the United Kingdom is clear that that is the purpose of the exercise. They no longer use the word 'colony' and the danger with formulating the position as simplistically - I do not say that in any sense derogatively - as the hon Member has just formulated it, is that it lends itself to the requisite that it is some time since the United Kingdom has regarded its dependent territories as colonies. He and I know what we mean when we use that phrase still; the United Kingdom regards its relationship with its dependent territories as fluid and evolving and therefore the question is not whether we cease to be something which we may or may not still be but whether what they are willing to give us by way of constitutional modernisation is sufficient to satisfy our aspirations as a people to enjoy a non-colonial relationship with the United Kingdom. I have never been told anything which would suggest that that is not possible or that there are practical difficulties in achieving that and certainly I have not been told that in relation to the position with Spain. Of course the United Kingdom has its views about the need to manage the Spanish problem but I have always thought it to divorce the two facts as I am sure he does as well.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Irrespective of whether we consider that the nature of the relationship in practical terms, that is to say, in the way it works on a day-to-day basis is colonial in the sense in which the word has been used since 1948, would the Chief Minister not agree with me that if there is an updating of the Constitution but the United Kingdom continues to report to the Committee on Decolonisation at the United Nations on the basis that it is reporting as the administering power of the non-self-governing territory of Gibraltar, even if we were a Crown dependency, we would be the only one on which it would be reporting, then de facto and de jure we are still a colony however benevolent the colonial link might be. Would he not agree?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, certainly it would suggest that the United Kingdom considers to regard us as a non-self-governing territory. I think that must be an inevitable consequence of continuing to report to a special committee dealing with non-self-governing territories. I think it is a semantic consequence of that and the political implications would have to be studied carefully.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, the semantic connotations of it do not apply because he has chosen to rename the committee 'the committee on non-self-governing territories'; it is as he knows, because he has appeared before it, the Committee on Decolonisation and when he goes there he goes there to talk to the Committee that is charged with monitoring how close we are to being decolonised. So would he not agree that it does not do us any good to try and hide the fact, either we are on the road to decolonisation or we are not and if we are not then presumably the practical difficulties in the way of independence and integration or this option are still the difficulties that the United Kingdom does not want to proceed in our case with decolonisation. That was the problem in 1968, is it still a problem in 1998?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I cannot tell the hon Member whether it is or it is not, I can tell him that it has not been raised with me in those terms. It may well be the United Kingdom's position. If it is, it has not been articulated to me.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, the Chief Minister has not actually been discouraged from thinking that there might not be such an obstacle?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As the hon Member knows, London does not, as a matter of practice, discuss Gibraltar and Gibraltar's participation at the United Nations. No discussion that I have ever had with anybody representing the United Kingdom Government on what I call decolonisation by constitutional modernisation and which he wishes to call something else, no one on behalf of the UK Government has to me linked that matter with the United Nations or with the committee or with what may happen or not happen or be able to happen or not be able to happen in relation to the United Nations. So certainly if by that he understands that I have not been discouraged then I have not been discouraged.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I take it that the Chief Minister has not actually put that question in a way that could not be avoided? That is to say, he has not asked point blank?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This Chief Minister prefers to conduct business in a way designed to enable the matter to be obtained rather than establish grounds of disagreement at the very beginning in a way which might render impossible the achievement of any progress. But, of course, we will come to that position at some stage, hopefully it is when we already have a more enlightened and advanced Constitution; he speaks about the way the Constitution operates in practice but of course he should also recognise that what the Constitution says in theory is also an important aspect of the modernisation of our relationship with the United Kingdom and the bridge that he is suggesting, I do not know if he is suggesting that I should do that at this early stage, but certainly I think it is better to leave that bridge to be crossed later rather than to try and cross it at this stage. Certainly he knows that I have said publicly that the Government of Gibraltar would wish to see a situation in which at the end of this process we could all go home and forget about the whole question of decolonisation and certainly if it did not achieve that, it would still be a worthwhile exercise because we will have achieved whatever we have achieved but certainly I would agree with the hon Gentleman that it would not represent the end of the process.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, the previous impression created when he said what he has just said which was, as I recall it, at the time of the self determination meeting in the Mackintosh Hall that we two were invited to speak, the impression suddenly that he gave me then was that the purpose of the exercise was to achieve what he has just said and that consequently to do a repeat exercise of what was done in 1969 which was modernising the Constitution from 1964 to 1969 was not what this is all about. Is he saying that if he cannot achieve Gibraltar's decolonisation he will settle, as second best, for simply staying as a colony but with a more modern Constitution?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In the first place I would expect that Constitution to be so modern that it could not objectively be described as colonial in nature. It would then be up to the people of Gibraltar to decide whether they wish to go further than that at that stage. But certainly the Government of Gibraltar cannot do more than try to achieve the maximum that can be achieved - I do not think it is just the Government, I think Gibraltar as a whole - the House can only seek to achieve the most that can be achieved and it is up to the people of Gibraltar in the light of circumstances prevailing at that time, to decide whether they are satisfied with the progress that has been made notwithstanding that it may not constitute the end of the decolonisation process or whether they wish to mandate the Government of Gibraltar to go further than that. I do not think that that is a judgement that can be made at this stage. Of course, even if the people decide that that which had been achieved was the most that they wished to see sought, that would still not prevent us from agreeing, in private and as a matter of objective analysis and comment, that it

did not amount to wholesome and complete decolonisation. There are circumstances in which the people of Gibraltar might be willing - and the people will have to stand up and be counted at that point in our future - about whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with whatever it is that we were able to achieve in this round of constitutional reform. I do not share the hon Member's apparent view that nothing is worth getting into the bank unless it is the whole swag. I think whatever can be put into the bank is worth banking.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Government not agree that the experience we have had previously which is that we set up in 1964 with the declared objective of the Legislative Council of the time to achieve decolonisation by 1969 and we finished in the bank in 1968 with a Constitution of which is still there 30 years later and we repeating the same arguments as we were 30 years ago? Can he not see that such a step can in fact put us further back instead of taking us forward?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not, I hope to enjoy more success in progressing the matter than Governments have had during the last 30 years. I can only repeat that constitutional evolution is a gradual matter. If the people who were in Gibraltar immediately after the war had taken that view of the 1969 Constitution presumably we would not even have that now and we would be in the same position as St Helena or some such place. The fact of the matter is that it appears that we are identifying a difference of approach here. My position is that it is worth pursuing the matter and obtaining as much as we can; his position appears to be, if what he is saying is to be interpreted in that way, that we should not move from where we are unless we are certain that what we have amounts to complete decolonisation in the United Nations sense. Well, that is a matter of approach. I do not think that the Government would share that particular approach because achieving whatever we can achieve, even if in his eyes it is not sufficient, puts us further down the road towards achieving whatever it is that he would like to achieve and I really do not see how it prejudices us. It does not prevent us from coming back later for more at some future date so I do not see why it leaves us worse off.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that the Government are not aware, I am surprised that it should be so, is he not aware that everything that he is saying now has been said 35 years ago and that, in fact, 35 years ago the people of Gibraltar, the Government and the Opposition, that is the Government elected under the 1964 Constitution together with the Opposition at the time, issued a booklet which went to the United Nations of which he has a copy in which they said that by 1969 the 1969 Constitution would be the end of the road and that they were in the penultimate step in 1964? Why is it that the Government believe in 1998 that we have still got a very long time ahead but this things must be taken very slowly, obviously it was not a view that was shared by all the elected leaders of Gibraltar in 1964 who believed then, and the British Government were doing nothing to discourage them from believing so, that we were practically there already and that the constitutional conference after the Referendum would be the one that would bring in a Constitution that would decolonise us; one of the options of which was of course this business of a Crown dependency way back in 1968. Is he aware of all that that has already gone on?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am aware of all that. What I do not see is how that suggests that because since 1969 the facts have been as we all know them to have been, that that renders correct the hon Member's thesis that therefore we should not move from where we are unless it is to take the one final definitive step. The fact that in 1969 they thought that this was going to be the second last step and that the next one would be.....

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, in 1964 when the 1964 Constitution came in they thought that was the last but one step and that the final step was in 1968 and were encouraged by Her Majesty's Government to think so. If the British Government in 1968 changed their mind, it does not take a genius to work out what was going on in 1968 that made them change their minds, would he not agree?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, we will have to see, we will have to test to what extent Her Majesty's Government's position has changed and this is what this process is about. These things cannot be tested in the sort of cataclysmic fashion, what is the hon Member suggesting that we should not make proposals unless we are certain that they are going to be accepted? At the end of the day there is nobody sitting in London waiting to say yes to everything that Gibraltar wants to achieve and therefore this has got to be tested and what we are now doing and we will be doing during the next 18 months is testing the issue and it remains to be seen whether the hon Member's well publicised and well-known cynicism about the United Kingdom's willingness and position in this matter turns out to be true. Time may very well demonstrate that he was correct and that we had been indulging in wishful thinking but I do not see that that is a reason for not attempting it.

NO. 146 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GIBRALTAR IDENTITY CARDS - INFRACTION PROCEEDINGS**

Can Government state when the European Commission initiated the infraction procedure against the Kingdom of Spain over its refusal to recognise Gibraltar's identity card?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

As far as I am aware the European Commission has not initiated infraction proceedings against the Kingdom of Spain.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 146 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

It would appear then that the Convent Press Release stating that this was the case must be based on mistaken information, if it is not the case?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not recall at this moment the exact Press Release to which the hon Member is referring nor is it my function here to defend the statements or the position of the Convent. But if they did use any formula of words that indicated that infraction proceedings had been commenced, I can only assume - but I speculate in the same way as he may be able to - that the phrase "infraction" was being used in its loosest possible sense and not in the technical sense of meaning the actual initiation of court proceedings. The hon Member knows that the procedure leading to infraction proceedings is that the Commission takes a view at something called "infraction chefs" and that that is where this particular matter now lies. The Commission, having formed its own view about the validity of the cards, having written to all the member states the letter that he is aware of, asking them whether they would accept them and expressing the Commission's own view about the acceptability of the cards, has received certain responses and the Commission is now considering whether or not to initiate formal infraction proceedings against member states who have answered in a particular way that letter. That decision is made by the Commission through a mechanism called "infraction chefs" which is just jargon for a committee that exists for that purpose, the Infraction Chefs Committee is seized of the question but has not to my knowledge yet made the decision to actually bring court proceedings against any member state and it is the decision to bring court proceedings and the bringing of court proceedings post to everything that goes before it preparatory, which is normally what is meant by infraction proceedings having been initiated. So the best that I can say in answer to the hon Member is that the phrase was either used wrongly or it was used loosely.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Chief Minister know how long the Community chefs have been seized? Did they start being seized a very long time ago or is it a very recent development that they became seized?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I think they have been seized of it for quite some time and if the hon Member might permit me to share his cynicism on this matter at least, I suspect that it will be seized of it for some time still to come. I do not see any evidence that there is any political will in the Commission to initiate infraction proceedings on this matter and it may well be that the file is just being kept alive but that there may actually be not any serious intention to take serious action at any stage. Unfortunately, and we have checked this, it appears that it is not possible to coerce the Commission through taking actions against the Commission of failure to take action, it is not possible by that means to force the Commission to take action, it is a matter entirely in their discretion and as this infraction chefs is not a place where Gibraltar has any direct influence, it is not something that we can influence.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the initiative be taken by anybody other than the Commission? I believe I asked that question before and the Government said they were investigating that possibility.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, and indeed we have and are taking the preparatory steps to getting a formal opinion and indeed putting together the evidence that would be required to sustain such a challenge in case we get advise that there is a procedure. The Government have not yet had a definitive advice upon which we can rely on the matter but certainly it is a matter that we would wish to pursue or at least have somebody else pursue it. It would have to be a private citizen and if we are told that it is possible encourage that because we do recognise it is an important matter for Gibraltar to leave no stone unturned in trying to obtain victory.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government say from what they know how the thing is being handled by the Commission? Have they got as far as writing those pre-169 letters of which we have been the recipient in other matters or it is not even at that stage?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

My understanding, and I am almost certain that I am right, is that a pre-169 letter has not been written because a pre-169 letter is never written until infraction chefs has made the positive decision to initiate infraction proceedings and in a way the pre-169 letter is an initiation of the infraction proceedings and if a pre-169 letter had been issued it might have been possible to answer the original question in the affirmative.



NO. 147 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**BRUSSELS PROCESS - PROPOSALS FOR CO-SOVEREIGNTY**

Can Government state the date on which they have asked the Foreign Secretary to formally reject the proposals for co-sovereignty tabled by Señor Matutes at the Brussels Process meeting of 10 December 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

On 15 January 1998 I wrote to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which amongst other matters I informed him that the proposals were completely unacceptable to the Government of Gibraltar as a whole and I urged him to reject them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 147 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Presumably the Chief Minister is aware that Señor Matutes informed the Spanish Parliament on 18 February that no reply had yet been received from the UK and he seemed to draw encouragement from the fact that no reply had been received. Has he had an indication from the UK that they will proceed to reject as he has requested?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have had no such indication yet from Her Majesty's Government but on the other hand I do not see any cause for Señor Matutes to be encouraged. The fact of the matter is that at the press conference immediately following the Brussels meeting, the Foreign Secretary informed him and the world that the British Government were unwilling to enter into any arrangements involving the sovereignty of Gibraltar without the consent of the people and Government of Gibraltar. Well, the Government of Gibraltar have made our position very clear and therefore if Señor Matutes links what the Foreign Secretary told him there and then in the press conference and what I have subsequently said, then he ought to have very little scope for encouragement all of which is not to say that it would be much preferable if the United Kingdom Government were to put the fullstop at the end of that and say, "Given that we are committed to respecting the wishes of the people of Gibraltar and given that the people of Gibraltar through their Government have conveyed to Her Majesty's Government their rejection of the proposals, there is little point in leaving it on the table to discuss them" and therefore reject them. That is what we have asked them to do, not because we think that there is any danger of the proposals making any progress unless they are rejected, I think there is no danger of that at all, but rather because there is always the risk that whilst they remain on the table unrejected the Spaniards may mislead themselves into believing that they offer prospect and may modify their management or their behaviour in relation to the constructive management of this problem. Their judgements may be clouded by the erroneous belief that there is any mileage in the proposals which they made and whatever mileage there may be in the resolution of this problem it is certainly not contained in Señor Matutes's co-sovereignty proposals as he has formulated them.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I take it that the Chief Minister is also aware that the reason for Señor Matutes's optimism on 18 February to which he has just referred, is because in fact as he explained to the Spanish Parliament he would be satisfied with a reply to the effect that the proposals will stay on the table as a basis for negotiation? Would he not agree with me therefore that until the rejection is made it is not unlikely that Señor Matutes will continue to live in the incorrect assumption that the fact that they have not been rejected means that they are a basis for negotiation which obviously they are not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They are not a basis for negotiation as far as the Gibraltar Government are concerned nor are they a basis for negotiation as far as the British Government are concerned given that the British Government are publicly committed to respecting the wishes of the people of Gibraltar in that respect. However, if Señor Matutes understands by a basis of negotiation something that can be so radically altered as to become something quite different and really not anything that looks very much like what he tabled in the first place, then I suppose, that by that very loose sense of the word, they might be considering that. But certainly the hon Member is aware because I am sure they would adopt the same position, joint sovereignty meaning sovereignty shared by the UK and by Spain is not a basis which the Government of Gibraltar believe offers the remotest scope for the resolution of the Gibraltar problem.

**GIBRALTAR**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**



**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 1998**

**NO. 148 TO NO. 278**

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**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

**24<sup>th</sup> April 1998**

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ORAL

NO. 148 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - STUDENT NURSES**

Can Government state how many student nurses were in employment in the Gibraltar Health Authority undergoing enrolment training as at the 31 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Gibraltar Health Authority had 18 pupil enrolled nurses at 31 March 1998.

NO. 149 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING AUXILIARIES**

Can Government state what was the approved establishment in the Gibraltar Health Authority for the grade of nursing auxiliary in the financial year 1997/98 and the actual numbers in employment as at 31 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 150, 151, 152, 153 and 154 of 1998.

NO. 150 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING ASSISTANTS**

Can Government state what was the approved establishment in the Gibraltar Health Authority for the grade of nursing assistant in the financial year 1997/98 and the actual numbers in employment as at 31 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 149, 151, 152, 153 and 154 of 1998.



NO. 151 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - ENROLLED NURSES**

Can Government state what was the approved establishment in the Gibraltar Health Authority for the grade of enrolled nurse in the financial year 1997/98 and the actual numbers in employment as at 31 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 149, 150, 152, 153 and 154 of 1998.

NO. 152 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SENIOR ENROLLED NURSES**

Can Government state what was the approved establishment in the Gibraltar Health Authority for the grade of senior enrolled nurse in the financial year 1997/98 and the actual numbers in employment as at 31 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 149, 150, 151, 153 and 154 of 1998.

NO. 153 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - STAFF NURSES**

Can Government state what was the approved establishment in the Gibraltar Health Authority for the grade of staff nurse in the financial year 1997/98 and the actual numbers in employment as at 31 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 149, 150, 151, 152 and 154 of 1998.

NO. 154 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - SISTER/CHARGE NURSES**

Can Government state what was the approved establishment in the Gibraltar Health Authority for the grade of sister/charge nurse in the financial year 1997/98 and the actual numbers in employment as at 31 March 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The breakdown of approved establishment and actual incumbents in nursing grades at 31 March 1998 is as follows:

	<u>Approved establishment</u>	<u>Whole time equivalent</u>	<u>Actual numbers of staff</u>
Nursing auxiliary )	126	23.5	29
Nursing assistant )		69.5	91
Enrolled nurse	87	75	91
Senior enrolled nurse	12	10	10
Staff nurse	70.5	85.5	91
Sister/charge nurse	36	32	32

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 149, 150, 151, 152, 153  
AND 154 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask whether it is intended to cover the umpteen posts or are any changes being contemplated to the approved establishment? There are gaps in most areas and there are some over and some under but in the areas that are under is it intended to cover or is it intended to reduce the complement in any of those areas?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The situation of approved establishment is an inherited one from the previous administration. There have always been places where there have been theoretical over-complement staff nurse, for example, and a theoretical under-complement in the nursing sister grade, so that is an inherited situation. If we actually look at the staffing levels today as compared to the last staffing levels available to me before the election, in January 1996, there is very little change either way with some increases in some areas like enrolled nurses because the intake of student enrolled nurses has now finished but there has been very little change as to the situation before the election. The issue of approved establishment is, of course, under review because of the nursing review because the Government have to consider the manning level recommendations made in that report. We expect to take a decision, as I mentioned in the last House of Assembly, within the next three months.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does it follow from that then that the estimates for the current year which are contained in the figures that have been tabled in the House today are based on this approved complement that he has given?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Obviously the estimates cover the actual numbers in post. They also cover the new intake of student pupil nurses that we expect to start their course on 12 May and the Government will have to review the estimates if we take a specific view of the manning levels, of course.

HON J J BOSSANO:

That was not the question. He has answered the question but I am not sure whether he intended that to be the answer. My question is, are the figures based, which I think was the way it used to be done, on the complement including making provision for the unfilled posts or are they based on the actual numbers of people in employment?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, I understand that to be the case.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Let us be clear, the figures are based on bodies in post plus vacancies in establishment, are both provided for in the estimates even though vacancies are not filled, some of that expenditure will not be incurred.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

As the Minister has mentioned the nursing review, could he state whether the Government have decided whether to make the nursing review public already?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I indicated in the last House of Assembly that we would take a decision on both questions within the next three months and we intend to do that.

NO. 155 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - CAPITAL WORKS PROGRAMME**

Can Government state whether the provision of £390,000 for the Capital Works Programme of the Gibraltar Health Authority was completed in the year ending 31 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Authority spent approximately £360,000 from the capital works item in the year ended 31 March 1998.

NO. 156 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - EXPENDITURE ON NEW EQUIPMENT**

Can Government state how much has been spent in the last financial year by the Gibraltar Health Authority in the purchase of new equipment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Authority spent approximately £500,000 during the last financial year in the purchase of new equipment.

ORAL

NO. 157 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - ST BERNARD'S HOSPITAL - KITCHEN

Can Government state when the works in the kitchen at St Bernard's Hospital are expected to be completed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 158 of 1998.



NO. 158 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - ST BERNARD'S HOSPITAL - PRIVATE WARD**

When do the Government expect that a private ward will be operational at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Chief Executive of the Authority is planning the use of existing space at St Bernard's and is discussing the matter with the Management Board.

At the moment management would like to utilise any space available for rehabilitation purposes but remains conscious of the existing need to provide for a private ward facility somewhere within the Hospital.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 157 AND 158 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I do not believe I have had an answer to the works relating to the kitchen, when they are expected to be completed?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I am sorry if I was not explicit enough. What I meant was that Lewis Stagnetto Ward went into private corridor with the kitchen going into what was Lewis Stagnetto Ward. As the hon Lady will recall, I have said previously in the House that we do not expect Lewis Stagnetto to move from its existing location and therefore the space available at the Hospital includes where the kitchen was - the kitchen is where Lewis Stagnetto Ward was - that space available is being considered by the management to provide space for rehabilitation which is an area where at the moment in the Hospital we are having serious problems. The hon Lady will recall from her time as Minister for Health that the 100 per cent figures of occupancy of the geriatric wards and the difficulty that elderly patients have in receiving physiotherapy and rehabilitation is an area that the management are trying to address by expanding the possibility of rehabilitation within the Hospital. Having said that, of course, there is the staff and the management and the government are aware of the terms of the will of the late John Mackintosh which obliged a private facility to be included within the new wing of the Hospital and so within the playing around of space those are the factors that move the management. First, they have their own managerial priority which is to provide rehabilitation facilities for the elderly and, secondly they are aware of the terms of the will which obliged the use of space in a particular way. Relocating the kitchen to its original place is below those two priorities and so at the moment the management are looking at expanding rehabilitation in the area where the kitchen was.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, I have taken in everything the Minister has said but unfortunately he still has not replied to my Question No. 157 which says specifically when are the works in the kitchen at St Bernard's expected to be completed?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Well, the management are weighing up all those factors that I have just stated and the works on the use of the facility where the kitchen was have not commenced. The costings are awaited I understand from JBS and the Management Board has to take a final decision on how to use the space. So at the moment the works have not commenced in any particular way. That is my understanding.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Am I correct in assuming that the Minister is referring that all the works related to the kitchen have still not commenced? Is that what he is saying?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I understand that the position is that the bulk of the work has not commenced, yes. Not all the work but the bulk.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister explain why the delay since, when we were in Government, round about in 1994 I believe, the works commenced? We are now talking that nearly three years have elapsed and the Minister is still saying that the bulk of the works have not commenced. What has been the delay?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, my understanding from the management is that when the hon Lady talks about the works the works do not actually include the kitchen itself, the works were to Lewis Stagnetto Ward so that the kitchen could move in to there. Then the workers that were working within that - that is why I say the bulk was not done - area had to urgently tackle the issue of Children's Ward because of the leakage we suffered last year. After that happened and the works at Children's Ward were completed, which took a number of months because of the severity of the leakage which involved having to actually re-roof part of St Bernard's, the Chief Executive arrived and wanted to assess before any further work was conducted the issue of space and so he is now assessing that matter with the Management Board.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it the case then that the actual work in refurbishment of the existing kitchen was not scheduled for the last financial year in the amount provided in the estimates for minor works? It was not included in it?

HON K AZOPARDI:

There was a sum of money provided and there was a projection that we would do work in the kitchen but events took over that projection because of the Children's Ward issue. So we had to divert manpower resources and financial resources to fixing that urgent matter first.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What is the Minister saying that after that happened they did not go back to carrying on with the work that would have been done in the kitchen but they decided to reconsider the whole issue and maybe put the kitchen somewhere else, is that the point?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Because the original plan that the Authority had was actually to carry on the work to the kitchen, move the kitchen back to where the kitchen was, move Lewis Stagnetto back to Lewis Stagnetto Ward and then reopen private corridor. Those plans have now changed, we do not see that we will move Lewis Stagnetto in the foreseeable future and against that background the Chief Executive then wanted to reassess whether we should move the kitchen back to where it was given that it is already in a suitable facility and there are far higher priorities on his agenda for the use of the space available.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

But whatever the plans for where the kitchen was prior to being moved to Lewis Stagnetto Ward I suppose it will not be used as it has been used now to store old furniture and mount up of rubbish, will it?

HON K AZOPARDI:

If the plan to use it for rehabilitation purposes proceeds, of course it will not be used for that purpose.

HON A J ISOLA:

May I just ask, what quote is the Minister waiting for from JBS, in respect of what?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Of the works to convert the space into space which is suitable for rehabilitation purposes. I do not exactly know what the technical requirements that have been submitted to them are but that is what we are awaiting.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm whether the Government are considering the old Lewis Stagnetto Ward to be converted into a private corridor?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Not at the moment but the Authority obviously has to weigh up the fact that the will imposes an obligation that there should be a private facility available somewhere within the hospital. But the answer to the question is no, not at the moment.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Has any money actually been spent on the existing kitchen location as if it were going to be reopened as a kitchen or, in fact, that never happened?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Money was spent in the sense that the kitchen was literally dug up with a view to refurbishing it substantially but works did not go beyond that. So to a degree the answer is yes, and to a degree the answer is no because it can still be converted into anything else.

NO. 159 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - ST BERNARD'S HOSPITAL - SECOND THEATRE**

Have the Government now considered the construction of a second theatre at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Government have not taken a final decision on the possible development of a second fully functioning theatre at St Bernard's.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 159 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Has the Minister received any representations from the medical and nursing staff at St Bernard's for the construction of a second theatre?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I would not say I have received any formal representations from them. I think that in conversations that I may have had with the nursing union they have sometimes said that the staff conditions within the theatre, locker rooms and so on, have to be improved substantially but I would not say that I have formal representations from any lobby group or nursing union that we should build or we should expand the second space available into a fully functioning theatre. It has been talked about but no formal representations have been made.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then it is not the case that the demand for theatre space cannot be met with the existing facilities, is that correct? It is not that there is a need, not because of the staff but because of the patients for a second theatre?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Well, the throughput of operations continues to be the same statistically as it was when the previous administration were in Government. I think ideally perhaps if there was much more space at the hospital we would like to expand the second space available into a fully functioning one. We would also like to expand the facilities of the recovery area and provide better conditions for the staff. So the answer to the question would be that though statistically the throughput of operations continues the same, we would like to develop the space and provide better conditions if it were possible. But as I mentioned in answer to the previous question, the Authority has far more pressing priorities to tackle and we are looking at those ourselves.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

When we were in office we had plans produced by a local firm for the construction of two theatres in the John Mackintosh Wing. Has the Minister been shown these plans by the management?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, I have not been shown any plans by the management.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Will the Minister ask the management to show him the plans?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, indeed, I will endeavour to ask the management to see the plans but no doubt if they thought they had value they would have shown them to me first.

NO. 160 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - HEALTH CENTRE - HOUSE CALLS**

Can Government state how many house calls were attended to by Health Centre doctors in the last financial year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Requests for house calls have only previously been logged if made during the hours of 9 am to 11 am.

The Authority logged 5,618 requests for house calls in the year 1997/98 during those hours.

As from this financial year the Health Centre will log afternoon requests for house calls also.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 160 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Out of the 5,618 that the Minister has quoted, is he in a position to tell the House how many, out of that number, are exempted patients?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The separation of exempt from non-exempt patients is not available. I cannot tell the hon Member.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Do all the doctors at the Centre share the workload of house calls on the same basis or is there a system which decides which doctor goes or whether one doctor does more than another? Does he have any information on that?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I understand that the system is that there are a number of doctors that will do house calls and they will share the house calls amongst each other. Not all of them do house calls every day but those who do will share them out.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that every doctor that is employed by the Health Authority at the Health Centre is required to do, if he is on duty that day, house calls or is there an element of discretion or preference involved as to who does the house call and who does not? Is it an obligation on the part of the doctors?

MR SPEAKER:

You answer it but this is hardly a supplementary on the answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the answer is that there are 5,618.....

MR SPEAKER:

But not if the doctors are obliged.

HON K AZOPARDI:

I believe that they are contractually obliged to do house calls. They certainly, on my information, all do house calls but they do not all do house calls on the same day. They will distribute the work amongst each other.



NO. 161 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - ST BERNARD'S HOSPITAL - PATIENT ATTENDANCES**

Can Government state of the 52,805 patient attendances which took place at St Bernard's Hospital in 1996, how many were accidents and emergencies?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Statistics for the period January to 7 March 1996 are unavailable. During the period 7 March to 31 December 1996, GHA staff attended on 13,775 accident and emergency cases.

NO. 162 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - WAITING TIMES - CONSULTANTS/SURGERIES**

Can Government give a breakdown of waiting times for appointments to see consultants and waiting times for surgery?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Waiting times for out patient appointments and surgery will depend on the circumstances of each case and therefore while the following breakdown of average waiting times can provide guidance, it cannot be an inflexible medical yardstick.

**A. Surgery**

- |       |                 |              |                   |
|-------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| (i)   | General Surgery | - non-urgent | - 6 months        |
|       |                 | urgent       | - no waiting time |
| (ii)  | ENT             | - male       | - 5 months        |
|       |                 | children     | - 6 months        |
|       |                 | female       | - 6 months        |
| (iii) | Ophthalmic      | - cataract   | - 1 year          |
|       |                 | minor        | - 1 week          |
|       |                 | squint       | - no waiting time |
| (iv)  | Gynaecology     | - major      | - 2/3 months      |
|       |                 | minor        | - 4/6 weeks       |

Average orthopaedic and trauma waiting times are unavailable as the consultant is currently away from Gibraltar. I undertake to write to the hon Member with the information as soon as this is available.

**B. Out patient Appointments**

- |       |                  |   |           |
|-------|------------------|---|-----------|
| (i)   | Ophthalmology    | - | 10 weeks  |
| (ii)  | Gynaecology      | - | 4 weeks   |
| (iii) | Orthopaedics     | - | 7 weeks   |
| (iv)  | Paediatrics      | - | 3 weeks   |
| (v)   | General Medicine | - | 5/6 weeks |
| (vi)  | ENT - adults     | - | 1 week    |
|       | paediatric       | - | 3 weeks   |
| (vii) | General surgery  | - | 8 weeks   |

NO. 163 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - COST UK TEMPORARY VISITORS**

Can Government state what is the latest available cost to Gibraltar of treating UK temporary visitors?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The latest available cost to Gibraltar of treating UK temporary visitors is approximately £118,000.

NO. 164 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**EUROPA POINT - LANDSCAPING**

Will Government consider landscaping the immediate surroundings of the long white pipe that runs along the western slope of the Rock above Europa Point?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Government do not have immediate plans for doing so. However, a golden opportunity to achieve landscaping was lost when the pipe was installed in 1992 as the previous administration did not make this conditional on permission for use of the land.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 164 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Putting aside the question of comparison of what was done or what was not done, would he not agree, despite the amusement of the Chief Minister, that many people see it as an industrial intrusion, in fact, and that one might well conceal it behind a row of hedges or at least paint it in a colour which might blend with the rockscape?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I am quite sure that a lot of people see it as quite a visual intrusion but I am not sure if we can put the small matter of what was done or what was not done aside because, frankly, the best opportunity to achieve landscaping was back when it was installed it should have been made perhaps a planning condition on condition of the use of the land and the Government were able, at the time, to do that and they did not.

HON J J GABAY:

I think it is a useless and negative exercise to continue over small matters like this to find excuses for not doing something simply because it was not done before. Does the Minister not agree that perhaps when they themselves create the number of things that have been created before that then we might find a reasonable balance and cease this business of making comparisons as an excuse for not taking action?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the answer to the hon Member has to be no. It is not a question of comparisons between what was done before and what was not done before. The Government, happily for Gibraltar, are doing many things now that were not done before. The point is that there is an element of richness, which the hon Member cannot put aside as if it were a small irrelevant matter, to press the Government to do something now at taxpayers' expense which they could have done at the time at the

expense of the contractor to whom they allowed access to the land. He may think that that is a small matter of complete political inconsequence but he has to acknowledge, and I personally subscribe to his view on the issue and that is that that pipe is an eyesore and it would certainly amount to an improvement if it were not visible. But for the hon Members who presided over it for six years and did not take that view when they could have done so, to now press the Government to do it, look we can discuss it on its merits but he will understand that it is legitimate for the Government to retort with, "Yes we agree but we would much rather that you had done it six years ago when it would have been paid for by somebody else and not by the Gibraltar taxpayer".

MR SPEAKER:

In the same way as I told the Hon the Leader of the Opposition about supplementaries, insofar as you are concerned you can ask questions from the Minister but I do not think you can reply. Once a reply is given by a Minister the other Members may ask questions but I will not change the rules to what has been happening in the House, I am just drawing Members attention.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not quite sure what Mr Speaker is saying. If he is saying that the Chief Minister is not free to stand up and take part in an exchange on questions which are not addressed to him, he is of course free to do it but he would be changing 35 years worth of practice in this House.

MR SPEAKER:

Maybe a bad practice, I am not changing it but I am just drawing the attention.

HON J J GABAY:

Talking about richness, the only richness that I see, perhaps the House might agree, is the richness in the expression of the Chief Minister over what is a small matter of a practical nature and he ended up saying that he agreed on the practical aspect of it. So might he not just simply be exceptionally magnanimous once in his lifetime and say that this might be done for the general good of an area which is important?

ORAL

NO. 165 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EUROPA POINT - MOSQUE**

Do Government propose to take any steps to remedy the current state of the former garden in the vicinity of the Mosque?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 166 of 1998.

NO. 166 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EUROPA POINT - NUN'S WELL**

What steps are being taken to protect Nun's Well from vandalism?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Government are currently considering steps that can be taken to enhance and better protect the area of Europa Point and Nun's Well.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 165 AND 166 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I am pleased to hear that but would the Minister not agree that that manicured garden that appeared there as if by magic on the official opening of the Mosque has now really degenerated - and this has happened during the present administration and not during the past - into an ugly patch of desert? Since he says it is an important tourist spot, would he again not consider doing something about it and indeed in respect of Nun's Well which is a historic site, with some immediate sense of concern? And in respect of Nun's Well, I am sure that he is quite aware of the historic aspect of that monument, the underground Moorish cistern; the fact that the nuns used to look after the Shrine of Our Lady of Europe, it is also associated of course with the Duke of Kent's futile attempt to curtail drunkenness in Gibraltar by setting up his own brewery there and I think shutting down 50 of the 91 houses available at the time, an interesting story for visiting tourists, would he not agree therefore that it is in a sorry state? The iron gates hang loose, the iron grills across the windows are torn and it is fast becoming a rubbish dump.

HON K AZOPARDI:

I thank the hon Member for his customary long question. Dealing with the garden area itself first, the hon Member will recall that that garden area sprung up at the time of the Mosque opening, it was done precisely by those who were interested in the opening of the Mosque. At the time we mentioned to them that it would be very difficult for a garden like that to survive climatically in such an area. Indeed, maintenance was costed at £100,000 a year and the Government took the view at the time and indeed insisted in those who installed that garden area that we could not make ourselves liable for those maintenance costs precisely because of the extent of them and because some of the plants would not survive in that area. What we have done is we have tried to salvage, I would say, on that final point, notwithstanding our comments to them they took no steps after the Mosque opened to maintain that garden area that they themselves had established. Notwithstanding that we have tried to salvage as many plants as possible from the area. We have taken some of the palm trees and other plants and put them in the custody of garden centres around Gibraltar. I will give the hon Member an example, the palm trees are with Greenarc; other plants have been placed with Greenarc and the

Botanical Gardens or with Gibraltar; other plants have been used in beautification projects or donated to organisations or the Church itself who has requested plants and so we have tried to find a home for these plants as much as we can to salvage the greenery because climatically they would not have been able to survive with lack of maintenance in that area. In the meantime, we have also set up a committee which is led by the Tourism Ministry to review the area of Europa Point and Nun's Well. That committee has been established recently and it will look to measures that can be taken to beautify the whole area. In respect of Nun's Well specifically, the Government received a proposal to restore Nun's Well and to commercially develop part of the non-sensitive heritage area for cafeteria purposes on the outside area. That project itself has the support of the Heritage Trust, it is fully backed by the Heritage Trust and the Government are in negotiations with the Trust and with that third party who is interested in the commercial development, to see whether it can come to suitable terms to enable a lease or a licence to be granted over the area so that the Nun's Well area which the hon Member rightly says is very heritage sensitive, can be protected, enhanced and developed in a sensitive way.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Out of curiosity, the Minister mentioned the plants and the palm trees. Why is it that the palm trees were not used for the beautification of Winston Churchill Avenue and the Government had to buy new palm trees when they already had those available?

HON K AZOPARDI:

My information is that some of the plants that were taken from the garden centre were used in beautification projects. I cannot tell the hon Member whether a specific palm tree was used at a specific location. He will understand that my gardening knowledge does not extend to that level but I am sure John Cortes could identify the plants by name.

HON A J ISOLA:

Does the Government not think they have enough committees without having to set a new one up to look at Europa Point? Is this committee specifically for Europa Point?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The hon Member responsible for Heritage has emphasised the importance of the Europa Point Nun's Well area and so I think he may be in disagreement with his own spokesman for Heritage on that point. The Government place substantial importance on that area visually and in a heritage sense and accordingly we have taken steps to address that.

HON J J GABAY:

Actually I am not in disagreement with my hon Colleague for the simple reason that I was seeking action not the formation of committees.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Action can only come in that manner.



NO. 167 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO

## ETB - EDINBURGH HOUSE

Can Government state how many of the workers actually working on the refurbishment of Edinburgh House are Gibraltarians?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

A reply to this question cannot be given with a very high degree of accuracy. The main contractors, Mackley Tricon and Cubiertas, have further sub-contracted some other tasks. I can state that in all the companies involved with the construction works there are 12 employees who are Gibraltarians. What I cannot give accurately is how many of these are employed at this site, bearing in mind that employees are rotated between other construction sites.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 167 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO

Therefore there is nothing when awarding a Government tender to any contracting company that they should employ a certain amount of Gibraltarians?

HON J J NETTO:

Generally speaking, of course, the Government when awarding tenders and bearing in mind that the Tender Boards are independent from the Government, looks at matters as to employers who maximise employment for local resident people. I would say in this particular area that in relation to the subject matter of relationship between local people working as a percentage in the Construction Training Centre, that if anything the situation is slightly better under this Government than it was under the previous Government. I can say for instance that in relation to a Question, No. 63 of 1991, the answer given by the Minister for Labour and Social Security, the Hon Robert Mor, he said, "Clearly a normal increase of this nature cannot be immediately absorbed by the labour market particularly as the skills available do not necessarily match the vacancies that exist. For this reason Gibraltar has continued to import construction workers for the same period". In a further supplementary to the same question the Minister said, "Of course, Mr Speaker, we are always running the scheme, the Vocational Cadet Training Scheme, in a way that can adapt to whatever changes are needed at any time", but despite what was said in the House at the time in relation to the percentage of workers and in 1991 there were 1,047 workers in the construction trade of which there were 239 Gibraltarians which is 22.8 per cent of the total. Today there are 2,051 workers in the construction industry, there are 694 and that represents a 33.8 per cent of Gibraltarians within that particular industry group. So therefore what I can say is that there are, at this moment in time, more Gibraltarians within that particular construction.... [HON J J BOSSANO: *Than in 1991.*] Than in 1991, yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But what he cannot tell us is whether there are more than in 1996, is that the answer? He is taking the credit for what happened between 1991 and 1996?

HON J J NETTO:

Well, if he wants a full answer I can tell him that during 1990 out of a total of 648 there were 184 which is 28 per cent; in 1991 there were 1,047 total of which 239 were Gibraltarians which is 22 per cent; in 1992 there were a total of, which shows the construction boom at the time and the highest point ever, 2,895 in total and there were 499, 17 per cent Gibraltarians; but then we see that in 1993 it came down to 2,016 in total of which there were 470 Gibraltarians which was 23 per cent; and in 1994 there were, again the trend coming down, 1,667 a total of which there were 459 which is 27 per cent Gibraltarians out of the total. And I can go on but the point I am trying to make is that while in the original question the hon Member is saying, "Do Government take into account the number of companies in terms of the composition of local people in awarding the tender?", not necessarily does it mean the independent Board awarding the tender that necessarily gives the highest or the lowest participation of Gibraltarians. What I can give in general terms is that today there is a higher percentage of Gibraltarians in the construction industry than there were at the time.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, what he can say is that there is a higher percentage today than there was in the year 1991 and 1992. Does the Minister not understand that if we have tomorrow 3,000 construction workers because there is a building boom it would be a sheer physical impossibility, unless there was also a baby boom to accompany the building boom, for enough Gibraltarians to exist to take the 3,000 jobs? Therefore if he wants to quote the share of the Gibraltar labour content can he say that what he is telling the House is that the numbers of Gibraltarians in the construction industry is higher now than it was in 1996? The fact that it was higher in 1996 than in 1991 has nothing to do with it. Is he saying that it is higher today than in 1996? Because if he is saying that we will see whether he is right when the figures eventually get published.

MR SPEAKER:

That is hardly a supplementary on the original answer. If you want to answer it you can.

HON J J NETTO:

The answer is yes. The answer is that in 1996 there were 1,864 in total in the construction industry and today there are 2,051, in June 1997.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am asking him, is the purpose of all the figures he has volunteered to the House trying to demonstrate that there are more Gibraltarians in the construction industry now than there were in 1996? Otherwise the whole business of all the quotes of percentages is meaningless unless he is telling us that. If he is telling us that, then I want confirmation because I believe he is wrong and I believe that the official figures which eventually will get published in a year's time will prove him wrong.

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a supplementary on the original answer and strictly speaking it is not an allowable question. I have been very lax all the time but if you want to answer it you can.

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, as I said, in 1996 there were 1,864 in total of which 651 were Gibraltarians. In 1997 there were 2,051 in total and there are 694 Gibraltarians so there are more Gibraltarians today. I do also take the other point that the Leader of the Opposition has said, that whenever I give figures from the ETB source I do it with a caveat that there are employers obviously who on termination of employees do not necessarily inform the ETB of that respect. Once we finish the current exercise, by 1999, obviously we will have a much greater picture because the terminations will have been cleared by then.

HON R MOR:

Going back to the original question.

MR SPEAKER:

No, the original answer. Supplementaries come from the original answer which we have lost sight of.

HON R MOR:

Can the Government say what is the total number of workers engaged on the Edinburgh House works?

HON J J NETTO:

I think I have already answered that question. In the original answer I said, "A reply to this question cannot be given with a very high degree of accuracy because the main contractors, Mackley Tricon and Cubiertas, have further sub-contracted other tasks. I can state that in all the companies involved with the construction works there are 12 employees who are Gibraltarians." But, of course, that depends because they have other construction sites where workers are rotated from one site to the other.

HON R MOR:

I understand that but I am asking what is the total number of workers engaged on the project?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is not a matter for which this Government are answerable in the House, how many employees a private construction company has in a particular site is not a matter that is reasonable for Opposition Members either to call the Government to account, still less to expect the Minister to have breakdowns of information about how many plumbers Cubiertas has on the site or Mackley Tricon has on the site.

HON R MOR:

The Minister has already given the figure that there are 12 Gibraltarians involved in the work at Edinburgh House. My question is, as a supplementary, if there are 12 Gibraltarians he must know what is the total number of workers engaged in that project?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, Mr Speaker a question is asked and the Opposition try to get the answer to that question, not to every question that the hon Member could possibly think he might ask. He might ask how many men with blue eyes are involved in the site and the Minister would not know that either.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think, the Minister has not understood the question. The question is, if he knows that there are 12 people working on a given site, does he know how many others that are not Gibraltarians are on that same site, not in the rest of Gibraltar? Does he know that?

HON J J NETTO:

In the same way that the 12 Gibraltarians could be 12 people today if we were to go to the site tomorrow it could be six, as far as Gibraltarians. Well the same happens to that supplementary question from the hon Member as far as non-Gibraltarians. We could go down today and it could be 30 but tomorrow there could be 10. It all depends from the manager of those various contractors where in different circumstances they say, "Today I want two masons" but the following day he has got other pressures in other construction sites and instead of having two masons down in that particular project he would take one mason and leave another mason on another site. I cannot give that with any certainty.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is you do not know.

HON J J NETTO:

No, I do not know.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then it must follow he does not know about the Gibraltarians either? That is to say, it may not be that there are 12?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He said that as well.

NO. 168 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians unemployed actually registered with the ETB at the end of October 1997 giving a breakdown of males and females aged under 18, 18 to 25, and over 25 years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 169, 170, 171, 172 and 173 of 1998.

NO. 169 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians unemployed actually registered with the ETB at the end of November 1997 giving a breakdown of males and females aged under 18, 18 to 25, and over 25 years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 168, 170, 171, 172 and 173 of 1998.

NO. 170 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Are Government now prepared to provide the number of Gibraltarians unemployed actually registered with the ETB at the end of December 1997 giving a breakdown of males and females aged under 18, 18 to 25, and over 25 years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 168, 169, 171, 172 and 173 of 1998.



NO. 171 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians unemployed actually registered with the ETB at the end of January 1998 giving a breakdown of males and females aged under 18, 18 to 25, and over 25 years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 168, 169, 170, 172 and 173 of 1998.

NO. 172 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians unemployed actually registered with the ETB at the end of February 1998 giving a breakdown of males and females aged under 18, 18 to 25, and over 25 years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 168, 169, 170, 171 and 173 of 1998.

NO. 173 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians unemployed actually registered with the ETB at the end of March 1998 giving a breakdown of males and females aged under 18, 18 to 25, and over 25 years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:

MR SPEAKER:

Before you start, this number of questions are really suitable for a written answer but you want an oral question and that has been so for the past 35 years. In order to help, if the Minister does not mind I will give the part of the written answer to the hon Member so that he can follow you, otherwise he will not be able to follow.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Perhaps if Opposition Members agree, rather than sit and read can we just not put the answer in Hansard and move straight on to supplementaries?

MR SPEAKER:

Well, it is entirely up to him, you give the oral answer on this occasion because they have been oral questions and maybe next time we have some written questions.

HON J J NETTO:

<u>October 1997</u>	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>18 to 24</u>	<u>Over 25</u>	<u>Total</u>
Males	32	84	215	331
Females	28	72	135	235
Total	60	156	350	566
<u>November 1997</u>	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>18 to 24</u>	<u>Over 25</u>	<u>Total</u>
Males	35	70	199	304
Females	29	67	128	224
Total	64	137	327	528
<u>December 1997</u>	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>18 to 24</u>	<u>Over 25</u>	<u>Total</u>
Males	33	72	204	309
Females	32	66	107	205
Total	65	138	311	514

<u>January 1998</u>	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>18 to 24</u>	<u>Over 25</u>	<u>Total</u>
Males	39	82	221	342
Females	<u>36</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>148</u>	<u>257</u>
Total	<u>75</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>369</u>	<u>599</u>

<u>February 1998</u>	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>18 to 24</u>	<u>Over 25</u>	<u>Total</u>
Males	40	91	222	353
Females	<u>36</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>139</u>	<u>245</u>
Total	<u>76</u>	<u>161</u>	<u>361</u>	<u>598</u>

<u>March 1998</u>	<u>Under 18</u>	<u>18 to 24</u>	<u>Over 25</u>	<u>Total</u>
Males	29	80	207	316
Females	<u>34</u>	<u>78</u>	<u>117</u>	<u>229</u>
Total	<u>63</u>	<u>158</u>	<u>324</u>	<u>545</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 168, 169, 170, 171,  
172 AND 173 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

There has been a drop from the month of February to the month of March. Can the Minister tell us, out of the males of 18 to 24 and over 25, which are minus 11 in the range of 18 to 24 and minus 15 in the over 25; and of the females, even though there is a plus in the 18 to 24, there is a minus in the over 25 of 22; how many of those were employed in Cammell Laird and the Bottling Plant?

HON J J NETTO:

In order to give that information he will have to give me notice.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it that the Minister does not know or is it that he does not want to give out the information?

MR SPEAKER:

He has just said to give him notice.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Presumably, without being able to give the figure he knows that employment in those two areas is principally responsible for the decline because that is the explanation he has already given in a press release. He has said that the drop in that month is due to those two employers, so he knows that that is accurate does he?

HON J J NETTO:

I think the Leader of the Opposition is misquoting my press release. I said in the general trend of figures that generally the economy is looking better because we have new businesses such as Cammell Laird and the Bottling Plant. Of course there are other activities going on elsewhere in the economy so not necessarily

everybody who got employed happened to be in that particular two, which the hon Member has quoted. The other factor, of course, as the hon Member knows, the number of people registered is an administrative count therefore if they do not happen to come in that particular month and do not happen to sign on whether they are employed or whether they have not necessarily gone to register as unemployed, therefore could influence the figures as well.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The statement which I am quoting, which is Press Release No. 70/98 says, "The falling trend during the quarter is the result of new business coming into Gibraltar such as Cammell Laird and the Bottling Plant". The falling trend during the quarter cannot be presumably one person less in February than in January, from 599 to 598, because that is hardly a trend. So it must be, we assume, that the change between February and March, which is the only falling figure, one month, which is something like 54 less people registered in March. If it is not accurate then certainly, will the Minister not agree, that the impression created is that the 54 less people unemployed is due to those two employers coming into the market in the month of March? If it does not mean that, what does it mean?

HON J J NETTO:

Well, of course, the hon Member would have seen in my interview in relation to that press release which he has quoted, that I went further than what he has just quoted there and I did say that they were absorbed probably in the wider economy as a result of the activity taking place. Either it is a result of that or it is also the factor which I allayed just before in relation that when people - he has quoted 50 less for March to February, it could also well be that some of those 54 perhaps did not sign on in February therefore they are not reflected as well, that is a factor to take into account.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

That is not a factor to be taken into account when one is giving the figures because those persons who have not bothered to register.....

MR SPEAKER:

What is the question?

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The question is, is it not correct that the people who have not registered as unemployed will not be shown in any of the figures published and therefore the analysis that the Minister arrives at saying that there are people who might not have registered, does not show in any of the unemployment figures anyway? Is that correct or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It seems to me that Opposition Members wish to make an issue out of where one does not exist. He knows that the unemployment statistics are the people who register for the purposes and therefore if there are people who are not on these

statistics it is because they have not registered as unemployed. And there are two reasons why they might not be registered as unemployed. One is because they might be employed and the other is because they are unemployed and not interested in seeking employment, and that has always been the case.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

That is precisely what I am saying but he should tell that to his hon Colleague who does not seem to understand. His hon Colleague has said in this House - if I may put it as a question, let me see if I can do it, there might be when I make reference to the figures on the drop in which I ask, is there any of the drop or any of the persons that have been employed in either Cammell Laird or the Bottling Plant, how many of the numbers already given which is 11 of the 15 and the 22 for females over 25 - the Minister said that there might be other people that might have been employed but are not registered as unemployed, which is what the Chief Minister has just said. I agree entirely with him. So the answer has nothing to do with what I have asked previously anyway, the answer his hon Colleague, the Minister for Employment, has given before.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

And all that that shows is that the hon Gentleman tries to give as much information as possible whether or not it is directly relevant to the question that the hon Member asks. If the hon Member wants the Minister to curtail the amount of information and attempt an explanation that the Minister gives, I tend to agree with the hon Member that he would be wise for him to do so because, frankly, all it does is get used by Opposition Members to complicate a question and answer session beyond the necessary.

HON J J BOSSANO:

We are not trying to complicate anything. What we are trying to establish is the accuracy of a Government Press Release that says, "the dropping trend" and we are seeing the dropping trend in the answer to the original question so we are now saying where is the dropping trend due to the Bottling Plant and Cammell Laird quoted in press release No. 70 given that we have got the figure in the original answer to the original question.

MR SPEAKER:

I know what you want but that is not a supplementary to the original answer. Please stick to the rules but if he wants to answer it, let him answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the original answer is that the figure for March is lower than the figure for February and that has been described publicly as the result of a drop in trend due to employment in two employers, is it not a legitimate question to say how many of the 50 is due to those two employers?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course it is a legitimate question but he has got to give notice of it.

MR SPEAKER:

Wait a minute, I will not allow you, let me speak. I know you are very experienced, far more than me but an allowable supplementary is to the original answer, there cannot be a supplementary to a supplementary, that is what I was trying to point out. Now I allow the Chief Minister to speak, it has taken me some effort. What do you want?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What I want and what I am sure the Leader of the Opposition wants, is to clarify the matter which is that of course it is a legitimate little piece of information. If the Hon Mr Baldachino wanted to know how many persons from the reduced number of unemployment, how many of those reduced figures are as a result of people engaged in Cammell Laird and in the Bottling Plant, well he could have asked and should have asked that information and if he had asked that question he would now today have that answer.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I could not have asked that question because the press release came after I gave notice of questions, so I am asking now, that is the reason why I am asking now.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 174 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state the number of work permits issued for the month of March 1998 giving a breakdown by nationalities and trade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The total number of work permits issued were 33. The breakdown by nationality and trade is as follows:-

Moroccans 25, from which 14 are in the construction trade, 1 domestic, 1 mechanic, 1 manager, 2 catering and 6 in other trades. Swiss 2 - 1 administration and 1 manager. Indian 1 - manager. Pakistani 1 - medical. South African 1 - medical. Malaysian 3 - professional.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 174 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Of the 25 Moroccans, did they all have work permits before or is that they are new entrants?

HON J J NETTO:

I am prepared to answer that question with notice.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Then I am giving him notice, could he be prepared to give me the answer at a later date?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He can ask two things, he can ask the Minister to give him a written answer in private which he can certainly do now, not by giving notice but by asking the Minister to provide him the information or he can give notice in the proper form by putting down an explicit question next time there is a question session in the House of Assembly but he certainly cannot stand up there now and say that he gives notice of a question.

MR SPEAKER:

Well you give notice that you are going to ask the question. Do you want the Minister to give you the information in writing?



HON J L BALDACHINO:

What happens is, if we go back in Hansard the Minister always needs time in any supplementary anyway.....

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a question and I will disallow that.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Well, let me put it this way as the Chief Minister put it, I am asking will the Minister give me the information in writing?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.

ORAL

NO. 175 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets were engaged by the ETB for the month of March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 176 and 177 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 176 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 175 and 177 of 1998.

NO. 177 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Cadets engaged for the month of March 1998 were 18.

Cadets who have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of March 1998 were 26 and the value of payments as at the end of March 1998 was £78,417.63.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 175, 176 AND 177 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister know how many vocational cadets there were at the end of March after the engagement of the 18 and the termination of the 26, what was the balance of vocational cadets left?

HON J J NETTO:

This is information which again I would need notice, it is a different question, it is not of relevance to the main question.

MR SPEAKER:

No, the question of relevance is up to me. He has asked a question, whether you can answer it or you need notice, but the question of relevance is entirely up to me. If you do not want to answer it that is your prerogative.

HON J J NETTO:

No, I will answer but he will have to give me notice.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Looking at the figures for December, January, February and March, I have seen that he has answered the three questions in one and comparing the vocational cadets that are engaged to the vocational cadets that have terminated, am I correct in assuming that there have been less vocational cadets being taken on than the vocational cadets who are terminating their employment? Is that a correct assessment?

HON J J NETTO:

That is correct.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Does the Minister know what is the factor for this happening? Is it that there are less employers who are interested in taking on vocational cadets?

HON J J NETTO:

I have answered this question on several occasions. The general trend is that yes, less employers are calling now to get cadets; yes that is the answer.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

That is the only factor in the equation that the Minister thinks, there is nothing else is there?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, I think that is the only factor.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I was referring to employers. If they do not shoot cadets I suppose they are shooting employers.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

ORAL

NO. 178 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - CAMMELL LAIRD**

Can Government state how many of the remaining 27 vacancies that had been notified to the ETB by Cammell Laird have now been filled giving the nationalities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question No. 179 of 1998.

NO. 179 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

ETB - CAMMELL LAIRD

Can Government state if any new vacancies have been notified to the ETB by Cammell Laird?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING AND BUILDINGS  
AND WORKS

Out of the 27 remaining, eight have now been filled of which six are Gibraltarians and two British.

I was just about to say, which is the information I was passed on, that there were no further vacancies being opened but after sending the information on Wednesday 22nd, we did have 10 new vacancies which have been opened with us and the 10 new vacancies are requesting welders.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 178 AND 179 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Of the six Gibraltarians, does the Minister know if they were six ex-Kvaerner employees?

HON J J NETTO:

No, I do not.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I am asking the question even though the Chief Minister.....

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, I know that, he has already answered you, he does not know.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

No, he laughs. I am asking because I thought that priority would be given to ex-Kvaerner employees because his hon Colleague the Minister for Trade said in an interview.....

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a supplementary.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The two British, does the Minister know if they are management or are they on the workforce?

HON J J NETTO:

No, I do not.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Of the new vacancies that have been opened for 10 workers, will the ETB be sending people who are registered with them as unemployed to the employer or is it that the ETB expects people to go directly to Cammell Laird? What is the position?

HON J J NETTO:

The position is exactly the same as when he was Minister for Employment, whenever a vacancy is opened for people who are unemployed, the Employment Officer does everything possible to get submissions to be sent to employers. So I should imagine that the answer to the question is that in the same way as it was done before, the Employment Officer in the ETB will get hopefully Gibraltarians or local resident people who are within those particular skills and submit them to the employer either to Cammell Laird or to any other one for that matter.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

So what the Minister is telling us is that the ETB will be submitting names to the employers or will they be providing a card so that they can go to the employers, which of the two is it?

HON J J NETTO:

Exactly in the same way as was done by him as Minister, by submitting cards.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

But that did not happen and I am referring now to the 27, with the other 27 it happened exactly the same, with the vacancies that have now been filled with the eight and the two?

HON J J NETTO:

My guesstimate is that the Employment Officer will be doing today the same as they were doing for the hon Member when he was the Minister.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the hon Member is asking whether there has been any change in Government policy the answer is that there has not been. On the other hand, the Minister is not the Employment Office Manager either. It is Government policy which we then assume is properly and faithfully implemented by the officials but there is no change of policy. The operation of the office, ETB remains as he left it.



HON J L BALDACHINO:

I am asking this question because maybe I have been given the wrong information and maybe the Chief Minister can clarify it, but previously, initially when Cammell Laird started recruiting people what people had to do was put their CV's in a box in the ETB. That is not the same procedure that we had, was that the case or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is not a difference in policy, this is one employer coming into the market trying to recruit a large number of people with specific skills and in order to simplify the recruitment process the ETB has got to be in a position to demonstrate to the potential employer the qualifications of the people that it is sending along. It is not possible to set up a shipyard from scratch on the basis of sending cards. The fact that applicants were asked to provide a CV may be a difference in practice but it does not reflect any change in system or policy.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact, what the Chief Minister is saying is that it is not the case that the CV's were simply passed on to the employer and then the employer called whoever they wanted; the ETB actually sent people with cards?

HON J J NETTO:

I am telling the hon Member that whilst my office is not within the Job Centre and I am not looking at what they do for eight hours every day, I have good faith that my Employment Officers will be doing the same things that they were doing for the previous Minister.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

That is not the issue. The Minister has not got to be eight hours on the front line serving people. He well knows, I do not know if he gets it but I used to get.....

MR SPEAKER:

What is the question?

HON J L BALDACHINO:

My question is, does he get daily reports of people who are being employed and people who are registering as unemployed or does he not get that; does he get that or does he not?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes or no?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Therefore it is correct for me to assume that for him to have certain knowledge.....

MR SPEAKER:

I am sorry, it is not correct for you to assume, it is correct for you to ask another supplementary question.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it correct to assume then that he already has the information available to him daily?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, I do have the information of people filling the vacancies, yes.

NO. 180 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many vacancies were opened at the ETB in the month of January 1998 with a breakdown by trade and how many vacancies were filled showing the trade and nationality of the persons employed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 181 and 182 of 1998.

NO. 181 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many vacancies were opened at the ETB in the month of February 1998 with a breakdown by trade and how many vacancies were filled showing the trade and nationality of the persons employed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 180 and 182 of 1998.

NO. 182 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many vacancies were opened at the ETB in the month of March 1998 with a breakdown by trade and how many vacancies were filled showing the trade and nationality of the persons employed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:

January 1998

<u>Vacancies Opened</u>	252, cancelled 55
<u>Vacancies Filled</u>	Gibraltarian 103, British 35, Spanish 49, Other EEC 2, Other non-EEC 5 and Moroccan 11
	Total filled 205

Vacancies filled by Nationality and Job Codes is as follows:

Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers Gibraltarian 4, British 5, Spanish 3

Professionals Gibraltarian 3, British 1

Technical & Assoc Professionals Gibraltarian 11, British 6, Spanish 4, Other EEC 1, other 1.

Clerks Gibraltarian 25, British 5, Spanish 1, other 1.

Service workers and shop and market workers Gibraltarian 18, British 10, Spanish 6, Other EEC 1, Moroccan 5, other 2.

Skilled agricultural & fisheries workers Moroccan 1

Craft and related trade workers Gibraltarian 14, British 3, Spanish 29, Moroccan 1.

Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers Gibraltarian 4, British 1, Moroccan 2.

Elementary occupations Gibraltarian 24, British 4, Spanish 6, Moroccan 2, other 1.

### February 1998

Vacancies Opened 340, cancelled 52

Vacancies Filled Gibraltarian 134, British 38, Spanish 66, Other EEC 12, Other non-EEC 5 and Moroccan 10

Total filled 265

Vacancies filled by Nationality and Job Codes is as follows:

Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers Gibraltarian 6, British 3, Spanish 1, other EEC 2, others 1.

Professionals Gibraltarian 4, British 2, Spanish 1, other EEC 1, others 3.

Technical and Assoc Professionals Gibraltarian 14, British 4, Spanish 1 and other EEC 2.

Clerks Gibraltarian 30, British 4, Spanish 1, Moroccan 1 and other EEC Nationals 4.

Service workers and shop and market workers Gibraltarian 20, British 8, Spanish 17, other EEC 1, other non-EEC 1, Moroccan 3.

Craft and related trade workers Gibraltarian 18, British 10, Spanish 28, Moroccan 3, other EEC 2

Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers Gibraltarian 20, British 1

Elementary occupations Gibraltarian 22, British 6, Spanish 17, Moroccan 3.

### March 1998

Vacancies Opened 469, cancelled 33

Vacancies Filled Gibraltarian 205, British 56, Spanish 121, Other EEC 11, Other non-EEC 10, Moroccan 28

Total filled 432

Vacancies filled by Nationality and Job Codes is as follows:

Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers Gibraltarian 1, British 2, Spanish 1, Other non-EEC 2.

Professionals Gibraltar 2, British 4

Technical & Assoc Professionals Gibraltar 1, British 8, Spanish 2.

Clerks Gibraltar 14, British 4, Spanish 2

Service workers and shop and market workers Gibraltar 28, British 5, Spanish 8, other EEC 1, Moroccan 4.

Craft and related trade workers Gibraltar 4, Spanish 8, Moroccan 4.

Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers Gibraltar 4, British 1.

Elementary occupations Gibraltar 17, British 3, Spanish 2 and Moroccan 5.

NO. 183 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**VARYL BEGG ESTATE/SIR WILLIAM JACKSON GROVE**

Are Government aware that the area in the Varyl Begg Estate which runs parallel to the wall that separates the Estate from Sir William Jackson Grove is covered with scattered construction debris and other waste?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Government are aware that for a considerable number of years the area between Varyl Begg Estate and the boundary wall with Sir William Jackson Grove has been and continues to be used as a dumping place by some tenants of the Estate.

The area in question has been cleaned on a number of occasions but this problem persists. The Department will clean the area again and will monitor the situation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 183 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister not aware that the main reason for the construction debris is that his department gave permission to some tenants to build a chapel of some sort and that the department actually initiated the works with two of their masons which were later withdrawn and that the debris is as a result of what the department initiated but did not complete?

HON J J NETTO:

I am not aware.

HON J C PEREZ:

Could the Minister investigate and see that it is not necessarily as a result of a number of years used as a dumping ground but because that situation arose and that is why there is construction debris scattered in the area?

HON J J NETTO:

Since the hon Member seems to be quite aware of the kind of debris left there, I will ask the department to look into it.



NO. 184 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**VARYL BEGG ESTATE - CAR PARK**

What improvements are to be carried out to the existing car park at the Varyl Begg Estate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Improvements to be carried out to this existing car park at Varyl Begg Estate consists of the following:

- (i) Completion of outstanding areas of paving including the provision of drop-kerbs and the replacement of broken and/or loose tiles.
- (ii) Remedial works to existing drainage channels and removal of defective gratings.
- (iii) Provision of flip-poles to the parking bays.
- (iv) Provision of planted areas and trees to embellish the area.

I can also say that the contract includes for additional drainage works to eliminate flooding problems at the boundary wall between Varyl Begg and Montagu Gardens which is the cause of water penetration problems to some garages at Montagu Gardens. These works became necessary when the Gibraltar Land Reclamation Company carried out the Westside reclamation thus blocking the storm water outlet from Varyl Begg. Although the work should have been carried out by the Gibraltar Land Reclamation Company, the previous administration undertook to carry out the works for a sum of £16,034. The money was paid into the Government General Account by Gibraltar Homes Ltd but the works were never carried out satisfactorily and the problem persists hence the need to include it in this contract as well.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 184 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Although I accept that the Minister might need notice, could he perhaps give me in writing, if he has not got it readily available, how much of the £67,992 of this tender is related to the provision of concrete base for new garages and how much for the other related works on the improvements of the car park?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, I can.

NO. 185 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**VARYL BEGG ESTATE - LOCK-UP GARAGES**

Can Government state how many new lock-up garages are to be constructed at the Varyl Begg Estate and what will be the purchase terms once completed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Twenty-four lock-up garages will be constructed. These will be sold for £4,000 each payable as follows:

£500 deposit on order

£1,500 payable on commencement of works

£2,000 payable on completion of works.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 185 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister aware that there are obviously some people in the Estate who see that the construction of garages takes away parking spaces and that unless the existing car park is not restricted to tenants of Varyl Begg only they see that their parking facilities are less and less when the garages are built? I remind the Minister that when the garages were built originally the car park was there and the intention was to close the car park for Varyl Begg tenants only. The car park is open to everyone and tenants complain that the more lock-up garages there are in the Estate, unless the existing car park is not closed for tenants of Varyl Begg only, what happens is that there are less parking areas for the tenants that cannot afford a garage.

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, there is merit in what the hon Member is saying in that particular argument. What I can say is that in order to maximise parking facilities for the use of the tenants in Varyl Begg Estate, what we are actually doing, quite apart from the lockable garages and quite apart from the open space parking which we are going to put the flip-poles, there are going to be further meetings between the department and colleagues in the Road Department and the Tenants Association to carry out a survey to see how much more we can maximise those opportunities albeit in the light of what the hon Member has said, to try and leave those spaces available for the tenants in the Estate.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister is referring to the car park for which the improvements are being made? The car park for which the improvements which we have talked about in the other question are being made? That car park originally was done to replace the lost parking spaces in the Estate when the lock-up garages were constructed. The argument of many tenants is that unless the car park is restricted for tenants of Varyl Begg Estate only then there are more parking spaces lost to the tenants as more garages are built because people from other estates and other places park their cars there in preference to the tenants of Varyl Begg.

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, that is quite right and that is the reason why in that particular area which he is now referring to we are going to have the flip-poles and the flip-poles will be for the purchase of persons from the Estate thereby disallowing, so to speak, people who are not resident in the Estate getting to that particular area and further areas within the Estate, not necessarily there, those spaces, yes.

HON J C PEREZ:

But the Minister is talking about selling parking spaces.

HON J J NETTO:

Well, the last time the question was asked by the hon Member I remember saying that it was going to be at a very, very low cost, if I remember rightly. Obviously we are not talking about lockable garages, we are talking about the open space car park and it was going to be at a very, very low price in order that that facility was available for the tenants of the Estate only.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

When that consideration is arrived at, will he also take into account to make parking facilities for persons, especially pensioners, even though it might be a very low price they might not have the financial backing to be able to pay for a parking space. Will he also take that into consideration that some parking spaces may be given free to elderly people especially pensioners?

HON J J NETTO:

Again there is merit in what the hon Member is saying but, of course, I have to put a caveat and the caveat is that in assessing such a possibility they will have to be means tested somehow because most people will say, "I cannot afford it" and obviously that particular number could be too big. In looking into that would have to be on the basis of some form of being means tested.

ON J L BALDACHINO:

I accept that may be the position. The other thing is, will he also take into consideration leaving spaces for motorcycles and that it is not just cars, there are also a lot of motorcycles in that area? Will he also be designating certain areas for motorcycles? Will he take that into consideration?

HON J J NETTO:

I can well imagine that in the consultation process between the department and the Tenants Association that will be up in the mind of the Tenants Association.

NO. 186 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government now give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of October 1997, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 187, 188, 189, 190 and 191 of 1998.

NO. 187 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government now give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of November 1997, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 186, 188, 189, 190 and 191 of 1998.

NO. 188 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government now give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of December 1997, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 186, 187, 189, 190 and 191 of 1998.

NO. 189 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government now give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of January 1998, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 186, 187, 188, 190 and 191 of 1998.



NO. 190 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government now give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of February 1998, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 186, 187, 188, 189 and 191 of 1998.

NO. 191 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government now give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of March 1998, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social Assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:

<u>October 1997</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Unemployment benefit	48	31	79
Social Assistance	109	47	156
No payment	142	129	271
 <u>November 1997</u>			
Unemployment benefit	41	23	64
Social Assistance	120	53	173
No payment	108	119	227
 <u>December 1997</u>			
Unemployment benefit	43	19	62
Social Assistance	107	50	157
No payment	126	104	230
 <u>January 1998</u>			
Unemployment benefit	34	22	56
Social Assistance	127	56	183
No payment	142	143	285
 <u>February 1998</u>			
Unemployment benefit	38	14	52
Social Assistance	121	56	177
No payment	154	139	293

March 1998

Unemployment benefit	28	22	50
Social Assistance	119	61	180
No payment	137	115	252

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 186, 187, 188, 189, 190  
AND 191 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister indicate where in these figures is reflected the large fluctuations from one month to the next which he told us last year was the reason why one should look to quarterly averages instead of monthly figures? Can he point us to where in these figures is the evidence of those large fluctuations that made him believe he needed to produce averages?

HON J J NETTO:

If he would bear with me one second. In answer to the Leader of the Opposition's question I will quote the Chief Minister in part answer to a supplementary Question No. 22 of 1994 when he said, "Mr Speaker, I think we have dealt with this point also previously and we said in fact that the figures would fluctuate moreso if somebody, for example, did not register in January but comes back in February and we produce monthly figures, first of all, there would be wide fluctuations which would be less indicative of the trend. Secondly, on a month to month basis the figures are more difficult to correct". We have changed the monthly figures, as I have said before, to a quarterly basis and I think that we have not invented the wheel, that is to say, that in the UK, as the Opposition Member knows, they have monthly figures which is basically just an administrative count coming from the Employment Survey from the Job Centre as we do here in Gibraltar but there are also the quarterly figures which is the household survey, the labour force survey which actually sorts out any fluctuations which is in the manner of my answers in the past. So there are good reasons for doing it and as I said the reasons that we are doing it today are the same reasons as when he was Chief Minister. In fact, not just because he said it but also because in another quote, the then Minister for Labour and Social Security, the Hon Robert Mor, in answer to No. 172 of 1992, he said, "Unemployment statistics as at 15 November 1992 are not available. As is normal practice the Government will however continue to provide these on a quarterly basis". Again let me quote, "Mr Speaker, it is not impossible to do it" - referring to the provision of unemployment figures on a monthly basis - "it just means that we would have to devote people to producing these statistics at regular intervals of more than a quarter. We have not done this since 1990 and we do not see the need to do it so we are only prepared to provide them on a quarterly basis". A most adamant and most categorical statement indeed though not least uncharacteristic of the then Chief Minister, the Leader of the Opposition today.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister think that he is being paid as the Minister for Labour not to provide information to this House about what was happening in the last six months but to spend all his time reading the Hansards of the last 20 years? Is that what he thinks he is getting paid to do?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He is getting paid to do both.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, if he is getting paid to do both with the full approval of the Chief Minister, will the Chief Minister tell his Minister that at least he should devote as much time to one as the other because he seems to be able to answer questions by quoting what happened in 1991 and yet if we ask him about what happened last month he needs notice. He is more familiar with the entire history of the GSLP administration than what has been happening in Gibraltar since he took office, is that not the case?

HON J J NETTO:

That is not the case. What shows up in Opposition Members trying to make a storm in a teacup every time that I quote what they have said shows their double standards and hypocrisy. They start moving in different directions and it wonders whether this is part of the film of the stampede of Jumanji as opposed to a coherent Opposition Party prepared to take seriously what they have said in the past and not prepared to do it now.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I do not know whether the Minister sees himself as Jumanji, we are certainly not seeking to stampede on him. Will the Minister not accept that it is perfectly legitimate to question him on a statement he made in the House previously in which he said not that he wanted to move to quarterly figures because he thought we were doing very well and he wanted to copy us or because he wants to copy something that is done by service in the United Kingdom but because there were fluctuations on a month to month basis which distorted the figures and I am asking him, now that he has been kind enough to give us the figures, can he tell us where these fluctuations are? That is all I am asking him. The answer is he cannot tell us where the fluctuations are and it has nothing to do with what we did in 1996, 1991 or what they do in the United Kingdom. Will he now accept that in fact there do not appear so far, of the figures we have had so far, it may happen tomorrow we never know, but so far there appears to be in fact quite a narrow range of movement from one month to the next in the figures he provides.

MR SPEAKER:

The question is, in the figure you provide there is little fluctuation.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Can we just remember that we are discussing a question about receipt of social security benefits. It is three quarters of an hour since we finished discussing statistics about levels of employment and unemployment. The question relates to the number of unemployed people receiving (a) unemployment benefit (b) social assistance (c) no payment. The statistics on employment they got in answer to Question No. 173 an hour and a half ago. The hon Member will see that in terms of the total unemployed persons the figure for October was 566, for November 528, for

December 515 and in percentage terms those show large fluctuations. Did we not discuss the last time we were in the House the distorting effect that it has on one month's statistics when one specialist form of employer, I think we even mentioned a particular supermarket, advertises vacancies for a particular type of job which only appeals to a particular type of person in the community who would not be interested in doing any other sort of work, for example, if the supermarket says, "I want part-time cashiers" there may be 100 ladies in Gibraltar who want to be part-time cashiers but are not otherwise interested in full-time employment and that would distort that month's statistics. If they ask for the statistics that month of registered it would reflect that fact but on a quarterly basis the distorting effect of that blip would have been ironed out although not eliminated until future quarters are accepted.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister not agree that that is precisely the point that I am trying to make. Having made that statement there is nothing in these figures to show the distorting effect in one month of 100 ladies applying for part-time cashiers which is in fact the point that we are making. Before the figures were provided, would the Minister not agree, we had to take that explanation on trust because we were not able to check it? Now that we have got the figures provided in this House we look at it and we do not see what he says. Will the Minister also not admit that in fact, his opening remarks that this has nothing to do with the levels of unemployment or the explanation that I was given is in fact incorrect because in answer to Question No. 44 the Minister gave average figures for the numbers of unemployment benefit the average for three months. Well, why does he need to give an average for three months of the numbers of unemployment benefit when the numbers on unemployment benefit is 79, 64 and 62 and instead of saying there were 79, 64 and 62, he says, "I am going to tell you that if you add the three together and divide by three you get 69 and that removes the blip". What blip? What are we talking about? The figures do not in fact sustain the explanation that was given at the time and therefore the supplementary is as valid about these figures as it is about the previous figures because the same explanation was given for both. The explanation was given in relation to Question No. 44 of 1998.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In respect of the two points that he has made. First of all I did not say that it had nothing to do with it, I simply pointed out the fact that hon Members were raising as a supplementary under a question dealing with social security payments an analysis of unemployment statistics which arise from the unemployment statistics which we discussed three quarters of an hour ago and do not arise from the social security recipient statistics. The hon Member says is it not clear from the facts now that we have them that there is not a blip? The answer is I do not agree with him. At the end of December 1997 there were 514 Gibraltarians registered as unemployed. At the end of January there were 599. Does the hon Member know what might have happened over the Christmas period to produce an additional 80-odd unemployed Gibraltarians in that particular month, in January 1998? These blips, these sudden surges from one month to the next in the number of people unemployed, we all know they happen in June or September because there is a school leaving year and there may be an injection of ex-students into the labour market. If there is a large redundancy in some place or another, that generates an increase in a particular months level of unemployed. But if there is a jump of that degree without there being some identifiable reason for it, it is a distorting blip. We have analysed those

figures and no one has been able to give me an explanation about why January 1998 there are suddenly, what happened during Christmas that meant that there were all those extra people employed before Christmas but unemployed 30 days later.

HON J J BOSSANO:

First of all, of course, unless the Minister had a crystal ball he could not possibly have told us in September that he was doing this for the figure of October because he knew what was going to happen in January and we are in fact asking him.....  
*[Interruption]* I will give him an explanation for the example that he has chosen because it is not a good example and I will put it as a question so that he gets the answer. I do not accept that the supplementary does not follow from the information that is being provided about benefits because they also said about benefits that they would now produce quarterly averages of recipients of benefits. That is the point that I am making. They said on unemployment benefit the average number of people in the period ending in December 1997 the average is that there are 69 people receiving unemployment benefit. Well, what is the explanation about fluctuations when we know now that the 69 figure which could have been obviously the result of 100 in one month and 50 in another month producing 75 and that would have been a big fluctuation, it would have been a doubling. But if you have a figure which is 79, 64, 62 it is obvious that the explanation is wrong, in saying, "We are smoothing something about by telling you the average was 69 in those three months". So the Chief Minister is wrong when he says that the supplementary does not arise because the same explanation was given perhaps inadvertently for both phenomena. Secondly let me tell him that there is in fact, does he not know or has he not been told, that there is a well-known pattern that in December because the construction industry closes down for a fortnight and because of the number of holidays that are there the number of people taken on in December is lower than normal and because the number is lower than normal in December the people who do not bother to go and maintain the registry in December is higher and therefore there is a tendency that people that will not have come in December to maintain the registration will reappear in January. I think if he cares to ask for the names or identification of the people from the ETB he will find that much of the movement upwards in January is related to people who were registered in November dropped out of the register in December and reappeared in January and if he looks at the filling of vacancies in December he will find that it tends to be lower than other months. So that is the explanation we were given at the time for what is not an unusual pattern. Therefore the question that I am asking is, if they do it quarterly because they want to do it quarterly it is their prerogative, but if the answer is, "We are doing it quarterly because of the need to produce an average to smooth out the big fluctuations", well we would like to be pointed to where the fluctuations are which are being smoothed out because we do not see it in these figures. Furthermore, would the Minister not agree that in fact nobody on this side of the House has quoted one months figure to suggest that that is a trend of anything? Whenever there has been a statement from the Opposition about the trend of unemployment we have always taken three months or six months so it is not true that the information is being used to suggest that because one month shows an increase it means that there is a calamity. That used to be the case in the past but not anymore if he cares to look back before 1996.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not accept the hon Member's attempted explanation for that particular blip. As I have understood his suggestion it is that because the construction industry is laid off, more or less, over the Christmas period or there are extensive holidays, companies as Christmas approaches who might have employed people say, "No, I am not going to employ them in November and December, I am going to wait until January and employ them in January, that way I do not have them on my books during the Christmas period and I do not have to pay them". That would explain the opposite of this, that would explain a higher level of unemployment in November and December and a falling level of unemployment in January when the employers say, "Now that Christmas has finished and I do not have to pay them lengthy holidays, now I am going to do the employment that I delayed before". What we have here is the opposite. We have higher unemployment at the end of January by 84 when the employers are now rushing to engage the staff that before when he says employers are holding off from employing people. So frankly I would not think that the explanation that he has given would be a credible explanation for the opposite of these statistics.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Chief Minister not acknowledge that he has failed to understand the explanation that I have given him and therefore will he consider in fact that the explanation given, which he can get verified by the people in the ETB, is that people registered as unemployed in November tend to lapse in December in the knowledge of the unavailability of vacancies and to re-register in January? I have said that if he cares to get the people to check how much of the increase in January is not new but people coming back after one month, he will find that that is correct. In fact if they want to smooth out the fluctuations would he not consider the possibility of not lapsing people after one month but in fact checking whether they should be kept on a register if they are coming on and off all the time?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No one has ever offered that explanation to me when I have asked but certainly I am very happy to consider any suggestion that eliminates unrepresentative fluctuations because at the end of the day all we want is to produce information which gives a proper indication of where the economy is in relation to employment and unemployment and we do not want to have to be diverted from the business of Government dealing with speculation and uninformed comments from people who may not understand that a month's figures does not necessarily mean what that month's figure says. The hon Gentleman may not fall into the trap of doing that but there are others in Gibraltar who do.

ORAL

NO. 192 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - PRIVATE SECTOR - GIBRALTARIANS**

What was the number of Gibraltarians employed in the private sector in October 1996 and April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 193, 194 and 195 of 1998.



ORAL

NO. 193 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - PRIVATE SECTOR - UK NATIONALS**

What was the number of UK nationals employed in the private sector in October 1996 and April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 192, 194 and 195 of 1998.

NO. 194 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - PRIVATE SECTOR**

What was the number of persons employed in the private sector in October 1996 and April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 192, 193 and 195 of 1998.

NO. 195 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - PRIVATE SECTOR - SPANISH NATIONALS**

What was the number of Spanish nationals employed in the private sector in October 1996 and April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING  
AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The number of employees in the private sector in October 1996 are as follows:

Gibraltarians 5,369; UK nationals 2,114; Spanish nationals 1,024 out of a total number of 9,910 employees in this sector.

Similarly in April 1997 there were:

Gibraltarians 5,325; UK nationals 2,146; Spanish nationals 1,065 out of a total of 9,955 employees.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 192, 193, 194 AND 195 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister confirm that these in fact are based on the returns made to date from PAYE certificates by private sector employers?

HON J J NETTO:

No, I can confirm that they come from the ETB source.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the figures that he has given for October and April 1997 are based on contracts and not on tax paid?

HON J J NETTO:

That is correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister confirm then that on that basis there is no available figure for, say, April 1996 because the April 1996 figure given in the House was based on PAYE so one is not comparable with the other, is that right?

HON J J NETTO:

I am not quite sure if the April figure which he is now quoting was an answer which I gave before.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, he did not give the answer but when we put a question to the Government we do not tell them who has to answer the question. When we put the question the last time the answer that we got was based on PAYE certificates submitted to date. In order to be able to assess the implication of that answer we need to know whether it is legitimate to compare it with the last figure given or it is not.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, with respect to the hon Member, I think he is slightly mistaking the position. I think he is referring to a question that I answered last time and that was a question which he asked a question not along these similar lines but a question linked to PAYE. I am talking from memory but I think he said how many people are paying PAYE? And the information we got from the Income Tax was along the lines that the hon Member has just said. It may be that the hon Questioner has asked in this question in relation to October and April because he knows that those are the two relevant months for survey purposes and that therefore he asked with that knowledge in hand. The Government have given the information in respect of October and April from ETB sources and if we decouple it from income tax of course that information, I am told, is available, they can work out how many UK nationals are employed as far as the ETB is aware. That is my recollection of the comparison that the hon Member made. I am sure he is referring to a question that he asked or which I answered last time.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister is right in saying that there is a reference to the same question in a previous question answered by him where he said it was possible to do it for the months of April and October because that was additional information given. [*HON CHIEF MINISTER: Yes.*] But the question had been asked prior to that about the previous figures for the comparable months in 1995 and 1996 and what I am trying to establish is whether the answer that we have had today is based on the same source as the previous one which I understood was the Tax Office and if it is not therefore it follows that there need not be any comparability between the two figures, is that correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I think that that is correct.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The figures that the Minister for Employment has quoted is for open contracts, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, I understand that to be correct.

NO. 196 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - Nos. HOMELESS**

Can Government state how many persons are categorised as homeless, and if any, what are their housing needs in rooms requirement?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

As at 20 April 1998, there is one family that is categorised as homeless. They require a 3RKB flat.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 196 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

It is the family that is actually, not in the street but in an institution, have gone there and are staying there in that place; is that the family the Minister is referring to?

HON H CORBY:

That is the family that is staying in that institution and they have already approached the Housing Department and we are looking at the case so that we can reallocate them from there.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Seeing that they have been categorised therefore is the conclusion of the Housing Advisory Committee and the Housing Allocation Committee that this is a genuine case?

HON H CORBY:

It is a genuine case.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Therefore, seeing that it is a genuine case, will they be giving priority especially on one hand to find something that is suitable for the family and in second place if there are any repairs to be done will it be given priority above everything else?

HON H CORBY:

This family from what I gather had a fight with one of the members of the household and they came out of the flat. They will certainly be given any assistance that they want inasfar as that is concerned because there are also children involved.

NO. 197 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**HOUSING - PRE-WAR/POST-WAR UNITS ALLOCATED**

How many pre-war and post-war housing units allocated have been given to successful housing applicants on the "do it yourself basis" broken down for each month since 1 June 1996, and how many have been allocated where the works have been carried out by Buildings and Works?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The allocation of post and pre-war flats allocated on a "self-help" basis and those allocated after being refurbished by Buildings and Works is as follows:

		<u>'Self-help'</u>	<u>Refurbished</u>
<u>June 1996</u>	- post-war	6	2
	pre-war	1	0
<u>July 1996</u>	- post-war	7	2
	pre-war	1	2
<u>August 1996</u>	- post-war	3	2
	pre-war	0	0
<u>September 1996</u>	- post-war	3	2
	pre-war	0	0
<u>October 1996</u>	- post-war	5	6
	pre-war	2	1
<u>November 1996</u>	- post-war	5	4
	pre-war	6	0
<u>December 1996</u>	- post-war	2	0
	pre-war	0	0
<u>January 1997</u>	- post-war	4	1
	pre-war	0	0
<u>February 1997</u>	- post-war	2	0
	pre-war	1	1
<u>March 1997</u>	- post-war	8	6
	pre-war	2	1
<u>April 1997</u>	- post-war	10	5
	pre-war	1	1

<u>May 1997</u>	- post-war	3	4
	pre-war	6	2
<u>June 1997</u>	- post-war	13	2
	pre-war	1	3
<u>July 1997</u>	- post-war	5	2
	pre-war	4	0
<u>August 1997</u>	- post-war	3	1
	pre-war	2	0
<u>September 1997</u>	- post-war	6	2
	pre-war	1	0
<u>October 1997</u>	- post-war	7	6
	pre-war	0	0
<u>November 1997</u>	- post-war	2	1
	pre-war	1	1
<u>December 1997</u>	- post-war	3	2
	pre-war	3	1
<u>January 1998</u>	- post-war	6	1
	pre-war	2	0
<u>February 1998</u>	- post-war	1	1
	pre-war	2	0
<u>March 1998</u>	- post-war	0	1
	pre-war	2	1
<u>April 1998</u>	- post-war	0	1
	pre-war	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
		<u>144</u>	<u>70</u>



NO. 198 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 31 March 1998, showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

As the hon Member knows the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund receives no contributions and its relevance in financial terms is now limited to a bookkeeping entry. Shortfalls in that Fund resulting from payments of pensions due under the Closed Scheme are financed from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund as necessary as envisaged in the legislation. All the local pensions monies are now contained in the Open Scheme fund. The Closed Scheme Fund contains a small balance of about £35,000 representing the residue of UK monies held in respect of Spanish pensions.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 198 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister saying, in fact, that the payment which is due under the Ordinance which provides for the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund are actually being made out of the Open Fund?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As the hon Member knows, there is no flow of contributions into the Closed Scheme Fund and therefore the capital of that has been depleted. Just as before it used to be funded out of current contributions it continues to be funded out of current contributions but, of course, those current contributions are paid into the Open Scheme and monies are transferred from the Open Scheme Fund to the Closed Scheme Fund in order to enable the Closed Scheme Fund to make its payments to local pensioners. Therefore the balance as at 31 March, if the hon Member wants to see a copy of the account of the Fund that is a different matter, but the actual balance meaning the amount of money in the Fund is a very small amount of course because it is just a carried forward figure and it is always a carried forward figure of UK funds. In other words, of the monies that the UK sends from time to time for the payment of the Spanish pensions, we are holding £35,000 which must have been left over. Yes, the hon Gentleman is correct in saying that the Funds are now all in the Open Scheme. He will remember when we debated the two bits of legislation that there are provisions for the one Fund to transfer monies to the other as and when needs basis.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister will recall that I questioned whether there was provision in the Ordinance for this to happen other than the provision that says that the Financial Secretary may move money from.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, we are not relying on I think section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance which I think is the section to which the hon Member is referring. There is specific provision in the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund Ordinance and in the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund Ordinance for this to occur otherwise it would not have been possible to create different funds because one fund is receiving all the contributions and the other is receiving none of the contributions. When they were all lumped as one fund that did not matter but now that the payment of benefits flows from different Ordinances and therefore technically out of different funds, there is a need to bridge financially the two which did not exist at the time when current contributors and past contributors, now pensioners, were really all contributing into and being paid out of the one Special Fund.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I do not dispute any of that. What I am disputing is in fact this provision that is said to exist in the law and I questioned him previously and simply the fact that he says that it is does not seem to be sufficient as far as I am concerned. Can he confirm that in fact this is the first month for which this has happened?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I cannot. If the hon Member firstly does not recollect what is in legislation that was debated in this House and on which he voted in favour of and, secondly does not trust my statement of what the law provides, which of course he is perfectly at liberty not to do, I think that the correct thing for him to do is not to say across the floor of the House that what I say is not sufficient but to read the law for himself and form his own view. If he is then of the view that there is no statutory provision for this, that will be a different matter but I can assure him that that is not the case, that this is a matter, I am giving him now the same answer as I did then, that there is statutory provision in both Ordinances, one to pay and the other to receive.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case, and certainly I do not think the Chief Minister has to come to the conclusion that either I am accusing him of lying or..... [*HON CHIEF MINISTER: No, I am not coming to any conclusions, he has said so.*] No, the other contribution is that notwithstanding all his attributes, infallibility is not amongst them and that he could be mistaken, that is possible as well, or is that impossible?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, of course it is possible but if the hon Member does not know what the position is and I am telling him that the position is (a), it seems to me that from his position of admitted ignorance of the matter he is not well placed to undermine the validity of what I am saying. Let him undermine the validity of what I am saying when he has taken the trouble to research what the position in relation to the matter actually is.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The point that I am making and will the Chief Minister not accept it is that having looked at the Ordinance from the beginning, from the beginning I said that in fact we did not agree that there was a provision there other than the provision in the Open Fund for the Financial and Development Secretary to transfer money from the Fund if the Fund does not require it. I have asked on several occasions is that the provision that is being used? That provision in the Open Fund Ordinance is there exactly the same as in the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance. When that provision was there and we debated it in this House I asked the Chief Minister why he needed to put something there which was already in the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance and he said that it was simply for the sake of clarity so that if somebody read the Ordinance he would not have to go to the other Ordinance to find out. On each occasion that I have asked whether this provision is the one that is being used I have been told no. Well, what is the other provision? I do not recollect from my looking at that Ordinance that there is any provision for a charge on the Fund to be that one of the legitimate charges on the Open Fund is money to make payments from the Closed Fund. I do not recall that having been put there.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He would have to read the principal Ordinance and of course the Regulations made thereunder.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the Chief Minister is indicating that in fact it was not in the principal Ordinance when we debated it and it has been put in the Regulations, is that what he is saying?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not indicating anything to the hon Member. As the hon Member has stated that what I indicated to him is not enough for him, my position is that I am not indicating anything to him at all. I will answer his questions and then if he wishes to research the legality of the situation he should. If the hon Member believes that the Accountant General is transferring millions of pounds worth of public funds from one Fund to the other without the proper legal basis to do so, then I can assure the hon Member that he is entirely mistaken.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not accusing the Accountant General of anything anymore than I am accusing him. Perhaps the Chief Minister is beginning to doubt now whether in fact he is right and he is already looking for a scapegoat to blame which is now the Accountant General. When he thought he was right two seconds ago it was his decision and his interpretation, now it seems it is the Accountant General. My question is a very simple one, if we are told that there is no money in the Fund because the Open Fund is funding the benefits of the Closed Long-Term Fund, I have asked is this the first time that has happened in the month of March because in previous answers to this same question we have been given balances for the other months before?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The fund has reduced to zero at some point in time. I cannot tell the hon Member without notice whether that happened in January, February or March and if it did whether it was on the 26 or 27. At some point in time, from the last time that there was a substantial balance, the Fund reduced to zero so I cannot tell him, without notice, whether this is the first month in which there was an inter-fund transfer. But if he is interested in knowing I shall certainly have the information provided to him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It is not a question of whether I am interested in knowing or not. Is it not a fact that in answer to this question in respect of previous months a figure was given which was the balance of local funds at the end of the month, up to the month of February. Does that mean that in fact until February the position was that the reducing balance was still sufficient, is that the position or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the premise of the questions that he is putting is correct, in other words, if a question has been answered that says that as at 28 February there was £1.5 million or £2.5 million left and in March he gets an answer that says that as at 31 March it is £35,000, well I would have thought it was self-evident mathematics that the reduction from the February figure to the March figure must have occurred between the end of February and the end of March.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But what is not self-evident from that is whether that is the result of money having been transferred from the Open to the Closed Fund during February which then left a surplus at the end of February or whether in fact is the result of declining. That is why I am asking whether in fact the first time that this has happened is during March or whether it was happening before March? He cannot tell me the answer to that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If what the hon Member is now asking is whether funds are transferred from one to the other unnecessarily, in other words, if funds were transferred from the Open to the Closed Scheme even though there was a sufficient balance in the Closed Scheme to meet its on-going commitments, the answer is that I cannot tell him that but I cannot think why the Accountant General would wish to organise affairs in that

way but he might have done. My understanding of the position is that funds have not began to be transferred until there has been a need to transfer funds and therefore until the Fund is reduced below the level of the month's commitment, then there has not been a Fund transfer but, of course, it is possible that it might have been done differently and of course I will find out for him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So on the basis of the answer that has been given unless we are told the contrary, the fact is that the month of March is the first time that this has happened because if there was a surplus at the end and if he thinks that it is absurd to suggest the Accountant General was putting money that was needed, then I take it that it is not inconceivable that March is the first month when this has happened?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, there is a difference between it being conceivable or inconceivable and the hon Member being free to assume it. He may take nothing, I have answered his question carefully, I have told him that I cannot tell him whether March is the first but that I would be surprised if there had been fund transfers before the need and that if he was told that in February there was a balance left, then I would be surprised if there had been a transfer before February. But if he suspects that there might have been, I will go to the trouble of finding out and having him informed of the certain answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Chief Minister accept that I do not suspect anything, I am just trying to get a simple answer to a simple question. Was the transfer done in March for the first time or was it happening before March? That is all I want to know.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not keep the Government's books on my bedside table at home, he might have done when he was Chief Minister, and therefore if he had wanted to know that he should have asked it in his question and if he had asked it in his question I would have got my bookkeeping officials to provide me with the information which I would then have gladly given to him. But why does the Leader of the Opposition think that the Chief Minister should carry around with him in his head the exact date of particular cash transfers from one Government fund to the other? It is just not a proper approach to the office of Chief Minister.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Will the Chief Minister not accept that the question is not addressed to him? He has chosen to answer it so we are not asking him to carry any figures in his head at all. We are asking the Government, and would the Chief Minister not further accept that we could not ask the other question because the question that we have asked arises out of the answer that we have been given to the original question. We did not know that there was no money left in March so since we did not know there was no money left in March we could not ask where did the money come from. We have just been told in answer that there is no money left in March and therefore since we had previously been told there was money left in February, look we can in fact

instead of putting 130 questions put 260 questions and try and put potential supplementaries ahead of getting answers. It is a well-known fact that supplementaries, subject to your ruling them, has not been legitimate.

MR SPEAKER:

No, supplementaries on supplementaries are not allowed but supplementaries on the answer are allowed.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I would have thought it was legitimate to ask, having been told that this happened in March to say, is it the first time it has happened because it is the first time we hear of it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member has asked what was the information as at 31 March and that is the information that he has had. As at the 31 March the information was that there were £35,000 left in the account and I have gone into the trouble of explaining who that £35,000 actually belongs to and it is not us. The information that he has had is the information that he has asked for. The hon Member wants, following from that answer, to have more information and I say fine, if he wants more information ask for it and it shall be given to him but he cannot ask and make assumptions on the basis of detailed supplementary information which cannot reasonably arise from the question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

When the answer was prepared, surely.....

MR SPEAKER:

One more question and one more answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

There is in fact a part of the question that I do not think has been answered which is the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What the question asks is the balance..... [*HON J J BOSSANO: And the expenditure.*] No, the balance showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers, yes for the whole year. What the hon Member is asking.....

HON J J BOSSANO:

The same question is put every month. The balance at the end of the month and the expenditure during the month, every month, it has been given in every previous month what is the mystery about this one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Nothing at all. The answer to the hon Member's question is that the payments to Spanish pensioners from UK Government funds have been £1,082,000 and the payments to local pensioners has been £910,000.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Now that we have got the original question answered, can the Chief Minister tell us of that £910,000 that was paid to local pensioners, how much of that was met from the Open Fund and how much was met from the residue within the Closed Fund?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In respect of the month of March only?

HON J J BOSSANO:

In respect of the figure we have been given for the month of March.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Even though the question does not say in respect of the month of March, the question speaks as at 31 March, but in respect of the month of March the best information that I have is that £846,000 appears to have been transferred to the Fund. That is not strictly necessarily the answer to the hon Member's question because there is a question of balances carried forward and balances brought forward but in respect of the month of March, £846,000 was transferred into the Fund.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then in fact does the Chief Minister not agree that this in fact is consistent with my previous question that there was a balance at the end of February which added to the £846,000 produces the £910,000 and that therefore the £846,000 is the first transfer that has taken place?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is possible, it is one interpretation of events. Certainly the figures are consistent with that but I cannot stand up here giving the hon Member an assurance that that is necessarily the case. Certainly the figures are consistent with the hon Member's supposition. If he wants it confirmed that it is not just consistent with the hon Member's supposition but that it is in fact what happened, that is what I offered him 10 minutes ago to have checked for him and communicated to him.

NO. 199 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the number of pensions being paid or with entitlement to payment in March 1998, from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving a breakdown of pre-1969 Spanish pensions and locally funded pensions showing the number of Gibraltarians/UK nationals, Moroccan and other nationalities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The following pensioners were in receipt of payments from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund in March 1998:

Pre-1969 - Spanish pensioners	8,787
British pensions (Gib and UK nationals)	4,663
Moroccan pensioners	877
Other nationalities	<u>251</u>
Total	<u>14,578</u>



NO. 200 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government now state how many social insurance cards were in issue as at 31 December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

As explained in my answer to Question No. 76 of 1998 at the previous meeting of this House, the information requested is not available at this moment in time. The final figure of how many insurance cards were in issue as at 31 December 1997 will not be available until the posting exercise has been completed. The full exercise which is carried out manually and also includes extracting the non-compliance lists will hopefully be completed in June/July 1998.

NO. 201 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state how many of the social insurance cards in issue as at 31 December 1997, have been renewed to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The number of 1997 social insurance cards which have been renewed to date is 10,606. This is broken up as follows:

Gibraltarians and British	9,123
Other nationalities	<u>1,483</u>
Total	<u>10,606</u>

NO. 202 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what is the total number of social insurance cards in issue as at 31 March 1998, to:

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) other nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The information requested is not available. I am advised that details of insurance cards in issue cannot be readily extracted on a given date as no provision for this has ever been made in the manual record system currently in use at the Department of Social Services. For practical reasons the information can only be extracted on an annual basis as at the end of each year.

NO. 203 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - SELF-EMPLOYED INSURANCE CARDS**

How many self-employed social insurance cards were on issue to frontier workers as at the end of 1997, giving a breakdown by nationality and of these how many have been renewed up to 31 March 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

At the end of 1997 there were 42 self-employed social insurance cards on issue to frontier workers broken down as follows:

(a) Gibraltarians	Nil
(b) UK nationals	23
(c) Spanish nationals	16
(d) Other EU nationals	2
(e) Non-EU nationals	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>42</u>

For the reason stated in my answer to Question No. 200 of 1998, it is not possible at this moment in time to confirm how many cards have been renewed up to 31 March 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 203 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

Do the Government accept that a total of 42 is very different to the reply given to us to a similar question where the total of frontier workers was given as eight?

HON H CORBY:

I have not that information with me but I will look at it and give the information to the hon Member.

HON R MOR:

I cannot find the question at the moment but it was a question asked last month in the House, it was answered by the Minister for Employment and the total given was that there were only eight frontier workers. A short surprise from the Chief Minister that reflected on my having been surprised at the answer but this is precisely the reason which I have been surprised because in answer to a previous question again the figure had been much higher than the eight.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Would the hon Member like to refresh the House's memory of what the question that he asked last time was?

HON R MOR:

The number of self-employed frontier workers, that was the question that was asked.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If that is the question that he asked I very much doubt that there could have been an increase of 34 which would represent something like 400 per cent in one month. If it is the same question and if that is the answer that he got it must have been mistaken. If he has now found the question perhaps he could just like to assure himself that it was exactly the same question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It was question No. 47 and it was, "What is the latest number of frontier workers classified as self-employed broken down by nationality?" And the answer was four UK nationals, three Spanish nationals and one EU national.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a very different question. [*HON J J BOSSANO: Is it?*] Yes, because one thing is how many frontier workers are classified as self-employed and the other is how many social insurance cards have been issued to self-employed frontier workers because we could easily have 34 frontier workers registering for one thing but not for the other.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the Chief Minister thinks it is not unusual that people should have insurance cards and not be registered as working? Would he not agree that, if anything, what would be usual would be that there might be eight with insurance cards and 34 without, but that there should be 34 with insurance cards and not registered is unusual, no?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not registered at the ETB, yes it is not impossible. [*Interruption*] The hon Member should bear in mind that it is legally possible, although in breach of the ETB rules, but it is possible for EU nationals to obtain employment in Gibraltar on terms that would enable them, administratively. One of the reasons why we want to computerise Government departments and link them together is precisely so that the records of one department dealing with employment and registration and the records of another department dealing with social insurance matters, does not produce such manifestly different pictures as the one which the answer to that question and the answer to this question produces. I accept it is not a situation that should be so but it is so and it is a combination of the fact that both operate manual records and that they do not speak to one another.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that if they spoke to one another they might find who the 34 are?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, in an ideal world that would be so but the hon Member knows that in the practice of it it is not that straightforward.

NO. 204 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**PRISON - NUMBER OF INMATES**

What was the number of Gibraltarians and other different nationalities held in prison on 31 March 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

On the 31 March 1998 there were a total of 31 inmates held in prison. The breakdown is as follows:

British (local)	17 (including one female)
British (UK)	2
Spanish	9
Moroccan	2
French	<u>1</u>
Total	<u>31</u>

NO. 205 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - PORT STUDY**

When will Government make public the recent Port Study commissioned by Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

As announced at the time that the Port Study was commissioned, Government do not intend to publish the full text of the study as part of the analysis contains commercially sensitive information. As originally envisaged, an abridged version of the Port Study will be made public and this will contain all the recommendations made by the consultants.

It is envisaged that the abridged version of the study will be published before the end of April 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 205 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Will the elements of the study that are made public coincide in any way with the recommendations which the Government are seeking to undertake or accept?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Can he repeat the question?

HON A J ISOLA:

Yes, does the abridged version of the study in any way reflect the recommendations which the Government have accepted? *[HON CHIEF MINISTER: All the recommendations are in the abridged version.]*

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The summary will contain all the recommendations that have been made by the consultants and obviously it is up to the Government to accept or not accept all the recommendations that are contained in that report.

HON A J ISOLA:

Have Government as yet formed a view on which recommendations they will or will not accept and, if so, when will they make those public?



HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Government have obviously analysed the full text of the report and have taken a view. However, the implementation of some of the recommendations will now be considered in the format that there will be an appointment of a Steering Committee to be able to implement some of the recommendations that are contained in the report. We want to ensure that any recommendations that we actually implement are not going to, in any way, jeopardise the existing commercial interests that currently exist and therefore we will be carrying out a process of consultation to make sure that the recommendations are implemented without any damage to the existing business and commercial entities.

HON A J ISOLA:

Is the purpose of the Steering Committee therefore to steer the recommendations forward in consultation with the private sector or is it the purpose of the Steering Committee to reach a decision on which should or should not be accepted?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I think there will be an element of both. I think Government have taken a view as to the vision of the way forward for port development and obviously with that in mind we will be having members of the private sector forming part of that Steering Committee in order to enable us to deliver on our programme for development.

NO. 206 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - YACHT VISITS**

Do Government expect the number of yachts calling at Gibraltar to increase this year over last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government do indeed expect the number of yachts calling at Gibraltar to increase during 1998 compared to 1997.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 206 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

On what premise is this expectation based?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Well, the expectations are on the fact that some of the causes for the drop in yacht arrivals during 1997 were due to, first the fact that the unfavourable peseta/pound exchange rate and, secondly the effects of "El Niño" which is a maritime atmospheric scenario which has cut down the number of yachts crossing the Atlantic. We hope that this will not be the case this year. Obviously in addition we are targeting a lot of our marketing and efforts within the Gibraltar Tourist Board towards yachting and yacht related activities.

NO. 207 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**VISIT BY GROUP OF TRAVEL WRITERS**

What was the cost to Government of the recent visit by the group of travel writers and to whom were these monies paid?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The total cost to Government of the recent visit by the group of top travel writers was £11,310.57.

This amount was paid as follows:

Doug Goodman Public Relations	£2,800.00
Sign Design Gibraltar	100.00
Strait Vision Productions Gibraltar	450.00
SRS Gibraltar (Sound System)	475.00
Copywrite Gibraltar	280.00
Betasnaps	144.00
123 Printers	35.00
Orlando Charvetto	10.00
GB Airways	5,950.00
Philatelic Bureau	48.00
Red House	200.00
Post Office	13.57
Stakis Casino Club	<u>805.00</u>
	<u>£11,310.57</u>

There were other costs involved with the press trip but these were covered through sponsorship.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 207 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Can I ask how many people were in the group?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

There were 33 journalists plus Doug Goodman and an assistant, so a total of 35.

NO. 208 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**REDUCTION OF SCHEDULED FLIGHTS TO MANCHESTER**

Do Government expect a reduction in seat availability between Gibraltar and Manchester in the 1998 summer season over the 1997 summer season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Yes, Government do expect a reduction in the seats available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 208 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Are Government satisfied with the reduction?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Not at all, representations were made to GB Airways who operate the Manchester/Gibraltar route at the time when we were informed that they would be reducing the size of the aircraft on the Manchester/Gibraltar route but, unfortunately these are commercial decisions that are taken based on the availability of actual flights, the financial viability of the route and the availability of slots. We have put proposals at the time to GB Airways that seeing that the aircraft that was available was a 146 aircraft, that they ought to consider putting on two flights a week, one on Wednesday and one on Sunday which would enable us to promote short break holidays in Gibraltar. Unfortunately it is not possible to arrange that for the coming summer but something that is being considered by them for their winter programme and at the same time they are also looking and it looks as if there is a possibility that they may be able to revert to a 737 aircraft once the winter programme is announced. But their decision has been based basically on the non-availability of 737 aircraft.

HON A J ISOLA:

Have Government received any representations from the operator as to the possibility of the service actually being cancelled for the forthcoming winter season?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, no representations or discussions have been undertaken in this respect.

HON A J ISOLA:

The Government are not aware of that possibility then?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, we are not.

NO. 209 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**BRITISH MIDLAND AIRLINE**

Have Government received any interest from British Midland to fly to Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government participated in Routes '97 held in Oslo in September last year. There I met representatives from British Midland and expressed Government's desire to expand services to Gibraltar. The present situation is that British Midland is evaluating the possibility of a UK/Gibraltar route. Among the factors which have to be considered by the airline are the financial viability of the route, aircraft availability and slot availability. At the time of our meeting in Oslo, I provided the airline with full data and statistics on Gibraltar airport.

Government continue to pursue our policy of seeking new scheduled and charter operators on Gibraltar routes.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 209 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Are Government aware that British Midland pilots are actually flying into Gibraltar alongside other pilots on carriers to familiarise themselves with the Gibraltar airport and, if that is the case and they are aware of that, will they continue to press to pursue the possibility of them flying to Gibraltar from any one of the UK airports or other airports?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am not aware that British Midland pilots were actually training coming into Gibraltar with their 'L' plates on their back but let me tell the hon Member that obviously we do encourage new schedule services and charter operators to Gibraltar and therefore it is an on-going process of negotiations and evaluations and we will continue to pursue that strategy.

NO. 210 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - HOTEL OCCUPANCY**

Do Government expect an increase in the number of guest nights sold at hotels this year over last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government do indeed expect increases in the number of bed nights sold at hotels during this year over 1997.

In fact, Government are encouraged by the increase in bed nights sold in 1997 which totalled 143,972 compared with 1996 when the total bed nights sold were 140,596. This represents an increase of 3,376 bed nights sold.

More significantly, expenditure by visitor arrivals in hotels has increased from £8.43 million in 1996 to £17.36 million in 1997, representing an increase of over 100 per cent.

NO. 211 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**TOURISM - AMOUNTS DUE AND OWING TO GOVERNMENT BY HOTELS**

What amounts are due and owing to Government by hotels broken down by items and in respect of which periods these monies became due?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The total amount due and owing to Government by hotels broken down by items, as at 27 March 1998, is as follows:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Periods</u>
PAYE	£293,581.06	1995/96 to 1997/98
Social Insurance	£334,064.26	1991 to 1997
Electricity	£300,496.97	1993
Rates	<u>£70,815.24</u>	1993/94 to 1997/98
	<u>£998,957.53</u>	

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 211 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Would the Minister agree to let me have the details in respect of each hotel in writing at a future date?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I do not think it would be appropriate to provide particular information about particular taxpayers, I do not think it would be proper at all.



NO. 212 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - HOTEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

What is the total amount paid out and to which hotels by Government in respect of the soft loans under the Hotel Assistance Scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The total amount paid out in respect of soft loans under the Hotel Assistance Scheme as at 20 April 1998 is £1,026,210.

The hotels which have received soft loans are:

The Elliott Hotel in the sum of £441,258.  
The Rock Hotel in the sum of £574,952.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 212 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say what are the terms of the soft loans, that is what is it that makes them soft?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Those details are not available from memory. Certainly they are available to the Opposition because the Leader of the Opposition's Colleague is involved professionally in the matter. The softness of it relates to the length of the loan, in other words, the loan period which would not normally be available on commercial terms, but if the hon Member is interested in the specific terms of the loan, as I have said, we can certainly provide him with the information. There are quite a lot of terms, incidentally, they do not all relate to finance, it is a lengthy loan agreement.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given the fact that it covers such things, I would be interested if we had a copy notwithstanding the fact that professionally my hon Colleague may have access to it, we would not expect him to give that to the rest of us if it was something he had on behalf of a client. Can I ask, is there not something or was something not mentioned about the European Union having to approve the element of subsidy that made the loan cheaper than a commercial loan? Was that statement not made in the House at the beginning?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The capitalised value of the softness in relation to the interest rate element of it has to be within the State Aid provisions of the European Union but all this has gone up to Brussels and there has been no comeback and I think the view has been taken that it has been approved.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In providing the information, can the Government identify that for us so that we can see how that mechanism works because probably by looking at the Loan Agreement we would not be able to arrive at that figure ourselves?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Since I am sure that the hon Member is as concerned as we are not to cause unnecessary problems for the Government and for important parts of the local economy, it is not an issue that he will wish to highlight, whatever the position is that he finds in relation to the EU aspect of it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not seeking to create difficulties for anybody, I am seeking information.

HON A J ISOLA:

Obviously the Chief Minister would not expect any information professionally obtained to be politically shared. But notwithstanding that, how many other hotels have indicated that they would also wish to participate in the scheme for soft loans?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Initially there were two other hotels that expressed an interest in soft loans and these were the Caleta Palace Hotel and the Bristol Hotel. Subsequently the Bristol Hotel has withdrawn their interest and it is only the Caleta Palace which at the moment is in the process of having a loan agreement put into place in line with the rest of the other two hotels.

HON A J ISOLA:

Is the loan agreement an integral part of the Hotel Assistance Scheme in the sense that if people participate in one aspect being the soft loan or the grant, are they entitled to the same benefits in the remainder of the package?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Given what he has just said I assume that he continues to be in political and not in professional mode. [*HON A J ISOLA: Of course.*] The Government have devised the scheme as a package and it should not be assumed that the grant will be available to those that do not participate in the scheme. But having said that, it should not be assumed that the Government would consider any particular permutation of participation on its merits and would respond favourably or unfavourably to the application on a case by case basis.

HON A J ISOLA:

I am referring to the only question in relation to arrears. At the time that the scheme was announced it encompassed the waiver on import duty on monies either through grant or soft loans, the reduction in rates, electricity and water charges, grants, soft loans and a freezing of arrears. Is that one package? Could somebody say, "I am not prepared to take a soft loan but can I do this?" Is that something that the Government considers?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, they cannot have access to the package at all without regularising the arrears situation.

NO. 213 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - HOTEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

What is the total amount paid out and to which hotels by Government in respect of the grants under the Hotel Assistance Scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The total amount paid out by Government in respect of grants under the Hotel Assistance Scheme is as follows:

Bristol Hotel	£ 46,216
Caleta Palace Hotel	£100,000
Queen's Hotel	£100,000
Rock Hotel	£100,000
Emile Youth Hostel	<u>£ 1,417</u>
	<u>£347,633</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 213 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

So these are amounts actually paid out or is this the total?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is the information that has been supplied to me by the Treasury as having been paid out. In other words, cheques having been issued.

HON A J ISOLA:

Are there any other hotels which will be receiving grants or is this it?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Well, the Cannon Hotel and the Continental Hotel were both offered an element of grant but they still have not come back with any proper proposals which would enable the Government to assess whether they would be feasible or in line with our thinking in terms of meriting the support in the form of a grant.

NO. 214 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - HOTEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

By when do Government expect improvements to hotels under the Hotel Assistance Scheme to be completed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

There have already been significant improvements to hotels as a result of the Hotel Assistance Scheme. Government expect an important part of the hotel refurbishment to be completed by June this year.

Government further estimates that it will take another 12 to 18 months for all refurbishment to be completed.

NO. 215 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - AVERAGE EXPENDITURE**

Can Government say what was the average expenditure per person per day by tourists staying in hotels during 1997 and the number of tourists involved?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The average expenditure per person per day in 1997 excluding hotel accommodation was £46.34. The expenditure per person per day inclusive of hotel accommodation was £92.34. The number of tourists involved was 28,853.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 215 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether it is on the basis of these figures that the tourist expenditure by people staying in hotels which he quoted in answer to an earlier question of £17 million is produced?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The question refers to the number of tourists and therefore it does not include business people that come to Gibraltar which are not strictly tourists. The figure of £17.3 million, which I referred to earlier on in one of the questions today, is actually proposed on the same level of expenditure on an average of 4.22 days stay. The number involved includes tourists and people staying in Gibraltar for business and therefore classified as visitors and can be totalled at 48,420. Therefore if we get the 48,420 tourists and multiply it by 4.22 and multiply it by the £84.67 which is the expenditure on average per day, we come up with £17.3 million.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say how it is that the expenditure excluding accommodation given in the survey where the £17 million appears which has been tabled by him today, in fact, shows the average expenditure per person per day as £36? This is on page 4 of the Tourist Survey Report tabled today.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Well, I am assuming here that obviously the figure of £36 refers to UK flight departures as everybody staying in hotels in Gibraltar does not come in by air strictly speaking. There are those that arrive in Gibraltar through the land frontier and stay in hotels and through other modes of entry into Gibraltar. So the figure of expenditure quoted of £46.34 is based on the survey being carried out by the Statistics Office on people actually staying in the hotels and not actually on people arriving through UK flights under this category called departures.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In fact, every other category is less than £36 according to this. Does the figure that he has given not reflected anywhere in the report? There is no way of knowing that people in hotels are spending £46 because even though the flight departures is £36, everybody else is less than £36.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I understand the point the hon Member is trying to make. I asked for clarification of that from the Statistics Office and that was the explanation given to me by the Government Statistician as to how those figures had been arrived at. I can only assume that there is a possible error in the actual sampling of these surveys but they are worked out on the basis which I have explained earlier on.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given the fact that the Minister in his supplementary to the previous question not only quoted the £17 million of this year but the £8 million of last year by visitors in hotels and expressed his satisfaction that it had gone up from £8 million to £17 million, can he say how the £8 million was calculated?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am assuming that the figure is calculated on the same basis. In other words, on the same formula but obviously the change being by the drop in the number of tourists coming in and staying in hotels in 1996 and possibly a drop in the actual expenditure figure per day and the length of stay. I cannot really give this information, I have not got this information readily available here in front of me but I am assuming the basis for calculations has been on the same basis but obviously with different mathematical changes made to it to arrive at a much lower figure for the previous year.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister obtain that information and provide it because obviously what we are looking at is the accuracy of the estimates which acquire a particular reference given his satisfaction that expenditure by people staying in hotels has gone up by 100 per cent even though the people staying in hotels have not gone up by 100 per cent and even though every other item of expenditure by every other category of tourists in the same survey is actually less this year than last year. So for some unexplained reason it appears as if whereas every category of visitor/arrival shown in the survey report produced today is down, the people who stayed in hotels stayed twice as much in addition to the accommodation cost and that does not seem to be consistent. So would he investigate that and let us know the explanation?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I will give the hon Member an analysis on how the 1996 figures were calculated. I am sure they will be based on the same as for 1997 but obviously with the variations that have been done because there may have been changes into actual patterns on people's levels of expenditure. But I will provide the information for him.

NO. 216 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**ROAD WORKS - UPPER ROCK**

What is the nature of the works to be done in the Upper Rock for which Amey Constructors have recently been awarded a tender?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The works in the Upper Rock consist of resurfacing, as follows:

1. St Michael's Road

overlaying to a compacted thickness of 40mm with hot asphalt an area of approximately 650m<sup>2</sup>.

2. Signal Station Road

overlaying to a compacted thickness of 40mm with hot asphalt an area of approximately 1850m<sup>2</sup>.

3. Queen's Road

patching up approximately 20m<sup>2</sup> of pot-holes.

4. Engineer's Road

reinstatement of the wearing course of a trench by the entrance to the Nature Reserve of approximately 120m<sup>2</sup>.

5. Spur Battery

overlaying to a compacted thickness of 60mm with hot asphalt the existing concrete road, an area of approximately 60m<sup>2</sup>.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 216 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is it the intention of the contractor to do the works in late evening or night in order not to coincide with the tourism vehicles in the peak season which is now on?



HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I know that yesterday there was a site meeting between Sights Management, members of the Gibraltar Tourist Board and the contractors in order to work out a programme to avoid minimum disruption to the flow of traffic in the Upper Rock. I am confident that they will be able to overcome some of the difficulties which the hon Member has highlighted. The works are intended to start next Monday and those who make regular use of the Upper Rock like the Taxi Association and public service vehicles will be advised as to any possible disruption so that they can take this into account bearing in mind the traffic that is expected in the Upper Rock as a result of cruise liners being in port on specific dates. So there will be monitoring between the different departments to ensure minimum disruption.

ORAL

NO. 217 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**DUDLEY WARD TUNNEL**

Are Government aware that the two-way traffic signs at each end of Dudley Ward Tunnel have been missing for some time?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

When the Roads Department of the Ministry for Transport became aware that the two-way traffic signs, and other safety measures, in the vicinity of Dudley Ward Tunnel had been removed or vandalised, steps were taken to have them replaced.

I am informed that the replacement of the necessary signage and safety works at Dudley Ward Tunnel have been completed.

NO. 218 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

### **BUS SERVICE STUDY**

Can Government state what are the terms of reference of the study being undertaken into the bus service in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The terms of reference of the study being undertaken in the bus services in Gibraltar can be summarised as follows:

The Board appointed by Government will enquire into and make recommendations on the following:-

The condition and appearance of public buses; the needs of different sectors of the community and the extent to which they are met; routes, fares and time tabling (including the effect of traffic congestion on timetables), bus tickets and passes; bus shelters; bus inspectors and their terms of reference; all matters relating to bus companies and the desirability or otherwise for public assistance to certain services and the form this should take; the training and appearance of drivers; the desirability of introducing new forms of public transport.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 218 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

So basically included in it is the possibility of some of these bus routes being in some ways subsidised by the Government if they are seen by the Committee and the recommendations are that they might be uneconomical because the problem always with the bus service has been on the uneconomical routes and the turnover of the companies and their ability to replace buses.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I would not like to pre-empt any of the conclusions or recommendations that this team will recommend to Government but the terms that the hon Member has mentioned could be a possibility and it is something that Government would consider but not on a term in isolation, it would have to form a package of much wider issue which would obviously improve public bus services which is what the Government are trying to achieve.

HON J C PEREZ:

What I am saying is that actually the terms of reference could include that given the mention of public assistance as part of it?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I have said it could be included but it will not be a matter of just issuing out an assistance to the bus service and leave the bus service as it is today. *[HON J C PEREZ: Obviously not.]*

NO. 219 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**BUS SERVICE - BOTH WORLDS**

Are Government prepared to extend, during weekends, the complimentary bus service for residents at Both Worlds introduced as a result of the closure of Sir Herbert Miles Road?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government do not intend to extend the complimentary bus service for residents at Both Worlds during weekends.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 219 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister aware that when the service was first introduced it was introduced on a five day basis on the strength that the No. 3 route would, during weekends, go through Dudley Ward Tunnel up to Sandy Bay and that this has not happened?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

My understanding of the situation is that when representations were made to Government on this issue the bus company that actually operates route No. 3 was offered the possibility of being able to extend the route in order to cover the need for residents of Both Worlds. Unfortunately the proposal that was put to the Government was totally uneconomical and too expensive for Government to consider and therefore we had to move away from the idea of subsidising this bus company to try and deliver on this service and we set up a temporary service using the Government Support Services garage. I was totally unaware that part of the negotiations included the weekend and I was involved in a lot of this so I just could not see how that could have been something that was committed to and has not been delivered.

HON J C PEREZ:

I was involved in the preliminary discussions although not actually in implementing it and one of the things that the operator of bus route No. 3 said that it was uneconomical for them to cover that part of the route during the weekdays and there was discussion that bus route No. 3 would cover up to Sandy Bay during the summer and in that way provide a bus service for residents who are unable to leave their place to come into town other than by taxi if they have not got their own private

cars. It is impossible otherwise because Sir Herbert Miles Road is closed and will be closed up to the end of January according to what we have heard in the last meeting of the House. The proposals from some of the residents there, some of which have bought houses as part of the surge to sell houses to retired people from UK is that if bus No. 3 does not provide the service for them at weekends, could the complimentary service be extended given that they are totally isolated there?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I think the first thing is that I still continue to state that I am not aware that the bus operator of route No. 3 were meant to carry out any of this service over the weekend. The second thing that one has to bear in mind is that nobody has made representations to me in respect of the bus service over the weekend and I think most important of all we have got to bear in mind that Sir Herbert Miles Road up to the Caleta Palace Hotel will actually be opened by June and therefore people in Both Worlds will be able to use the service which services up to Catalan Bay and the road up to Both Worlds will be open after June.

HON J C PEREZ:

Will be open by June for pedestrian traffic, I presume? I think we were told in the last meeting of the House that the road would be closed up to the end of December?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The road will be closed up to the end of December , they will not be able to go right through it but it will be opened by sections..... [*HON J C PEREZ: Up to Sandy Bay?*] Yes, from the Caleta Palace up to Both Worlds will be opened, so vehicular traffic will have access up to the Caleta Palace, for example, via Europa Point area.

NO. 220 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**SANDY BAY - PARKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Have Government any plans to introduce any special parking arrangements in the area of Sandy Bay during the bathing season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Senior officers of the Traffic Department of the Royal Gibraltar Police have met with members of the Roads Department of the Ministry for Transport, on site, to discuss parking arrangements at Sandy Bay during the bathing season. The aim of the meetings was to maximise the car parking spaces available in a safe and organised manner which would not interfere with the free flow of traffic.

A report, consequent on these meetings, will shortly be submitted to the Traffic Commission for consideration.

NO. 221 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**LAGUNA ESTATE - HEATON ROAD**

Will Government give consideration to the proposal of widening Heaton Road in Laguna Estate, contained in a petition signed by over 100 tenants in the Estate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government are at present undertaking a study at Laguna Estate in order to maximise the number of parking spaces in the Estate. This study is being carried out in conjunction with the Laguna Estate Tenants Association. The placing of barriers to prevent indiscriminate parking on pavements to the detriment of pedestrians responds to a long-standing and persistent request from the Laguna Estate Tenants Association.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 221 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

I have kept well away from the question of barriers given that I am aware, as most of the public is, that there are two viewpoints within the Estate over the barriers and everything else. But it seems to me that the proposal of the widening of the road at Heaton Road was one which made sense and I would urge the Minister in reviewing the situation to look at that aspect of it because perhaps that might go some way in allaying the concerns of many tenants in the Estate.



NO. 222 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - MOT TEST**

Within what time limit, after the anniversary of their registration, do public service or goods vehicles have to undergo an MOT test?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Public service and goods vehicles have to undergo a road worthiness test on the first anniversary of their registration and thereafter annually on each subsequent anniversary.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 222 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

But how much time do they have at the time of the anniversary in order to comply with the requirement of having to undertake the test? Within what time limit do they have to undertake the test at the time of the anniversary?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

It is normal practice for the test to be asked for and requested prior to the anniversary coming into place. Obviously there is a certain leeway that one must realistically bear in mind but there is not a specified period by law which specifies a particular date by which the test has to be done other than it has to be undertaken by the anniversary.

HON J C PEREZ:

There was a specified period which has been changed recently in a Gazette on 5 March, the specified period was within 60 days of the anniversary which meant either 60 days before or 60 days after. That has now been changed and although the test can be taken 60 days before it seems that the change reflects the position where there is no time limit for taking the test after that. That is to say, one can have the whole year without taking the test according to the regulations how they have been changed, that is why I am asking the Minister.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not aware of what the hon member has just said but on the assumption that what he has said is an accurate statement of the position, it seems that there is no longer a statutory grace period but of course the test can be taken, it just would not be in compliance with the law after the anniversary period, then there is no question of administrative grace periods and all that sort of thing.

HON J C PEREZ:

Let me ask the Chief Minister if there was a period in which the test needed to be carried out, (a) why is it that the Government have decided to remove that period, and (b) if there was that requirement before and after the test, why maintain the requirement before the anniversary and remove the requirement after the anniversary?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot answer the second part because I am not aware that the change has been introduced but obviously the idea being that there should be a reasonable interval of about 12 months between tests otherwise tests could be carried out so far in advance that it would in effect enable one at some stage to have an untested vehicle for anything up to 24 months.

HON J C PEREZ:

I refer the Chief Minister to Legal Notice No. 21 of 1998 of the 5 March, perhaps the Government might care to look at it and come back with the reason for this because I cannot understand the reason, frankly.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, given that what the change appears to do is to say that a person may not take the test more than 60 days ahead but does not say how long after the date he can take the test, does it mean that it cannot be taken at all after the anniversary, is that what the regulation now means?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As I was telling the Opposition Member since we are not aware of the rule change that the hon Member is talking to, I can hardly explain to him what it means.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it then that the Acting Governor changed the rules without consulting the elected Government? We are talking about a regulation which is signed and published on 5 March and no elected Member of the Government is aware that the rules have been changed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Minister for Transport will have to explain what his internal arrangements are but certainly the Deputy Governor makes no decisions of the sort that the hon Member has just said. There are officials in that area of Government business that have presumably made the decision and put it up for Ministerial approval and the Ministerial approval has been given. [*HON J J BOSSANO: Given?*] Presumably so. The Government do not collectively meet to decide points of that sort as I am sure he would not expect us to.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Quite apart from what I would expect or not expect, I would certainly expect that if the law was changed it was because the Government wanted the law changed and had a good reason for doing it and they would know that they were doing it, that I would expect. All that we have done in bringing the matter to the House is to try and understand the implications of the change because it is not readily visible to us by reading it. The whole purpose of changing the law and gazetting it is so that the citizens to whom this law applies need to know what their legal obligations are so that they are not breaking the law, presumably. Why gazette a regulation other than for the purpose of making it known to those who have to comply with that regulation? If the implications had been self-evident the matter probably would not have been raised and we would not have known that even the Government benches are not aware of this. But quite apart from how this has been arrived at, it seems strange that what appears to be linguistically the effect on the surface by reading the text, it appears as if before there was a time limit as to how long after the anniversary of the appointed day one can take the test and now that time limit has gone. What we are not sure is whether the disappearance of the time limit means that one cannot take it at all after the anniversary or that there is an unlimited period after, which would appear to defeat the whole purpose of the testing if there was not a time limit afterwards. Is it possible for anybody to answer whether the technical consequences of removing that extra date is either one or the other?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If what the hon Member is asking is for my legal opinion on the matter, on the basis of his reading..... [*HON J J BOSSANO: There is no other lawyer.*] ... on the basis of that part of the regulation that he has read and accepting for the purposes of this extended discussion that their interpretation of the meaning of that regulation and the effect of it is exactly as they are describing, none of which I would be able of course to be aware of because, as I said, I am not aware of the existence of that piece of legislation, it would seem that if there is not a statutory limit one may have one's test done at any time but that the day after the anniversary one is in breach but that does not prevent oneself, presumably, it would be my legal view without having examined it in detail, if the law does not impose a statutory limit by when one must have a test it does not mean that beyond the anniversary date one is forbidden to take the test so that therefore one is obliged to remain illegal for the next 12 months because one is not allowed to have one's test because one missed the deadline. It cannot possibly mean that and if that is how it is drafted it would have to be changed.

NO. 223 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - MOT TEST**

Can Government state how many registered vehicles are required as from 1 January 1998 to undergo an MOT test as a result of the application of EU Directive 96/96, and of those, how many have now undertaken the test?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

I have discussed this question with the hon Member and have agreed that this question would be answered in writing on a confidential basis. This I have already done.

NO. 224 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - MOT TEST**

Will Government state how many registered vehicles over 10 years old, which have received a fitness certificate at the MOT Test Centre in 1998, have had to undergo the test more than once?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of vehicles over 10 years old, which have undergone a road worthiness test more than once, as at 17 April 1998, is 343.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 224 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Does the Minister know whether this figure of repeating the test is in line with what happens in other years, is he aware of it?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am afraid that I do not know whether it is in line with other years but the figure to me does not seem high especially considering that no vehicles over 10 years has actually attended the test more than once. In other words, they went for a repeat and all of them passed. So it does not seem to be abnormal.

ORAL

NO. 225 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - MOT TEST**

Will Government state how many registered vehicles there are which are over 10 years old, and of those, how many have undertaken an MOT test in 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

There are 2,038 vehicles over 10 years old registered as at 17 April 1998. Of these, 1,226 have been issued with a road worthiness certificate.

NO. 226 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - MOT TEST**

Will Government state how many registered vehicles over four years old which have received a fitness certificate at the MOT Test Centre have had to undergo the test more than once?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of registered vehicles over four years old which have received a road worthiness certificate as at 17 April 1998, after undergoing the test more than once, is 1,092.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 226 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

May I ask the Minister whether the MOT test that is given to vehicles of over 10 years and the MOT test that is given to vehicles of over four years is the same or does the test in any way differ, is one more stringent than the other?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am assuming that there is some similarity between the tests for vehicles over four years and those over 10 years but I am assuming this, I cannot categorically state it is exactly the same. I do not believe that it is exactly the same but I think it is similar.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister, I presume, is aware of the complaints that there are from the general public that they think that the test is too rigid and that they fail the MOT for matters which are not necessarily directly concerned with safety. Has the Minister perhaps checked with the MOT Test Centre whether this is the case and whether those complaints are warranted or not?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I have heard complaints of people's views on this and I have made my representations to the Chief Examiner in respect of this and his reply has been basically that there is a set of checks that have to be done under this directive and these are the ones that they are complying with. It is not something that is strict or not strict, it is a check list that has to be adhered to and it is not up to the discretion of the individual examiner as to whether people pass or not pass based on different levels and personal views on strictness.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is the check list that the Minister is referring to based on the directive from the EEC?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The check list that the Minister is referring to is part of the directive and is actually reprinted in the Ordinance, it sets out all the things which have to be examined.



NO. 227 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**HOTEL AND CATERING TRAINING SCHOOL**

Is it still the intention of Government to open a hotel and catering training school?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Government intend to open a School of Tourism including courses in the hotel and catering trades. This will form part of a training institution to be located at Bleak House which will cater for a wide range of professional and vocational courses related to the finance and business sectors. Bleak House will also house an information technology laboratory with facilities for interactive learning. Hon members may be aware that the information technology unit has been largely funded by Reuters Foundation.

Tenders were invited for the repair, refurbishment and conversion of Bleak House to accommodate the proposed aims and the contract has been awarded to Fitzpatrick Contractors Ltd who commenced work last Monday 20 April with a scheduled time span of 10 weeks and the contract will be signed next Monday 27 April. Detailed logistical plans are now also well advanced for the resourcing and staffing of the Training Institute and the Ministry for Tourism and Transport has already made arrangements with a professional firm to run the hotel and catering courses once the Institute is suitably refurbished and resourced.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 227 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Why is it that the Minister states what has been the delay in implementing this? This was announced during the budget last year, it has taken a year to do the things that the Minister has said are now going to happen on 27 April, why has there been a delay?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am not too sure about the delay, I think it is really logistical problems of getting the necessary drawings and going through all the procedures and processes involved in a contract of this nature. I know that European funds have also been sought for this project but in any case we should all rejoice that the matter is now in hand and we shall soon see, come into fruition, an excellent training institute in Bleak House for the good of the community.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

We are all rejoicing the only thing is that when they announced it I thought all these things had been put in place.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, all I can say to the hon Member is that given the conditions of some of the things that we found when we arrived in office on 16 May, I just wish the hon Members had taken a bit longer to do some of the things that they tried.

NO. 228 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - ADVANCED SKILLS TEACHERS**

What is the policy of the Government as regards the creation of a special grade of "superteacher" to be established in the UK as from September?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Government have no intention of creating a special grade of "Advanced Skills Teachers" (otherwise named "superteachers") as proposed by the School Teachers Review Body in UK. The Government believe that the social and academic circumstances which have prompted these proposals in UK do not prevail in our local situation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 228 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Has the Minister considered the pros and cons properly? Has he reviewed the matter and sought the opinions of the GTA? It would be interesting to know whether the Minister has considered in fact the two models that are being considered in England. One is the narrower one being imposed by the Government and the other one suggested, by the Teacher Training Agency, which is a broader model, where the good teachers would be able to aspire to a particular grade and more handsomely paid rather than the narrower one suggested by the Government where the teacher would be labelled in fact as a "superman" and I would just simply like to know what the Minister has been considering in coming to his decision.

HON DR B A LINARES:

The Department has considered very thoroughly all these factors. The indications are that the GTA and certainly the teachers generally in Gibraltar would be, as indeed, the teaching unions in Britain are strongly opposed to the idea, I am sure the hon Member has also followed the controversy which these proposals have prompted in UK. When I refer to the differences in the local situation from that of UK, I am sure the hon Member is aware that this new grade is actually linked to another proposal by the Department for Education in Britain of creating education action zones in areas which are considered to be under-performing and in which these blitz approaches have to be targeted for support. This, of course, does not apply locally. The opinions that we have consulted, for instance that of the National Association of Headteachers in England, declare the proposals as implicit among staff, eroding differentials, worsened difficulties in recruiting deputy heads and headships. It would create an artificial hierarchy and cause resentment in the staff room and I think the best quote that I have found is from a headteacher in Lancashire who says, "The education of a child is very much a team matter and never the work of just one person no matter how much of a superman he is".

HON J J GABAY:

I am extremely pleased to note that the Minister has done his homework on this subject, I personally as well disagree with the advanced skills teachers and there has been a lot of adverse criticism on it. The fact that The Times Educational Supplement said that it would tend, in fact, to degrade the noble art of teaching and it would create a special class of teachers who, in any case, will be covering the work already done by heads and deputies of departments. So I am pleased to hear that answer.

HON DR B A LINARES:

So we end up by agreeing.

HON J J GABAY:

Indeed we are.

NO. 229 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - OXBRIDGE STUDENTS**

Does the Minister for Education agree that potential Oxbridge students should be encouraged, briefed and assisted to pursue that target?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

There are many factors, personal, social, intellectual, academic and professional which come into play in any guidance programme for Sixth Formers as they prepare for entry into university. Within this context, which is more complex than is suggested, with respect, by the hon Member's simple question, I can say nevertheless that a pupil who is assessed to potentially benefit from pursuing his/her higher studies in any given subject area in Oxford or Cambridge rather than in any other university in UK, should be (and I am satisfied that he/she is indeed) counselled, informed and specially tuitioned in his/her efforts to gain access to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 229 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I wonder whether that is so, that adequate instruction and encouragement is given to those with the potential to obtain a place at Oxford or Cambridge. In my experience it has been mainly the initiative taken by cultured, academic parents pursuing their own children and helping them along the way to attend this but I would not accept that sufficient is being done, as is being done of course in the United Kingdom simply because they are aware now that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge are keen to attract an increasing number of students from the Comprehensive Schools and special seminars are being held every year to attract potential students to be able to discuss with dons, graduates, under-graduates and so on what these universities have to offer and to explain to them how to proceed in trying to obtain a place, of course without underestimating the difficulties, as we all know, since Cambridge rejected last year - and this seems to be an annual practice at both universities - 3,000 candidates with three 'A' grades at A-level. But the point I am trying to make, which might be of interest to us, is that an increasing weight is being given to candidates that show self-discipline, particular enthusiasm, the ability to think logically; they are looking for people with these qualities and these seminars have been extremely helpful in the United Kingdom and there has also been a publication of a guide as to how to proceed and I feel that our students would benefit from the specialised attention for those bright students who have the possibility of going to these universities. So therefore, I do not accept, I am not questioning.....

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question?

HON J J GABAY:

I am just coming to it. Therefore, would the Minister now partially agree that there is a need for polishing the system that would enhance the chances of our students in making their way to these two famous universities?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, of course I agree but if the implication is that we are not trying our best in the current situation because one has to accept that the constraints that we have in the local set-up - distance, less accessibility to admissions tutors and registrars which are readily accessible, particularly to elitist public schools in UK because many of the State schools too in UK do not benefit from this accessibility. The point is that a disproportionate number of students in Oxford and Cambridge, as he knows, are still emanating from public schools and I would not comment on the often made accusation that there is a definite bias in Oxford and Cambridge towards, I would not comment on that but the fact is that public schools have this ready accessibility to all the machinery and all the procedures and even the personalities of the admission tutors which enable them to drill and prepare their students so much more effectively than we can but that does not mean that within these constraints in our local situation everything possible is being done by our teachers and our tutors to identify and to counsel and encourage and prepare. Indeed I know from my own experience how much time is given even outside school hours, even outside remunerated school hours by teachers and tutors in preparing individual students to enable them to access and gain entry into Oxford and Cambridge.

HON J J GABAY:

The views just expressed by the Minister shows that he is completely outdated, absolutely and completely outdated with regard to what is happening at Oxford and Cambridge because over 50 per cent now come from State schools, in fact the seminars are being held to attract even more students. The concern now is not for the aristocracy but for the meritocracy, this is what is happening, it is a revolutionary approach and it is within this new dimension that I am suggesting this. We agree that we do a good job but we must not be complacent and I think that there is need there for a special direction. This is all I am suggesting and it seems sensible to me, I hope it seems sensible to the Minister.

HON DR B A LINARES:

Of course it is sensible and I want to be positive about it. As regard my understanding of the situation and the change of approach in Oxford and Cambridge, I am perfectly aware of it but even by saying that 50 per cent of students now come from the State schools is still a disproportionate number of pupils coming from the public schools in relation to those that come from the State schools which are many more. I would not like to comment on the often made accusation, which is still made today, and I would not comment on the fact that there is a definite bias, I did not comment on that, I just quoted the often made accusation.

HON J J GABAY:

Does the Minister not realise that what I am pointing out is that this particular type of complacency is the only reason why it may remain at a 50 per cent? A lot of the closed scholarships have already been ended from particular public schools but if we still face, as the Minister seems to do, Oxford and Cambridge with the notion that only the refuge of the aristocracy and the privileged coming from the public schools, he is very mistaken.

MR SPEAKER:

All right, the Minister has got the last word and that is the end, if you want to answer. If you do not want to say anything it is all right.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I want to be courteous to the hon Member but, quite frankly, he then delves into areas which I am now at a loss because I am not too sure what he is aiming at and what he is getting at and what is the objective of his intervention.

HON J J GABAY:

I get the same feeling about the Minister's answers.

NO. 230 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**EDUCATION - OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITIES**

Can the Minister state how many pupils have obtained places at Oxford or Cambridge in the academic years 1993/94; 1994/95; 1995/96; 1996/97 and 1997/98?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Pupils who have obtained places at Oxford or Cambridge in the academic years 1993/94; 1994/95; 1995/96; 1996/97 and 1997/98 are as follows:-

	<u>Cambridge</u>	<u>Oxford</u>
In the academic year 1993/94	1 young lady	1 young lady
In the academic year 1994/95	-	1 young man
In the academic year 1995/96	1 young man	2 young men
In the academic year 1996/97	-	1 young lady (but
	actually declined it in favour of another university)	
In the academic year 1997/98	1 young man	1 young man

We know that there are also a few students over the last five years (but we have no exact records) who have indeed gained places in Oxford and/or Cambridge but have declined, for their own reasons, the offers made to them in favour of other universities.



NO. 231 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - GCSE REPEATS**

Will Government comment on the new changes at Bayside Comprehensive School in respect of GCSE repeats?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

No changes for the forthcoming academic year have been as yet finally approved at Bayside School. At present the school's administration is discussing with the Department of Education the best means of meeting the aspirations of students who having failed to qualify for A-level work, show some potential and definite commitment to repeat their efforts in GCSE English and Mathematics together with more vocationally oriented courses either in the school or in the College of Further Education.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 231 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

At this early stage has the Minister any preference in respect of continuing the structure as it exists at Bayside or handing it over to the College of Further Education to handle?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I would not like to comment at this stage because the matter is under consideration between the school's administration and the Department of Education.

HON J J GABAY:

Is there no such thing in these matters as Government policy so that one could discuss the pros and cons of these matters and not simply be told only that something is being studied in committee or that we are waiting for further information from the schools, et cetera?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The school has real problems in this respect and we have to be sensitive to these constraints and these problems. I will tell the hon Member what the background is so that we can be of one mind in this matter. The fact is that during the previous administration the Headmaster of Bayside, quite close to me personally, was denied an increase in staff to cater for the increasing number of pupils qualifying to follow A-level courses and also for those who wished to stay on in school to repeat GCSE courses and examinations. He was advised then to divert pupils who wished to repeat GCSE courses to the College of Further Education where they could be

entered for GCSE courses and examinations in English and Maths. In September 1996, this Government increased the staff complement as a whole by five teachers and devised a system of in-built supply teachers which I have explained in this House before, and this enabled Bayside School to offer post-GCSE pupils who did not qualify for A-level studies a curricular package made up of courses offered by the AEB, the Associated Examining Board, leading to a Certificate of Further Studies in Media Studies, Business Studies, Science Health and Safety, together with repeat GCSE courses in English and Maths. Unfortunately, the AEB is no longer offering these courses for the forthcoming academic year and, as I say, this presents the school's administration with a very real logistical problem of providing a viable and cost effective programme for these so-called 'repeat' students. That is why we are trying to be as sensitive as possible to the problems of the school but nevertheless also sensitive to the aspirations of the pupils who wish to renew their efforts this year in order to qualify at GCSE level.

HON J J GABAY:

I would like to ask the Minister if there is any truth in the rumour that in fact the repeat structure at the Comprehensive is to be ended in order to be able to choose and afford, within the same budget, a special scheme of a two-year course for students coming into the Comprehensive who are not considered of reasonable ability to be able to follow the GCSE courses?

HON DR B A LINARES:

That is a very shallow judgement and the source of that rumour obviously lacks an in-depth understanding of the constraints of the school in piecing together all the factors that go towards a well-balanced curriculum. I would not give any value or validity to that rumour, I assure the hon Member.

HON J J GABAY:

Can I therefore assume that the policy of the Government is not to institute this two-year special course which would label students going into the school as inferior material doing a special examination?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am not saying that all, I am saying that one needs to look into all the different factors in order to arrive at a balanced conclusion. I am not excluding or accepting any particular decision at this moment until the matter is thoroughly discussed and considered in-depth with those in the field, with the administration and the teachers and the heads of faculties and heads of departments in the school.

HON J J GABAY:

The Minister has failed to answer my question.

MR SPEAKER:

He is fairly entitled to if he wants to but you are entitled to ask questions. He can remain silent if he wants to.

HON J J GABAY:

I just simply wanted to thank him for saying nothing.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you have taken advantage. You have not got the last word here.

HON J J GABAY:

I apologise, Mr Speaker.

NO. 232 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - CLEANLINESS CAMPAIGN**

Have Government plans to promote and broaden the example of Bayside Comprehensive pupils and staff in their cleanliness campaign?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Bayside School's "Litter Free Campaign" which recently merited media attention is indeed one of many outcomes of the Government's wide-ranging and planned programme of environmental awareness in the community as a whole and in our schools in particular. The Ministry for the Environment and Health and the Ministry for Education are working together to support various initiatives in environmental education of which the Bayside School campaign was a particularly significant and praiseworthy instance.

The hon Member will be glad to learn that environmental education, as one of the cross-curricular themes in the National Curriculum, has always had a strong presence in our schools' curriculum both at primary and secondary levels, raising issues related to the pupils' immediate surroundings as well as wider global problems. Some of our schools have worked on programmes to improve their playgrounds and immediate environment while others encourage pupils to care and look after their own nature areas. The evidence of all this in our schools is truly impressive and the hon Member is welcome to visit our schools and see for himself.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 232 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I wish to share that view and in fact, I would like to add my congratulations to the pupils and staff at Bayside for their excellent campaign which has actually blossomed out into the community at large and I would hope that the Minister might wish to pursue that matter further with other schools and perhaps even in other sections of the community so that some areas of Gibraltar that are still quite filthy might benefit from the momentum that is being created.

NO. 233 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - DYSLEXIA**

Can Government state what system is being practised to diagnose the incidence of dyslexia and what programme of special tuition is currently being provided?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The policy of the Department of Education is not to over-medicalise with terms like diagnosis and certainly we do not refer to pupils as "dyslexics", thereby describing them by a disability. The policy of this department is to work with two broad categories: global learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties. We prefer to refer to these pupils as students currently having specific learning difficulties. The Government are, of course, very interested in all learning disabilities, including literacy difficulties. More specifically, the Government are increasing early detection of all difficulties through a Preventive Programme before statutory school age. This involves ensuring that pupils with early speech difficulties, which is a diagnostic feature, are caught as early as possible to receive support from teachers and speech therapists, and creating also a Child Development Centre for specialist Observation and Assessment by our team of therapists.

As well as a Preventive Programme, which I have described, we have a rather sophisticated Screening Programme which consists of the following:-

1. Early years screening through Croydon Profiles carried out during their first year at school. This Screening Programme is carried out in great detail by our Principal Educational Psychologist. Children with the early signs of specific difficulties are kept under review and assessed in greater detail, if necessary.
2. The very important place that oracy has in our schools, especially at Reception Level. The Department has invested in specialist material from the Dyslexia Institute that address this very important area.
3. As part of the staged approaches to assessment defined in the Code of Practice. At Stage 1 the case is kept under close scrutiny. Pupils may be registered as having special educational needs (which may be specific) and earmarked for special assessment.
4. At Stage 2, a child with specific learning difficulties may be assessed by the class teacher or by the Special Needs Co-ordinator using a "diagnostic" battery of tests such as the Aston Index.
5. When all these forms of assessment are applied, and staff still feel that further assessment and advice is necessary, the child may qualify for a detailed educational assessment from the Principal Educational Psychologist whose involvement is then sought.

6. Former screening continues throughout the service in the form of Standardised Group Reading Tests carried out at the following ages: 7+, 8+ and 12+. These results are monitored and investigated by the Education Support Services.
7. Finally, when pupils are approaching their GCSE's and their 'A' levels, all pupils whose difficulties are specific (not necessarily dyslexic) and which prohibit them from showing themselves at their best in their exams, also receive a formal assessment by our Educational Psychologist. This is prepared for the respective Examination Boards who are advised of the pupil's learning difficulties. Pupils who are adjudged to have specific learning difficulties may qualify for special consideration when taking their examinations such as extra time or even reading assistance from an aide.

If I may now turn to the second part of the hon Member's question, the tuition provided for pupils with specific learning difficulties depends on what those specific difficulties are and the extent of their difficulties.

The bulk of the tuition is carried out in the mainstream class where pupils are helped to access all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with specific difficulties need their music, PE, art, history et cetera. We must not undervalue the class tuition. This is where the literacy tuition takes place. This is where oral skills are developed in the group. This is where the child needs to have his support. This is where the child feels at one with his peers.

Some pupils receive extra support in small groups. Sometimes, a phonics programme or integrated multi-sensory work is best carried out in a small homogenous group by the Special Needs teacher.

And there is of course the provision of a peripatetic teacher service whose remit is solely to support pupils who have specific learning difficulties.

We welcome the support of voluntary agencies, notably GATES, which is an association of specialised teachers who give of their time unremunerated for homework service and for private tuition. The Government support these ventures and are happy to continue to provide funding for their resources.

But we look forward to improvements, we are not complacent. We look forward to the appointment of a new Special Needs Adviser next month. We look forward to the continuation of the training programme for special needs that we initiated for all teachers only a few weeks ago. This Government remain committed to this, and I am grateful to the hon Member for this opportunity to explain just how much is being done in this very special area of education by our educational administrators and our teaching staff to develop the fullest potential of each and every child within a defined code of practice and a declared policy of equal opportunities.

I hope this time the hon Member feels that I have said something.

## SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 233 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I too would like to express my gratitude for the volume of knowledge that has been expressed. But I would like to raise this question of dyslexia as a specific ailment and not to be reduced and diluted, as he did some time ago in answer to Question No. 156 of 1996 where he decided that dyslexia really was a vague term, it was an umbrella term and he proceeded to give us a lot of information about other disabilities and he has done the same today. There is no doubt in the world of education and research, in fact, that dyslexia is a specific ailment and those of us who have taught dyslexics know that they need very, very special tuition. Secondly, this question of dyslexics - and one should not be ashamed of the name because now it is an accepted term in the educational world and The Times Educational Supplement has been full of analysis in this and the latest research actually shows that there may well be a genetic component to the problem. But that being said, for the Minister to say that for literacy and so on they need to be kept with their peers, in saying so I feel that he is really quite misguided. In fact, if Governments are actually to pursue the standard which they claim to be pursuing of literacy for every child, there is no cheap way that that is going to be achieved for dyslexics because they need, not visitors now and again or extra-curricular attention as a luxury, they need very, very special attention actually within the mainstream education.

I would like to ask the Minister whether he read a letter in the Chronicle not so long ago by an ex-Head, called Mr Lawson from some school in Edinburgh, expressing his shock at the way dyslexic children are not getting what they ought to be getting by comparison to the more advanced schools in the country. If he has not read that letter I feel that he should read it because that is a detached assessment on a particular child, the mother wrote and this teacher actually wrote back in sympathy with the mother that the child was not getting the education that he was entitled to. To shorten this question, because I have not asked it yet, I came across, if the House will bear with me just for one moment, something which an expert recently said in the Times Educational Supplement and it reads like this, "What we really need is a test that spots dyslexics at the age of four months. Their families would then be able to emigrate to Spain where they would learn a more phonologically regular language than English". And I thought, in view of the Minister's overflowing enthusiasm for regional co-operation, that he might view this proposition with an element of favour.

MR SPEAKER:

There is no answer? Next question.

NO. 234 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - DYSLEXIA**

Can Government state how many pupils are currently receiving special tuition as dyslexics in Primary, Middle and Comprehensive Schools respectively?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, THE DISABLED,  
YOUTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

May I, first of all, with respect and to avoid confusion, point out a matter of nomenclature: "Primary" includes "Middle". The hon Member clearly means First, Middle and Secondary in his question.

Dyslexia is a very contentious issue as has been clear in the course of this debate. Some people define it loosely as "word blindness"; others refer to all reading difficulties as "dyslexia"; others only call dyslexia what are reading difficulties in otherwise intelligent children; some people only use the term in its strictest neurological sense. All learned sources agree that there is a serious problem of definition.

Depending on the definition, people will attribute a certain rate of incidence. A very strict definition might imply a 3 per cent rate of incidence; a very loose definition as literacy difficulties might even be 40 per cent. Pupils usually referred to as having "dyslexic type of difficulties", (and we still prefer to call them specific learning difficulties), will be registered with the school's Special Needs Co-ordinator. Most schools detect between 18 per cent to 20 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs at some time or other during their schooling. Of these, 70 per cent have literacy difficulties and about 50 per cent of these will be specific as opposed to global and if we put the statistics together, in other words, there are about 6 per cent of pupils that we are currently supporting with extra tuition to meet their specific learning difficulties.

In rough terms this means that there will be one or two pupils per class of 20. We support these pupils primarily with the best tuition possible in as small a group as we can afford.

Some are identified for additional tuition. Some others receive an intensive course of additional tuition from the peripatetic literacy tutors. But these things are offered in cycles. Learning difficulties are not always permanent, and in some cases pupils outgrow some forms of special tuition.

We are grateful to the voluntary groups in UK and in Gibraltar who lobby to find better ways to reach the hard to teach. But I must warn the hon Member, in the context of references he made in the question before, that other learning difficulties, without an articulate lobby, also need our support. The Government are committed to support all our children within a policy of equal opportunities.



SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 234 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Just one final comment, of course we all agree that children with various difficulties should get special attention but we must not, as I said earlier on, dilute the significance of dyslexia which is well recognised. In my own experience and I have taught quite a number of them, they are highly intelligent pupils and if they are not given the special help that they require from expert and patient teachers, they suffer a great deal of depression and low self-esteem. This is why we need, I think, to give it very, very special consideration. Would the Minister not agree with this?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I too have taught many children with these difficulties and of course my heart goes out to them and to the problems that this creates with their parents and I want to assure the Opposition Member that not only myself but pretty well the whole of the teaching profession and any teacher worth his or her salt will be as sensitive as he is to this matter.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask for clarification on the figure that was given of one or two in a class of 20 with special learning difficulties. Is it that there are one or two with the type of special learning difficulties that would be understood as dyslexia or is it that one or two is the global figure of all kinds of special learning difficulties of which in some cases it might be dyslexia and in some it might not? Which of the two is it because I am not very clear from the explanation?

HON DR B A LINARES:

One or two will be the special, I distinguished between global learning difficulties and specific learning difficulties. Specific learning difficulties will cover areas like dyslexia and dyspraxia, oracy problems, spelling problems of different types, sometimes even neurological, sometimes related to impairment of sight, hearing. These are specific learning difficulties and the percentage, the one or two per 20 that I was referring to covers all these areas.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So we do not have an answer really as to how many of those are dyslexics, which is the original question? The one or two does not mean that 10 per cent are dyslexic?

HON DR B A LINARES:

It does not mean that one or two per class are dyslexic in the strict sense of the word but I want to advise the Leader of the Opposition that there is sometimes very grey areas between an element of dyslexia and an element of short-sightedness and various aspects like this. It is very difficult to be clear-cut in defining, within narrow parameters, one particular ailment which I do not like using that word because we do not want to over-medicalise but it was used by the hon Member.

NO. 235 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GBC - PENINSULA PRODUCTIONS**

Can Government confirm that the most recent proposal on broadcasting by Peninsula Productions foresees the gradual elimination of the Government subsidy?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The Peninsula Productions proposals to the Government in respect of GBC are commercial in confidence and Government are not prepared to comment on their content at this delicate stage of the matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 235 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister aware that this information has already been published in the pages of the Gibraltar Chronicle?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I am not answerable for whatever the Gibraltar Chronicle publishes.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister say whether the Government have considered this new proposal or are in the process of considering the new proposal?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

The Government are in the process of considering both, this proposal and GBC's own proposals.

HON J C PEREZ:

Given that GBC has indicated publicly that the proposal now is for a one channel TV, is it not possible to accommodate both proposals given that there are two channels available?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I repeat what I said in answer to the original question, this is not a subject on which I am prepared to comment further at this stage.

NO. 236 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**GIBTEL/NYNEX - COMPLAINTS**

Are Government aware whether the Spanish Government have now responded to the European Commission over the two complaints on telecommunication matters made by Gibtel and Nynex respectively?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Yes, the Government are aware that the Spanish Government have now responded to the European Commission over the two complaints made by Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex Communications.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 236 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Will the Minister perhaps be able to give us an indication of what that response is and what is going to be the action of the Commission, if he has an indication as a result of it?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

All I can tell the hon Member at this stage is that the Spanish Government's reply was predictable and is on the lines that the hon Member would expect, negative and based on the misconception that the 350 regional code is prejudicial to its sovereignty claim.

HON J C PEREZ:

But given (a) that we can certainly prove that the 350 code has nothing to do with it because it has been granted to Gibraltar by the ITU in Geneva and (b) Spain's recognition of the telex code historically, that would possibly reinforce the position of the Commission in deciding to take steps against Spain as a result?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Indeed, these two arguments have been deployed in the past, both in the complaints and outside the complaints and continue to be deployed.

HON J C PEREZ:

So what does the Government envisage would be the next step of the situation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member, I know that he is aware but he should not lose sight of the fact as we discuss it but, of course, the Government are not a party to the complaints; the complaint by the two telecommunications companies, a complaint directed by them to the Commission. So whatever might be the Government's influence as a shareholder in those two companies, ought not to be confused with having certainly the public impression which should not be created that this is litigation that is being driven by the Government, it is not being driven by the Government. It is driven by the telecommunication companies and we have been advised, as a Government and the companies have been advised, as companies, that their complaints have a better prospect of success if it is not seen to be driven by the Government but rather by them on purely commercial complaints basis. So I would just like the hon Member, when he draws us out in this discussion, not to lose sight of that fact but the position is that the complaint will now continue and on the basis of that response it seems unlikely that it will be possible for an interim relief arrangement to be entered into on terms that the Government, if consulted, will be able to support it.

HON J C PEREZ:

On a point of clarification, I understand the commercial aspect of the complaint. But is it not the case that the Chief Minister himself informed the House that the level at which the complaint was being looked at had changed and that it had become more political as a result of the matter being moved to a different level which is when the United Kingdom Government were asked by the Chief Minister, I believe, to take a view and the position of the Government themselves publicly has been the recognition of the 350 code as being the solution to the problem?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, indeed. The transfer of the case to the more political Article - I cannot remember the number of the Article - about which I gave the hon Member information last time, does not of course mean that the company ceased to be participants or the complainants in the litigation but it does mean that the Commission requests the British Government to reply on behalf of UK member states on these issues and obviously the position of the Government of Gibraltar continues to be as it has always been that the UK should field the views of the Gibraltar Government when the UK Government, as opposed to one of the complainants, is asked for a view. Therefore to the extent that the Commission contacts the UK Government to explore the possibility of the political acceptability to the UK Government member state of particular suggestions and possibilities for interim settlement, our position is that the UK Government should respond in accordance with the position in relation to that issue by the Government of Gibraltar and so far that is what the UK Government have done.

NO. 237 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**I&D FUND - KONVER PROJECTS**

Can Government give a breakdown of the Konver projects that have been financed from the £1.5 million provided for this purpose in the Improvement and Development Fund in the last financial year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Two Konver projects have been approved to be part financed from the £1.5 million voted in the 1997/98 Estimates of Expenditure. These are the Bleak House and Casemates projects.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 237 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

But these projects have not yet started, have they?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

As my hon Colleague has mentioned, Bleak House has just started and Casemates is in the preliminary phase but the hon Member is right in highlighting the fact that the projects have been essentially approved but no significant expenditure has been yet made on them. So in fact the expenditure will be carried forward into this financial year and be expended during this financial year.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figure of £1.5 million that was put in the Improvement and Development Fund last year, am I right in thinking that that is of course including the Government element, can the Minister say, now that these projects presumably are going ahead, what is the share? Is it 50/50, Government and Konver?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

That depends on the project and the type of expenditure. In the context of Casemates the total expenditure there, as will be clearer when the estimates are debated, is in the order of £2.9 million, 50 per cent of the square will be paid for by the EU funds and 40 per cent of the cost of the conversion of the barrack will be paid by the EU funds so it will be matching funds from the Government of Gibraltar, various sums of 50 per cent and 60 per cent for those two aspects of the project. With regard to Bleak House, there will be 50 per cent of the Bleak House expenditure paid for by Konver funds, namely, £150,000. As my hon Colleague mentioned, the balance of the funds will not entirely be Government funds because Reuters is making a contribution towards part of the equipment that will go into Bleak House.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

So the money that has been spent on the two projects up-to-date has been on plans and things like that and not on any physical restructuring, is that correct?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

That is right.

NO. 238 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**PRINCE GEORGE'S BLOCK**

Can Government state if Prince George's Block has now been handed over by the MOD?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Prince George's Block has been offered for transfer and it is expected that the formalities of transfer will be completed as soon as outstanding issues can be agreed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 238 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Has the Minister asked for a survey report from the MOD on the condition of the block?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

We did not actually ask for one but we were provided with one, they had one. The survey report, I am sure the hon Member will be interested to know, basically indicates that the condition of the block is very bad, beyond what in our view is economic repair. The report essentially identifies a figure of £1.5 million to £2 million to actually refurbish the block so it is unlikely that that will be an option that the Government would seek to want to pursue.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

So based on the answer that the Minister has given, and this is something that the MOD have done in the past and carries on doing, that they hand over buildings which are beyond economic repair and therefore if the Government take it over they will have obviously to pay for the demolition and things like that. Are the Government considering asking the MOD that they demolish the building prior to it being handed over?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

In general terms that is the philosophy that this Government continue to adopt. In general terms the Government are not keen to take over what essentially is a liability rather than an asset but we do not take a completely dogmatic and inflexible view of that. There are circumstances where it would be possible and conceivable in which we would be prepared to accept a transfer of a building that requires demolition if it facilitated the unblocking of other issues which caused difficulty under the current structure of the Lands memoranda and which hold up a whole series of other matters. Similarly, if a developer, for example, were interested and

we felt that a plot could be developed and the cost of the demolition would fall to be part of the cost of the developer we would be taking on board, again we might take the view at a pragmatic level that the development of the plot was important enough to justify taking a particular position on such a transfer. But in general terms, the sentiments of the hon Member are shared by the Government.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I take it from the answer we have had that in fact at the moment there is no pre-conceived use for Prince George's Block when it gets passed over to the Government? It is not that they have got it earmarked already with a potential use for it, have they?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

No final decisions have been taken other than to indicate to the House that it is most unlikely, in fact, I dare to say, impossible that the Government would refurbish the block so it is the potential of the site rather than the potential of the building that is of interest to the Government.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is the Minister aware of how much it would cost to demolish the building?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Our estimates are in the order of £100,000.



NO. 239 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMISSIONER**

When does the current Financial Services Commissioner's contract of employment expire?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The contract in respect of the Financial Services Commissioner expires on the 24 July 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 239 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

By when do Government intend to recruit or seek a suitable replacement for this position and how will it go about doing that?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Firstly, I would remind the House that it is not the Gibraltar Government that recruits the Financial Services Commissioner but the steps taken to identify a successor are already well in hand. Interviews have been held in London with prospective candidates and we expect to be in a position for there to be a hand over, if not on or around July of this year, certainly very shortly thereafter.

HON A J ISOLA:

Has the position already been advertised?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Absolutely, the position has been advertised in Gibraltar and in the international press and there were two adverts that went out; one was in respect of the position of Financial Services Commissioner and the other in respect of Banking Supervisor, the Banking supervisor is also due to move and there have been interviews for both in respect of the Financial Services Commissioner and Banking Supervisor.

HON A J ISOLA:

Would the Minister be aware of how many applications have been received in respect of these two posts?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Speaking from memory I could only give the hon Member a rough guide. There were more applications for Financial Services Commissioner than for Banking Supervisor. There would have been in the order of perhaps 12 to 15 for Commissioner and about five or six for Banking Supervisor but as invariably happens with these things, the short list of applicants becomes much more considerably reduced. The post, in particular of Financial Services Commissioner in Gibraltar is a rather difficult position to fill because it obviously requires a mixture of credentials, not just regulatory, on an on-shore environment but also some experience of the off-shore world and also some element of EU background. So it is often the case that although there are a number of applicants it really trickles down to three or four that are effectively the front-runners.

HON A J ISOLA:

Could I ask the Minister what the selection process is? Who would interview the prospective applicants or the short listed applicants and ultimately who would select the appropriate successful candidate?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

As I indicated, the formal appointment is actually an appointment made by the Foreign Secretary through the Governor but the process of selection and interview has been a fairly broad based one. This has involved an invitation by London for the Government to participate in the perusal of the applications and to form part of the interview process. There has, as the hon Member would expect, been representation in that interview process from the Bank of England, the Treasury, the Foreign Office, independent members including a member from the Commission itself and myself on behalf of the Gibraltar Government. The methodology will involve a recommendation made by that board formally to the Foreign Secretary for an appointment to be made.

NO. 240 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**FINANCIAL CENTRE PAGE - GIBRALTAR CHRONICLE**

What is the cost of the financial centre page in the Gibraltar Chronicle to Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The Government do not make any payment to the Gibraltar Chronicle in respect of the financial centre page published in the Chronicle.

The production of the financial centre page does involve work by a freelance contributor who is paid a contribution of £100 a week from the Department's marketing budget.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 240 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Is the view of the Government that the financial centre page is in fact a contribution towards Gibraltar's marketing plans?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Well, it is in the context of the local scene. The main purpose of the finance centre page is really to provide a vehicle of communication from within the industry so that people who feel they might want to access opinion can use the page. Also we felt it necessary to perhaps transmit information that we think is being delivered internationally, to transmit that information locally because there is a lot going on internationally that we were of the view that Gibraltar opinion was not aware of. So it is really more a communication page, it is a very open concept. We are very much welcoming private sector involvement and it is very much open to therefore participants to contribute to it and to seek to use it in the development of any issue that would be of interest to the centre. Of course the Chronicle does have as well an element of distribution up the coast. I have no doubt that there are ex-pats as well that do read the Chronicle and to that extent it is an element of marketing and advertising through that media.

NO. 241 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE COLLECTED**

Can Government state how much was collected in PAYE tax from the construction sector in the financial year 1997/98 and the comparable figures for 1996/97 and 1995/96?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The PAYE tax collected in respect of the construction industry sector in the financial years 1995/96, 1996/97 and 1997/98 was as follows:

1995/96 - £1.44 million; 1996/97 - £1.4 million; 1997/98 - £2.41 million.

NO. 242 OF 1988

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CONSTRUCTION SUB-CONTRACTORS**

Can Government state how much was collected in payment of tax by or in respect of construction sub-contractors in the financial years 1997/98 and 1996/97 and the number of such sub-contractors in each year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The answer that I am about to provide him is on the assumption, which is not specified in the question, that he is asking for information in respect of the Income Tax Construction Sub-contractors Regulations. In other words, the element of statutory withholding by principal contractors from sub-contractors is, of course, there may be a sub-contractor's bill to pay corporation tax in their own respect on profits and that is not included in this answer.

Tax totalling £670,000 was collected in respect of construction sub-contractors in the financial year 1997/98. In the financial year 1996/97, the sum collected was £630,000. The Tax Office computer system does not provide the number of sub-contractors as is requested by the Leader of the Opposition but arrangements are being made to provide him with this information at a later date.

NO. 243 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - DIRECT ASSESSMENTS**

Can Government state how much of the tax due by direct assessments on individuals amounting to £13,491,754 as at 31 December 1996 was by 31 March 1998, (a) paid; (b) still outstanding; (c) otherwise discharged and the number of assessments in each category?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I suppose I could prefix this and other questions by saying that the systems of information reporting that we have available to us are more or less the same ones that he had when he was in office.

The information requested by the Leader of the Opposition cannot be produced in the time scale allowed to the Income Tax Office. I am informed that a reply to this type of question requires programming changes to the computer system. These have been sought from the Information Technology Unit of the Government. The information will be made available by Government as soon as this is produced.

NO. 244 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - DIRECT ASSESSMENTS**

Can Government state what was the amount of tax paid as a result of direct assessments on individuals in the financial year 1997/98 and the number of such assessments?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The sum of £3.75 million was collected in respect of direct assessments on individuals in the financial year 1997/98. The Income Tax computer system does not provide, as management data, the number of assessments.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 244 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given the fact that the question has been put can the Chief Minister say whether it could be possible as assessments are done from now on to keep a record of the numbers so that at the end of the day that information will be available?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The policy of the Government is rather than to invest additional management time and administrative resources in extracting more information from an antiquated manual system, rather to invest management time in the design of and public funds to resource a comprehensive computerisation programme so that much of the information that hon Members ask, which I would have thought they might have known from their terms in office, would not be easily available but that it is information that the Government are perfectly willing to provide and it just does not relate to income tax matters. This morning we had the example of a very different view that the ETB on the one hand, and the Department of Labour and Social Security had on the other, on the question of frontier workers. Hon Members will see when they examine the estimates that have just been tabled, that there is a substantial provision there to make a major start on a process of computerisation in Government that will enable access to information, will enable information to be pulled down from the system notwithstanding the form in which the question is put and indeed it will provide the Government with management information. I acknowledge that we could do what the hon Member has just asked but I would hope to make more rapid progress in making more sophisticated the computer system in the Income Tax Office and other areas and indeed the departments that I have just mentioned are amongst the priority for computerisation and more sophisticated facilities than are presently enjoyed on the Government's list. So if the hon Member will just bear for a while longer I hope that by this time next year he will have access to information which presently would require an awful amount of administrative resources to pull out.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given the fact that such exercises have been attempted before and seemed to have produced no great impact on the system, in the eight years that I have been familiar with improvements on paper which somehow did not materialise in practice, would the Chief Minister not agree that if in fact we are talking about direct assessments on individuals - I do not know whether we are talking about 100 individuals or 1,000 individuals but I would have thought it is not too difficult - I can understand the difficulty of going back and trying to establish information that is not readily available in the form in which the question is put but if one were to say, well can a record be kept of how many assessments on individuals are sent out from the beginning of April 1998, I would not have thought that would require a great deal of cost or administrative time or computer time, it is just a question of somebody making a little cross on a piece of paper every time they post an assessment and at the end of the year we will have either 500 crosses or 5,000 crosses.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That observation might have been more relevant in relation to the hon Member's other questions but, of course, we are on Question No. 244 and that asks, "What was the amount of tax paid as a result of direct assessments?" So one would not have to keep a tally on the assessments as they are posted, every time one gets a cheque in the post one would have to make a note of the number of assessments that are paid. This is not about assessments issued, the question relates to assessments paid. But nevertheless, if the hon Member really believes that it would assist him in something that he regards as important to have particular types of information in a particular form, if he will write to the Chief Secretary on it I will ask him to pass the information on to the Commissioner of Income Tax to see if this can be done without too much upheaval and if it can be done it will be.



NO. 245 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state what is the total amount received in respect of corporation tax and the number of companies assessed in respect of such tax for the tax year 1994/95?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

A total of 1,401 companies paid corporation tax totalling £10.3 million in respect of the tax year 1994/95.

NO. 246 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state which is the amount of corporation tax at present due and payable in respect of the tax year 1994/95 and the number of tax assessments involved?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The sum of £1.39 million in respect of 383 1994/95 corporation tax assessments is currently outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 246 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are the Government in a position to know whether, in fact, these two figures now represent all the assessments for that particular tax year or are there still some pending which could change those figures?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not have obviously that information with me now but it occurs to me that there can only be two ways in which that figure could change at this late stage given that it is 1994/95. One is that there may be companies that have not yet reported and have not yet been assessed in respect of those years and at some time in the future they may get back assessments for a long period covering this one or that there are arrears of tax outstanding in respect of this period. No, it can only be the one category because otherwise it would be included in this answer. But I would expect any such future modification of that figure to be minimum in terms of the people that have not yet reported.

NO. 247 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how much of the corporation tax paid by companies in the financial year 1997/98 was in respect of the tax year 1997/98 and the number of assessments involved?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

In the financial year ended 31 March 1998, the sum of £2.7 million was collected in respect of corporation tax on assessments for the tax year 1997/98. The number of assessments was 90.

ORAL

NO. 248 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - BANKING SECTOR**

Can Government state how much was collected in PAYE tax from the Banking Sector in the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The sum of £3.1 million was collected in PAYE tax from the Banking Sector in the financial year 1997/98.

NO. 249 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GOVERNMENT DEPOSITS - GIBRALTAR SAVINGS BANK**

What was the total amount on deposit from Government controlled funds in the Gibraltar Savings Bank as at 31 March 1998 in:

- (a) On-call accounts
- (b) Debentures
- (c) Fixed term bonds
- (d) Ordinary accounts?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Understanding the term "Government controlled funds" as meaning companies, pension funds, Government monies; anything over which the Government have control even though they may not be available to the Government to spend, all such monies are actually on on-call accounts. So for the other three items it is nil and for On-call investments accounts it is £87.5 million.

NO. 250 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GOVERNMENT DEPOSITS - GIBRALTAR SAVINGS BANK**

What was the total amount on deposit from members of the public in the Gibraltar Savings Bank as at 31 March 1998 in:

- (a) On-call investment accounts
- (b) Debentures
- (c) Fixed term bonds
- (d) Ordinary accounts?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No public deposits are held on On-call investments accounts, so that is nil. In the case of Debentures it is £48 million, that is the biggest item. Fixed term bonds is £4.5 million and Ordinary accounts is £10.1 million.

The Ordinary accounts includes holdings of Trust funds such as the Supreme Court Fund and the Public Trustee Fund amounting to £800,000 which is not really public funds.

NO. 251 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**GOVERNMENT DEPOSITS - GIBRALTAR SAVINGS BANK**

Can Government give the breakdown of the amounts deposited in on-call accounts with the Gibraltar Savings Bank by:

- (a) Government Special Funds
- (b) Government Owned Companies
- (c) Government Deposit Accounts

as at 31 March 1997 and 31 March 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The breakdown of the amounts deposited in On-call investments accounts with the Gibraltar Savings Bank as at 31 March 1997 and 31 March 1998 were as follows:

	<u>31.3.97</u>	<u>31.3.98</u>
(a) Government Special Funds	£43.8 million	£45.8 million
(b) Government Owned Companies	£11.1 million	£8.2 million
(c) Government Deposit Accounts	<u>£16.6 million</u>	<u>£33.5 million</u>
	<u>£71.5 million</u>	<u>£87.5 million</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 251 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is there a particular reason for the very large increase which is almost double in the Government deposit accounts?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can only assume that it is the fact that the reserves are increasing. If the hon Member has a quick glance at the estimates again that have been laid on the table, there is a substantial budget surplus being run and I can only imagine that it is that but if he is interested in the answer to that ..... *[Interruption]* Yes, it is basically the same answer. That includes a rise in what is now the Consolidated Fund Reserve.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I will not go into debating the estimates which we will do when we return. But, in fact, surely the difference to which the Chief Minister refers is in the estimated figure, not in the actual figure. The actual figure has not shown 100 per cent increase in the reserves?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I dare not give the hon Member a different explanation without checking it back. Certainly there has been a substantial increase which might well account for the lion's share of that 100 per cent increase in the Consolidated Fund surplus generated during this year. But if the hon Member will just await I will have that figure broken down for him and the information provided to him on Monday.



NO. 252 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**NON-PAYMENT OF ARREARS TO GOVERNMENT**

In respect of how many companies or individuals trading in Gibraltar has Government commenced proceedings in respect of non-payment of arrears due to Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The breakdown is as follows:

1. In respect of individuals	None
2. In respect of companies	
Statutory demands initiated by Central Arrears Unit	270
Rates summonses	<u>40</u>
	<u>310</u>

NO. 253 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**IMPORTS AND EXPORTS 1997**

Can Government state what was the value of imports and exports in 1997 excluding petroleum products?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The value of imports/exports in 1997, excluding petroleum products, was as follows:

Imports	£339,620,207
Exports	£34,831,230

NO. 254 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**IMPORTS AND EXPORTS 1997**

Can Government state what was the value of imports and exports in 1997 in respect of petroleum products?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The value of imports/exports of petroleum products during 1997 was as follows:

Imports	£24,566,672
Exports	£18,232,814

NO. 255 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**IMPORTS 1996/97**

Can Government state what was the value and volume of imports of soaps, perfumes, clocks, watches, photographic equipment, detergents, household cleaning materials, nappies and clothing in the financial year 1996/97 and the revenue yield in this period in each product?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The values (volume is not available) in respect of the items requested for financial year 1996/97 is as follows:

Soaps, detergents, household cleaning materials:

Value - £1,546,730                      Duty - £131,207

Photographic equipment:

Value - £432,944                      Duty - £45,987

Clocks and watches:

Value - £1,211,394                      Duty - £142,005

Perfumery and Cosmetics:

Value - £4,630,888                      Duty - £546,853

Clothing:

Value - £4,049,388                      Duty - £385,752

Nappies:

Value - £53,304                      Duty - £5,330

NO. 256 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**IMPORTS TO 31 MARCH 1998**

Can Government state what was the value and volume of imports of soaps, perfumes, clocks, watches, photographic equipment, detergents, household cleaning materials, nappies and clothing in respect of which import duty was abolished for the six month period ending 31 March 1998 and the revenue yield in this period in each product?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The values (volume details are not available) in respect of the items requested for the six month period ending 31 March 1998 is as follows:

Soaps, detergents, household cleaning materials:

Value - £856,044	Duty - £4,238
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Photographic equipment:

I feel that this figure must be in error and I would ask the hon Member to give me an opportunity to correct it at a later date, the answer that has been prepared for me says -

Value - £4,504,526	Duty - £1,674
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Clocks and watches:

Value - £700,835	Duty - £43,037
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Perfumery and Cosmetics:

Value - £1,838,865	Duty - £122,916
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Clothing:

Value - £2,075,568	Duty - £117,094
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Nappies:

Value - £90,621	No duty applicable
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NO. 257 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**EXPORT DUTY**

Can Government state which bonded stores outside New Harbours are affected by the elimination of the 2 per cent export duty; what goods are affected and the value volume and revenue yields of these exports in the financial year 1996/97 and the six months since 1 April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The elimination of the 2 per cent export duty applies to all bonded stores and all commodities except cigarettes and tobacco. The duties involved are minor as there are only a few bonded stores outside New Harbours. These imported a range of goods on which 0.25 per cent to 2 per cent duty was applied on export, depending on the commodity.

In 1996 the total value imported was £980,476, yielding a total duty of £14,786. In 1997 the total value imported was £589,110, duty collected amounted to £8,284.

NO. 258 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**GONHS/SPANISH FISHERMEN**

Can Government explain the nature of the discussions taking place between the representatives of the Spanish fishing vessels and the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The discussions that took place between representatives of the fishermen of La Linea and Algeciras on the one hand and the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society have been of a technical nature. The Society has explained to them the extent of Gibraltar's nature protection laws and their relevance in relation to the European Habitats Directive, the United Kingdom Wildlife and Countryside Act and Spain's own laws with regard to conservation and fisheries.

In turn the Spanish side has presented its arguments for being allowed to fish in Gibraltar waters. These arguments have not been accepted.

It is not yet clear whether further discussions will take place.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 258 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

We wish to express our appreciation obviously to the GONHS for their excellent work in protecting our natural environment at home and abroad and I would say significantly in Spain but, of course, at a non-political level. However the problem is a purely political one in our recent confrontations stemming from the reiterated view of Spain that we have no territorial waters. It is therefore, in my opinion, the sole responsibility of the Government to discuss or negotiate with what the Chief Minister himself has described as an orchestrated body of Spanish fishermen. Would the Chief Minister not agree that under the present circumstances where the central issue is our jurisdiction and not simply our conservation views that the Government should be the single advocate and arbiter?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I certainly agree with the hon Member that the underlying issues are political. As to whether they are the Government's responsibility is another matter, there is one particular local newspaper that seems to take the view that I should say absolutely nothing on this issue, it not being any of my business. That is not a view which I share nor are such articles in such newspaper likely to be - do not worry, it is not the hon Member's party's newspaper, it is another one - and certainly I do not think that it would be appropriate for the Government of Gibraltar to discuss issues of sovereignty and jurisdiction and territorial waters with fishermen from La Linea which is the level at which these conversations took place. So certainly I do not

think that this was what the hon Member was suggesting but I would not think it helpful for the Government to have participated in those talks instead of the Ornithological and Natural History Society. If anybody was going to talk at that level I think it should not have been the Government, certainly not in respect of political issues. Coming back to this question of responsibility, of course I think that we are probably at one on both sides of the House on the issue that ultimately it is the responsibility of Her Majesty's Government of the United Kingdom to assert, protect and enforce its jurisdiction over these waters and that certainly whilst the Government of Gibraltar, as indeed one would expect the Opposition to do, express what their political views on the issue are and do what we can in discussions, in meetings as to the provision of resources necessary et cetera, to facilitate that, that is not to say that it is our responsibility in the sense of Gibraltar only being able to achieve on this issue what its Government can achieve because we all know that that is necessarily limited when it comes to deploying perhaps significant resources into this area. So the hon Member in his supplementary said nothing with which I would disagree and I am not certain whether he was just stating his own position and asking whether I agreed with it or whether he is trying to analyse it in some other way but I hope that I have made my own position clear on it.

HON J J GABAY:

If I may clarify the point, to make certain there is no dilution of our stand by giving the fishermen the idea that this is merely a matter of conservation and they can come to an understanding with the Natural History Society, that was my concern.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can tell the hon Member the Natural History Society have themselves made it clear to the fishermen that that is not the position.

HON J J GABAY:

Bearing on the political aspect again of this problem, I would like to refer to Press Release No. 7 of 1998, we have had many others since, on the 8 January where the Minister for the Environment referred to a meeting with Mrs Juana Maria Lasry, Diputada for Cadiz, in the Andalucian Parliament and quoted, "In order to establish an initial contact for future possible discussions on matters of environmental interest". Therefore I would like to ask the Chief Minister to explain or the Minister for the Environment to explain whether this has been pursued and, if so, with what success?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I met Juana Lasry at her request. She mentioned when she came to see me that she is a deputy of the ruling PSOE in the Junta de Andalucia Government, she mentioned that they were interested in establishing whether there was a possibility of environmental co-operation. Since then I am still waiting for them to come back to me. So the answer of the Government obviously is that we are interested in establishing discussions in areas of mutual interest like, for example, oil pollution; like I said when I met the Mancomunidad representatives about 18 months ago, the experience of the Government though is that while it is open to discuss matters on that level which I confirmed to Mrs Lasry, once that is said to the Spanish representatives we then get no comeback. The initial apparent willingness to



exchange information which can be of assistance in a non-political way does not seem to come to fruition. The answer to the question is there has been no progress on any front even though I confirmed that we were open to the idea of environmental discussions but it was not, I stress, in the context of nature protection or fishing. The areas that I am more concerned about is given that Gibraltar is a big bunkering port and a shiprepair facility and given Cadiz also represents a big port, I am more interested in establishing some degree of interchange of information in case there should be an oil spill in the Bay of Gibraltar we know what resources and what assets are available to address any potential difficulty. But I stress the issue of fishing was not discussed, she did not raise it, I did not raise it, I did not see that it was an area where we need discuss any matter, that matter is being addressed by the Chief Minister directly in the manner that he has stated to the House.

HON J J GABAY:

Would I therefore be right in coming to the conclusion that many of these initiatives in trying to co-operate regionally with the neighbouring area are faced with failure almost in every direction and branch that we undertake?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I do not think I can allow the hon Member the glee of writing off all forms of co-operation quite so quickly. I realise that he is anxious that one day I should stand up and answer that question in the affirmative, it is not the case. There are areas of co-operation where things are done and it is certainly in fewer areas than we would like, we would like there to be more. However, and I think I have said this to the hon Member before, the principal obstacle is that whilst whereas the Government of Gibraltar have the resources and the power and the faculties to deliver, our interlocutors whether it be the Junta de Andalucia or municipalities, in most areas that we touch on do not and in the areas that they do, because it is in the Spanish administrative political system of their jurisdiction, they tend to have to obtain permission to do it and that is given only depending on what the issue is. So certainly the amount of co-operation that takes place is certainly less than (a) is desirable, and (b) that would be the case between two friendly neighbours dealing through political institutions of equal power and jurisdiction, if the hon Member understands me.

HON J J GABAY:

The only thing I would like to correct briefly is that certainly I would not be gleeful to see it..... *[Interruption]* It would be excellent if it worked on the right basis of mutual respect and understanding. My objection to it, of course, is that we are trying at the moment the impossible and there is a danger that it weakens our position which I think is very reasonable.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, all that I can say is that regardless of whether things are pulled off or not, I have never dealt with at the level that the Government of Gibraltar deals with Spanish politicians which is, namely, at a regional and municipal level, I have never found anything other than respect and understanding.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It is quite obvious that if he has meetings with them he gets respect and understanding and if I had meetings with them they were described by him as boozing in marisquerias, no?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think I said boozing. I seem to remember long and wet lunches but not boozing.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, in fact, was it the initiative of the Government to suggest that the GONHS and the Spanish fishermen got together to see if they could understand each other or understand the nature of the arguments?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the Government judged that it was in the interests of de-escalating the situation that somebody should explain to the Spanish fishermen the exact nature of the issues at stake here and that they should not form views or take actions based on a mis-comprehension or a misunderstanding of the history and the legal legislative position and to that end the Government invited GONHS, firstly to take part in the meeting which they had in my office, and then to pick up the ball directly and run with it in a sense and explain these things directly to them. But GONHS's involvement was at Government's invitation, yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Has there been just one meeting which is the one that was publicised?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, there was one meeting at No. 6 originally which was publicised, then they have subsequently had, to my knowledge, if they have had any others I have not been informed, they have had two, one in Gibraltar and one in La Linea.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is there any indication, is there any feedback to the Government as a result of these meetings that presumably now that the position has been explained to them and they understand what our laws require, that has made any difference to their pretensions to fish in our territorial waters or is it now that they understand it the position is still the same?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The word "pretensions" is I think an unnecessary difficult one to deal with. Let me put it this way, now that they have had the position explained to them it has not diminished their desire to fish.

NO. 259 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**TERRITORIAL WATERS - ILLEGAL FISHING**

Can Government confirm that the statement, "Fishing would be acceptable in an informal way", does not mean that the RGP will condone low profile illegal fishing?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The hon Member has chosen to refer only to part of what the Gibraltar Chronicle quoted me as having said in its report of the 17 March 1998 on fishing incidents in the Bay. The quote attributable to me went further adding the qualification "providing they conform with Gibraltar law". It therefore follows that no form of illegal fishing would be condoned since any act of illegality cannot conform with the law.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 259 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Let me invite the Chief Minister to compare these two quotations. On the one hand from him came an embattled cry of "I will not tolerate this", almost a martial cry. This to be followed almost in parallel with the full quotation that he is referring to, "Fishing would be acceptable in an informal way, in a moderate way in numbers, providing they conform with Gibraltar law as has happened over the years". Is this not really a classic example of contradictions and discordant signals that we have been mentioning all along? What are the implications, are we going to bend the law if a Spanish fisherman performs without making a fuss in some unobtrusive way? Does he know that their sort of fishing, whether formal or informal, is illegal or does he expect professional fishermen to fish with little rods like children off the piers? Is this not symptomatic of an approach which is full of sound and fury - I shall not complete the quotation - soon followed by concessionary fantasies?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is not evidence of anything of the sort. What it is evidence of is of the hon Member's complete ignorance of the legal issues at stake in this dispute. And indeed, if the hon Member wants to take the liberty of becoming sarcastic on an issue, the very least that he can do, if he wishes to save the space, is research the matter so that at least he does so on grounds that are defensible and in accordance with facts. Let me educate the hon Member so that next time he launches a political attack of that sort he will at least do so on grounds which bear some relation to the reality and to the truth of the matter. [*HON J J GABAY: Words speak for themselves.*] No, they do not, because the hon Member appears to believe that all fishing by Spanish fishing boats in Gibraltar is illegal and it is not. The law of Gibraltar does not say, "Spanish fishermen shall not fish in the waters of Gibraltar", the law says, "That no one" - whether they are Spanish or Chinese - "shall fish in the waters of Gibraltar using certain fishing methods", and therefore Spanish fishing boats that enter Gibraltar's territorial waters..... The hon Member may wish to

shake his head but is he interested in being corrected on the matter? No, I am not giving way, he will sit there quietly and take the medicine like the naughty boy that he has been. Therefore he should know that if a Spanish fishing boat enters Gibraltar waters and fishes, for example, by the method known as long-line, as some of them do, I do not know what he means about little fishermen with a rod and line, but many of the Spanish fishing boats that come into Gibraltar's waters do not fish illegally. Because the only definition of legality is the environmental illegality contained in the Environmental Protection Ordinance. What I have said repeatedly is that the Government of Gibraltar could not condone breaches of the law, in other words, the Government of Gibraltar cannot condone anybody coming into Gibraltar's waters and fishing by a means which is prohibited by the laws of Gibraltar, namely, the Environmental Protection Ordinance. But that if Spanish fishing boats came into Gibraltar's waters and fished using lawful fishing methods, in other words, not infringing the laws of Gibraltar, that and that is what the second quote that the hon Member tried to abuse refers to, that provided they did not breach the laws of Gibraltar by using illegal fishing methods, that their presence in Gibraltar waters would continue to be tolerated as it has been tolerated for the last 35 years including the last eight during which Opposition Members sat on this side of the House. I hope that having had the matter explained to him in relatively simple terms that he will now be able to distinguish between the point that the Government would not sanction breaches of the law on the one hand with the statement that informal fishing in discreet numbers would be continued to be tolerated provided that it did not breach the law. In other words, fishing by lawful means.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I just ask the Chief Minister, since he wants to be so technical, I know that I am being given 100 lines now that he is in a headmaster mode, surely there is nothing in the law about the, shall we say, manner in which the fishing is being done in terms of it being low profile or high profile, it is just a question, as he says, of whether they are using nets or not using nets?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, that is not the case as far as the Government are concerned, it might have been an attitude that he might have been willing to tolerate. For example, if Spanish fishing boats arrived in droves using lawful fishing methods but in such large numbers that it would scandalise local opinion or obstruct access to the port entrance or obstruct access to the marinas, the Government would not be willing to tolerate that even though the fishing method was not illegal and even though no law was being breached.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is he saying that this is what they have been doing in his time and they have never done it in the past? If the Chief Minister is making a comment in response to the problem that had arisen of fishing, is it not the case that the problem was not that they had arrived in droves like an armada and scandalised the population, if they scandalised anybody it was the fish. So his comment in the context of the question he was being asked about the level of fishing with nets surely that could simply have been answered by saying simply that they had to fish as the law provided. By appearing to qualify it, would the Chief Minister not agree, that he seems to be saying they have to be legal and they have to not draw a lot of attention to

themselves. That is the impression given by the statement the way that it was printed, he might not have put it like that himself but that is how it came across. That appears to give a message that provided they do not do it too visibly the law would not be implemented fully. That certainly has not happened in the past to my knowledge.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is not that it is provided they do not do it too visibly. The only thing that they could not do too visibly and get away with it is fish legally but I suppose theoretically the United Kingdom Government could take the view that whether they use legal or illegal fishing methods, incursions by unlicensed Spanish fishing boats into Gibraltar waters is not something that was going to be tolerated, it would not be in breach of any law of Gibraltar but I suppose that view could be taken. It is not the view that has been taken historically. [*HON J J BOSSANO: Never.*] Never, and therefore I just wanted to make it very clear that in indicating that lawful fishing would continue to be tolerated as it has always been tolerated, I added the qualification about the discretion and about the way in which it is done, to make sure precisely that no one could misinterpret this to mean that they could send in however many number of boats they wanted in the future and fish no matter what disruption they cause provided that they use the lawful fishing method.

HON J J GABAY:

I would like to remind the hon Headmaster that, in fact, sarcasm was warranted and that his words were misleading, that they were misconstrued in stark contrast with his "I will not tolerate it" and that our problem was with illegal fishing. So what is he talking about, the innocent fisherman who might come on a pleasure tour round our coast? This was a way merely of trying to deflate it by giving the wrong impression and I insist that those words convey that, the words speak for themselves.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 260 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**TERRITORIAL WATERS - ILLEGAL FISHING**

Can Government state, in respect of the period between the 13 and the 27 March 1998, how many instances of Spanish fishing boats illegally operating in Gibraltar waters have been recorded, giving a breakdown of the number of vessels and the dates of such incidence?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 261 of 1998.

NO. 261 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**TERRITORIAL WATERS - ILLEGAL FISHING**

Can Government list the number of occasions, giving dates and number of vessels, on which Spanish fishing boats have illegally operated in Gibraltar waters since the 27 March 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Between the 13 and 26 March 1998 there have been a total of 15 instances involving 56 vessels. Since the 27 March 1998, there have been 16 instances involving 36 vessels.

The details are as follows:-

<u>Date</u>	<u>No. of vessels</u>
13.3.98	1
18.3.98	2
19.3.98	3
20.3.98	19
21.3.98	1
22.3.98	1
23.3.98	4
24.3.98	16
25.3.98	2
26.3.98	<u>7</u>
	<u>56</u>
27.3.98	8
30.3.98	8
1.4.98	2
2.4.98	4
4.4.98	2
5.4.98	2
6.4.98	2
7.4.98	1
13.4.98	4
14.4.98	<u>3</u>
	<u>36</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 260 AND 261 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Are we therefore to assume, since there has been a continuation of illegal appearances of these vessels in our waters, that we are unable to exercise our right to control our waters?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member, if he wishes me to answer that question, will have to be more specific about what he means by we.

HON J J GABAY:

By "we" I mean we the Gibraltarians because we share a common belief that we have jurisdiction over the waters so whether I say the Government or ourselves there is no distinction here. I think we share the same view.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The distinction that I was inviting the hon Member to make was not between him and me, it was between us and HMG. The answer is that his Government - that is us - do not control operationally the Police and we do not dispose of an Army, a Navy or an Air Force and we do not have a diplomatic capability of our own and therefore as the hon Member well knows the question of what we can do about it is not a constructive focus of this problem because it might suggest to uninformed listeners to the debate that there is something that we might do and are not doing which, as he knows, is not the case.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government say what has changed since His Excellency the Governor confirmed that he now had the authority to give the necessary support to the RGP which I think happened on or around the 27 March? This is why we wanted to see the impact that his public appearance had made on the incidence. There appears to be no significant drop in the numbers unless it is that they have chosen to stay away because they were scared by what he had to say on television.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, what I think has changed mainly is the weather. [HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO: "El Niño".] No, this is not "El Niño", this is "el levante" and "el poniente". I do not pretend to have a complete grasp of these issues but I understand that they like to use our waters in levanter but not in the westerlies and we have been, what some would say, fortunate that the weather has intervened propitiously to discourage them from attending in the waters at the critical moments of this matter. The weather has now changed back to easterly and there has not been yet any report of incursions of that sort. The other thing that has happened, rather than changed, as the hon Member may have read in the press, is that the RGP, the GSP and the Marine Squadron have engaged in exercises to practice what they would do if and when they decided to do it.



HON J J BOSSANO:

In the actual dates when there have been, say, two or four or eight, can the Chief Minister say whether in fact there has been any resistance by these boats when approached by the GSP or the RGP and told that they had to leave our waters?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

My understanding of that is that pending the decision to actually intervene with all its consequences, the RGP's operational instructions are to take a record of infringements and not to attempt to intervene except in an orchestrated way.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister say as from what date that has been? That is, when was the last time that they were told; when they stopped intervening and they started taking records?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Again, the hon Member should not hold me accountable for this information. My understanding is that that has been the position since the incident involving the helicopter. I do not remember exactly on what day that was.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

In those incidence after 27 March, does the Chief Minister know if the RGP asked for assistance from the MOD? I am referring to that because I think that the Deputy Commissioner came out on television and said that unless he had the backing he could just record the incident.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

My understanding of the matter is that the RGP did request assistance but that the rules of engagement under which the Marine Squadron operate in Gibraltar would not have permitted them to give the sort of assistance that was required without specific operational instructions from the United Kingdom. In other words, the local command structure is not at liberty to authorise the sort of intervention that was requested and would have been necessary and, indeed, that was the sort of authority that His Excellency the Governor has subsequently sought from London and my understanding is that it has been obtained but not yet deployed.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Of the number of instances that the Chief Minister has given on the times the Spanish fishing boats have illegally operated in Gibraltar waters, are they just on the west side of Gibraltar or is it also on the east side, because they also fish there when the levanter is not in operation and the "poniente" is?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, one would have thought that what the hon Member says is true but again, without wishing to get drawn into the intricacies of the fishing business, I understand that that does not follow. It does not follow that they go to one side of the Rock or the other depending on which direction the wind is blowing. Apparently they are not interested in any part of our waters except in an easterly. My understanding is that the Government and the law enforcement agencies who have provided this information do not distinguish between British waters on the east or the west or indeed up the southern tip of the Rock and therefore the hon Member is free to assume and should assume that these are related to the whole area.

NO. 262 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**INCOME TAX - SPANISH FRONTIER WORKERS**

What was the number of Spanish frontier workers paying PAYE in October 1996 and April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The figure for Spanish frontier workers in respect of whom PAYE tax was paid into Government was 605 in the month of October 1996 and 653 in the month of April 1997.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 262 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, this is obviously based on P8 certificates handed in. Is it as at this date or can he say at which date the cut off is for these figures?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot but I think he would be entitled to assume what he has just said. In other words, that it is drawn on the same basis as the previous answer which I think was Question No. 143 of 1998 which he asked. In any case I will check it and have that provided to him.

NO. 263 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**PRE-1969 SPANISH PENSIONERS**

Have the Government made any representations to Her Majesty's Government in relation to increase the pensions of pre-1969 Spanish pensioners?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No. The hon Member should not believe the nonsense that he reads in his own party's newspaper "The New People".

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 263 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Should we believe the nonsense we read in his party's newspaper?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No. The answer is that the advice would be the same but the need for him to rely on it would be much less because we tend to ascertain the truth of what we print.

HON R MOR:

The reality is that the public perception is that after his meeting with representatives of the Spanish pensioners he did indicate, when he was posed the question as to the Spaniards wanting an increase in their pensions, that all he could do was pass it on to Her Majesty's Government. That is what, I believe, he said in an interview and what was recorded in the meeting.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not believe I said even that but certainly I accept that there is a perception on this matter, a perception which I have no doubt has been caused or contributed to by Opposition Members together with many other perceptions which are calculated to increase the level of anxiety of pensioners in Gibraltar. For example, the widespread rumour which is so similar to the election campaign that the hon Members waved in 1996 that one can be forgiven for suggesting or for believing that they are at the root of this rumour now as well, for example, the completely false, baseless suggestion that the Government are contemplating reducing or eliminating pensions or Community Care payments. Those are cheap political strategies designed and deployed by people who appear to be more interested with their own partisan political fortunes than with the peace of mind of 4,000 elderly people in Gibraltar.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think since the Chief Minister says that his paper makes sure it has got the facts right before they print it, which is a highly questionable statement, he himself ought to make sure the facts before he starts making accusations across the floor of the House. Nobody has said to him that he is going to do away with anything. What he has been told, of course, is that I am sure he will recall that he has got a tremendous cheek to stand in the annual dinner of the pensioners to say to them that they are still getting Community Care when the first thing he did after his election was to stop making any Government contribution towards Community Care Ltd because he said they already had too much money. But nobody has suggested he is actually going to take the money away from them. Can he say, in relation to the question which is the question on which we are trying to seek information, whether it is correct, as the Spanish pensioners who saw him claimed, that they raised with him the question of the frozen pensions and, if so, what reply did he give them?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Before I do I would just like to make clear that when the hon Member raises the question of the fact that the Government ceased to transfer funds to Community Care after the election, of course if he is willing for one moment to be objective about it he should ask himself what is it that he has asked, what conclusion he is inviting uninformed and anxious elderly people to draw from that? Could it be, for example, that the money is therefore going to run out and that therefore they are not going to collect the payments or was he really trying to convey to the elderly people in Gibraltar that the Government had made the judgement that for the time being Community Care was sufficiently resourced to meet its obligations and that those resources were better employed elsewhere or is the hon Member suggesting that the Government should continue for four years to pass money into Community Care regardless of whether Community Care needed those resources or not? As to the new supplementary that he has put to me, the answer is that the representatives of the Spanish pensioners raised with me, as I am sure they must have raised with him together with numerous other issues, the question of the frozen pensions and I informed them that the level at which pensions were paid to them was not a matter for the Government of Gibraltar given that this was being paid not from Gibraltar Government funds but by United Kingdom funds but that in any event, they were being paid pensions at the level provided by law and that they were being paid pensions at the same level as was being paid to Gibraltar resident pensioners.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact did he tell them that not only were they getting the same level as any other nationality covered by the Closed Pension Scheme but also that the condition attached by the UK Government made it impossible for the pensions to be increased? Are they aware that it is not that we want them to have frozen pensions, it is that the British Government would not pay for the pensions on any other basis other than that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I told them that but they were aware of it, presumably he must have told them on several occasions before me. They are aware of that, I have no doubt that the Spanish pensioners' representatives, at least, fully understand the position and I have found that they do not aim their guns in our direction. I think I remember the Leader of the Opposition when he was in this seat, I think I remember reading him as to have said something similar in the past, one does not know whether that attitude will change at any given time but for the time being they are fully informed and fully understand the ins and outs of this issue.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Following the meeting the statements that were made by the Spanish representatives to the press was that they having had that meeting they were now going to complain to the EU because their pensions were frozen. Do the Government have any knowledge whether, in fact, anything has happened in that area?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, we have no knowledge of anything having happened in that area but I certainly know that they appear to have access to a particular Spanish MEP whose name presently escapes me but who seems to be advising them on these issues in Brussels. But nothing has happened there in any formal sense.

ORAL

NO. 264 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**PAYMENTS TO BUILDING CONTRACTORS**

Can Government state how much has been paid to building contractors in the last financial year giving a breakdown showing the amount paid to each contractor and in respect of which project?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

A total of £4,596,309 has been paid to building contractors in the last financial year.

The hon Member is aware the details are of 20 contracts, 20 contractors, I can stand here for 15 minutes reading it out or I can pass the sheet to him.

PROJECT	CONTRACTOR	COST OF PROJECT	PAID APRIL '97 MARCH '98
1. Road Widening Sir Herbert Miles Road	Sharrock Shand Ltd	£ 1,399,059.00	£ 981,327
2. Beautification Winston Churchill Avenue	Amey Construction	£ 299,718.00	£ 245,000
3. Extension Bishop Fitzgerald & Governors Meadow School	Profield Constructors	£ 609,088.00	£ 609,088.00
4. Promenade North Mole Rd	Amey Construction	£ 630,160.00	£ 630,160.00
5. Advanced Stabilization Works Camp Bay	Profield Contractors	£ 44,254.00	£ 44,254.00
6. Conversion Stone Block Buena Vista	H L Wilkie Ltd Sub-Cont. Sheriff	£ 218,833.00 £ 47,831.00	£ 187,733.00
7. Residential Development for the Elderly	Profield Contractors	£ 2,385,723.00	£ 526,781.00
8. External Refurbishment Edinburgh House	Mackley Tricon & Cubiertas Construction	£ 949,733.00	£ 166,162.00
9. Retaining Wall Loreto Convent	H L Wilkie Ltd	£ 74,021.00	£ 71,476.00
10. St Bernards Road Retaining Wall	H L Wilkie Ltd	£ 99,554.50	£ 50,942.00
11. New Roadworks Both Worlds Complex	Blacktop	£ 106,954.00	None
12. Main Street Beautification	Amey Construction	£ 304,165.00	£ 304,165.00
13. Proposed Promenade Harbour Views Road	Amey Construction	£ 418,228.54	None
14. Camp Bay Site Investigation	Bellilo & Partner/Geocisa	£ 28,000.00	£ 28,000.00
15. Europort Car Park	Blacktop	£ 76,654.00	£ 33,436
16. Sand Slope Stabilisation Works East Side	Mackley Tricon	£ 192,688.00	£ 82,639
17. Treasury Building Road Widening etc	GJBS	£ 250,000.00	£ 213,399
18. Demolition Sir Herbert Miles Road	Shelly & Co Ltd	£ 32,124.00	None
19. Demolition of Shed North Mole Road	Monteverde & Sons	£ 16,400.00	None
20 Ex-Treasury Building	GJBS		£ 421,747.00
		TOTAL	£4,596,309.00



NO. 265 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**IMPORT DUTY - MOTORCYCLES**

Can Government explain why they decided to exclude motorcycles from the reduction of import duty on motor vehicles?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Government did not decide to exclude motorcycles from the reduction of import duty on motor vehicles. [*HON J C PEREZ: It was just never included.*] Well, the hon Members may giggle but, of course, there is a significant difference between the two. The Government's own review of import duties was limited to goods which were relevant to the attraction of tourism to Gibraltar and to household goods which attracted local shoppers to Spanish hypermarkets with the result that they did the bulk of their shopping there taking advantage of their presence principally to purchase those articles.

At about that time, representations were made to Government by the Motor Traders Association in respect of motor cars. These were considered by Government and were included in the review.

Representations have subsequently been made to Government in respect of motorcycles, and these representations are now also being considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 265 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

It was my understanding that representations had initially been made by the Motor Traders Association for both and that only motor vehicles had been accepted. That is why I put the question, to see what difference Government considered between motor vehicles and motorcycles in this respect. Whether it was just that Government might not be inclined to encourage the sale of motorcycles, for example.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not prepared to swear that some letter or other may have mentioned motorcycles but certainly I attended two meetings with all the Committee of Motor Traders Association and the conversation and the discussion focused exclusively on motor cars and nobody ever said, "Well what about motorcycles?" unless of course they assumed that they were included in motor vehicles - no, they could not have assumed that it was included in motor vehicles because the discussion centred

about the particular rates of duty. But different considerations do apply. For example, motorcycles under a certain cc, I do not remember if it is 50cc or 100cc, he will have to forgive me for that, already pay import duty and I think it is 12 per cent as opposed to 35 per cent or 40 per cent that some vehicles of certain cc were paying. So the case for the reduction was obviously much more cogent and much more obvious in the case of a commodity that was paying much higher rates of duty than in respect of motorcycles that were paying less. Of course there are some motorcycles over a certain cc that are also paying very high rates of duty and the Government are considering the representations we have now received in that context.

ORAL

NO. 266 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**CIVIL SERVICE - ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many applicants there have been for the Administrative Assistant vacancies recently advertised in the Civil Service and of these, how many were from persons registered as unemployed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Two hundred and nine applications were received in response to the Administrative Assistant vacancies recently advertised, 80 of which were from persons registered as unemployed.

NO. 267 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**CIVIL SERVICE - ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT VACANCIES**

How many of the applicants for the Administrative Assistant vacancies in the Civil Service were shortlisted for interview and what criteria was used?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Of the 209 applicants, 128 were shortlisted for interview. The criteria for shortlisting for interview was established at the level of five GCSEs.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 267 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is this not contrary to the advertisement that appeared that people only require three 'O' levels in order to be able to apply for the post of AA?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is not contrary to the advertisement. The advertisement did not say that everybody that applies for the job is going to be shortlisted for an interview. It is most unusual for any employer to interview every single person that applies for a job. The advertisement published was the minimum qualification for applying for the job. One can fully appreciate that if there are 209 applications either it is agreed to interview all 209 people, which in my opinion would be an unnecessary deployment of resources, or one takes the view that given that people have applied from a certain level of qualifications, in other words, that there are people with degrees, with 'A' levels and many 'O' levels, either everybody is interviewed or one takes the view that not everybody is going to be interviewed. If not everybody is interviewed one has to find some criteria by which to exclude those that are not interviewed. The view was taken that those people with less than five GCSEs and nothing else were unlikely to succeed in competition with the people that had applied, a lot of them with degrees and many of them with two or three 'A' levels and eight or nine 'O' levels. At the end of the day the policy is to recruit into the service the best qualified people for the job and that means that a degree of priority was given on this occasion, unlike what happened on the previous intake incidentally, in the application of this criteria a degree of preference was given to the most qualified people rather than to the least qualified people. At the time of the last intake a specific quota was reserved for the less qualified people.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Whilst accepting what the Chief Minister has said that not everybody is going to be interviewed, there is a problem in deciding what criteria to apply to select who is shortlisted. The decision that was taken de facto means that five GCSEs has now become the entry requirement for the civil service.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think that is neither true nor justified by anything that I have said. On this occasion five GCSEs was chosen as the criteria for shortlisting for interview. On a different occasion a different criteria might be applied in deciding who is going to be shortlisted for interview. The hon Member knows that the minimum entry criteria into the civil service is stipulated, I cannot remember now if it is two GCSEs or something else but I am sure the hon Member, whilst we are all keen to give everybody a reasonable opportunity to aspire to employment for which they are qualified, the hon Member must appreciate that the Government want to recruit into the public service the best people that are available and that it would not make sense to pass over somebody with a degree, three 'A' levels and nine 'O' levels in favour of somebody with two 'O' levels.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Let me say that I do not agree because I do not think that the fact that somebody has done well at school necessarily means that in a particular area of the civil service..... *[Interruption]* As somebody who has been through the system and worked with people that left school early and worked with people that came out of university, I think the ability of an employee to perform well in giving a service to his employer or to his customers is not directly correlated to the number of GCSEs one obtains and I think it is wrong to assume that somebody who may not be well academically cannot do an excellent job for the Government or for the public otherwise we are condemning people really to say, "Well, your prospects of employment or unemployment are directly related to how many GCSEs you obtain and if you do not obtain more you finish up on the dole".

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In the real world that is precisely the situation. That is why people go for qualifications, that is why some people put in the extra work and the extra effort to attend colleges and universities to get qualifications because in the real world the more qualifications one has the more attractive one is to an employer and I think that Gibraltar should be an exception to that and that the public service in Gibraltar should be within Gibraltar an exception to that either. The hon Member has views with which I strongly disagree. The fact of the matter is that the hon Member appears to believe that qualifications count for nothing when it comes to suitability for employment. If that is his view I have to say I strongly disagree with him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, if that was my view I would have said so, that is not what I have said. Because, in fact, if the Chief Minister thinks that it is just a matter of getting qualifications then why stop at five 'O' levels, why not say, "Well since there are only x number of vacancies and there are 128 we will only interview people with 'A' levels". He can draw the line anywhere along the system. Is he in fact saying that the results of the interviews of the people shortlisted shows that those selected were those with the highest qualifications and all those with the lowest qualifications within the five 'O' level to degree range failed the interviews and were not selected because that would be the logic of the argument that he is putting?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly as a matter of Government policy that is what should have happened. In other words, subject to performance at interview, the Government would have been happiest to see those best qualified for the job subject to suitability, the extent it can be measured in a five or 10 minute interview, are the people that on this occasion should have been taken in. The hon Member has got to understand that tomorrow's Heads of Department come from today's AAs. Some of these AAs are going to stay at a low level of the civil service forever but 15 years from now some of these guys have got to be Directors of this, Heads of that, Principal Secretaries and if the hon Member really believes that the calibre and the competence and skill and the livelihood that an individual is going to be in the future of middle or senior management calibre is irrelevant, is unaffected by whether at the age of 18 or 20 he has two 'O' levels and a degree, three 'A' levels and eight 'O' levels, then all I can say in disagreeing with him is that he has an unconventional view of the value of education and qualifications.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think he does not understand what the value of education is. Does he not realise that anybody - I suggest he asks his hon Colleague who has been an educationalist for many years who perhaps can explain to the Chief Minister that there is a difference between training somebody to do a job and educating somebody. What the educational system does is to produce human beings who are equipped to contribute as citizens to our society and to draw from the benefits of their education a benefit throughout their life whether they happen to be Heads of Department or happen to be collecting boxes in a factory. Having done jobs of all ranges I can tell the Chief Minister that I value education tremendously and would he not agree with me that the importance of educating our children is, in fact, what we do to broaden their minds and to give them extra knowledge? It is not just a question of training them to do a particular job in the civil service and he might well find that a graduate brought into the service as an AA long before he gets to be the Head of Department, after everybody in front of him has died, may not be giving such a good service as somebody with two 'O' levels or three 'O' levels. He may find that in the time that he is in office and he looks at the performance of people. So certainly would he not agree that to simply suggest that the way to recruit into the civil service at AA is simply to go down the list by qualification results at school or at university and assume that anybody that got a First Class Degree would make a better AA or typist than somebody who came out, for a variety of circumstances, they might not have had the opportunity, there are many people who develop later and at school do not perform well. Would the Chief Minister not agree that all those considerations matter where the Government are concerned? Perhaps a private sector employer with a narrower view might want to approach the position that he is adopting but would he not agree as a Government, his approach should be a wider one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Frankly no. The hon Member appears to believe that the taxpayer, as an employer, should settle for lower standards than private sector employers. Why does he believe that the taxpayer should give preference in access to permanent and pensionable lifetime jobs to people who are not the best people? I just do not understand what criteria the hon Member believes makes every employer in the world wrong and him right or justifies the view that the standards of recruitment that

should motivate the public service ought to be less than the well-trying and tested standards of recruitment deployed by the private sector. I accept what he says only to this extent, that of course people can have less academic qualifications and perhaps perform very well let alone develop later, perform well in an interview or it could be the other way around. That is why people with more than five GCSEs were allowed to apply but one has got to exercise an element of judgement. The chances of somebody with two 'O' levels closing the gap during a five minute interview with somebody with a degree, three 'A' levels and eight or nine 'O' levels - the hon Member I hope will agree with me that of course it is possible that there is an Einstein lurking somewhere with only two 'O' levels because he came from a troubled domestic environment and never got a fair crack at the whip. I have no doubt that there might be exceptions of that sort but I hope the hon Member can agree that it would be very much an exception and that there is sufficient margin between five 'O' levels only and a degree, 'A' levels and 'O' levels at the upper end, that there is enough slack between those two standards to note more than sufficient allowance for the factors that the hon Member was describing and with many of which I agree. What the hon Member is really saying is that he believes the Government should interview everybody. If there are 500 applicants one interviews 500 applicants.

HON J C PEREZ:

I doubt whether the Chief Minister has this information available but it is information that is relevant to the discussion that has taken place and I would ask him to make this available to me if he has not got it. Using the criteria that has been used, how many of the ones that were unemployed have come through the criteria and how many of the ones that were already employed have come from that criteria? That is to say, of the ones that have been given an interview, how many came from the 80 that were unemployed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can provide him with that information but not now. But I can also tell him that as a matter of policy although it has not been a complete hard and fast rule, the Government's policy to the guidelines to the selection board was that subject to suitability and subject to qualification, that preference should be given to the unemployed and I will explain to the hon Member why that is the case. The Government have a fear that if somebody who is in a job, for example, in a bank, and there are several people in a bank that applied and the Government allow people to move from employment in a bank to the Government, first of all we are causing the private sector to throw away valuable training that they had invested in the financial services centre which is an area that we are encouraging financial services operators to invest in. Secondly, there is the real danger that if somebody leaves a job in a bank to come over to the civil service there is every danger that that employer from which the applicant comes will take the opportunity to eliminate the post and instead of there being a net gain to the job market we are simply replacing a job in the private sector with a job in the public sector. In the present climate there is a real risk that that might happen and the Government do not wish to take action unnecessarily, I say subject to qualification and subject to suitability, I think the Government's overall policy is not to destabilise employment in the private sector anymore than is necessary.

HON J C PEREZ:

Are all these policies under the auspices of the Public Service Commission?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government establish policy and the Public Service Commission scrupulously and independently implements it. In other words, Government plays no part in the application of the policy but certainly I think the hon Member will agree, as I would have in his favour, that it is a legitimate matter of Government policy to decide the calibre of recruiting into the public service.



NO. 268 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**CIVIL SERVICE - TRAINING OFFICER**

Can Government state on what basis has the analogue for the recently advertised post of Training Officer been established?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The basis for the level of the post has been established in relation to the local current circumstances and needs. Because the responsibilities of the job were very similar to that of Education Adviser, it was recommended by the professionals to analogue to that salary, ie Point 10 Head teacher Scale.

ORAL

NO. 269 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**LEGAL TENDER GOLD COINS**

What was the value and number of legal tender gold coins of weight 1 oz or less imported in the financial year 1996/97?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 270, 271 and 272 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 270 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**LEGAL TENDER GOLD COINS**

What was the value and number of legal tender gold coins of weight exceeding 1 oz imported in the financial year 1996/97?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 269, 271 and 272 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 271 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**LEGAL TENDER GOLD COINS**

What was the value and number of legal tender gold coins of weight 1 oz or less imported in the financial year 1997/98 up to 25 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 269, 270 and 272 of 1998.

NO. 272 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**LEGAL TENDER GOLD COINS**

What was the value and number of legal tender gold coins of weight exceeding 1 oz imported in the financial year 1997/98 up to 25 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The information requested is not available because prior to imposing duty on gold coins exceeding 1 oz (which are legal tender), all gold coins were classified as one commodity and therefore there is no breakdown by weights but the information will be available in future because of the change.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 269, 270, 271 AND 272 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Chief Minister have presumably a figure which is not giving a breakdown? That is to say, what was the value of all the gold coins irrespective of their weights? That presumably is available because even goods that do not pay import duty still have to be declared on importation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I suppose that such information must exist but I do not have it in my back pocket right now but if he wants it I will have it provided to him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I want it, yes.

NO. 273 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**LEGAL TENDER GOLD COINS**

Can Government explain why they have decided to impose 6 per cent import duty on legal tender gold coins of a weight exceeding 1 oz as from 26 March 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

So that Government will collect 6 per cent of the value of such coins so imported, thus enhancing public revenue. The Government are however aware that the imposition of duty may adversely affect the trade in coins exceeding 1 troy ounce of gold. Government believe that it is in Gibraltar's interest to encourage trade in gold coins of less than 1 troy ounce.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 273 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

But why do the Government think that it is important to encourage it below 1 oz and to discourage it above 1 oz?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Because the Government believe that the demand for 1 oz gold coins constitutes a more conventional source of trade in business than coins in excess of 1 oz the demand for which tends to be from less conventional sources.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that the Government were aware that following the introduction of the 6 per cent import duty last October on bullion there was a move towards importing coins of over 1 oz in the trade that previously depended on gold bullion and that, in fact, that happened as a consequence of that and that the persons concerned did not hide the fact that this was in the Government's knowledge that this was going to happen?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the Government were concerned that trade in gold bullion was not, what one could euphemistically call 'conventional trade', and therefore made the policy decision to make trading in gold bullion less lucrative by imposing a level of import duty. In doing so we did not want to disturb the legitimate different market for gold coins and therefore gold coins remained exempted. However, unknown to the Government, there is one country which curiously produces - and that was done by reference to gold coins that are legal tender in some countries, so gold coins that are legal tender in some countries were exempted from import duty. Unknown to the Government when we did that, the Government of Australia produces what can best

be described as an ingot rather than a coin, weighing one kilo of gold which can hardly be described as a coin and that by some quirk of Australian legislation this one kilo ingot is legal tender in Australia and because this one kilo ingot is legal tender in Australia it fell into the class of exempted imports in Gibraltar. The Government took the view that that device defeated the purposes of the initial policy and therefore moved to this device of the subsequent amendments to limit the exemption from import duty to gold coins of legal tender of one troy ounce or less which covers such things as the Kruggerand, the Maple leaf and the Sovereign. I have never seen an Australian walking around with a one kilo ingot in his pocket but I suppose that that is what they are entitled to do in Australia and we did not take the view that that was something which we wished to encourage here.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I do not know whether the Chief Minister wishes to encourage it or not but in fact when was it that they took this view because my understanding is that it was shortly after October that the persons that started importing the Australian nugget actually communicated with Government and told them that they were doing this and were told that there was no problem. So when did they come to this view?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly it took the Government some time to react between realising that this loophole had been found and plugging it but that is in the nature of cumbersome public administration. The fact of the matter is that really the Government's concern was heightened when the volumes of these Australian nuggets had clearly taken over from having increased to such a level that what was previously importation of gold bullion was now simply being imported through the Australian nugget and the Government realised this, then add a bit of reaction time and consideration time and legislative drafting time and all of that and eventually the new measure was gazetted.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Chief Minister not find it odd that this being the case as recently as February the Minister for Tourism in his capacity as a businessman should be making enquiries in London about importing one kilo coins?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know if in his personal or any other capacity the Minister for Tourism has done that but certainly what it shows is that he was not part of that committee of the Government that was considering this matter.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact when the Chief Minister says the Government came to the conclusion that it was not in Gibraltar's interest to encourage the importation of kilo coins, the Minister for Tourism was not a party to that decision?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I think the hon Member can assume that at that moment in time that was the case. The hon Member knows that Customs matters are primarily dealt with at the office of the Chief Minister, and that is me and that the Minister was not aware, unless the hon Member is trying to insinuate - which I think would be disingenuous of him to do - that the Minister for Tourism knowing that these things were about to be made illegal nevertheless set up the machinery to continue to import them in flagrant breach of the law. I sincerely hope that that is not what the hon Member is insinuating, and as I am sure he is not, the only other explanation is that he was ignorant of the intention to put it - not to outlaw these things but to put an import duty on them because the Minister for Tourism, as indeed the other gentleman whose brief the hon Member appears to be holding in this matter, are both still free to import gold nuggets provided that they contribute 6 per cent to the public exchequer. These have not become illegal imports, they have simply been subjected to a duty.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I do not know whether Standing Orders say anything about insinuations in answers, I always try to avoid making insinuations in questions where the position is very clear. All I am asking is .....

MR SPEAKER:

It is not all that clear but carry on.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the position is not all that clear that would mean that I can make insinuations.

MR SPEAKER:

Not when the insinuation is that a particular Member has committed or is going to commit an offence. I am not giving any ruling, carry on.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But I think the record will show that I did not use the word 'offence', all I said is it not strange that in February a member of the Government would want to import kilo coins and that in March a 6 per cent import duty is put on the coins in the full knowledge that it will mean that these coins are no longer marketable in Gibraltar because they would be more expensive here than anywhere else.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There can only be two explanations for the situation; one is that the hon Minister was ignorant and the other is that that situation stands as a monument of which I am proud to the fact that this Government are willing to take steps in the public interest of Gibraltar notwithstanding that it adversely affects the commercial interests of one of its members.



HON J J BOSSANO:

I think before they all rush to clap let me say that he was not successful in bringing the gold coins, it might have been different if he had been successful but in fact he was not actually bringing them so they did not actually put him out of business.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

On a point of order, all this tittle tattle that the hon Member is now using on the floor has reached the Government and is doing the rounds of Gibraltar and no doubt next week we will read it in *The New People*. The hon Member is responsible for the allegations that he makes across the floor of the House. The hon Member must know that golden nuggets are available for anybody to buy in various international markets and it is not a question of one person being allowed to bring in golden nuggets and everybody else do not. It is not possible to fail in an attempt to bring in golden nuggets, all one has got to do is go to any of the numerous gold dealers that exist anywhere in the world, buy them and have it brought over. So any little nefarious insinuation that those for whom the hon Member holds the brief which, let us be clear is the company adversely affected by the decision that the Government have implemented, any such insinuation is completely unsustainable on any logical analysis. Anybody that wants to bring gold nuggets is free to bring them, whether they are a Government Minister, a Member of the Opposition or a member of any particular company that has filled the hon Member's ears with all that he has filled the hon Member's ears with. And it is not possible to fail, obviously the hon Member is insinuating that because the Minister tried and failed and in vicious retaliation, which is the story that has reached us through the rumour grill, grinded God knows by whom, because the Minister failed to bring the wretched gold nuggets, in retaliation and spite the Government said, "Well if the Minister cannot bring it nobody can bring it". It is absurd. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to buy a golden nugget ... [*HON J J BOSSANO: I have already bought one.*] I will tell him where he can buy them. One cannot fail, all one has got to do is go with one's money and buy it. Therefore the connection that he makes between some supposed unsuccessful attempt by the Minister to bring nuggets to Gibraltar and the introduction of this measure which has been done entirely on the advice of Customs in Gibraltar and an analysis by Customs and Government of statistics and an analysis of the nature of the business that was being done, is completely unjustified.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Let me just say for the record ...

MR SPEAKER:

One more question and one more answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I wish to put on record that all I am doing is asking a question none of which contain innuendoes or stories. Whatever has reached the Chief Minister and whatever may have been said, for the record, has not been reflected in my question and I am sure that you would have called me to order if I had phrased any question in that way. All

I am saying is given the fact that the decision was taken in March is it that in February it was still undecided whether they were going to stop it or not? How long before the actual Legal Notice was that decision taken? It seems to have been sprung out of the blue on people.

MR SPEAKER:

One last answer.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the hon Member wants to know these things, given that he has no intention "of accepting the genuineness of my explanations and therefore I have no reason to suppose that he will treat with any more credibility anything further that I might say on this matter in relation to dates. Let him write to the Collector of Customs and let him satisfy himself directly from the Collector of Customs, if he trusts him, about the date when these decisions were made, how the decision was made, why the decision was made and where the driving force of this decision originated and perhaps he will believe the Collector of Customs when he is not willing to believe me, that is up to him, it is his problem not mine.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

On a point of order. I think I have to make clear the way he has presented this to the House as the hon Member insinuated that I went to London in February and met with a gold bullion dealer or a jeweller for that matter. Let me say that I represent a company called by the name of Sakata who have been trading in jewellery and gold for over 40 years. I have contacts in London to the tune of 40 or 50 people who deal with gold bullion, gold nuggets, gold jewellery. The rumour round town is that I went to London to obtain the agency for obtaining these nugget coins and that I was unsuccessful in doing so and therefore a decision was taken to put an import duty on this. Let me say that anybody, and as the Chief Minister has already pointed out, can buy any of these nuggets or any of these gold bullions in 350 establishments in London or in other places in the world. I do not need to seek any agency, one can get the agency for a specific brand of product but gold is a product that one can buy anywhere in the world, one can buy it in England, Italy, Spain. Therefore the insinuations that I went to London seeking to overturn an established business in Gibraltar and not being successful establishing an import duty in order to jeopardise the existing operator, is totally false and I do not accept it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Let me just say .....

MR SPEAKER:

No, on a personal explanation there is no debate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

He has raised it on a point of order and therefore he is defending himself against an accusation that I have not made and I have at least on every supplementary repeated that whatever story may be going round nothing that I have said contains a reference to any of those stories' but I am entitled to ask the kind of questions I have asked. What is the point of order?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

With respect, if you will indulge me, Mr Speaker, for 30 seconds. The hon Gentleman has got to be a little bit more sincere than that. *[Interruption]* Yes, he must be a bit more sincere than that. The hon Gentleman cannot say, "I have not formulated in expressed terms an allegation", but he has got to be honest. What he has done is made remarks calculated to cause listeners to believe that there is some suspicious nefarious connection between the Minister's business dealings and the decision made by the Government and I challenge the hon Member later to take a straw poll from anybody in this Chamber and ask, or anybody that has listened to this debate on the radio, and to ask how many of them did not draw that conclusion from his non-accusation.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think they probably will have drawn the accusation from the replies and not from the questions.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 274 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**LEGAL TENDER GOLD COINS**

Can Government explain the nature of the change introduced by Government Notice No. 340 on 26 March 1998 correcting Government Notice No. 319 which introduced the imposition of 6 per cent import duty for legal tender gold coins of a weight exceeding 1 oz on 19 March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

There are no changes to the content of Government Notice No. 319. Government Notice No. 319 was wrongly numbered and was subsequently re-issued as No. 340 of Gazette No. 3033.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 274 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government explain why it is No 340 says, "The public information notice on 19th March published as Government Notice No. 319 is corrected as follows" It does not say, "It is wrongly numbered and will be renumbered". It says, "Is corrected as follows" and there follows a text which is the same as the previous text except with a new date.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Except with a new date and a new number.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, a new number simply because between 319 and 340 presumably other notices came out.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As the hon Member thinks that there is some suspicious reason for that as well, he should also add this to his letter to the Collector of Customs who originated this issue and perhaps the explanation that I have given him, which is the same one that the Collector of Customs will give him, will strike a truer tone to him coming from the Collector of Customs than he obviously does coming from us.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister state in fact whether the original notice of the 19<sup>th</sup> March actually produced the imposition of the 6 per cent import duty which was stated in the notice?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I cannot but certainly the notice of 319 was not invalid simply because it had the wrong number on it. I think the decision to reprint it for the purposes of giving it a new number was simply to avoid confusion amongst those that might consult the law in the future. My understanding is that 319 remained valid until it was replaced. In other words, there was no interregnum, there was no change in commencement date.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister explain to me why it is that on the page of the Gazette, which is Gazette No. 3032 of 19<sup>th</sup> March in which Government Notice No. 319 appears, the next notice on that page is Government Notice No. 320 and that has not had the number changed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I cannot give him an explanation for that without notice. It is clear *[Interruption]* Yes, as to the page numbers and everything else. This is not a matter of Government policy. The Government did not make a policy decision to republish this Gazette. This was dealt with at an administrative level by officials and those that publish the Gazette and if the hon Member is really interested in those issues it can only be because he believes that somehow this explains his theory. Well, I will get for him this administrative information which I assure him will not support his theory so that his mind will be put at ease.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister does not have to imagine any motive simply because I ask him a question, I happen to read the Gazettes which perhaps not many people do and if I see a Government Notice which says that it is correcting something, I go and see what is being corrected and if I see that what is being corrected is identical to the correction, it seems to me a peculiar way of doing Government business, that is why I put the question to the House. And the Chief Minister in his answer said that if I did not believe the answer that he had just given me which is that the reason for the change was that the number 319 was wrong, it is not that I am quoting new pages, I am just telling him on which page 319 is in case he does not know where to find it, but the point that I am making is how is it that the number 319 is wrong, that the notice before that one is 318, that the notice after that one is 320 and that the only one that is wrong is 319 because he has put it in his answer that I do not believe him because I do not believe anything he says and I do not believe him simply because the answer that he has given me does not seem to tally with the facts. If the 319 was wrong, as he claims, one would expect that everything after 319 would also be wrong. There is no longer a 319, it has disappeared. Can the Chief Minister say whether in fact on the 19<sup>th</sup>, when the first notice came in, the Customs were already aware, as a result of this notice which he claimed was done administratively and the department did it, was aware that they had to levy the 6 per cent import duty on 1 kilo coins arriving from the 19<sup>th</sup>, were they aware of that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot answer that, my involvement in this matter has just simply not been to that degree. The fact of the matter is that the answer that he has had to Question No. 274 is the answer that officials have produced on the basis of the information that they have obtained from the department that initiated this administrative change. But I can assure hon Members that it has absolutely no connection with their suspicions in relation to the subject matter of the previous question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not saying that it has any connection with any suspicions or anything. I am trying to find an explanation to something that appears incorrect or peculiar and the explanation that has been given does not seem to tally with the facts as I know them. Is he not aware that there was an importation on the 20th and that duty was not put on because the Customs did not seem to know they were supposed to be putting duty and he claims that the duty was decided by the Customs. Is he not aware that gold came in on the 20th and was not levied import duty?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I am not aware. Clearly those that have briefed him in such detail have not briefed me in the same detail. The fact of the matter is that this is yet another example of the hon Member making insinuations and then withdrawing the hand. I cannot believe that the hon Member can be facetious to the point where he could ask this question about the reason for renumbering a Legal Notice which he can see does not change the text of the law one word immediately after asking a question on behalf of his clients in relation to gold coins and then have the temerity to stand up in the House to suggest that the two things are not connected. Well, if the two things are not connected I am surprised that the Leader of the Opposition cannot find better things to seek to hold the Government accountable for at Question Time than the reason for the renumbering of a Legal Notice.

MR SPEAKER:

One more question and one more answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I know the Minister for Employment is overjoyed by any remarks that his hero makes but it is not the fact that it is renumbered, it is the fact that to my knowledge in the history of import duty one has never had import duty imposed on one day and removed the next day and reimposed a week later, that is not a normal way in which people apply import duty. It seems as if the Legal notice imposing the duty was put in and that this was not something that was known to the people who ought to know about it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Who says that that has happened? The hon Member stands up, draws suppositions and assumptions from his interpretation of the facts and then we spend 45 minutes debating on the basis that it is the Gospel according to St Joseph. It is not, I am sitting here patiently listening to the hon Member draw one supposition upon the other and the fact that I sit here silently doing it does not mean that I am accepting the factual accuracy of what he is saying to me. He may be right, he may not be right but he cannot attribute to me from one answer to the next the consolidation of the fact of what he has surmised himself five minutes earlier. He is suggesting that there has been a suspension of import duty for one week. Well, there may or may not have been but it does not inevitably follow from anything that has arisen in this debate and it is certainly not something ..... [*HON J C PEREZ: The hon Member has said ....*]

MR SPEAKER:

No, you intervened because you allowed him to, so you finish what you were saying before and he will have the last word and that is the end.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It is not something that I surmised and this is not the Gospel according to St Joseph or even the Gospel according to St Peter because in fact St Peter seems to know very little about it, he cannot even write half a page on the subject never mind the Gospel. Reading the notice what I read is that Government Notice No. 319 - incidentally No. 339 was the potable toilet so it could not have been a different number of 319 and 339 - introduced duty on the 19<sup>th</sup> March. My information is that gold came after the 19<sup>th</sup> March duty free. Legal Notice No. 340 differs from the previous one not simply in the number, it just happened to be No. 340 because the last one before that was the potable toilets which was No. 339. What Legal Notice does is it repeals the imposition of duty on the 19<sup>th</sup> and reintroduces it on the 26<sup>th</sup>. Is it not the case that the persons affected by the duty were making representations to the Department of Trade and Industry on the 23<sup>rd</sup> because nobody knew on the 23<sup>rd</sup> that duty had been put on the 19<sup>th</sup>, not even the Minister? Is that not the case?

MR SPEAKER:

You have got the last word and that is the end.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Representations have been made but I can tell the House that the advice we have received from Customs is that the methodology employed in the context of the announcements made in the Gazette are entirely in accordance with normal practice. Indeed the suggestion made by the company in question, with which it is possible to sympathise at one level, applies to every other company. Import duties are not changed with prior notice to industries either here or in Britain or anywhere else in the world and all that has happened in this case, as far as I am personally

aware, is that there is one particular company and one particular import that has suffered the consequence of being caught at a time when an order was made when they were not aware of a Gazette imposing a duty. But that is exactly what happens to every single importer of a product between the time that it places an order and the time that it becomes aware of regulations that have been effected introducing import duty and the specific advice, that I have received from Customs which I must say I concur, is that it would not be good practice to actually inform the industry in advance of changes in duty.

MR SPEAKER:

That is the end, I said it before. Next question.



ORAL

NO. 275 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GIBRALTAR IDENTITY CARDS**

Can Government identify who is the Commissioner responsible for pursuing the complaint of October 1995 made by UK in respect of Spain's refusal to recognise Gibraltar's ID card?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 276 and 277 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 276 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GIBRALTAR IDENTITY CARDS**

Can Government confirm which Directorate of the European Commission has been dealing with the issue of the recognition of Gibraltar's ID card?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 275 and 277 of 1998.

NO. 277 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GIBRALTAR IDENTITY CARDS**

Can Government state the date on which the Commission first approached the member states to seek confirmation that they accepted Gibraltar ID cards as valid travel documents?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Commissioner is Mr Mario Monti and the Directorate is DG XV. The commission approached member states on 5 June 1996 seeking confirmation that they accepted Gibraltar's ID cards as valid travel documents.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 275, 276 AND 277 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is this information that has been provided to the Government by the United Kingdom recently, because, in fact, my recollection was that the previous date in which it was claimed the Commission had been first approached was in 1995?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The question does not ask for the date when the Commission was first approached. The question asks on what date the Commission first approached member states and therefore it is not surprising that the dates are different.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, the Commission then took a year to approach the member states between the date they were approached themselves, is that it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know whether it was a year or what because I do not have to hand the date upon which the Commission itself was first approached. The 5 June 1996 is the date upon which the Commission approached the member states, which is what the hon Member asked.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Chief Minister know, in fact, whether initially in 1996, the indications from member states, other than the neighbouring one, were that they were likely to accept the card? He must be aware that the initial reaction was that only Spain was likely to say no, does he have any information on that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not have any detailed information. I am aware that one country or perhaps even two, went so far as to confirm that they would accept it. But I think the position has been, that most of the member states have never actually responded to the Commission.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Chief Minister know when it was that Spain responded saying they would not accept it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I believe that information is available to me but not here. I think it is a date that is mentioned on some file.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I take it the Chief Minister is willing to provide me with the date when he has the time to fish it out?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If others have the time to fish it out yes, I do not intend to fish it out myself.

NO. 278 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**PROPOSALS BY SR MATUTES**

Have Government now received confirmation from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs that the Matutes proposals of 10 December 1997 have been formally rejected?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 278 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Have the Government received any indication whether it is intended to reject it after the end of the EU Presidency by the United Kingdom which, according to the Spaniards, is when they are expecting a reply from UK?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have not had any indication from the United Kingdom whether they will be rejected and, if so, when. I have however been assured by the Secretary of State, as has everybody else, that the formal rejection or not does not prejudice the fact that they are unacceptable to the United Kingdom Government if they are unacceptable to the people of Gibraltar. The people of Gibraltar through their Government have made it clear that it is unacceptable to them and therefore I have invited the Foreign Secretary to take the view that it follows from that that he ought to reject them, he has not done so and that is where the position rests.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it the position of the Chief Minister that he would not proceed with meeting Señor Matutes if the proposals are still on the table or is he willing to go ahead with the meeting even if they have not been rejected?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government, not being a member of the SDGG, have not drawn the connection that they have drawn and made publicly in one of their recent press releases.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Government, of course, are committed to self determination so I do not know why they are not members of the SDGG. I recommend to them that they join but that is not the question that I asked. I do not know what else he is a member of, he can be a member of the Yacht Club but I still would want to know whether he is going to see Matutes with the proposals on the table or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The position of the Government is that there is no direct connection between the rejection or not formally by Her Majesty's Government to the proposals and the willingness of the Government, my willingness to attend the talks with Señor Matutes but certainly the Government would prefer to see the proposals rejected and certainly it ought to be made clear that the Government are not willing to participate in discussions with Señor Matutes or anybody else for that matter, on the basis of a discussion of his proposals. In other words, any meeting would not be a discussion or a negotiation still less around this document although I suspect that in any meeting with Señor Matutes, he will want to raise his proposals and I of course will say to him in private what I have already said to him in public and that is that his proposals are not acceptable neither to the Government nor to the people of Gibraltar.

**GIBRALTAR**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**



**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**11<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER, 1998  
(Vol. I)**

**NO. 279 TO NO. 425**

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11<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September 1998 (Vol. I)

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ORAL

NO. 279 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of April?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287 and 288 of 1988.

ORAL

NO. 280 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of May?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 279, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287 and 288 of 1988.

NO. 281 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of June?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 279, 280, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287 and 288 of 1988.

ORAL

NO. 282 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of July?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 279, 280, 281, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287 and 288 of 1988.

ORAL

NO. 283 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS

Can Government state how many vocational cadets have terminated their employment with the ETB for the month of August?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 279, 280, 281, 282, 284, 285, 286, 287 and 288 of 1988.

ORAL

NO. 284 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of April?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 285, 286, 287 and 288 of 1988.

ORAL

NO. 285 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of May?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 286, 287 and 288 of 1988.



ORAL

NO. 286 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of June?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 287 and 288 of 1988.

ORAL

NO. 287 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of July?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286 and 288 of 1988.

NO. 288 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO

## ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS

Can Government state what was the total value of payments to vocational cadets for the month of August?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:

Vocational Cadets terminated:-

April	-	26
May	-	28
June	-	20

Value of Payments are:-

April:- £65,938 of which £32,397 correspond to Vocational Cadets proper and £33,540 to longer- term Ministry of Education Cadets.

May:- £61,708 of which £28,091 correspond to Vocational Cadets and £33,616 to Ministry of Education and Training.

June:- £61,712 of which £31,615 correspond to Vocational Cadets and £30,097 to Ministry of Education and Training.

With regard to Vocational Cadets terminated in July and August and Value of Payments in those months, the information will be provided at the end of the third quarter as stated Government policy.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287  
AND 288 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

This is a new Government policy is it?

HON J J NETTO:

This is a Government stated policy which I have repeated in the past and I am not going to be drawn into.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Minister may not want to answer any questions at all but he has not stated it in the past. In the past what he has stated was that he could not give us the figure for the unemployed on a month to month basis because that created blitz which distorted the picture. He has always given the figure for the vocational cadets on a monthly basis until now, this is the first time he has refused to do it so it is a new policy. What is the explanation, why does he not want to do it? Is it that he does not have the information?

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it not correct.....

MR SPEAKER:

The Minister has not answered so I can hardly allow you to ask another supplementary. But anyhow ask.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it not the case that the Chief Minister said in this House that the Government would answer any question that was put to them in the House?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will rise to that bait. The hon Member does not entirely correctly describe the Government's policy in answering questions which is that the Government want to answer as many of the Opposition's questions as possible, believe that we already do so in quite wholesome and generous terms compared to anything in Gibraltar's recent history in this House but that the Government are entitled to the policy as they have in the United Kingdom, for example, that statistics – whether they be statistics on waiting lists or statistics on unemployment or statistics on the cadet scheme or any other statistics – are published for either political or administrative reasons on a weekly, monthly or quarterly or annual basis, as is the case, for example, with the Tourism Survey. What the Government cannot commit ourselves to do is to give statistical information every time that the hon Members wish to ask the same question at Question Time. If Opposition Members feel that the decisions that the Government take as to the frequency with which we choose to publish statistics in any area should or could be reviewed, perhaps because the hon Members take the view that it would not be administratively burdensome to do so, the Government may take the hon Members views into account but might still, for political reasons, decide that certain types of information should be published in a structured way at certain regular intervals and that is a legitimate poise for the Government to take in Gibraltar as it is for Governments to take all over Europe. The only illegitimate decision for the Government to take is not to publish information at all or not to publish information except in such infrequent intervals that it becomes historical and really quite meaningless and we are much less further from that situation now than we have been in recent years.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister explain why it is that in this House they suddenly find that they are not willing or able to give information that they have been giving until now without any problem? It is information they have readily available presumably, it is not that the Minister is not able to tell us. He is able to tell us that 20 vocational cadets left in June but he is not able to tell us how many left in July. He does not want to tell us how many left in July although until now he has had no problem in doing it so what is the problem now?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think it follows that the Minister has taken the view that this information also, which he has given broken down by month in respect of April, May and June and the information in respect of July, August and September will be provided on a quarterly basis at the end of that quarter which is at the end of this month which will be at the next meeting of the House, that is implicit in the answer that he has had from the Minister.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, but when previously the decision was announced way back in October 1997 for the introduction of that policy and we asked why there was a need for it, we were given an explanation which reflected a rationale which was that fluctuations in the numbers of unemployed could be misinterpreted if not by us by others outside as indicating a trend in unemployment and that that was why they wanted to do it every quarter. They said that the rest to which this explanation did not apply would continue to be provided monthly. They are now going back on the commitment they gave us, why?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I think the hon Member cannot say that we are going back on any commitment. If commitment is the right word, it could only have been used in relation to the statistics then under discussion which were levels of unemployment, nothing to do with vocational cadets.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, this is the whole point. When we asked about the statistics other than the levels of unemployment the answer that was given recorded in Hansard in October 1997 was that the argument did not apply to those other statistics and that those other statistics would continue to be answered in the House if we put the question in the House and therefore what we do is we give notice and we put the questions. The information, I am sure, is something that he has there in front of him and he just refuses to give it.

MR SPEAKER:

If he does not give it, he does not give it. It is his prerogative. Next question.

NO. 289 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state how many work permits were issued for the month of May and how many of these were to new entrants broken down by nationalities and trade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 290, 291, 292, 293 and 302 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 290 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state how many work permits were issued for the month of June and how many of these were to new entrants broken down by nationalities and trade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 289, 291, 292, 293 and 302 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 291 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

ETB - WORK PERMITS

Can Government state how many work permits were issued for the month of July and how many of these were to new entrants broken down by nationalities and trade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 289, 290, 292, 293 and 302 of 1998.



ORAL

NO. 292 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state how many work permits were issued for the month of August and how many of these were to new entrants broken down by nationalities and trade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 289, 290, 291, 293 and 302 of 1998.

NO. 293 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state out of the 33 work permits given in March how many were to new entrants broken down by nationalities and trade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 289, 290, 291, 292 and 302 of 1998.

NO. 294 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many of the 205 vacancies filled in March by Gibraltarians were for jobs at:-

- (a) Cammell Laird
- (b) in the Bottling Plant

and in each case how many were taken up by persons then registered at the ETB as unemployed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question No. 295 of 1998.

NO. 295 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO

## ETB - VACANCIES AT CAMELL LAIRD

Can Government state how many of the 10 vacancies opened by Cammell Laird on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1998, were filled by Gibraltarians and how many by others giving nationalities and trade?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The Government do not think that it is appropriate or fair to habitually discuss across the floor of the House, and therefore publish, the commercial affairs of individual private sector employers in Gibraltar. However, given the importance of the ship repairing operations to the economy, I am willing to give this information to the hon Member privately and in confidence.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 294 AND 295 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Does that also mean Question No. 294 because No. 294 I have raised because the Minister invited me to put a question in the House so that he could answer?

HON J J NETTO:

I am sorry, I do not understand the point the Opposition Member is trying to make.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I shall put the question again. Does the answer he has just given me that he is prepared to give it to me privately also apply to Question No. 294? That question has been put by me because in a previous House in a supplementary the Minister said that he would be willing to answer that question if I were to give him notice.

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, I am prepared to give the information to Question No. 294 with the caveat or qualification that if it does not mean a disproportionate amount of effort by my staff at the ETB. Provided that that is not the case he will get the information.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The point that we are making is that when we raised a question previously in the course of supplementaries my hon Colleague asked this question and the response from the Minister was that he needed notice in order to be able to provide the answer. That happened six months ago, we have now given him notice so he has had the notice he wanted. Has he not got the information now, is that what he is telling us?

HON J J NETTO:

No, what I am saying is that I will provide the information privately and confidentially.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But the last time he did not say that, the last time he said if we gave him notice he would provide it in the House. The Minister chose to quote these two companies in a Government press release dated the 17<sup>th</sup> April in which he said that the fall in trend is a result of new business coming into Gibraltar, namely, Cammell Laird and the Bottling Plant and the fall in trend was the fact that there was shown in the published statement, at the time, that there was in the month of March, 205 Gibraltarians employed. What we are doing is asking a supplementary because he made it public in a Government press release.

MR SPEAKER:

What the Minister is telling you is that he will give it to you privately.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The Minister has just told me he is prepared to give it to me privately and confidentially so it is something I will not be able to use, so what I want to clarify from the Minister is how many persons were registered in the ETB as unemployed, is that also going to be classified as confidential?

HON J J NETTO:

I have to say to the Opposition Members that under Standing Orders section 15 says, "Any question addressed to the Chief Minister, a Minister or an ex officio Member shall relate to the public affairs with which he is officially connected or to a matter of administration for which the Government is responsible". The truth of the matter is that I am not officially connected to Cammell Laird or responsible for the operation or expansion of Cammell Laird other than the bilateral meetings that both my colleagues in the ETB and I have in terms of maximising employment opportunities and business opportunities in Cammell Laird for their success and for the success of the economy of Gibraltar. So in relation to that, I think that the question put to me is improper and illegitimate.

MR SPEAKER:

It is within Standing Rules and it is also within Standing Rules that he does not reply and says he will give it in confidence, you have got to accept that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not that the Government do not want the Opposition Members to have the information, they have been offered it privately and I know that the information has been given in the past but, of course, if questions about particular employers are going to be asked repeatedly at repeated meetings of the House we will find ourselves debating, let us put it in the context of some other company, if the hon Members were to start questioning the Government about the employment policies of C Caruana Ltd across the street, it would become a debate about the affairs of a particular listed

company. Government understand that the economic importance to Gibraltar of the Cammell Laird operation is significant and therefore it is legitimate for Opposition Members to seek to wish to keep that situation monitored and controlled and to enable the hon Members to do that the Government are willing to give them the information. The Government believe that it would not be right to debate the affairs of particular employers across the floor in a focused way, hon Members may not agree with it but at least let them understand what the Government's position is.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Chief Minister not realise that in fact the distinction that he has made is totally inapplicable in this case? Is it that he missed out when I gave the original explanation for the question of the supplementary? We asked this question before following a Government press release and if the Government say in a press release, "The following trend of unemployment is due to Cammell Laird and the Bottling Plant" we are entitled, I would have thought, to check the accuracy of that statement. If there have been 205 people employed in March and the Government issued a statement in April saying, "The drop of unemployment in March is because of Cammell Laird and the Bottling Plant" we would like to know how many of the 205 were employed there. That is simply following on an invitation from the Government to seek further information because they chose to include it in their statement. When we put the question in the House originally, nobody told us, "We are not answering because it is confidential" nor did the Minister then tell us last April that it was illegitimate to put the question, what he told us was that we had to give him notice. We have given him notice five months later, he has had five months to prepare the answer because we have put the question before. It seems to us that to tell us five months after he promised to answer it that he has now come to the conclusion that it is illegitimate or that it is commercial in confidence, well then I suggest that if the Government consider that identifying employers is commercial in confidence, they should not be putting it in Government press releases. We are only seeking it in response to a statement from the Government that the change in the employment level in the first quarter of 1998 which only happened in March, there was a change of one person between January and February from 599 to 598 and the figure dropped in March and if the indications from the department that the Minister had presumably when this press release was prepared was that the explanation for the change was the Bottling Plant and Cammell Laird, it seems to us a legitimate question to try and find out to what degree those two employers affected the figures.

MR SPEAKER:

Just one second. It is a legitimate question, similarly it is legitimate for the Minister to say, "I will give you the information in confidence".

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I think it is entirely legitimate and proper that the hon Members should ask the Government for information to enable them to assess the extent to which public statements made by the Government are accurate. But, of course, for that purpose the information does not have to be given publicly across the floor of the House. If we offer to give the hon Members the information to them privately, I agree that the in confidence part may be an unnecessary stricture but if we give the information to the hon Members privately it just as well allows them to use it for the purposes of assessing the accuracy of previous Government statements. The Government's position in relation to this matter is based on not wishing to bandy about names of particular

employers in questions and answers across the floor of the House. It is implicit in the Government's answer, the Minister has said that he is willing to give the hon Members the information privately and in confidence, the in confidence is not intended to suggest that if when they get it they find that it confirms that the Government's statement is inaccurate they cannot do anything about it, I would be very happy to clarify that for the hon Member here now. It is really a question of the root for the provision of information rather than whether or not the information is provided or the use that hon Members can make of it when they get it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I welcome that further clarification but, of course, the Minister must realise that we have given notice because that is what we were invited to do the last time we asked.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I have been given the same answer before in this House that I will be provided with the information and I have never had any information coming from the Minister. Will he guarantee this time that he will provide the information that I have asked in these questions?

HON J J NETTO:

The hon Member knows that, as he usually phones up the staff of the ETB to provide the information, he can definitely phone me and tell me that I have not given him a particular answer to a question that he desired, it is as simple as that.

NO. 296 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 1**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, subhead 1 – Major Remedial Works and Repairs to Housing Stock for the month of April 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 297, 298, 299 and 300 of 1998.



ORAL

NO. 297 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 1**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, subhead 1 – Major Remedial Works and Repairs to Housing Stock for the month of May 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 296, 298, 299 and 300 of 1998.

NO. 298 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 1**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, subhead 1 – Major Remedial Works and Repairs to Housing Stock for the month of June 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 296, 297, 299 and 300 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 299 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 1**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, subhead 1 – Major Remedial Works and Repairs to Housing Stock for the month of July 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 296, 297, 298 and 300 of 1998.

NO. 300 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 1**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, subhead 1 – Major Remedial Works and Repairs to Housing Stock for the month of August 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:-

April	-	Nil expenditure
May	-	£19,899 (Replacement of windows)
June	-	£ 9,147 (Replacement of windows)
July	-	£25,452 (Replacement of windows)
August	-	£ 9,261 (Replacement of windows)

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 296, 297, 298, 299 AND 300 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The money that he has just told us he has spent for the different months, does it only involve materials used for those projects or does it involve something else?

HON J J NETTO:

Well, to the extent that I am aware it is for materials but it could well be, and I could find out for the hon Member, because it is not just providing the window or the frame itself but actually placing them in the particular flat. That may also have to be borne in mind but I am not quite sure, I can definitely find out for the hon Member.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I do not know if he has the information but is it that this money has only been spent by Buildings and Works or is it that some of this money has also been given to private firms?

HON J J NETTO:

I understand, subject to finding out, that all the money is contracted out to a particular manufacturer that provides for the replacement of windows. I believe that to be the case.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Could the Minister provide me with the information at a later date if he has not got it here?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the implication of the answer, in fact, that from this subhead, major remedial works, nothing is being done other than replacement of windows by a contractor? That is the only thing that is being charged to this head?

HON J J NETTO:

No, the one thing that Opposition Members have to bear in mind is that indeed the money allocated under Head 101, subhead 1, is not only for the replacement of windows, there are many other projects. This financial year has different people within Buildings and Works, the Design Support Services have actually been preparing various tender documents and some of them we hope will commence very soon. I am referring to things like the project in Calpe Road, in MacFarlane, Willis's and Anderson House. There are indeed some other tender documents which have already been published in the Chronicle and which the Central and Procurement Unit will award shortly and work will commence and obviously the money allocated under that particular allocation will come from there.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In the first five months of the financial year there has been no money spent on remedial works other than replacing windows, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

That is correct, from that particular subhead.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would it then be reasonable, even if the Minister considers it to be a hypothetical question, that the £1.3 million is not going to be spent in the remaining seven months?

HON J J NETTO:

Well, yes, it could be hypothetical but I do believe that either we will spend it or we will come very close to spending it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Whether it will have been spent in the sense of actually paid out, it will certainly have been committed, I cannot say whether the work will have progressed. For example, the projects at the Calpe area, Anderson, Willis's and MacFarlane blocks, that work has already gone out to tender and it is about to be allocated and we expect the works to commence soon and then payment will be rapidly thereafter. Whether it will all be finished in time for the end of this financial year I could not say.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I suppose that the Minister has spent money on repairs on maintenance from the other vote which he was referring to which is under the Buildings and Works vote, can I ask him from subhead 1, I suppose that expenditure like the hire of scaffolding and things like that will also come out from there. Can I ask him also if any payment of bonuses or anything will be coming out from that money or will that money be only for materials or the hiring or the contracting out of whatever works the department intend to do?

HON J J NETTO:

I think it depends. If one brings an issue such as scaffolding I would assume that under the tender document for that particular project it would come under that allocation amongst many other items that would need to be carried out in that project. But, of course, just the same as there will be payment for scaffolding under Head 101, subhead 1, for the project at Calpe Road, does not necessarily mean that scaffolding to finish Alameda Estate will come from the vote that the hon Member was referring to before.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that none of the work that it is intended to do under this subhead will be done by direct labour? Is it all intended to be done by contractors, under Head 101, subhead 1?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is the intention.

ORAL

NO. 301 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - HOTEL WORKERS - WAGES**

Can Government state whether there is a statutory wage for hotel workers other than the national minimum wage?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

There is no statutory wage for hotel workers other than the standard minimum wage.

NO. 302 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state how many work permits were issued for the month of April and how many of these were to new entrants broken down by nationalities and trade?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

It is Government policy to provide information for the previous quarter therefore, Question Nos. 291 and 292 will be answered after the end of September 1998.

March 1998: There were 33 work permits issued of which seven were new. Breakdown by nationality and trades are as follows:

Swiss	2	-	1 manager & 1 administrator
Pakistani	1	-	medical
South African	1	-	medical
Malaysian	3	-	professional

April 1998: There were 27 work permits issued 11 of which were new. Breakdown by nationality and trades are as follows:

Malaysian	3	-	1 administration & 2 professionals
American (USA)	1	-	professional
Canadian	1	-	professional
Indian	4	-	1 manager & 3 directors
Norwegian	1	-	director
Chinese	1	-	professional

May 1998: There were 40 work permits issued of which 16 were new. Breakdown by nationality and trades are as follows:

Indian	8	-	4 directors, 2 managers, 1 accountant and 1 domestic
Brazilian	1	-	domestic
Malaysian	2	-	professional
Dominican Republic	1	-	manager
American (USA)	1	-	manager
Chinese	1	-	professional
British (Overseas)	2	-	professional

June 1998: There were 19 work permits issued three of which were new. Breakdown by nationality and trades are as follows:

Swiss	1	-	manager
Polish	1	-	professional
American (USA)	1	-	professional



SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 289, 290, 291, 292, 293 AND 302 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, the directors that have been given work permits, are these treated as self-employed permits or are they work permits as employees?

HON J J NETTO:

I could not give him an answer right now but I can definitely find out if he wishes to know and provide him with the information.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot give the answer either but they should be treated as employees because that is the status of a director in legal terms. I do not know how it is actually being done administratively, they ought to be as employees.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can we obtain confirmation?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

What I find surprising is that in one of the cases, one of the Indians given a work permit was for domestic employment, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

That is the information provided to me, yes.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I can understand that for directors and obviously for administrative officers work permits are given because obviously the company requires those persons as employees of those companies to do business in Gibraltar. Is it the policy of the Government also to issue work permits to domestics when that employment could be available to someone locally?

HON J J NETTO:

The answer is that it would not be the policy of the Government except, of course, if there is some extenuating circumstances which I will need to find out if that is what the hon Member so wishes me to look into.

NO. 303 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VACANCIES - HOTEL INDUSTRY**

Can Government state how many vacancies have been opened with the ETB for employment by the hotel industry in October 1997 giving a breakdown by job title of each vacancy?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 304 and 305 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 304 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many vacancies were opened at the ETB in the month of July 1998 with a breakdown by trade and how many vacancies were filled showing the trade and nationality of the persons employed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 303 and 305 of 1998.

NO. 305 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many vacancies were opened at the ETB in the month of August 1998 with a breakdown by trade and how many vacancies were filled showing the trade and nationality of the persons employed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

It is Government policy to provide information for the previous quarter, therefore, Question Nos. 304 and 305 will be answered after the end of September 1998.

The reply to Question No. 303 is as follows:-

There were four vacancies opened in the hotel industry, three of which were filled by Gibraltarians and one by a Spaniard in October 1997.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 303, 304 AND 305 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

He has not given us the job title, has he got the information?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, the hon Member is correct, he did ask for the job title and the information is not provided, so I will have to provide it.

ORAL

NO. 306 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**VARYL BEGG ESTATE - GARAGES**

Can Government state what will be the cost of the garages that are being constructed at Varyl Begg Estate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 307 and 308 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 307 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**VARYL BEGG ESTATE - GARAGES**

Can Government state when they expect the garages at Varyl Begg Estate to be completed and when they will be ready to be handed over to purchasers?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 306 and 308 of 1998.

NO. 308 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**VARYL BEGG ESTATE - GARAGES**

Have all the garages being constructed at Varyl Begg Estate been sold to tenants of the Estate?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:

The construction cost of the garages is £94,243. The garages have been completed, final snagging will be carried out in the next few weeks, and handed over soon.

All the garages at the Varyl Begg Estate have been sold to tenants of the Estate, in consultation with the Varyl Begg Estate Tenants Association.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 306, 307 AND 308 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

I know that they have been sold in consultation but have they all been sold to tenants of Varyl Begg Estate? Can the Minister tell me why it is that he can give me the breakdown of the cost of the garages today and he could not give it to me in writing according to a letter that he had when I asked him, at the last meeting of the House, to give me a breakdown between the cost of the garages and the cost of other remedial works in the Estate and he said, in the House, he could provide it in private and then he wrote to me and he said he could not provide it. What is it that has miraculously changed the Minister's position?

HON J J NETTO:

I cannot give him an answer because I cannot recall the background to that. But to the other part of his supplementary question, yes my understanding is that all the garages have been sold to tenants of the Estate in very much close consultation with the Varyl Begg Tenants Association. I believe, and I do not know whether this question has been triggered by the fact that it appears that in one of the garages sold to a tenant of the Estate it is being used by his son-in-law who is not a resident of the Estate. That is the background information that has been provided by the department.

HON J C PEREZ:

Now that the garages are completed, will the Minister now look at the other issue arising from this which is the use of the car park where the tenants have continuously been making the point that the car park should be for the exclusive use of the tenants of the Estate and not for the use of other Estates where parking is already being provided and would the Minister say what progress is being made towards this?

HON J J NETTO:

This is a question which the hon Member has asked in the past. I know that parking spaces have been marked throughout the Estate, I know that there is a consultation process between the department and the Varyl Begg Tenants Association, I know that flip posts for the open car park area which the hon Member is alluding to are being purchased, I know that there will be a period in which they will start installing them and he is right in his assertion that it would be for the use of the tenants of the Estate.

HON J C PEREZ:

Coming back to the lock-up garages. Can the Minister state whether once the purchase is complete owners can then resell those garages to people outside the Estate or is there a mechanism that if they move house or they no longer have a car, for example, they sell the garage back to the Government for an agreed price and the Government resell it to a tenant in the Estate?

HON J J NETTO:

I am afraid that I cannot give an answer to that hypothetical question, he would definitely have to give me notice but I would have to say that the role of Buildings and Works Department is to provide the work to be carried out, either in-house or contracted out, and once that is done it is not a matter for Buildings and Works, it is a matter for housing as being the landlords to pursue with Land Property Services but, of course, in terms of the information if he wants I can try and find the information from them.

HON J C PEREZ:

Yes, I would like the information if the Minister could provide it.



ORAL

NO. 309 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - PRE-WAR FLATS**

How many pre-war housing units allocated have been given to successful housing applicants on the "do it yourself basis" broken down for each month since the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1998 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question No. 312 of 1998.

NO. 310 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - POST-WAR FLATS**

How many post-war housing units allocated have been given to successful housing applicants on the "do it yourself basis" broken down for each month since the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1998 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question No. 311 of 1998.

NO. 311 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**HOUSING - POST-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many post-war housing units have been allocated since 24<sup>th</sup> April 1998 broken down for each month up to the end of August 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Twenty-four post-war flats have been allocated since 24<sup>th</sup> April 1998 to the end of August 1998.

The monthly allocation of flats is as follows:

May	9
June	1
July	4
August	10

This total of 24 flats allocated includes 19 that have been allocated on a "do it yourself" basis. The monthly breakdown of flats allocated on a "do it yourself" basis is as follows:

May	8
June	1
July	3
August	7

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 310 AND 311 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

On the "do it yourself" basis I suppose that these are people who have been allocated according to the housing waiting list and if any of them have refused it would not have been given to the second one down, is that the policy of the Government?

HON H CORBY:

The people who have been offered these flats were eager to get the flat and were prepared to do it themselves, they were allocated on the list and they took advantage of doing it themselves in order not to wait for Buildings and Works to do it.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it the policy of the Government that if somebody is offered a flat and he says that he is prepared to wait it is not offered to somebody else in the waiting list, who might be lower than he is, on a "do it yourself" basis, is that the policy of the Government?

HON H CORBY:

No, the policy of the Government is if the person is allocated the flat and he is prepared to wait the time lapse that Buildings and Works take to refurbish it will not be given to somebody else down on the list. If he is willing to wait and it takes six months, well it takes six months and he is then given the flat.

NO. 312 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - PRE-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many pre-war flats have been allocated since 24<sup>th</sup> April 1998 broken down for each month up to the end of August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Five pre-war flats have been allocated since 24<sup>th</sup> April 1998 to the end of August 1998. The monthly allocation of flats is as follows:

May - 2; June - 1; July - 2

This total of five flats allocated includes two that have been allocated on a "do it yourself" basis. The monthly breakdown of flats allocated on a "do it yourself" basis is as follows:

May - 1; June - 1

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 309 AND 312 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Are these the flats that have been offered or have there been more flats offered and the only thing is they have not been allocated because they have been refused?

HON H CORBY:

No, these flats were available in a fit state. As the hon Member knows the Government have now contracted out pre-war flats and I am told by Buildings and Works that the refurbishment of 10 pre-war flats, there is a programme for it and they will be refurbished by the end of the year. Once they have finished this the contracting out will offer the possibility of another five being offered.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I am grateful for that information but I think the Minister has misunderstood what I asked. The Minister has given me a breakdown of the allocated flats for May, June and July. Could he say if there have been other flats offered which housing applicants have refused?

HON H CORBY:

No applicants have refused any, those were given and accepted. There were no other flats offered and rejected.

ORAL

NO. 313 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - POST-WAR FLATS**

Can Government state how many post-war flats are at present vacant and in which areas?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There are 36 post-war flats vacant. Of these, 16 are in the north district, 19 in the town area and four in the south district.

NO. 314 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

HOUSING -- APPLICATIONS

Can Government state how many housing applicants there are in the housing pre-list broken down by room requirements?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There are presently 210 applicants on the housing pre-list. This can be broken down into room requirements as follows:

1 RKB	107
2 RKB	29
3 RKB	42
4 RKB	30
5 RKB	2
6 RKB	Nil

NO. 315 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**HOUSING - APPLICATIONS**

Can Government state how many housing applicants are medically recommended broken down by rooms requirement and their medical category recommendations?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There are 23 housing applicants that are medically recommended. This can be broken down by medical category and room requirement as follows:

## Medical Category A

1 RKB	1
4 RKB	3
5 RKB	1

## Medical Category B

1 RKB	3
2 RKB	1
3 RKB	2
4 RKB	4

## Medical Category C

2 RKB	3
3 RKB	2
4 RKB	1
5 RKB	1
6 RKB	1

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 315 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Apart from the question am I also correct that the Housing Medical Advisory Board may also recommend points to people?

HON H CORBY:

That is correct.



NO. 316 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - PENSIONERS**

Can Government state how many applicants are in the housing pensioner exchange list?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There are 334 applicants on the pensioner exchange list.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 316 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Are the 334 all pensioners who live in Government accommodation?

HON H CORBY:

No, there are some who do not live in Government accommodation, very few of them are in private accommodation, but at times when they moved in they were young and nothing has been done by the landlords and then we have got to take into consideration those aspects of pensioners who want an exchange and due to the character of the building we take that into account as well.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Therefore, even though those in Government accommodation might be returning to Government bigger accommodation in some cases, in others it might be that they are moving from area to area, I suppose one can say that once an allocation is given under the pensioners scheme it does not necessarily mean that the Government will be getting a flat back, is that correct?

HON H CORBY:

In some cases we do not get a flat back. I have got some who want to go down to Edinburgh House who are housed in private accommodation. The purpose of that is that most of the people being housed in that housing area will release big flats because they are in high rise flats in other parts of town like Calpe and due to their age they cannot come frequently to town for groceries, et cetera. At times we do put people into Government accommodation from reports from Buildings and Works and we do not get a flat back.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Minister confirm that to be considered on the pensioners exchange list, the person must be 60 or over?

HON H CORBY:

Usually a pensioner is 60 and over and most of them request flats in lower areas.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Am I also correct then that the age, in a husband and wife, if one is 60 or over then they could be considered as pensioner even though the other spouse might be 20 or 25, is that correct?

HON H CORBY:

It is considered on the pensioner and his requirements.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that if there is no release of accommodation back to the Government it is not really an exchange, it is allocation? If in fact in the cases of the private landlord the property is not available to the Government it is really an allocation and not an exchange, does that not require some amendment to the rules on Housing Allocation to take account of that?

HON H CORBY:

No, because usually when a person lives in a dilapidated flat we can decant as such from one place to another. If the private flats are in such a bad state that we receive reports that we must reallocate these persons, they are done on the decanting system which the Minister has the power to do.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

In any case, is it not also correct that in most cases many of them are medically recommended?

HON H CORBY:

Yes, that is correct.

NO. 317 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - APPLICATIONS**

Can Government state how many housing applicants are socially recommended and how many of these are classified as homeless?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There are 77 applicants who have received a social categorisation. Presently there is no applicant who is classified as homeless.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 317 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Out of the 77, are there any who are at the moment allocated in the Devil's Tower Hostel?

HON H CORBY:

I have not got that information with me. In cases that we have received of people being homeless which we have investigated, there were none homeless, they were trying to jump the waiting list so we investigated those cases and we found out that they were living either with a common-law wife or with parents or with friends, there was even one renting an apartment in Both Worlds.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

That is why I am asking, I understand the problems that the Minister has given and I understand them quite well. I am asking because at one time, mostly men who were single and in most cases out of work, and I suppose the Minister actually carried on with the policy in putting them in the Devil's Tower Hostel and those up to a certain point, even though they were not homeless by the mere fact that we had to put them in the Hostel they were considered to be homeless for all intents and purposes, is that the case? How many of those persons who fall under that category are in the Hostel?

HON H CORBY:

I would have to give that information to him as soon as I get it.

ORAL

NO. 318 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Can Government state on how many occasions each month did the Housing Advisory Committee meet from 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to the end of December 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 319 and 320 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 319 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Can Government state on how many occasions each month did the Housing Advisory Committee meet from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 to the end of December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 318 and 320 of 1998.

NO. 320 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Can Government state since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998, on how many occasions each month has the Housing Advisory Committee met to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Housing Advisory Committee has met a total of 23 times for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to date.

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1996, it met once a month for the months of June, September, October, November and December.

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997, it met once a month for the months of January, February, March, April, May, July and December. It also met twice during the months of September and October.

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, it met once a month for the months of January to July.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 318, 319 AND 320 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

This is an Advisory Committee, do they not advise the Housing Allocation Committee which is the Committee under the Housing (Special Powers) Ordinance, am I correct?

HON H CORBY:

Yes, that is correct.

ORAL

NO. 321 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING ALLOCATION COMMITTEE**

Can Government state on how many occasions each month did the Housing Allocation Committee meet from 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to the end of December 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 322 and 323 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 322 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING ALLOCATION COMMITTEE**

Can Government state on how many occasions each month did the Housing Allocation Committee meet from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 to the end of December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 321 and 323 of 1998.



NO. 323 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING ALLOCATION COMMITTEE**

Can Government state since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998 on how many occasions each month has the Housing Allocation Committee met to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Housing Allocation Committee has met a total of 28 times for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to date.

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1996 it met once in June and twice a month for the months of October, November and December.

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997 it met once a month for the months of January, February, April, May, June, July, September, November and December. It also met twice during the month of March.

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 it met twice a month during the months of January, March and June. It met once a month during the months of February, April, May and August.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 321, 322 AND 323 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is there any correlation between the Housing Advisory Committee meetings and the Housing Allocation Committee meetings? If one is the adviser of the other and seeing that one is an advisory committee on social cases and the other one is the one that makes the decision, how is it that they both work together?

HON H CORBY:

As the hon Member knows the Committees are independent bodies, they are not employed by the Housing Agency. Members have their own job responsibilities but endeavour to meet usually on a monthly basis. There are times that for reasons that are evident, people are on leave, work commitments, which dictates when they meet; it is the availability of the people who are in the committee but we normally encourage them to meet once a month like the other committees.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Under the Housing (Special Powers) Ordinance "the Committee" is the Housing Allocation Committee and under its umbrella it has two advisory committees. I am not disputing the times that they meet, what I am asking the Minister is if there is any connection because even though they both meet once a month and the other one meets twice a month, if the time is not correct for procedures to go from the Housing

Advisory Committee to the Housing Allocation Committee, is there any procedure which will expedite any problems that somebody might have socially which is recommended by the Social Committee and goes to the Housing Allocation Committee? Do they work together or does it not make any difference because once a month could be that one meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, for example, and the other one meets on the 31<sup>st</sup> December. If the Housing Allocation Committee meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> January and the other one on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, there is no specific date when they meet. Once a month could be any day of that month, is that correct?

HON H CORBY:

I take the hon Member's point and they do work in conjunction one with the other because one is social and the other is medical and they have to take the recommendations on board. I would tell the hon Member that whenever there is a very serious case or an urgent case they do meet more than once a month and I make it a point that they are all together and there are extraordinary meetings if the case warrants it.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

But is it not also correct that it is the Government's responsibility as the appointees of the committee that if the committee is not functioning they can very well replace those members by somebody else?

HON H CORBY:

That is the case but at the moment there is no indication of that. The Minister is quite capable of assessing the committees and if they are not working well he can actually appoint somebody else.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

What I am saying is that up to that point the Government still have the responsibility that the committee must function, not to interfere in the allocation but it is a Government responsibility

HON H CORBY:

Yes, it is.

ORAL

NO. 324 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD**

Can Government state on how many occasions each month did the Housing Medical Advisory Board meet from 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to the end of December 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 325 and 326 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 325 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD**

Can Government state on how many occasions each month did the Housing Medical Advisory Board meet from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 to the end of December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 324 and 326 of 1998.

NO. 326 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD**

Can Government state since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998 on how many occasions each month has the Housing Medical Advisory Board met to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Medical Advisory Committee has met a total of 19 times for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to date.

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 1996 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1996 it met once a month during the months of June, September, November and December.

During the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1997 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997 it met once a month for the months of January to July and October to December.

For the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 it met once a month for the months of January to May.

NO. 327 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HOUSING - WAITING LIST**

Can Government state at what intervals the publication of the housing waiting list takes place?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The housing waiting lists are published on a quarterly basis.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 327 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Are those the lists for that quarter that the Housing Allocation Committee consider when it is allocating housing for applicants?

HON H CORBY:

The Housing Committees have up-to-date computerised lists when they are assessing requirements. The posting of the waiting lists have been done in accordance with what was the practice for years now, even when the private company was there we have had no complaints that it is on a quarterly basis. The members that sit on the Allocation Committee have the up-to-date list and not the lists that are posted.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Then it is correct that the lists that are published might be outdated the next day because there is fluctation as the Minister has said?

HON H CORBY:

Of course they will and they will be outdated a week after that and another week after that but then we would have to post lists on a daily basis.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

No, I only wanted this cleared because I have explained things to people who have come to see me exactly the same as the Minister has said but that having the list it appears that somebody says, "Somebody has jumped me" and it does not necessarily follow because the Housing Allocation Committee, quite rightly, in my opinion, go by the updated lists at that particular time of allocation and is that the procedure that is being followed?

HON H CORBY:

That is correct.

NO. 328 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females not previously in employment as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) Non-Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 329, 330, 331 and 332 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 329 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females not previously in employment as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998, broken down as follows:-

(a) Gibraltarians

(b) Non-Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 328, 330, 331 and 332 of 1998.



NO. 330 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females not previously in employment as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) Non-Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 328, 329, 331 and 332 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 331 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females not previously in employment as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) Non-Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 328, 329, 330 and 332 of 1998.

NO. 332 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females not previously in employment as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) Non-Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The information requested is not available. However, I can provide details of the total number of social insurance cards issued to males and females not previously in employment from April to August 1998. These figures are as follows:

	<u>Gibraltarian</u>		<u>Others</u>		
	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
April	18	16	49	9	92
May	11	15	29	15	70
June	46	40	17	7	110
July	71	51	31	20	173
August	35	32	22	9	98

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 328, 329, 330, 331 AND 332 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

Can the Minister clarify whether these are persons who were not previously in employment?

HON H CORBY:

That is correct. When the hon Member asks for insurance cards in issue we take the total of all the persons but there are no monthly statistics for that. I can give him the new ones but not the total. For example, I join Barclays Bank and then from Barclays Bank I have a mastercard in issue so if I left Barclays Bank and joined Saccone and Speed it is just reported in the mastercard and in order to give that information we would have to go through all the mastercards. If we want somebody who is 18 then I have to do the same operation. It is only at the end of the year those things are collated for statistics and planning forward. But previously the hon Member has asked "issued" and he now says "in issue", in issue encumbers the whole of Gibraltar insofar as social security is concerned. That is why I have not got the information because it would be as cumbersome to give him that and time wasting and the hon Member might have a purpose for it but it would entail a lot of work and we cannot do that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

We just want to be sure that we have understood the answer correctly. These are newly issued cards for each month?

HON H CORBY:

That is correct.

NO. 333 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state how many social insurance cards were in issue to males and females as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Other EU nationals
- (f) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 334, 335, 336 and 337 of 1998.

NO. 334 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state how many social insurance cards were in issue to males and females as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Other EU nationals
- (f) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 333, 335, 336 and 337 of 1998.

NO. 335 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state how many social insurance cards were in issue to males and females as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Other EU nationals
- (f) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 333, 334, 336 and 337 of 1998.

NO. 336 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state how many social insurance cards were in issue to males and females as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Other EU nationals
- (f) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 333, 334, 335 and 337 of 1998.



NO. 337 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state how many social insurance cards were in issue to males and females as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Other EU nationals
- (f) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The information requested is not available. However, I can provide the hon Member with the last figures available of the insured population. I can confirm that as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997 there were 12,410 insurance cards and it is broken down as follows:

		<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Gibraltar and UK nationals	-	6269	4264
Others	-	1428	449

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 333, 334, 335, 336 AND 337 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

The only information which the Minister can provide is just a global figure and not broken down?

HON H CORBY:

That is the figure as at the end of 1997 when the department collates all the figures. I have the figures here as at the end of 1997 and if the hon Member wants a copy he can have it and we will do the same in 1998.

HON R MOR:

I would be grateful if that information could be made available.

NO. 338 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of April 1998, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 339, 340, 341 and 342 of 1998.

NO. 339 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of May 1998, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 338, 340, 341 and 342 of 1998.

NO. 340 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of June 1998, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 338, 339, 341 and 342 of 1998.

NO. 341 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of July 1998, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question Nos. 338, 339, 340 and 342 of 1998.

NO. 342 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - UNEMPLOYED GIBRALTARIANS**

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over at the end of August 1998, receiving:

- (a) Unemployment benefit
- (b) Social assistance
- (c) No payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:

April 1998:

There were 29 males and 18 females receiving Unemployment Benefit, 111 males and 64 females receiving Social Assistance and 99 males and 113 females receiving no payment.

May 1998:

There were 17 males and 24 females receiving Unemployment Benefit, 104 males and 53 females receiving Social Assistance and 88 males and 102 females receiving no payment.

June 1998:

There were 23 males and 14 females receiving Unemployment Benefit, 106 males and 42 females receiving Social Assistance and 107 males and 122 females receiving no payment.

Information as regards July and August 1998 will be provided at the end of the third quarter as per Government's policy.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 338, 339, 340, 341 AND 342 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister explain why he feels there is a need to apply the same policy in respect of benefits which on the last occasion was not covered by the same policy?

HON J J NETTO:

This, I believe, has been answered before in previous questions.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, he has not answered because I have not asked the question before. I am asking why he feels there is a need to extend it to this which was not previously extended. The last occasion he treated this information differently and said he was willing to continue to give it on a monthly basis. I have not asked him why he is doing on a quarterly basis because he did not tell us before until now. Why does he feel he needs to do it for this as well having been willing to treat this different previously?

HON J J NETTO:

I feel I have answered the question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What is the answer? What is the answer why he feels now he has to extend it to this and before he was happy not to extend it to it?

MR SPEAKER:

There is no need for him to answer if he does not want.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If he does not want to answer he does not have to answer but what he cannot do is not answer and say he has.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer is that the Government are now publishing information and are going to publish increasing amounts of information on a structured basis to get away from a situation where information is only put in the public domain when and if the Opposition ask questions. The Government are structuring the publication of information on a structured periodical basis. There are some people who might like the information issued weekly or monthly or quarterly and indeed judging by people who visit the Opposition Spokesman for Housing to which he helpfully gives what I think is a responsible answer, they think that the housing waiting list should be published daily. I said before, if Opposition Members want to make a case for Government's automatic publication of information to be more regular than what the Government have decided, the Government are willing to consider but what the Government cannot do is having geared up the administrative machinery to produce information at whatever interval, whether in some issues monthly, in other issues quarterly, in other issues it is yearly, then on top of that get the administrative system to produce the information as at every week or every month that the Opposition Members decide because then the Government machinery would not have a structured publication of information. That is the answer to the hon Member's question as to why the regime is now extended to these two new areas. It forms part of the structuring of the publication of information which historically has never been automatically published. From now on it will be automatically published as happens in the United Kingdom and information of this sort will be published as a matter of routine by the Ministry concerned.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But surely the Chief Minister understands that it is a matter for the Government to decide what they publish as a matter of routine but the effect of what they intend to publish as a matter of routine seems to be that they are now refusing to provide what they have provided for the last two years in this House and when the policy was introduced we were given two explanations. One explanation was that the purpose of producing quarterly averages was not to produce distortion when these things are not going to be averages, it is not that we are going to be given..... *[Interruption]* No, but if the Chief Minister cares to go back and look at the matter when it was raised and he gave an explanation in the House and I raised the question of the benefits, his reply was, "The question of the benefits has nothing to do with the unemployment statistics and therefore different considerations apply. We are not refusing to provide the information provided the Opposition give notice they will get the information". Surely, it is difficult for us to understand why it is that people in the department would need to wait till October to count the people receiving benefits in July, they must know already. The Minister has that information already, it is just that he wants to make us wait until October because he wants to publish in October rather than provide it in the House. We cannot prevent that but, in fact, it is not what we were promised previously, they are going back on the commitment that the Minister gave previously but as far as his policy was concerned they wanted to give us answers to the questions if we gave them sufficient notice as required by the rules and that is what we have been doing. I could understand if we were asking them to produce the information in a way which they were not already doing and asking them to introduce a new system his argument would apply but surely he must accept that if the information is going to be published in October all that can happen in October is that what they already know at the end of July and they already know at the end of August and they already know at the end of September, will be published in one piece of paper. We are not asking them to take on any extra administrative burden. What is there to prevent the answer being given now? He has got the information.

MR SPEAKER:

If he does not want to give it. Next question.



NO. 343 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females under 18 years of age as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 344, 345, 346 and 347 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 344 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females under 18 years of age as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 343, 345, 346 and 347 of 1998.

NO. 345 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females under 18 years of age as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 343, 344, 346 and 347 of 1998.

NO. 346 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females under 18 years of age as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 343, 344, 345 and 347 of 1998.

NO. 347 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to males and females under 18 years of age as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

As stated before this is not available, however, I can provide the hon Member with the latest figures available which have been extracted from our annual statistics of the original population. I can confirm that as at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997, there were 213 persons under 18 years of age insured in Gibraltar broken down as follows:

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Gibraltar and UK nationals	146	62
Others	4	1

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 343, 344, 345, 346 AND 347 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

Can the Minister provide the information as to the others, what specific nationalities they are?

HON H CORBY:

I have not got that with me but I will provide the hon Member with the information that he has requested.

HON R MOR:

I would be grateful.

ORAL

NO. 348 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998, to males and females who work under 15 hours per week broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 349, 350, 351 and 352 of 1998.

NO. 349 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998, to males and females who work under 15 hours per week broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 348, 350, 351 and 352 of 1998.

NO. 350 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, to males and females who work under 15 hours per week broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 348, 349, 351 and 352 of 1998.



NO. 351 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998, to males and females who work under 15 hours per week broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 348, 349, 350 and 352 of 1998.

NO. 352 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, to males and females who work under 15 hours per week broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Moroccan nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The information requested is not available and I cannot give the hon Member any more information.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 348, 349, 350, 351 AND 352 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

What the Minister is indicating is that the information cannot be made available.

HON H CORBY:

Not readily available because I would have to go through all the records again. He is asking "in issue" again on the number of people who work 15 hours, I would have to look at every record to see who works 15 hours or less.

HON R MOR:

On whatever registration is done, is it not true that the contribution rate would be different?

HON H CORBY:

No, I am afraid the hon Member is mistaken. In order to give him that information I have to go through mastercards because we are talking again 'in issue' and that is the whole of the population of Gibraltar and I have to go through every one in order to give the information requested by the hon Member.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say of the grand total for December 1997, which he has provided of 11,962 in answer to the previous question, can he say whether in fact persons who do not pay the full social insurance because they work under 15 hours would be included as part of that 11,962?

HON H CORBY:

I have not got that information with me but I will certainly pass it on to the hon Member if that is the case. I am sure it is not but I want to give an accurate answer to the hon Member and I will get it and give him the information.

NO. 353 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SELF-EMPLOYED INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers classified as self-employed as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 354, 355, 356 and 357 of 1998.

NO. 354 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SELF-EMPLOYED INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers classified as self-employed as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 353, 355, 356 and 357 of 1998.

NO. 355 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SELF-EMPLOYED INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers classified as self-employed as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 353, 354, 356 and 357 of 1998.

NO. 356 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SELF-EMPLOYED INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers classified as self-employed as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 353, 354, 355 and 357 of 1998.

NO. 357 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - SELF-EMPLOYED INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers classified as self-employed as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Non-EU nationals?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers classified as self-employed is broken down as follows:-

	<b>April</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>June</b>	<b>July</b>	<b>August</b>
(a) Gibraltarians	1	1	1	1	2
(b) UK nationals	24	24	24	24	24
(c) Spanish nationals	16	17	17	17	17
(d) Other EU nationals	1	1	1	1	1
(e) Non EU nationals	1	1	1	1	1



NO. 358 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURANCE CARDS - FRONTIER WORKERS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 359, 360, 361 and 362 of 1998.

NO. 359 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURANCE CARDS - FRONTIER WORKERS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 358, 360, 361 and 362 of 1998.

NO. 360 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURANCE CARDS - FRONTIER WORKERS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 358, 359, 361 and 362 of 1998.

NO. 361 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURANCE CARDS - FRONTIER WORKERS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 358, 359, 360 and 362 of 1998.

NO. 362 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURANCE CARDS - FRONTIER WORKERS**

Can Government state what was the total number of social insurance cards in issue to male and female frontier workers as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, broken down as follows:-

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) UK nationals
- (c) Spanish nationals
- (d) Other EU nationals
- (e) Others?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The information requested in respect of the months of April to July 1998 is not available as records are not kept on a monthly basis.

However, the details available as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 are as follows:-

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
(a) & (b) Gibraltarian & UK nationals	237	156
(c) Spanish nationals	687	247
(d) Other EU nationals	24	17
(e) Others	1	1

NO. 363 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the number of social insurance cards in issue on 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997, which have been renewed as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, in respect of:

- (a) Gibraltarians (males and females)
- (b) Non-Gibraltarians (males and females)?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There were 12,410 social insurance cards in issue as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997, of these 448 have not yet been renewed. They are as follows:-

	Male	Female	Total
Gibraltar/British nationals	188	167	355
Other nationalities	44	49	<u>93</u>
			<u>448</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 363 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figure of 12,410 which the Minister said are the cards in issue in December 1997 or should that be December 1996?

HON H CORBY:

1997.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then the table he has provided us says that the cards in issue at the end of December 1997 was 11,962 which is, in fact, the figure arrived by deducting the 448 from the 12,410. There seems to be a contradiction between the two. If it is 1996 the Minister can confirm it and then we know how to interpret the information. Perhaps the Minister can check whether, in fact, what this implies is that during the course of 1997 there were cards issued and the numbers in issue at the end of December are the ones that have been returned since January presumably and that is where the 11,962 come in.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That sounds right but we would just like to check.

NO. 364 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - OPEN/CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what transfers have been made from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund to the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving the amounts and the month of each transfer?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The transfers made from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund to the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund by month is as follows:

December 1997	£425,000
January 1998	£600,000
February 1998	£750,000
March 1998	£1,000,000
April 1998	£350,000
May 1998	£800,000
June 1998	£800,000
July 1998	£800,000
August 1998	<u>£800,000</u>
	<u>£6,325,000</u>

ORAL

NO. 365 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state in which month this year the balance in the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund was reduced to zero?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The local pensions element of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund had a nil balance during December 1997.



NO. 366 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the number of pensioners being paid or with entitlement to payment on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998, from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving a breakdown of pre-1969 Spanish pensions and locally funded pensions showing the number of Gibraltarians/UK nationals, Moroccans and other nationalities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 367, 368, 369 and 370 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 367 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the number of pensioners being paid or with entitlement to payment on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998, from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving a breakdown of pre-1969 Spanish pensions and locally funded pensions showing the number of Gibraltarians/UK nationals, Moroccans and other nationalities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 366, 368, 369 and 370 of 1998.

NO. 368 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the number of pensioners being paid or with entitlement to payment on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving a breakdown of pre-1969 Spanish pensions and locally funded pensions showing the number of Gibraltarians/UK nationals, Moroccans and other nationalities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 366, 367, 369 and 370 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 369 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the number of pensioners being paid or with entitlement to payment on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998, from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving a breakdown of pre-1969 Spanish pensions and locally funded pensions showing the number of Gibraltarians/UK nationals, Moroccans and other nationalities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 366, 367, 368 and 370 of 1998.

NO. 370 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the number of pensioners being paid or with entitlement to payment on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving a breakdown of pre-1969 Spanish pensions and locally funded pensions showing the number of Gibraltarians/UK nationals, Moroccans and other nationalities?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The following pensioners were in receipt of payments from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund from April to August 1998:-

	<u>APRIL</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUNE</u>	<u>JULY</u>	<u>AUGUST</u>
Pre-1969 Spanish pensioners	8809	8796	8797	8796	8881
British pensioners (Gib & UK Nationals)	4683	4691	4704	4720	4713
Moroccan Pensioners	889	895	910	922	919
Other nationalities	<u>248</u>	<u>248</u>	<u>249</u>	<u>253</u>	<u>256</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>14629</u></b>	<b><u>14630</u></b>	<b><u>14660</u></b>	<b><u>14691</u></b>	<b><u>14769</u></b>

ORAL

NO. 371 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998, showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 372, 373, 374 and 375 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 372 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998, showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 371, 373, 374 and 375 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 373 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 371, 372, 374 and 375 of 1998.



ORAL

NO. 374 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998, showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 371, 372, 373 and 375 of 1998.

NO. 375 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED LONG-TERM BENEFITS FUND**

Can Government state what was the balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund as at 30 April 1998, 31 May 1998, 30 June 1998, 31 July 1998 and 31 August 1998, showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds is as follows:

	<u>30 April 98</u>	<u>31 May 98</u>	<u>30 Jun 98</u>	<u>31 Jul 98</u>	<u>31 Aug 98</u>	<u>Total</u>
Opening Balance	£550,327	£358,628	£515,720	£525,941	£282,464	
Receipts from O.D.A	£880,000	£550,000	£610,000	£800,000	£330,000	£3,170,000
Other Receipts	£3,700	£3,179	£8,477	£14,733	£6,405	£36,494
Spanish Pensions	£559,157	£408,882	£622,164	£1,059,776	£475,587	£3,125,566
Local Pensions	£866,242	£787,205	£786,092	£798,434	£774,734	£4,012,707
Transfers from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund	£350,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000	£800,000	£3,550,000
Closing Balance	£358,628	£515,720	£525,941	£282,464	£168,548	

ORAL

NO. 376 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**PRISON - NUMBER OF INMATES**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians and other different nationalities held in prison on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 377, 378, 379 and 380 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 377 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**PRISON - NUMBER OF INMATES**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians and other different nationalities held in prison on the 31<sup>st</sup> May 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 376, 378, 379 and 380 of 1998.

NO. 378 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**PRISON - NUMBER OF INMATES**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians and other different nationalities held in prison on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 376, 377, 379 and 380 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 379 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**PRISON - NUMBER OF INMATES**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians and other different nationalities held in prison on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 376, 377, 378 and 380 of 1998.

NO. 380 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**PRISON - NUMBER OF INMATES**

Can Government state what was the number of Gibraltarians and other different nationalities held in prison on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The number of inmates currently in custody by nationality is as follows:-

	<u>30.04.98</u>	<u>31.05.98</u>	<u>30.06.98</u>	<u>31.07.98</u>	<u>31.08.98</u>
British (local)	16	18	15	14	14
British (UK)	2	2	2	3	1
Spanish	12	8	8	8	7
Moroccan	6	5	5	11	10
French	1	1	1	1	1
Italian	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>35</b>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 376, 377, 378, 379 AND 380 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

Is there any specific reason for having such a high number of Moroccans in July?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The specific reason is that the courts have sentenced them to custodial.....

HON R MOR:

My interest was perhaps whether they might have been illegal immigrants?

HON H CORBY:

No, they are not illegal immigrants; most of the Moroccan inmates in prison are drug related.

NO. 381 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**SCHOOL OF TOURISM**

Will Government state how many applicants there have been for the 20 places available at the School of Tourism?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

There have been 36 applicants to fill the 20 positions available in the first intake.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 381 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Needless to say, without detracting from what is really a laudable policy on the part of Government to wish to attract youngsters into the hotel industry, I would ask the Minister whether he is actually happy with the response taking into consideration that these are meant to be initial steps on a much longer span of training to be provided at Bleak House?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Obviously one is never satisfied with the results that one achieves in any initiative but, in principle, I would say that I am happy with the 36 applications considering that after the closing date for applications another 12 applications came through which have not been considered in this particular intake. But as a second intake takes place in 18 weeks time these may be considered subsequently. So I think with time the interest expressed by young Gibraltarians to be able to consider a one year training in the hotel industry is something that is moving in the right direction.

HON J J GABAY:

I rather disagree with the Minister in respect of that interpretation. Since we are institutionalising training and this is the important point, perhaps the Government should have researched fully not only the actual demand but the prospective demand because it comes to mind, of course, that – and this will be part of another question later on but related in a way to this one – as to whether it might not have been advisable to arrange for such a limited number to have their education in the hotel industry abroad instead of having it locally unless he is really quite convinced that the demand is going to be there. I also appreciate the fact that the Minister has actually advertised and campaigned on this field and, again, I think this is very acceptable and commendable but I have certain doubts as to whether we should have taken such an important expensive step, I presume, when only 36 candidates have applied for the 20 places available.



HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, can the Minister give us the breakdown of the 36 applicants male and female and can he say whether they are all in fact school leavers? There is an age limit, is there, in the applications?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, initially we were targetting the age group of 18 to 25. The split up, to be honest, I could not give exact figures but I have been told that there are slightly more males than there are females but it is very near the 60:40 ratio.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are they school leavers?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Some of them are school leavers, some of them have been unemployed for two or three years, some of them are finishing their studies at school and have opted out to go into training in the hotel industry but some of them are school leavers, yes.

HON A J ISOLA:

What system is going to be put in place to select the 20 from the 36?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The initial interviews took place earlier this week. There was a selection board composed of a representative of Julie Sibley and Associates, the Product Manager of the Gibraltar Tourist Board, a representative from the Hotel Association and two members from the Education Department, one from Bayside and one from Westside in order to have a good background as to the sort of candidates that had applied especially those who are school leavers. Interviews have now taken place and we are waiting to see what the outcome of those interviews have been.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Following from what the Minister has said, I suppose that the interviewers will be looking at the character of the person because if I remember correctly, and he can correct me if I am wrong, he said that no academic qualification was required. What is it that the interviewer will be looking from the people that they are going to interview?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct, there would not be any minimum academic qualification to be considered for a post at the School of Tourism but the interviewing board were basically looking for the attitude of the applicant and the enthusiasm of wanting to move into this particular industry.

NO. 382 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

### **HOTEL TRAINING COURSES**

Will Government specify what qualification will be obtained by trainees on the successful completion of the hotel training courses?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

There will be two types of qualifications: those which are internationally recognised and internal certificates. We analysed the international qualifications before. These will be basically in three disciplines - Waiting, Housekeeping and Chef.

The original intention was to offer these three qualifications to NVQ Levels 1 and 2. An alternative international qualification, the City and Guilds International Certificate, is now available and an evaluation is presently being conducted of which of the two international qualifications should be offered by the School.

In addition to these international qualifications, there will also be internal certificates which will be based on –

Basic Certificate from the Wine and Spirit Education Trust; Basic Food Hygiene Certificate; the Julia Sibley and Associates Customer Care Certificate; the Julia Sibley and Associates Selling Skills Certificate; and the Diploma from the Gibraltar School of Tourism.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 382 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Again moving into the direction of questions later on as to the expenses incurred upon the taxpayer in institutionalising these courses locally, was it not possible in a way for the Government to enter into some sort of contractual arrangement with the hotels so that at least some percentage of these youngsters who enrol in the courses might have some guarantee of a job at the end of it all otherwise we might be adding a further element of disgruntled youngsters onto the unemployment market or perhaps educating for export. So I think it is not an unreasonable suggestion to make that perhaps some sort of positive understanding might have been reached with the hotels. I think some of the comments made by the Hotel Association casts some doubt as to the availability of jobs for them since they related it to a growth in tourism, which we would all like to see but, of course, which is not a certainty.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have to say that I do not think it is an unreasonable suggestion as the hon Member puts. The fact of the matter is that one cannot directly link training with job creation, it is true that one should seek to train people to prepare them for the jobs that one judges that the economy is going to throw up for them possibly in the future but the idea that

one does not train people unless and until one is sure that one has guaranteed employment for them is not a viable way to proceed. Here is an industry in which Gibraltarians have traditionally been under-represented, we believe precisely because, amongst other reasons, they have not had the necessary skills and therefore the hon Member is right when he says that this is an investment by the Government. It is indeed an investment by the Government, it is an investment in training for the people of Gibraltar who are interested in taking this training opportunity, others may be more interested in taking other training opportunities. The Government invest in training opportunities, as we do, in scholarships to send people to university. We do not say to people before we give them a scholarship to go to university, "Well, I am not going to send you off to study marine biology until I find an employer who is guaranteed to employ you when you come back." The view that the Government take, training and relearning is a right that people have and that Government should do what we can, which is not due to lack of resources as other larger countries with more resources might be able to do, but that we do what we can within the resources that we have, to give people the opportunity to acquire additional skills, preferably with qualifications attached, that makes them better able to sell their services when the opportunity arises. As it happens, we think because we are confident in the prospects for success of our tourism potential and the likely success of the Government's tourism policy, although it is not guaranteed, but we believe that given the confidence that we have in Gibraltar's future in tourism, it is not an unwise investment to make in offering training opportunities to people in that amongst other sectors. The Government are working in partnership with the private sector, as the hon Member says, but not to extract from them cast iron guarantees of employment but rather as part of the delivery of the training course. The vast majority of the training course involves placement with hotels and the Government much hope and indeed have an expectation that when those placements come to an end employers will be interested in retaining the services of people in whose training they have had an input. But if the hon Member demands the criteria of guarantee of a permanent employment at the end, certainly this scheme does not deliver it and I really do not think training schemes deliver that guarantee anywhere in Western Europe.

HON J J GABAY:

I share naturally, and I think we all do, some of the views expressed by the Chief Minister, and I realise as well that the Hotel Association would be obviously very reluctant to enter into some sort of contractual arrangement which is global in respect of all the future graduates of the school. But as an encouragement, I think, to future applicants I do not feel that it is an unnecessary or a difficult imposition of the Hotel Association to guarantee at least a small number, otherwise we may find that at the end of the course, if they have not got new jobs for them, it is certainly not going to be an encouragement for others to apply and at the same time we will be landed with a whole expensive structure which might well collapse. I do not want to be a prophet of doom because I would like to see its success, of course.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, obviously the Government will not miss every opportunity to encourage – he may interpret the word "encourage" as he likes – but we will certainly be encouraging hotels, especially hotels that have been the recipients of assistance from the Government in other respects, to take these people on as many of them as possible but, of course, there is a difference between encouraging and obliging them to do so. As to the permanence of the Tourism School, of course it may well be that this is not a Tourism

School, these are tourism courses operated at an institution, this is a general training institution and of course we will not continue to provide tourism courses year in year out once the natural market has been satisfied but we are a long way away from that and given the relatively low incidence of Gibraltarians involved in management of hotels and at all levels of the industry, I think that there is scope for the Tourism School concept to run for several years before that could be saturated and we shall have to monitor the caution that the hon Member has mentioned. We shall have to ensure that there is indeed a reasonable level of take-up of the products and output in this institution to justify it continuing in future years. Obviously the Government intend to do that as well as encourage hotels to prefer locals. In the past when we have tried to encourage them to prefer locals they have always come back with the answer that the locals have not got enough expertise, that they are not trained and this is an answer to that. Now we are going to do that, let us see what answer they come up with then.

HON J J GABAY:

As an extension really of what we have been saying on that, I was wondering whether the Minister has had an opportunity to cost the per capita expense per trainee for a year's course in this hotel industry study and whether he has had the opportunity to compare that per capita cost with the possible cost of having similar training abroad? That would be an interesting indication as to the wisdom of the way we are spending our money in this field.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is not the view that the Government have taken. The fact of the matter is that having the training abroad automatically excludes from access to it, individuals who due to family circumstances cannot just relocate themselves away from Gibraltar and therefore there are people who would wish to do this if they can do it in Gibraltar but would not wish to uproot themselves to go to England to do the course. Secondly, it is very much on-the-job training, in other words, there is movement in and out between hotel placement and the actual academic – whatever the technical jargon is – the classroom part of the course and that would become much harder to co-ordinate, if not impossible to co-ordinate. Thirdly, the Government will insist on keeping a close supervisory control of this to make sure that there is genuine training being delivered and that this does not just become some sort of cheap labour option for the hotels and, of course, the Government could not supervise this from abroad. On the whole and given what the cost structure is, (a) we do not think there would be a terrible great saving in sending all these people abroad as opposed to what we envisage this will cost, (b) there is almost other reasons why we think these training opportunities should be offered locally and, (c) many of the costs will be shared with other courses that will be run from that same building, sort of a central administrative sense and that would spread out the cost over many other courses that the Government will hope to offer, this one just being the first as tourism-related one. So on balance, although we do access the UK as the hon Member knows for many aspects of our educational products, I think that in training no one has said to the Government, "Well, why is the Construction Training Centre located in Gibraltar? Would it not be cheaper to send the 20 youngsters who are in the Construction Training Centre which costs several hundred thousand pounds a year to run, would it not be cheaper to put them all in an aeroplane and pack them off to Hartlepool?" That is not the view that I think Governments take,

either this one or indeed the previous one, about vocational training of this sort and I think on balance and I hope that on reflection the hon Member will agree that whatever merit there might be to his view, on balance the better view is that we should, where possible, provide these facilities within Gibraltar for all the reasons that I have explained.

HON J J GABAY:

No doubt time will tell and, as I say, I do not want to forecast any doom but time will tell how viable the scheme will turn out to be. I would not share, of course, the comparison between the hotel industry and construction. I think we are all aware that the fact that there are certain international standards with regard to the hotel industry which are extremely important and needless to say, trainees from Gibraltar getting experience, also direct experience in foreign hotels could be very much part of an excellent training in this field which is obviously something that they will miss. With regard to placement I think we have a specific question on it.

HON J L BADLACHINO:

The Minister for Tourism, if I heard him correctly said that at this stage they did not know whether they were going for NVQ qualification or they might go for City and Guilds, is that correct?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Originally we were going to go for NVQ Levels 1 and 2 but in subsequent discussions last month we were given an alternative of being able to go for the City and Guilds International Certificate and this is another option which we are considering. Basically the courses and the actual training is basically the same, it is just the final presentation as to who will eventually issue the certificates and a decision will be taken before the course starts on the 21<sup>st</sup> September.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I would understand that on the level of academic qualifications, probably they are similar or they have the same standing within the hotel industry but there is a difference on applying the different systems. For example, is it not correct that for an NVQ one needs internal verifiers, assessors, external verifiers? I am asking this because seeing that this is going to start this month, they have to have all these things in place if they do not go for the NVQ 1. Is that the consideration that the Minister is taking in weighing one with the other?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Both options actually function in the same way. Let me tell the hon Gentleman that the hotel industry, as it stands today in Gibraltar, does have suitably qualified people at managerial level who are able to carry out the necessary supervision and necessary examination. In addition to that we will be having external tutors and examiners who will be coming out from Julia Sibley and Associates to monitor and examine the trainees as they approach the different levels throughout the first year. But let me say that we are dealing with a small number of people, 20 people is not a big number to deal with, firstly, and secondly, a one year course covering such a wide range of basic training in

the hotel industry is not a massive amount of specialisation that will be accredited in one year. The standards at NVQ level 1 and level 2 are quite basic in the initial stages. Once the first year is over and they wish to move on to level 2 or level 3, then the situation changes completely.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that everybody will be trained to be a waiter, housekeeper and a chef or are people going to be deciding between the three options that the Minister has mentioned?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

My understanding is that there will be basic training being given in waiting, housekeeping and in becoming a chef and then after that comes the area of specialisation where then the trainees will start to branch off depending on what areas they feel they would like to work in. It is not a matter of everybody becoming a chef but everybody will have some basic training as to what happens in a kitchen.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the chef part of it may be simply learning to peel potatoes or wash pots and pans, is that the kind of level?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member may not be aware that that is what happens in the hotel industry. The hotel management course in the United Kingdom involves people starting at the bottom and one starts as the bellboy and by the time one gets to hotel management one will have worked on a dirty one's hands basis in every department of the hotel and that is the basis of the training for hotel management in the United Kingdom generally. That is exactly the case.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, I am well aware that that is the case, in fact the managers that we have got in Gibraltar in hotels started off precisely like that and they worked their way up not by going to school and getting qualifications but in fact by getting a job as a bellboy. I am aware that that is the system that presumably the School of Tourism is not intended to be emulating that. What we are doing, presumably from the information that has been provided, is seeking to provide people who will be able to apply for vacancies as waiters because at the moment they cannot apply because they are inexperienced or unqualified, is that not the case?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Let me say that each individual trainee before applying has been given a package of literature for them to consider and read through and in that literature there is a 52 week programme which basically gives details of exactly what they will be doing during those 52 weeks. If the hon Member wants I could go through the 52 weeks but let me say that in addition, for example, in the first week of doing the basic induction course, weeks two to six they will be doing purchasing, stores, linen room, house portage, maintenance and then they will move back to the school and then return back to the hotel and do room service, restaurant, grill rooms, bars, et cetera. Then they will move

in to week 18 to 29 when they will be in the kitchen, possibly peeling potatoes as the hon Member has rightly pointed out. Then they will be back to the school again and then returning back to the hotel on weeks 32 to 43 when they will be doing housekeeping. Towards the end of the course, on weeks 46 to 52, they will be in the front office, reception, cashier and reservation. So therefore within those 52 weeks programme they will have achieved a basic knowledge of most of the departments that actually run a hotel.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that it is an NVQ 1, for example, if it is decided that that is what is going to be provided at the end, in housekeeping, kitchen work and waiting, because he mentioned those three in particular or is it that there is an NVQ 1 in hotel work?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

My understanding is that they will be achieving NVQ level 1 and 2 depending on the skill and the potential of the individual candidate in the three basic categories of waiting, housekeeping and chef. If they do housekeeping they are covering purchasing, stores, linen room, house portering, maintenance, what I have given is a more detailed analysis of these three particular headings. But everything that I have gone through in these 52 weeks come under these three headings so they will be getting qualifications at NVQ level in these three particular categories or areas of specialisation.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So what they get is three NVQs, not one NVQ for the three things, is that correct?

HON DR B A LINARES:

If one wants an umbrella qualification for the NVQ and name a label, it is hotel, catering and hospitality and that covers a whole range of elements within that which is basic food hygiene, basic wine and spirit, housekeeping, customer care, selling skills, wine butler certificate and diploma from the Gibraltar School of Tourism. So those are the elements that make up the one NVQ which is labelled hotel, catering and hospitality and it is validated and accredited by the City and Guilds International Certificate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think perhaps then we have been misled by the original answer which said that they will get NVQ qualifications in waiting, housekeeping and chefs. In fact they will all come out with the same certificate then and the certificate will have that title?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON A J ISOLA:

The Minister intimated that at the end of year one there was an option for trainees to take it further in any of these specific areas. Is that the case? Does a trainee who does his first year course have the ability to say, "I want to stay for a second year now" and to increase his accreditation or his certificate?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

This option will not become available until the end of the first year because within the year all they can achieve is an NVQ level 2. Once that option becomes available we will be considering throughout the course of this year whether we are going to take this forward depending on the level of interest that there is in trainees taking their studies further.

HON A J ISOLA:

So at the moment, as far as the trainees are concerned, the only thing on offer is the certificate that the Minister has just referred to? There is no, at this stage, question of any of these trainees being able to take a second year if they want to, that will come later?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The option will be considered at the end of the first year.



NO. 383 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**HOTEL TRAINING COURSES**

Will Government inform the House whether students attending the hotel training course will be in the employment of the Employment and Training Board?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Yes.

NO. 384 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**HOTEL TRAINING COURSES**

Will Government state how much is going to be paid to trainees in the hotel training course?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government will pay trainees in the Hotel School programme similar allowances as per other Government training programmes, such as in the Construction Centre. The rates are as follows:

<b>AGE GROUP</b>	<b>TRAINING ALLOWANCE PER MONTH</b>
15 to 16	£227
17+	£254
18+	£330
19+	£356

Government are presently considering increasing these allowances.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 384 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact the rates are the vocational cadet rates that are currently being paid and that everybody else gets? Could he further clarify, when the Minister is talking about the possibility of increasing it, is he talking about increasing it for everybody or just for the people in the School of Tourism?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct and obviously we are looking at increasing it across the board.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact the statement that was made by the representative of his department in an interview that what they would be getting would be pocket money was incorrect, it was misleading, we are not talking about pocket money?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am sorry, could he repeat that question again?

HON J J BOSSANO;

Yes, when there was some concern being expressed about the lack of response there was an interview with a representative of his department who said on television that people might not know that they would be getting pocket money if they went to the School, that was in fact a misleading description, what they will be getting is the kind of pay that trainees are getting in any other field?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

NO. 385 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

### HOTEL TRAINING COURSES

Can Government state, in respect of the one-year training course for the hotel industry, how much time the trainees are to spend at school and how much time attached to a hotel?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The students will spend five weeks in the school, 44 weeks in hotels and three weeks on holiday.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 385 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I think one needs to be concerned with the question of the amount of time to be spent actually working in hotels because as the Chief Minister pointed out earlier on, there is always a danger of a placement in an hotel being converted into some sort of cheap labour. I believe in the interview given by Julia Sibley she said that they would be monitored by hotel managers and the School's monitor. As we all know, hotel general managers are very busy people and I cannot imagine them spending much time with these trainees. Therefore the question is, is the Minister satisfied that the School has the right person as a monitor with the required amount of time to literally supervise their work and to see that it has an educative purpose and not merely time-consuming chores of very little educational value?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Let me start by saying that the programme that has been worked out for this particular course follows very much in line with similar courses in the UK. The split between what time they spend in schools and in hotels follows the trend in most UK hotel training programmes. So there is nothing special or different in this particular course to raise any alarm. I also want to inform the hon Gentleman that these courses need to have internal verifiers and these internal verifiers are members of the hotel staff who have to verify that certain work is being done by these trainees according to the training programme that is specified by the school. Obviously there will be a monitor who will be monitoring not just the performance and work of these trainees, but verifying that the verifiers are undertaking their scrutiny of ensuring that these trainees are being trained. So that is basically the structure that will be in place and follows very much the trend in all hotel training courses.

HON J J GABAY:

Will the work required of the monitor be full-time employment or is it just a casual visit now and again? How is the time supervision to be divided?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, the monitor will be full-time employment and will form part of the staff at Bleak House undertaking training under the Ministry for Education and Training.

HON J J GABAY:

In a Chronicle interview Mrs Julia Sibley indicated there could be interchange with UK hotels, is this to form part of the present course for the duration of the year or is this some aspiration for the future?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That comment was probably made as a result of one of my meetings with her where I intimated the fact that it is some times wise may be to send some of these trainees for a short period of time to an hotel abroad and seeing that she does similar work in the UK and has similar programmes, that we could interchange in that we would have some of the Uk trainees coming out to Gibraltar for a few weeks to see what they could learn locally and we in turn could do likewise. It is something of a proposal that may be considered but it definitely cannot be considered at an early stage because there is no point in sending a trainee in his initial stages of his training programme but later on in the year that could be a possibility.

HON J J GABAY:

In the Minister's comments a minute ago he said there was nothing really dramatically different about the course, it was really the standard course provided in the UK and yet in her interview, again, Mrs Julia Sibley said that this was a condensed version of a course she had run for training at the Savoy Hotel, which is of course very impressive, and that the whole thing had been condensed to one year. So I would have thought there was something really very special about it and not simply what is standard in most courses in the UK, could he comment on that?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

What I think Mrs Sibley must have been referring to was the fact that in the UK training programmes of the Savoy group are quite extensive and on-going and this had been tailor-made on a training programme for 20 individuals initially as a first intake, considering the size and considering the fact that they would not be training just in one specific hotel but would be training in a number of hotels and therefore one cannot compare possible training in a four star hotel to a two star hotel which is something that will happen in Gibraltar but does not happen in the UK. So there are some local tailor-made parts of the course in order to meet local requirements.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The Minister has said there are certain things which have been tailor-made to meet local requirements but obviously as the Minister for Education explained what is the NVQ 1, for example, the Minister mentioned three headings which obviously are modules within that specific NVQ which have to be covered. By having a modification has he had confirmation from the authority, in this case it might be the hotel industry in the UK, that that will be acceptable once they are given those qualifications? If they are

doing an adjustment, is it based well above what is normally required for that NVQ 1 and then it has nothing to do with the qualification they are going to get but if there are certain modifications, has the Minister got clarification that that modification will, at the end of the day, cover the qualification?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, the whole concept of NVQs as the hon Member knows is very much to make training as realistic and as down to earth as possible, as meeting the real demands and the real needs of a particular industry, in this case the hotel and catering industry. Precisely the beauty of NVQs is that they are so flexible, so adjustable to the needs; cultural needs, economic needs, very special particularised needs of the hotel industry in Gibraltar and nevertheless, so long as that training is geared, as I say, into the specific needs of the particular industry in Gibraltar meets with certain general criteria and certain principles, underpinning principles which are validated by the accrediting body the NVQ will be granted although it gives us the opportunity to tailor-make the training of these trainees very much to the real and specific needs of our industry and our hotels in Gibraltar.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

That is obviously the advice that the Minister has had because I had advice to the contrary when I was in Government. So the Minister is clear that if that happens the person at the end will have no difficulty in getting an NVQ, is that correct? Can I ask the Minister because he said that the supervision will be done within the hotels by the hotel employees, am I correct in that whoever does an assessment needs a qualification himself to assess the person in that area? Are the hotel employees who are going to carry out this monitoring qualified to a D32 and a D33?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON A J ISOLA:

Just so that I can be clear, am I right in saying that the entire training will take place at the School of Tourism in Bleak House and therefore what will happen in the hotels will be work experience? There will not be any actual training from the School, there will be training from the hotel but not from the School? They are going to be spending five weeks in Bleak House and 44 weeks at hotels, is the element of training from Julia Sibley and Associates, is that element of the work only carried out at the Bleak House School of Tourism and if that is the case, are Government satisfied that with one week in every 10 that the training they are going to be given by Julia Sibley and Associates will actually have an impact on their training at the end of their 52 week course?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, the analysis that the hon Member makes, whilst strictly speaking is accurate, it is not the whole picture. There is also careful monitoring and supervision by qualified monitors of the on-going placement to make sure that it is taking the form of training delivery as opposed to just straightforward work and that is an important part of the training course. This course has been designed by them and this is what they do professionally.

HON J J GABAY:

Taking into account the remarks made by Mrs Julia Sibley she said, speaking on behalf of the Government, that the course should be fun. If by this it is meant that the course should be enjoyable, creative and exciting, perhaps even absorbing and adventurous, by all means I am sure that we all share that view. But does not the Minister find it a little amusing or perhaps even hilarious when the fun remark was followed by her in these words, "There will also be a treasure hunt in the first week". In terms of propagating education I thought that this was almost as hilarious as her use of the word "fantastic" when describing the particular people in the hotel industry who would actually be teaching our pupils, I thought there would have been a more apt word to describe head waiters rather than fantastic. What is the Minister's opinion on this?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 386 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

### **HOTEL TRAINING COURSES**

Can Government state what is the type of work for which trainees will be qualified on completion of the one-year training courses for the hotel industry?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Trainees who successfully complete the one-year course will have an internationally recognised qualification in hotel catering and hospitality but with waiting, housekeeping and chef under its umbrella.

In addition, trainees will have received an extremely thorough and comprehensive basic training in all areas of a hotel environment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 386 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

We are aware and we were from the very start as to the actual subjects that will form this course. Would the Minister be more specific as to what particular jobs the graduates will be able to undertake in the hotel industry, for example, wine butler, housekeeper, waiter and so on?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I think really there is an overlap between the previous question and this one, I think we covered really a list of areas which I read out: basic food hygiene, wine and spirit education, housekeeping, customer care, selling skills, wine butlers certificates. It is that particular jigsaw of skills and areas of training that will cohere in the hotel, catering and hospitality qualification.

HON J J GABAY:

What jobs will be available for these youngsters once they graduate? I think there was a worrying note in the words used by the spokesman for the hotel industry who was quoted as saying, if I may quote his words, "Obviously what we now need is as many tourists as possible to ensure that we can take all 20 trainees aboard at the end of next year and take further intakes in future". Well, in the light of such uncertainty, might it not have been more financially prudent, as I mentioned earlier on, to send initially some of these candidates for training abroad and then study the uptake locally and if the uptake of course is satisfactory, then to have embarked on institutionalising the process but I feel we have already gone into that, perhaps the Minister might wish to comment.



HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I think we ought to agree to disagree.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think the Minister has in fact failed to answer specifically the original question because surely, although the Government have said they cannot require hotels to provide jobs for the people who finish the course, they have said that they are going to use every opportunity to persuade them and use their influence. So therefore they must know what is the potential pool and at what level and what types of jobs we are talking about and consequently that is a slightly different thing from the nature of the content of the course. This is why, originally, it was not very clear whether what we were talking about was training somebody who would come out as a waiter like somebody might come out as a painter and we would be able to do that and nothing else which, apparently, is not the case. So is it in fact that the Government themselves have not done any kind of exercise to establish what is the nature of the kind of work which hotels would be able to recruit these people into?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I believe the Tourist Department has carried out considerable survey in consultation with the industry as to their requirements and needs and it is emanating especially from that type of consultation and survey and enquiry that the whole idea of the School of Tourism has emerged and I think even at a layman's level, I think it is very obvious that the hotel industry is recruiting from outside the local population precisely because they claim the skills are just not there in our own people. I think it is almost obvious and manifest that we are meeting a real need within the hotel industry and also a real need as far as a possibility, as a potential employment resource for our own school leavers.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the answer then is that it has not been done, that no exercise has been done to identify specifically the jobs that these people would be well trained and therefore have a high prospect of obtaining at the end of the one year? What we have got is a general sort of intuitive thing?

HON DR B A LINARES:

What I am answering is exactly the opposite, that there has been an exercise and there has been a study, there has been a survey, that we know that we are meeting real needs. What we cannot do, and I think the hon Member will understand, is actually guarantee that those needs are going to be filled by particular and specific trainees as they qualify. That is something that was discussed earlier and I think in line with the cadet scheme that was initiated and steered by the previous administration, it is impossible to actually guarantee the prospective trainees an opportunity of employment which is not to say that the potential jobs and openings have been studied through a careful exercise of consultation.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not asking for the guarantee. I am asking for the description of the potential jobs. If the potential jobs have been identified, can the Minister say, "Yes, the potential jobs is that we expect that there will be a requirement for waiters and for cooks and for linen keepers and that these are the kind of jobs that people", that is what the original question seeks to have, the type of work. We are still trying to get the answer to the original Question No. 386 which the Minister says he has done.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

When Julia Sibley was in the process of putting together the training programme she did this in consultation with the Hotel Association. In my answer to the question the hon Gentleman is referring to, I have said that the qualifications will be in waiting, housekeeping and chef so these are the three particular sectors that have been identified as having the areas where training is required because potential does exist at the end of the road.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am afraid it sounds as if the Minister is avoiding giving a straight answer because, in fact, when I asked originally in a supplementary whether people would come out able to work as chefs the answer was no, because the chef element would be working in a kitchen possibly peeling potatoes which the Chief Minister confirmed was a perfectly natural and normal thing. If what they are saying is, "Yes, when they come out they will be able to apply for vacancies as potato peelers" then fine, we know what type of work we are talking about. But certainly it is not conceivable that they would be able to work as chefs at the end of a one year course based on the content that has been described. Do we know, apart possibly from waiters, is there anything else that there will be vacancies which the hotels will be opening and which the Government will seek to encourage them to offer to these people because these people will be equipped to perform those jobs? Is that known?

HON DR B A LINARES:

It is a question of perspective on the whole thing. No one will qualify as a chef in a top hotel after one year's training, I think it is obvious but one will qualify to start off as a chef from the bottom of the ladder which is the normal course of events in any job opportunity and prospects in that industry. The course will prepare trainees precisely for these potential opportunities of employment whether as chef or waiting and housekeeping but nevertheless it does not preclude those trainees from actually getting down to starting off their career from the bottom of the ladder, particularly in the hotel and catering industry which pretty well demands that sort of experience, starting from the very basic skills.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that the Minister does not realise that the nature of the career structure that he describes is the normal way in which the hotels recruit people when the hotels are large enough organisations to be able to have a staff in a kitchen where one can start off at the bottom and eventually, as vacancies open, one moves up. Surely he does not think that, say, the Bristol or the Queen's Hotels can afford to employ somebody, if they need somebody to cook a meal now, in the expectation that in several year's time he

will be ready to start cooking meals. Are we doing anything to be able to provide them because surely the Minister must understand that if the rationale of the School is that the hotels should employ local people it is because they are now arguing that what they need is somebody trained to cook ready to go into the job not somebody who is going to start at the bottom of the ladder and will be ready to cook in five year's time so the School will not be providing that supply of labour, will it?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I accept that many employers, not only in the hotel industry but in many other industries, prefer to recruit people from scratch, so to speak, without any basic skills qualifications but because they feel they have a character, the attitude and the possibility and potential of training within their own ambit. That is a route which is often followed but in our study of the situation we find that more and more employers, particularly in the hotel industry and in other industries as well, are now requiring, I suppose it is a question of the laws of supply and demand, certain basic training before they can even look at somebody for this route of starting from scratch and that is what the course, I think, will provide and as the Chief Minister was saying a moment ago, will actually take away steals of thunder from that excuse that is often heard from employers that the local people just simply do not have any form of training and therefore they have to recruit from labour abroad.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 387 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

## HOTEL TRAINING COURSES

Will Government state the fee being paid to Julia Sibley Associates in respect of the hotel training courses?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The total fee for the hotel school course is £8,750 for this financial year and for other training for the hotel industry £5,750.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 387 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Without wanting yet again to go over the previous question but it is relevant at this stage, would there be other additional expenses as well that we are not reckoning with at the moment? Would the Minister be prepared to provide the information at a later stage to contrast the per capita cost elsewhere abroad, whether in the neighbouring area or in the United Kingdom, so that we can have some parallel idea even if only as background information?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I think that the cost is not the only element that needs to be considered as the Chief Minister clearly pointed out earlier on in this session. Therefore we have taken the view in Government that we do want to have our School of Tourism in Gibraltar and therefore that will remain.

HON J J GABAY:

Nobody is questioning the authority of the Government to do so but I think it is a sensible question to ask about relative costs, we are all concerned about the way we use taxpayers money and I have said I do not want the information now but would the Minister consider making such a study, which is relatively simple and shed light on this question that I am asking him?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have not, I confess, done an actuarial analysis of cost comparison, cost relativities, but I can tell the House from my experience what it costs to send abroad students for academic careers, the maintenance grants which have to be paid so that the students can actually sustain themselves abroad together with tuition fees which can, in this particular industry, be quite hefty because mostly it will be private colleges which is not the £1,000 charge to us by State universities. I do not know what the cost effectiveness aspect of keeping the tuition locally is.

HON J J GABAY:

My final question is that I would still welcome the possibility of getting facts rather than general impressions in the same way as I would have welcomed really a greater detailed explanation as to what the Minister meant by a survey when talking about the prospects of jobs in the hotel industry. We get the feeling that it is all rather intuitive.

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a question.

HON A J ISOLA:

In respect of the fee that the Minister has given us, are there any other costs or expenses relating to the course other than this fee being paid to Julia Sibley? Is there anything else being paid to that company or tutors? Does this fee cover the tutors, for example?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I gave a figure for six months because it basically started on the 25<sup>th</sup> September going on until the end of March next year. We have the cost of Julia Sibley Associates which is £8,750 and the cost of external courses and packs which is £5,750. Then there is the standard pack which is £500 which is the syllabus and the work files that trainees work with and then the cost of registering the 20 students with the City and Guilds which is £4,330, assuming that we go down the route of the City and Guilds. So that would come up to a total of £19,330.

HON J J GABAY:

Would the Minister not also have to add to that sum the expenses in terms of electricity consumption, services, care of the building and so on? That would be obviously an expense incurred.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The running cost of Bleak House comes under the Ministry for Education and Training because there are going to be other courses being undertaken at Bleak House so the capital cost, as such, of setting up the School and the actual running will form part of the cost of a number of courses and not just specifically in respect of tourism itself.

HON J J GABAY;

Yes, I totally agree with that but should not a proportion of that outlay be taken into consideration in costing the expense of the course?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, there are some other costs which I have not highlighted earlier on because the question before was geared towards Julia Sibley and her related contract but there is the cost of the training monitors which we have set at £70,000. The trainer's flight expenses is about £2,000; the consumables at £10,400; electricity, water and telephone at £5,000; stationery at £1,500.

HON J J GABAY:

Perhaps as we keep on adding to the cost as we discuss it we may eventually come round to my suggestion which is only a suggestion at this stage, of a comparison costing per capita of what it might cost elsewhere even having accepted that it is the prerogative of the Government to make a School if they so desire, it is quite understandable.

NO. 388 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**TRANSPORT - COMPLAINTS ABOUT STATE OF A ROAD AND DANGEROUS PARKING**

Have Government investigated the complaints about the filthy state of the road as well as the incidence of dangerous parking in the immediate vicinity of St Paul's School?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government are not aware of any specific complaints having been made with regard to the state of the road in the immediate vicinity of St Paul's School. The issue of parking in the immediate vicinity of the school is being examined at present as part of an overall parking study which is being conducted by the Buildings and Works Department with the assistance of the Highways and Sewers Department under the Ministry of Tourism and Transport.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 388 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I am surprised that the Minister is not aware of any complaints. There have been two or three letters in the press on this subject, if I remember correctly, and I have actually.....

MR SPEAKER:

That is what you cannot ask. You cannot ask if letters in the press are accurate.

HON J J GABAY:

With all due respect I am not asking him whether they are accurate, this is only to point out that there is an awareness of problems with regard to cleanliness and parking in the vicinity of the school and these pose a danger both to health and the safety of the children. Again this has been illustrated in the press generally which I saw and therefore the main point that I would ask the Minister, if he is aware, is if he has visited the place, the danger of children crossing from behind parked cars on the pavement as the flow of traffic continues. Also whether he has found it easy to walk on that pavement because of the baroque display of excrement, it seems to have settled there as a permanent exhibition and I dare say that any tourist that strays into that area would get a very poor opinion both of our art and standard of cleanliness. The question is would he agree that there is this art display on the pavement and whether it is dangerous and whether the parking conditions are acceptable?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am sure that the Minister has no personal knowledge of whether there is a particular piece of dog excrement on a particular square metre of pavement on a particular street but certainly the Government could agree that the general thrust of what the hon Member is saying is that if the position were as he is, I suspect, with a degree of exaggeration describing then I would agree with him but it would not expect tourists to be impressed either with our cleanliness or with our art.



NO. 389 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY

## ROSIA ROAD - PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

Will Government consider putting a pedestrian crossing midway up Rosia Road to facilitate crossing from the Alameda Estate to the Bateria Promenade?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The possibility of placing a pedestrian crossing midway up Rosia Road has been considered by the Traffic Commission in the past and rejected on the grounds of safety.

Pedestrians crossing from the Promenade towards Alameda Estate are not visible to motorists until they actually step on to the road.

In the circumstances it was felt that a pedestrian crossing would give a false sense of security, especially to the many young children who use the promenade as a play area.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 389 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Would the Minister not agree that by having a practical zebra crossing midway up Rosia Road it would serve two purposes – (a) the elderly and children crossing from the estate into the promenade would find it easier and less hazardous, and (b) it would also, in my opinion and I hope it may well be his opinion, check the speed at which vehicles travel along Rosia Road, at times it seems to have become a speed track so I think it could serve both purposes. Might not the Minister reconsider on those grounds?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

It is not a question of the Minister reconsidering, it is a question for the Traffic Commission to consider and, as I have said, the Traffic Commission has considered this idea in the past and have been rejected and I have already explained the reasons why it has been rejected and that is how the story goes.

HON J J GABAY:

Is it never the practice of the Minister to express his own views which would obviously be influential to this particular Committee?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What the Minister has said is that if safety considerations permitted it, it would seem like a jolly good idea to have a zebra crossing where the hon Member suggests but those who have more experience in these matters have advised that the safety advantages are outweighed by the safety disadvantages and therefore the fact that

there are safety pros is not enough to go ahead with it. The safety pros have got to be greater than the safety cons and the advice that we have is that they do not. As the hon Member is aware the Government would not be adverse to spending the few pounds that it would cost to paint zebra crossings on the road so if the Government do not do it, I am sure he can accept that it is for a good reason, it would not be a controversial issue between us.

HON J J GABAY:

Or to use one of the Chief Minister's favourite phrases, it may well be just merely a matter of judgement.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course it is a matter of judgement.

NO. 390 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - AIRLINES ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

How much of the Airlines Assistance Scheme has been paid out as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 and in respect of which operator?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The amount paid in the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 is £64,188. Payments of £32,094 were made to each of GB Airways and Monarch Airlines.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 390 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that the payments under the Airlines Assistance Scheme are linked to the number of passengers being carried and, if so, is it just coincidence that they are both exactly the same?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is not correct. There is a Memorandum of Understanding with Monarch Airlines which started in May 1997, details of which have already been given to the hon Member in this House, covering three years and during those three years there are agreed levels of subsidy to the airline based on frequency of actual flights to Gibraltar and not passengers. The agreement with GB Airways is that we were going to subsidise them on this at the same level as we did with Monarch. So, in other words, when Monarch presents an invoice for a particular quarter based on the number of flights to Gibraltar, GB Airways is subsidised at the same level.

HON A J ISOLA:

Is there another form of payment under the Assistance Scheme to airlines which is linked to the number of passengers carried? I recall at the time when it was explained to us that, in fact, I think it was the Chief Minister or the Minister for Tourism, who said that obviously the more passengers they carry the quicker they would receive the payments because it is an amount in respect of the passengers. I think it was linked to the departure tax, if I remember rightly.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The hon Member is incorrect and I can only assume that he has misinterpreted what may have been said before. What I am saying today is what the situation really is.

HON A J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying then that, if Monarch submit an invoice for a quarter in the amount of £15,000 because I assume this is two quarters, and GB Airways have one flight or 15 flights will they still get the same?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

What we have agreed with Monarch Airlines – I do not have the details here in front of me – but hypothetically speaking, they would have four or five flights in the summer and two or three flights in the winter and for that they would get a certain subsidy and GB Airways would get the same level of subsidy assuming that they kept to their x number of flights that they had agreed at the time which was, I think, 13 or 14 flights from Gatwick and one from Manchester.

HON A J ISOLA:

So the subsidy is actually linked to the number of flights as originally agreed with Government, is that right?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON A J ISOLA:

So if somebody is flying less frequently does it affect the figure negatively and I assume that if it is more frequently it does not push it up anymore than what the limit was?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

In principle the hon Member is correct. Monarch, for example, increased their flights by one at some point during the Memorandum of Understanding and in order to promote that particular extra flight they asked whether we could assist them with an advertising budget for that in order to actually promote that particular flight and what we did was we did a joint advertising campaign targeted at particular additional flights which I think is on Fridays, but that is something outside the Airlines Assistance Scheme and that particular additional advertising as such comes from the Gibraltar Tourist Board advertising budget.

HON A J ISOLA:

Basically the Airlines Assistance Scheme is today the same as it was when it was initiated and it was announced in the House?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister then saying that there is no other payment to the airlines related to the departure tax?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

If I can recollect what I said, I have not read the Memorandum of Understanding with Monarch for a few months but as far as I can recollect, Monarch has a level of subsidy on year one, year two and on year three based on a particular number of flights and a commitment of minimum weekly flights during those three years and there is an agreed amount whether they bring in one passenger or they bring in 180 passengers on a particular flight. It is not paid as a rebate of passenger tax. They pay their landing charges in full, they pay their departure tax in full and they send us an invoice for that amount and we actually pay them the agreed amount. There is no netting of the subsidy.

HON J J BOSSANO:

This has nothing to do with netting. Is the Minister confirming that there is no payment other than the one that he has mentioned related to departure tax? I distinctly remember having been given an explanation here, indeed I remember the Chief Minister in clarification saying that the share of the departure tax that would go to the airline would not be the share that went to Terminal Management. If we get confirmation that there is no payment related to departure tax then that is fine, we just want it for the record and make sure we are getting the answer that is correct.

HON JJ HOLLIDAY:

There is no payment.

NO. 391 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**I&D FUND - HEAD 104, SUBHEAD 18**

How much of the £1,599,000 provided in the Approved Estimates in Head 104, subhead 18, has been spent to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 and in respect of which projects?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

A total of £350,000 has been spent to date from the I&D Head 104, subhead 18, Beautification and Refurbishment Works, on the extension of the city centre beautification works, Harbour Views promenade on the western reclamation and the completion of the Winston Churchill Avenue works.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 391 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Are there any projects which the Minister expects to add on to that list before the end of the financial year or will these projects entail the entirety of that budget under that Head?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

There are other extensions and payments that have to be made in respect of the city centre beautification works. Harbour Views has not been fully paid for and I believe that there is Queensway east which is a project that is about to start.

HON A J ISOLA:

Could the Minister, by way of clarification, what is Queensway east? It does not mean anything to us.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Queensway east is the area of the old pre-fabs housing area and some of the area along where Queensway Quay is.

NO. 392 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - HEAD 6A, SUBHEAD 8**

Can Government state how much of the £650,000 provided in the Approved Estimates in Head 6A, subhead 8, has been expended to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 and in respect of what matters?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The figure spent to date is £247,366 and this can be broken down as follows:

Literature	£71,147
Promotional material	£ 6,520
UK consumer & trade road shows	£ 7,872
Press & travel agent familiarisation trips	£21,477
Advertising	£36,112
Travel fairs	£61,912
Events	£24,001
Marketing & PR contracts	£18,325

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 392 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

The one figure that seems to stand out is literature £71,000. Is there any explanation for that? It seems an awful lot of money on literature.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The explanation for that is that, for example, the cost of the UK/GTA brochure which will be launched later this month in October has already been paid for from this budget. The total budget that has been allocated to literature this year is £101,000 because we are working on a big new concept for literature which will be launched at the World Travel market so there has been an amount of literature production that has already incurred cost this year.

NO. 393 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - HOTEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

How much money has been paid out to local hoteliers as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 by Government in respect of the soft loans under the Hotel Assistance Scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The amount paid out is £2,213,172.25. This figure includes all payments since the scheme began in the 1997/98 financial year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 393 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

I do not know if the Minister has the figure available but in respect of the £2 million budgeted for this year, how much of that has been spent? It is £900,000 this year, is that right?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Roughly since the beginning of this financial year it is about £1.168 million.



NO. 394 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - HOTEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

Is any hotel in breach of the arrangements entered into with Government in the Hotel Assistance Scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government are aware that the Elliott Hotel had certain problems in relation to staffing, and these were discussed with the hotel and are the subject of on-going discussions. Seven employees were involved.

Following a meeting with the Hotel's General Manager on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1998, the hotel was informed in writing on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1998 that Government could not accept that a state of redundancy should be declared at the hotel; and should some of the hotel's employees wish to leave of their own accord, and the hotel wished to assist them through the grant of redundancy pay, then there was no Government objection to this provided that the resulting vacancies were advertised through the Employment and Training Board.

The Government are aware that five persons have indeed been made redundant by the Elliott Hotel, and two continue in employment but working fewer conditioned hours. The five vacancies have not as yet been filled. Discussions continue with the hotel with regard to the recruitment of new staff.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 394 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that the Minister has accepted the five redundancies as being in compliance with the arrangements entered into with the Government?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, the Government have not accepted this and, in fact, I wrote to the hotel myself on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July following my meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> July putting them on notice as to the fact that it was contravening both the spirit and the actual terms of the Hotel Assistance Scheme. Nevertheless explanations were given to me and the Transport and General Workers Union were involved in the redundancy situation and some of the people involved were people who wanted to leave and would have probably left without absolutely no payments whatsoever. There was also someone who wanted to stop work as a result of maternity leave and therefore there were cases where there was a need, possibly, for consideration to be given. I have not accepted that and I have said that maybe there is a need not to replace the people concerned but in actual numbers I would want vacancies to be registered for the numbers involved to ensure that numbers are maintained according to the soft loan agreement and the Hotel Assistance Scheme which classifies that no redundancies are to be effected within the first 12 months after the signature of the document.

HON A J ISOLA:

There have been redundancies, the Minister has not accepted them and therefore there is a breach technically of the agreement. What is going to happen next? The Minister has said that vacancies have been opened, some may or may not need to be replaced. Will it just stay like that or is the Minister insisting that the five vacancies, if any, are filled to maintain the number? What is it that concerns the Minister? Is it a fact that there have been redundancies, the fact that the numbers are down, what are Government demanding, is it that the level of employees has to stay in the same amount as when the arrangements were entered into which is what the commitment was when it was signed?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

It has been made known to the hotel that they are in breach of their Hotel Assistance Scheme contract. It has been made known to them that the Government could not accept the state of redundancy. They nevertheless explained and showed us the circumstances under which these redundancies had been made and as long as vacancies are offered at the Employment and Training Board then Government would be willing to consider allowing them to fill these new vacancies in order both to keep up numbers and to ensure that employment is offered in those particular areas where redundancies have actually taken place.

HON A J ISOLA:

Is there not a sort of contradiction there in that if somebody is made redundant it means there is no work for him, that is the only legal basis for a redundancy that there is no longer any work for that person to do. If it was a dismissal, for example, for misconduct then fine, there is no problem, if the guy misbehaves he is sacked. How can somebody be made redundant and then open five positions to replace the ones that have been made redundant only because lack of work, that is the only basis for redundancy otherwise these five individuals could get five claims from the Industrial Tribunal for unfair dismissal, how can it be a redundancy if they have opened five vacancies at the ETB?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I take the hon Member's point and possibly what they term as redundancies may not strictly have been redundancies as such and that the employees themselves were in agreement, in fact, were quite willing to move on because of the package that was being offered. So in actual terms one had a situation, for example, where we had a chambermaid who had become pregnant and she was delighted that she was going to be offered a package to terminate her employment. Government did not accept that and we may have a situation that this pregnant woman terminating her employment but we do insist that the vacancies are filled and are registered with the Employment and Training Board so that the position is not lost.

HON A J ISOLA:

Firstly, if in fact there had been redundancies then obviously that is something that the Minister should consider himself with because that is exactly what the agreement tries to prohibit from happening. In other words, a hotel taking the benefit of the grant of the subsidy and then reducing its numbers and that is exactly what the Government intended to stop. If it was a dismissal, as I said before, it is a different question. To make it slightly worse, when there are five redundancies under the Gibraltar law it is a collective redundancy, we have to give notice to the union.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The position of the Government, which is all that the hon Member is legitimately entitled to press us on, is that hotels that have received the Assistance Scheme on certain conditions as to the level of employment the Government are not willing to turn a blind eye to breaches of those terms of the Assistance Scheme. The hotels are free to change the identity of their employees by whatever means they can lawfully do so and if they do so in a way which breaches any employee's rights no doubt those employees will pursue their remedies. I think we should try and keep both things apart, we are not the Personnel Department of the Elliott Hotel, we are the guardians of the public interest in relation to the Hotel Assistance Scheme and in that capacity I can assure the hon Member that we will assert our rights in full under the terms upon which the loans have been made available should any condition, in relation to employment levels, be infringed.

NO. 395 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA

## TOURISM - HOTEL BED NIGHTS

Can Government give the hotel bed nights sold in each month of 1998 up to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 and the comparable figure from 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

From the compilation of information supplied by the hoteliers, the number of bed nights sold from January 1998 to July 1998 by month and from January 1997 to July 1997 was as follows:

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>
January	7495	7400
February	9721	8853
March	10378	10616
April	11138	10828
May	14335	12407
June	13484	12858
July	13750	12557

The August figures are not yet available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 395 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

In respect of the figures for 1998 as compared to the ones of 1997, are these the figures that would appear in the Hotel Occupancy Survey being responses directly from the hotels themselves and not the subject of any other survey or information? Are these the figures that we have just been given?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, I believe they are correct but rounded off to the nearest thousand.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister explain what is the source of the information that he provided in answer to Question No. 258 when he said there had been a 14.6 per cent increase in May 1997 over May 1996 and a 14 per cent increase in June 1997 compared to June 1996 given that the figures he has now given for 1997 do not seem to be the same ones as he gave in answer to Question No. 258?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am sorry but Question No. 258 happened some time ago.

HON J J BOSSANO:

When we asked a year ago for the figures we were given that there was a 14 per cent increase in May and June compared to May and June 1996 but the figures he has now given for 1997 are totally different from the ones that he told us in 1997 were the figures for 1997. Does he know whether the source of those figures was the same as the source of these figures because we cannot make sense of the answer?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That information is not available but can be obtained. There are, as the hon Member knows, two distinct sources of this sort of information; one are the hotels themselves and the other is the survey the Government conduct. It would have been one or the other of those. The hon Member's supplementary is, "Can the Minister identify the source of the figures that he used in his answer to Question No. 258 of 1997?" I cannot help him with that right now and I do not think the Minister from memory can either but we will provide him the source so that he can follow up with a new question when the House next meets.

HON J J BOSSANO:

He has confirmed that on this occasion the source is the guest nights sold declared by the hotels?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON A J ISOLA:

Although I did not ask for it last time but I got the information from my hon Friend that the figures had in fact increased by 14.6 per cent. I wonder whether he has taken the trouble to see of the figures he has just given for 1998 as to whether there has been a similar or if there is any increase at all of 1998 over 1997 in those months? I have got the figures for March, April and May, is May 12447 for 1998?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, for May it is 12407.

HON A J ISOLA:

And June?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

June 12858.

HON A J ISOLA:

And July?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

July 12557.

HON A J ISOLA:

Would the Minister agree with me that, in fact, in those three months that we used in Question No. 258 which is May, June and July, that the figures on 1997 are actually higher than they are in 1998 therefore there has been a drop this year?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct. I think one must realise that during this period in question and, in fact, since about the last quarter of 1997, most hotels have been undergoing major refurbishment works and so therefore the availability of rooms has not been what it normally is. Apart from that most hotels have had to inform tour operators in the UK, according to EU regulations, that major refurbishment works were being undertaken in the hotel during this time. So therefore a number of tour operators have refrained from selling Gibraltar during this period in order to avoid problems with their clients in respect of noise, et cetera that would have been encountered should they have opted out to take a holiday in Gibraltar. Therefore the results are obvious considering the major refurbishment works that most hotels have been undergoing during this period.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If that is the explanation then presumably the air traffic figures will reflect that? The Minister is saying that it is the tour operators in the UK who are responsible for the drop in these figures, is that right?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Could the hon Member repeat that?

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, the explanation we have been given would imply that what we can expect is that those three months when we asked the question which reflect the drop in the numbers arriving from the United Kingdom which is where the tour operators, because of the work taking place in the hotels, have been selling less, that is what we have just been told. He is talking about people from UK, is that correct?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct, we are talking from the UK. I do not think that it is true to say that air traffic during the months of May, June and July will have dropped. To be honest I have not got the figures in front of me to respond positively or negatively on that but there is no direct correlation why this should be so. It may be so but not necessarily.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But if it is not so it would mean that, in fact, although the people are coming to Gibraltar they are not staying in hotels.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, or alternatively it could mean that had it not been for the hotel refurbishment scheme and the fact that rooms were less available, air traffic might have risen by even more. In other words, there are a number of possible explanations. It may well be that the reduced number of hotel room availability, it may well be that that will convert itself into a reduction in air passengers, it should be but because this is a netting thing, air traffic may be rising in respect of, for example, people going to the Costa del Sol. One cannot extrapolate mathematically one from one column to the other. But there may well be a reduction in air traffic that reflects the fact that there are less people coming on package tours to Gibraltar.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Air Traffic Survey that the Government table in the House does show the distinction between the people who go to the Costa del Sol and the people who stay in Gibraltar. So if in fact the explanation why there are less people staying in hotels, given that we are still in an unknown area as to the origin of these people as other questions on the Order Paper indicate, since the explanation of the Minister is that it is down because of the effect on tour operators selling Gibraltar which means, of course, the United Kingdom, we would take it that a drop in these figures would be of the UK content of the hotel stayers as opposed to the content from other sources. Did the Minister not answer in an earlier Question, I believe it was earlier this year, that he was anticipating an increase in the number of bed nights sold this year and is it that at the time that he gave the answer in the House he did not know that there was going to be a hotel refurbishment programme?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, I did know that there was going to be a refurbishment programme but let me remind the hon Gentleman that the year has not yet finished and figures are only available until July. We are hopeful that the situation will vastly improve now that some of the hotels have finished their refurbishment programme, for example, the Rock Hotel finished their refurbishment programme only last month; the Elliott is bound to do so in the next few weeks and there are others that are still on-going and will not be finished until the earlier part of next year. But all in all, we are now trying to get our house in order in terms of the tourism hotel product which will hopefully signal to the trade that we do have a product which we can be proud of and that will encourage the increases that we are all hoping for.

HON A J ISOLA:

In a supplementary to Question No. 258 of 1997, the Chief Minister said, "I think the increase in bed nights" which is the question that is now going to be answered as to the source of that information because from page 12 of the survey the figures do not seem to show any increase at all, in fact, they show a decrease but anyway, "sold represents early success for the Government's tourism policy generally, including our marketing strategy, including the repositioning of Gibraltar in terms of international reputation,

including what the Government have tried to do to improve the product available to tourism in Gibraltar and certainly also including, I have no doubt, the Monarch service.” To what extent does the Chief Minister think those factors may have an influence on the declining numbers for the first part of the year?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Chief Minister thinks that they have no relevance whatsoever but the Chief Minister does find extraordinary that the hon Member who represents a client who is one of Gibraltar's leading hoteliers and who therefore knows the extent to which all hoteliers in Gibraltar, including the one whose affairs he is intimately knowledgeable, have welcomed the Hotel Assistance Scheme as being a major boost to their fortunes and to the tourism industry in Gibraltar and who is boasting a record improved hotel occupancy. I am surprised that the hon Member should persist with giving the impression that he is the only person in Gibraltar who appears to be blind to the fact that even though there is still much more success in the pipeline that already there has been a large measure of improvement and success in Gibraltar's tourism. Everybody else appears to accept that this is so: the airlines, the hoteliers, the travel agents, everybody appears to accept this except the hon Member. The hon Member ought to bear one thing in mind, however much he tries to twist and turn statistics and look at them upside down and back to front and turn the page backwards in the hope of finding some arithmetical formula that allows him to make a half truth about the Government's tourism policy, the fact of the matter is that 17,000 people to whom we shall both be appealing for electoral support come the next general election have eyes in their head and brains in their head and they can see things for themselves and I am very happy to rely on the judgement of that real sort and I suggest to the hon Member that few people are going to make their judgement on the basis of the contorted use to which he seeks to put statistics.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it the Chief Minister's view then that the figures that we have been given by the Minister today which show a decline in the months of January to August are in fact contorted to assist us in giving a false picture?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I have not said that statistics are contorted, I have said that the use to which the hon Member puts them is contorted and exactly what the hon Member has said is precisely what I mean. These figures do not suggest, which is the hon Member's last supplementary to me, the fact that there is a decline in May, June and July 1998 as opposed to May, June and July 1997 does not, as the hon Questioner sought to suggest, suggest pessimism about the prospects of the Government's tourism policy, it suggests only the explanation that the Minister has given that this was a period during which the hotels were basically a building site. Indeed many of them had whole corridors closed to sale because they were under contractors refurbishment. That is the explanation. If the hon Member wants to suggest that in those circumstances the figures still suggest a failure of Government policy when actually they suggest a success in Government policy, namely the Hotel Assistance Scheme, that is a contortion of the statistics which is precisely what I am accusing him of.



HON J J BOSSANO:

Since we are not in the business of suggesting anything but simply of asking questions to which we are trying to get answers, does the Minister not agree that whatever may or may not happen in the future which is hypothetical, which is something he does not like giving expression to hypothetical answers to hypothetical questions, the historical position at the moment is that there has been no increase. Is that a correct factual statement or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is not. There have been periods during the last 12 months when there have been increases and that increase has been interrupted by what is a blip as a result of the fact that the hotels have been going through a process of physical refurbishment and rooms have simply not been available to sell and if rooms are not available to sell it is clear that the occupancy has got to suffer that is what we are saying.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Has the increase which the Chief Minister claims happened in the past, that is before January, is that the increase on the basis of the figures that the Government claim to have arrived at by interviews and not on the basis of these figures which are the reported figures by the hotels? Because in fact will the Minister not agree that the reported figures of the hotels for last year which are the equivalent of the ones we have been given today show that there was no increase in 1997 over 1996 in the same months? He does not agree with that? Then I suggest he reads the report.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There was a marginal increase and indeed some hoteliers, the one that the hon Member represents, have made public statements about what a successful year 1997 was for his client's hotel compared to previous years but it seems to me that the hon Member wishes, by hook or by crook, to disprove what people out there are saying and if he does not want to believe us at least let him believe them. They have got no reason to lie to him even if he thinks that we have.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister is not responsible for what may be said by a hotelier whether he happens to be a client of my hon Colleague or a client of his former firm, it is irrelevant whose client they are and it is irrelevant what they say. Is it not the case that the Government are on public record as saying they are the ones who do not believe what the hotels say because the figures of bed nights sold given today are those provided by the hotels and what they have said in respect of the 1997 figures, which have been quoted today in the answer, is that they do not believe these figures to be accurate, is that not the case?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not the case.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No?

MR SPEAKER:

You will have a last question and there will be a last answer. There will only be one more question. This is not a debate, this is a question and answer session.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister has said, "Who has said that?" Well, the answer is, in the figure given for 207,000 bed nights sold for 1997 by the Minister, that figure is 60,000 beds more than the figure reported by the hotels reflected in the answer we have been given today. If the figure for 1997, according to the Minister, is out by over 50 per cent, 60,000 over 140,000 nearly 50 per cent out, then how are we to know that he will not come along and revise all the 1998 figures and show a different result? So in fact we are not putting in doubt what the hotels claim, this is what the hotels survey says, and I am only making the point that surely the Chief Minister must know that that is precisely why we are seeking information as to how the figures are arrived at because they are questioning the hotel nights sold which the hotels claim to be selling.

MR SPEAKER:

One final answer, whether it is the Chief Minister or the Minister.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I find it absolutely surprising to hear the Leader of the Opposition claiming that I am distorting figures when this is precisely not the case. He refers to 1997 and says that in the Hotel Occupancy Report the figure reported was approximately 143,000 whilst in the Tourist Survey Report the figure comes to about 204,000. The sources of these figures are completely from different places: the Hotel Occupancy Report is based on the figures that are presented to the Government Statistician by hoteliers whilst the Tourist Survey Report is based on surveys that are carried out by the Government's Statistics Office and therefore he should know better and should be aware of the fact that if one carries out surveys and one gets information from two different sources while compiling information, one is bound to get different answers. No way is one going to be able to correlate one figure with the other exactly if one is seeking the information from the other. He refers to 1997 as a figure where there are 61,000 difference between one and the other. He should be made aware of the fact that when he was in office in 1990 the figure distortion was 54,000 and I wonder whether he distorted the figures if he is accusing me of that. In 1990 the Hotel Occupancy Report showed a figure of 197,000 whilst in the Tourist Survey Report the figure is 251,000. How can the Leader of the Opposition make and explain the difference of 54,000? I presume it is quite similar to the 61,000 and I am assuming that he did not distort the figure in the same way as he has insinuated that I have and he has been in the press as actually saying that. If we look at 1991 the difference is 23,000; in 1992 it is 39,000; in 1993 it is less, it is 5,000; in 1994 it is 7,000 and then in 1996 the difference is 33,000. So there is discrepancy in every year between 1990 and 1997 under which six or seven of those years he was Chief Minister.

MR SPEAKER:

No, there was no further question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Minister has made a statement which I challenge in its entirety except that I cannot answer.

MR SPEAKER:

That is right. We will have a 10 minutes recess.

The House recessed.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, as I am on my feet with the word, I give way to the Leader of the Opposition to give him the opportunity to answer lest he should say that he was not given one.

MR SPEAKER:

But he has not got the last word.

HON J J BOSSANO:

He is gracious enough to give me an opportunity.

MR SPEAKER:

Do not take advantage of it, carry on.

HON J J BOSSANO:

A statement has been made by the Minister which was not an answer to the question that I had just put. It was an answer to the exchange of press releases that we have had and I want to make absolutely clear that, in fact, what he has said today is wrong and that I will expect him to be coming back to the House and putting the record straight. Therefore will the Minister check the fact that the method of calculating expenditure by reference to interviews as opposed to the guest nights sold reported by the hotels was introduced in 1996 and that in 1995 and prior to 1995 the guest nights sold reported by the hotels, the figure he has given in answer to the question we have just finished dealing with today, have been the guest nights sold used by the Statistics to produce the Tourist Expenditure Survey until 1995, so there could not be a discrepancy as he claims that there is because the estimate of the difference between arrivals by air from the United Kingdom which was obtained by the survey interviews was a residual figure, will the Minister investigate and confirm and then come back and put the record straight? In 1995 the hotels told the Tourist Department, "We have sold 144,000 bed nights". The Statistics Office, from the survey, arrived at a figure of nights sold to tourists from the United Kingdom and by subtracting the survey from the reported figure of the hotel, which was always larger than the survey, they produced a residual figure which they assumed came either by sea or by land because there was

no other way of coming if it was not by air and that that was done until 1995. In 1996 for the first time a figure was used for calculating tourist expenditure which differed totally and by a huge margin, from the reported figure for the hotel. In the case of 1996 the Tourist Office claims that the hotels did not sell 140,000 guest nights, that they sold 100,000 so they believe that the hotels were exaggerating the guest nights sold in 1996. In 1997 they believed that the hotels were understating and the 40,000 that they took off one year and the 60,000 that they added to the other year is the 100 per cent figure that the Minister has been claiming. The only reason why we point a finger at him is because he has chosen to disregard the apparent contradiction between these two figures and pick the one that seems to suit him to claim 100 per cent success. That has never happened before 1996 either so will he check those facts and come back and put the record straight in the House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Minister will, of course, check his facts simply to come back and confirm that the position as he has previously stated is correct given that the hon Member seeks to impugn it. The Government do not accept the assertion that he has made at the beginning of his statement to the effect that the practice began in 1996. The suggestion that for statistical purposes prior to 1996 only the data received directly from the hotel was taken into account for hotel and tourism statistics is not a statement that the Government accept as accurate.

NO. 396 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - INTERVIEWS - HOTEL GUESTS**

Can Government state how many interviews with persons staying at hotels were carried out in 1996 giving the number of persons interviewed, the dates of the interviews, the hotels at which the interviews were conducted and the persons who conducted the interviews?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 397 and 398 of 1998.

NO. 397 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - INTERVIEWS - HOTEL GUESTS**

Can Government state how many interviews with persons staying at hotels were carried out in 1997 giving the number of persons interviewed, the dates of the interviews, the hotels at which the interviews were conducted and the persons who conducted the interviews?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 396 and 398 of 1998.

NO. 398 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - INTERVIEWS - HOTEL GUESTS**

Can Government state how many interviews with persons staying at hotels were carried out in 1998 (to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998) giving the number of persons interviewed, the dates of the interviews, the hotels at which the interviews were conducted and the persons who conducted the interviews?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

For the purposes of the Tourist Survey, visitors were interviewed at points of departure and not at hotels. The following were the number of persons of those interviewed who said that they had stayed in an hotel:-

1996	84
1997	125
up to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 1998	77

The interviews took place throughout the periods in question. The interviews were carried out by staff of the Statistics Office and others who had been suitably briefed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 396, 397 AND 398 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the public statement made by the Minister that the figures he was quoting was the result of interviews at the hotels was, in fact, incorrect? Can he confirm that? His answer confirms that his previous public statement that these were interviews conducted at hotels is in fact incorrect?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Could the Leader of the Opposition please clarify when I made that statement?

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, in the context of the exchange of the press releases on the accuracy of the figures that had been quoted. The Minister said, "interviewed at hotels".

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, would the Leader of the Opposition quote the statement because what I am not willing to have is an exchange across the floor of the House on his vague recollection of words that he now seeks to attribute to the Minister. Let him quote from the Minister's statement before we start a discussion about whether the statement was accurate or not.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I cannot help if the Minister does not remember what he says but I will certainly produce the statement for him and then he will presumably come back and confirm that that was incorrect and that no interviews have taken place at hotels.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

When the hon Member is able to quote with accuracy and the necessary degree of certainty the statements that he is attributing to the Minister, the Minister I am sure will gladly debate the matter with him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister then confirm that the only interviews that have been carried out are those that are reflected in the Hotel Occupancy Survey at the beginning of the survey where it gives the numbers at the points of entry and where it says that interviews were carried out at the frontier and the coach park and the airport, is that in fact the extent of all the interviews carried out?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The sampling method as detailed in the Tourist Survey Report are correct, they are carried out by the Statistics Office and I personally, as Minister for Tourism, do not have an influence as to the sampling that they use.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, I have not asked anything about the sampling. I am asking about the location. It says, for example, in respect of the 1997 figures, that people were interviewed at the airport, there were 272 interviews at the airport and 561 at the coach park and 1,598 at the frontier and 48 at the Marina and 105 at the port and none took place at Waterport in respect of disembarking ferry passengers. Can he confirm that there are no interviews other than the ones listed there? Those are the interviews on which the survey is based because that is how it has always been before.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct. From my understanding from the Government Statistician no surveys have been carried out in Waterport since 1986.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that in Press Release No. 135 of 1998 the Minister stated that the discrepancy in the published figures on hotel occupancy was due to the fact that the figure given by the hotels with regard to the average stay of guests and the other information is the information given by an actual sample of hotel guests who were questioned on this matter. In fact, this is not the case, there were no hotel guests questioned on this matter, in any of the points of entry the people who were questioned were tourist arrivals and not hotel guests.



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a different matter. Before the Leader of the Opposition was trying to attribute to the Minister the erroneous statement that he had said that the surveys had taken place in hotels and now what he has read is very different. The statement that he has read does not mean that the Government have said that the surveys were physically conducted in hotels, they were surveys of hotel guests. If we catch somebody in the airport and we ask him, "Have you stayed in an hotel in Gibraltar?" and he says, "Yes, I have just come down from the Rock Hotel", "Well, how long have you been there, Sir?", "Well, I spent three nights there". That is a survey of somebody who has been a hotel guest but it is not a survey conducted on the premises of the hotel. Therefore I am glad that I did not allow the previous debate to take place on the basis of an erroneous attribution by the Leader of the Opposition to the Minister.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are then the Government aware that what they call surveys of hotel guests which is no different from the surveys that have been carried out in all previous Hotel Occupancy and Tourist Expenditure Surveys tabled produced no discrepancy because in fact it was not hotel guests that were being interviewed, it was arrivals in Gibraltar of which a small percentage were people staying in hotels and therefore the sample was not hotel guests. If the answer is that the survey has been carried out as before then how does the Government explain that for the first time in 1996 it is suggested that they produced different results?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government are not suggesting that it produces a different result for the first time in 1996. He is suggesting that it produces a different result for the first time in 1996. The Government are suggesting that there has always been a discrepancy between the statistics that derive from the hotels own returns and those that derive from the Tourist Survey which is hardly surprising given that a survey is, by definition, not a scientific process.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are the Government not aware that the results of the survey have always shown that the number of bed nights sold according to the hotels have always exceeded the numbers produced by the survey until 1997 when an assumption was made in the opposite direction, are the Government not aware of that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the Government are aware of the contrary. On the basis of information provided to us by officials, the Government are aware that the opposite of what the hon Member has just said is the case.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I have already asked the Government to go back and check their facts because they are wrong. Are the Government able to point out in which table in the surveys the discrepancy that they claim is demonstrated in published figures, where?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have here in my hand a lengthy letter addressed by the Government Statistician .....  
*[Interruption]* Does the Hon Juan Carlos Perez wish to make a formal statement about his views about the Government Statistician? No, he does not, then he should not make it as an aside either. Either he has the courage to say what he feels or he should just sit there quietly and not pass under the breath aspersions about public servants.  
*[Interruption]* Yes he has.

MR SPEAKER:

I do not want to call to order anyone because this is enjoyable but do not take advantage.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This letter contains on its second page two tables, which the Statistician offers as an explanation to which we are relying in this House for the very things that they are saying and it has three columns. One column is every year from 1989 to 1997, the other column is length of guest nights sold and the third column is length of stay estimated from expenditure by visitors arrival at hotel calculations which he says always been based on the survey and not on the guest nights sold. The hon Member in some Statistician's Convention may be able to have an enjoyable time analysing the comparative use of statistics. What I am saying to the hon Member is that this Government rely in this House as we believe we are entitled to do, on the statistics and the analysis of the statistics made available to us, as explained to us and as put in our hands by those public officials who are paid by the taxpayer as experts precisely to do that material and whilst we take political responsibility, as the rules of the House require us to take for that information, Ministers do not ourselves compile statistics and Ministers do not ourselves check the accuracy, not that I am suggesting that they are inaccurate, of statistics provided to us by the public administration through the various means that it produces. If the hon Member wants to challenge the accuracy of the assertion I can only suggest that he writes to the Head of the Statistics Office which now resides in the Ministry of my hon Colleague, the Minister for Trade and Industry, and I am sure that if he has some reason to believe that there has been a change since he left office which I can assure the House is certainly not as a result of any policy decision of the Government and we do not believe that there has been any change but he cannot debate the science of statistics with us. We bring them as factual information to this House as they are provided to us by the statisticians and on the basis of the information provided to us by the statisticians, what the hon Member is saying is not right. Let me put it another way, I cannot concede to the hon Member that he is right on the basis of the best advice that I have available to me which is from the Government Statistician.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I do not know to what degree the Government have checked the accuracy of the figures that they were making use of but will the Government accept that given the obvious inconsistency in the figures that are produced we asked them to go back and check this because it did not seem right and they have kept using it notwithstanding the

fact that there is a discrepancy of one figure showing an increase of 3 per cent and another figure showing a difference of 100 per cent and will the Chief Minister go back to the Government Statistician and get confirmation from him, as I have in writing, that the procedure was adopted from 1996 onwards?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Will he perhaps try and find out why it is that the explanation for the new procedure is based on more interviews being carried out at the frontier when, in fact, the figures do not reflect more people staying in hotels as a result of crossing the frontier? If the explanation is that because more interviews are carried out at the frontier, one assumes that there are more people staying in the hotels one would expect to see that the more interviews one gets a percentage of the people who respond goes up because if one asks 1,000 people if they are staying in hotels and half of them say yes, and if one asks 2,000 and half of them say yes, the estimated number of people staying in the hotels is still based on the pro rata response that one has had. It is only as one asks more people that the percentage that stay in the hotels goes up but in any case, the breakdown provided by the Government does not show that more people cross the frontier and stayed in the hotels. What is the logic of arguing that a new procedure is brought in in 1996 which says more people must be staying in the hotels because by having interviews at the frontier that is the conclusion we have come to and therefore we disregard the reports in the Hotel Occupancy tables and if, in fact, the Minister would have no objection – I know it is in Hansard but I have to wait a long time to get the figures that he has quoted if he can actually let me have those figures I am sure that I can demonstrate to him that they are not right.

MR SPEAKER:

The only thing is will he look, that is the question?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I can say to the hon Member that without thereby implying any concession to him on the merit of his argument, the Government will ask the matter to be looked at again so that we can satisfy ourselves that the position is as we are saying that it is and not as he is saying that it is and I will certainly provide him with an advance copy of the statistics that we have quoted so that he should not have to wait for Hansard.

NO. 399 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**CRUISE LINER VISITS - 1998**

How many cruise liners have called at Gibraltar in 1998 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 and how many are expected to call up to 31<sup>st</sup> December 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The figures are as follows:-

Arrivals from 1 <sup>st</sup> January to 31 <sup>st</sup> August 1998	71
Bookings from 1 <sup>st</sup> September to 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1998	<u>65</u>
	<u>136</u>

However, the figure of 65 from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> December should increase as it is likely that there will be a few extra calls in the autumn. In fact, since this answer was written earlier this week, there have been two additional bookings.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 399 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

In respect of the figure given up until the 31<sup>st</sup> August, is that figure actual arrivals? Does it include taking out the cancellations which there are from time to time?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The figure up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August are actually cruises that have stopped at Gibraltar.

HON J C PEREZ:

May I take this opportunity in informing the Minister that the cruise liners that arrive early are normally subject to the Upper Rock facilities being open early and that I understand that to date this has not happened and that there have been problems there and that it is not the first time that this has happened. When cruise liners arrive early, the facilities in the Upper Rock ought to be open early and they are not. I know it is not appropriate, I am just making the point to inform the Minister of the situation as it has been reported to me today.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I take note of the comment.

NO. 400 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**TOURISM - VISITOR ARRIVALS BY SEA**

Can Government state what were the visitor arrivals by sea giving a breakdown by cruise passengers, yacht visitors and other arrivals in respect of the months of January, February, March, April, May, June, July and August 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The following were visitor arrivals by sea broken down into cruise passengers, yacht visitors and other arrivals for the months January 1998 to July 1998. The August figures are not yet available. In fact, in the case of yacht visitors, July is not available either.

	<u>CRUISE PASSENGERS</u>	<u>YACHT VISITORS</u>	<u>OTHER ARRIVALS</u>
January	2646	424	729
February	2076	289	654
March	2068	680	1306
April	7834	992	1203
May	17234	1592	1030
June	6118	1830	1781
July	4658	-	1232

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 400 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

In the arrivals by sea that has been given we have got other questions which deal with the figures for the previous year, can I ask in the ones that we have just been given for 1998, do the figures include arrivals from Morocco?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I understand that that is under 'other arrivals'.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So, for example, the 1232 arrivals in July will include people arriving from Morocco?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister know how it is decided, of the people who arrive from Morocco, who is included here as a visitor and who is left out because he is a returning worker? Does he know how that is done?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I recollect having discussed this matter with the Government Statistician and although I cannot specify actual percentages, I believe that a percentage is used to define what would be a visitor to Gibraltar and what is a non-visitor to Gibraltar for the sake of this particular survey. In other words, for example, somebody coming here to work and has travelled through Morocco a percentage of that is used as a percentage of those that would be staying in an hotel as opposed to those that would be staying with friends and family. I believe that as from 1996 and 1997 the proportion is 75 per cent whilst prior to that, in 1994 and 1995 this used to be 50 per cent. I understand that these were changed in 1994 by the Chief Secretary under the previous administration when the Leader of the Opposition was then Chief Minister. But, as I said, these are just rough notes that I have here which I am not 100 per cent sure whether they are strictly correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I was not actually asking at this stage how many of them were staying in the hotels, that will come later and I will have the chance to use the information.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I was trying to give the hon Member a full résumé of my notes to give him as much information as possible in good faith.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What I am trying to establish is if in terms of the figure that is shown that will eventually appear in Table 8, other visitors by sea, we have got a number of questions to establish how they get here by sea but in the figures we have been given today there will be included some people who will have arrived on the ferry service. Can he say where the ones who do not arrive by the ferry service from Morocco where they come from?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Could the hon Member repeat that again?

HON J J BOSSANO:

We have been given figures of arrivals by sea month by month who are not people who arrive either on a cruise liner or on a yacht and the Minister has confirmed that of those, for example, of the 1232 arrivals in July by sea some of the 1232 will have been people who have come on the ferry service from Tangier and who are assumed to be visitors as opposed to returning workers and they constitute some of the 1232 arrivals of July. Where do the remaining people come from? How do they arrive by sea?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There are only so many ways that one can arrive at Gibraltar by sea. One can arrive on a cruise ship, a yacht, on a ferry from Morocco and the only other category that I can think of might include people who disembark from merchant shipping, there might be a small element of that but I cannot personally think of any other but the Statistician must have a list of the items that fall under other arrivals but I cannot think of any other than those two which is the ferry from Tangier and disembarkation from merchant shipping. I would be very surprised if it was any other.

NO. 401 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - VISITOR ARRIVALS BY SEA**

Can Government explain the method of arrival of the visitors by sea other than cruise ship and yacht visitors showing an increase from 9,500 in 1996 to 20,700 in 1997 reflected in Table 8 of the Tourist Survey Report 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question no. 404 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 402 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA - MOROCCO**

Can Government state whether arrivals by sea from Morocco are included in the figure of 20,700 visitor arrivals by sea for 1997 in Table 8 of the Tourist Survey Report 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question No. 405 of 1998.



NO. 403 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - VISITOR ARRIVALS BY SEA**

Can Government state of the 9,500 visitor arrivals by sea shown in Table 8 of the Tourist Survey Report 1997, how many are estimated to have stayed in hotels and the average bed nights stayed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

It is estimated that in 1996 of the 9,500 visitor arrivals by sea from Morocco, approximately 5,200 stayed in hotels and the average bed nights stayed per visitor were estimated at two nights.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 403 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether the assumed numbers of arrivals from Morocco who stayed in the hotels are 5,334 and for two nights, whether that is the result of survey interviews or some other methodology?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

This is the result of pure estimates.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But are the estimates based on interviews?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

They are not, they are based on pure percentages that are attributed for calculation purposes so therefore they are an estimate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Perhaps the Minister will re-read the explanation he sent me produced by the Statistician in which he will find that he claims it is the result of interviews.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That the general hotel occupancy figures are on the basis of interviews yes, but that specifically in relation to visitors by sea from Morocco an estimate of how many of those have stayed in hotels I would be most surprised if anybody had suggested that that was done by interview given that the Statistician says that no interviews were conducted down at Waterport ferry station. I do not know if the hon Member has the letter in front of him from which he is attributing that. I have not read the letter but I suppose that it might say that hotel occupancy figures generally are done on the basis of estimates but I very much doubt if the Statistician has said that any estimation given which is in any case not

given in the survey, it is given in here in answer to this question in the House, that the estimation given here about how many visitors from Morocco by sea stay in hotels, that is done by survey, I stand to be corrected almost immediately, but I would be very surprised if the Statistician had said that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am being invited to correct almost immediately. Are the Government aware that the number staying in hotels in the calculation for 1995, was arrived at by a residual calculation on the basis of deducting from the total reported by the hotels the numbers estimated to be staying in the hotels from the surveys at the airport and that the method was changed in 1996 and that that produces a change in the numbers and the length of bed nights between 1995 and 1996 and that the explanation that has been provided for the change is the fact that there were more interviews conducted?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the Government are not aware of that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the Minister reads carefully the letters he has written which are confidential and I cannot read out then he will see that that is in there.

NO. 404 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - VISITOR ARRIVALS BY SEA**

Can Government explain the method of arrival of the visitors by sea other than cruise ship and yacht visitors showing an increase from 3,100 in 1995 to 9,500 in 1996 reflected in Table 8 of the Tourist Survey Report 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The method of arrival of visitors by sea other than cruise ship and yacht visitors was by ferry in both cases.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 401 AND 404 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does that mean then that in the previous question referring to the first six months of this year the same applies and, in fact, they are all arrivals by ferry? That is what we have just been told.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, to the extent that the answer in Question No. 404 purports to be exhausted and provided that it comes from the Government Statistician and that he is saying that other really means Moroccan ferry only then that would be the case.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Therefore then it means that the ones that we have been given for the six months of this year presumably is just from the Moroccan ferry? Can the Government say whether the increase which is from, taking Question Nos. 401 and 404 we have a position where 3,100 visitors arrived on the Moroccan ferry in 1995, it went up by 300 per cent in 1996 to 9,500 and then it more than doubled to 20,700 in 1997. This is in fact a 700 per cent increase in arrivals by sea from Morocco in those two years. *[interruption]* Yes, but in fact this is not the case that the ferry was out of action in 1996. It cannot have been in 1997, in 1997 is when the increase took place.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The changes are attributable to the changes in frequency in the ferry throughout 1995 and 1996 and 1997

HON J J BOSSANO:

In fact, are the Government not aware that the number of arrivals from Morocco for 1995 was higher than for 1996 according to the figures in the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure showing the arrival and departure tax paid by arrivals on the ferry?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am afraid I am not aware of that analysis.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Will the Government therefore check how these figures have been calculated since there actually seems to be a discrepancy, if it is the ferry, between the figures that are shown as other visitors from the sea and the actual movement of people from Morocco to Gibraltar which includes all the Moroccan workers? That is to say, will the Government establish for themselves, for the sake of ensuring the accuracy of these figures, will they check that in fact the numbers of visitors shown in 1995 is something of the order of 3,000 out of 23,000 arrivals or something like that, whereas in the case of 1996 and 1997 it would indicate that there was a huge increase in non-Moroccans travelling on the ferry?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, the Government are content otherwise we would not give the information to the House that the information that is given to the House is accurate. However, the hon Member has argumentative reason to believe that the figures may not be accurate. The Government are not going to check every information that the hon Member asserts may be inaccurate in the statistics but certainly if he wishes to write on a particular matter in which he believes that the information is inaccurate, certainly his letter will be passed on to the Government Statistician and a comprehensive reply worked out and provided for him but that is not something that we would wish to do on each and every occasion of our own notion. Certainly if the hon Member has serious reason to doubt the accuracy of information put in the public domain which originates in the Government Statistician and if he wishes to put his detailed reasoning in writing I will certainly have that looked at as an administrative act by the Government Statistician and indeed by his superior within the civil service structure.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But the Government in fact cannot explain the increase of 700 per cent in visitors on the ferry?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not on any grounds that I am personally aware of at this precise moment in time. Either it is a mistake or there is an explanation and as I am not accepting that there is a mistake there must be an explanation and if there is not an explanation there must be a mistake. It is the hon Member's proposition.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government say whether I am right in thinking that in order to have visitors who are Moroccans, in fact, there would have to be visa waivers and in this period there is no, to my knowledge, increase in the availability of visa waivers for visitors from Morocco? Am I correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member should be careful in the use that he makes of that apparently logical statement because, of course, there are many pensioners who come to Gibraltar who would be categorised as visitors yet have visa waivers so a lot of the people that he is describing in his own mind as Moroccan workers for statistical purposes, because they are not actually workers but visiting pensioners coming to collect their pensions, may be in these figures, I am sure are in these figures.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Government do not seriously think that if in fact the monthly visit of Moroccan pensioners accounts for this increase or a significant part of it, that then it must follow that the figure that was being quoted in an earlier question by the Minister for Tourism.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I am not addressing that issue. I have narrowed the point about the logical use that the hon Member seeks to make of the connection between visas and visa waivers and whether somebody is a tourist or a worker.

NO. 405 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA - MOROCCO**

Can Government state whether arrivals by sea from Morocco are included in the figure of 9,500 visitor arrivals by sea for 1996 shown in Table 8 of the Tourist Survey Report 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

In both cases arrivals by sea from Morocco are included.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 402 AND 405 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is anyone else included? The answers that we get to different questions do not seem quite to match up. "Included" seems to give the impression that the visitors from Morocco do not account for the whole of the 20,700 and the whole of the 9,500.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is in answer to the question that was formulated. The question asked, "Can Government state whether arrivals by sea from Morocco are included...?" and the answer slavishly follows the same sentence construction and word choice as the question, "In both cases arrivals by sea are included". The point that the hon Member is making is that given that we think that it is the only item it might have said, "in both cases the figures constitute exclusively arrivals by sea from Morocco". Is that the point that he is making?

HON J J BOSSANO:

If not can we know if they are included, how many of the 20,700 in 1997 and how many of the 9,500 in 1996 are in fact from Morocco, if they are not the whole of it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Obviously it will not surprise the hon Member that we will not have that information available here but if he wants a breakdown, indeed if there is a breakdown that we have for that figure, I am sure the Minister will provide it to him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government confirm that they have not had an indication in the answer that there is another source? Am I right in assuming that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, Table 8 of the survey is all three – cruise ships, yachts and others and I suppose in answer to the question whether the whole of Table 8 includes visitors from Morocco then the answer is correctly formulated.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Whether they are included in the figure of 20,700 and that figure is at the bottom of the column which says “other visitors by sea” and therefore excludes yachts and cruise liners.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I agree. The question is targeted specifically at the others as opposed to the first two.

NO. 406 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - VISITOR ARRIVALS BY SEA**

Can Government state of the 20,700 visitor arrivals by sea shown in Table 8 of the Tourist Survey 1997, how many are estimated to have stayed in hotels and the average bed nights stayed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Out of the 20,700 visitor arrivals by sea from Morocco in 1997, it is estimated that approximately 11,000 stayed in hotels and the average bed nights stayed per visitor was estimated at four nights.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 406 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government explain why the estimated length of staying in the hotels was two nights in 1996 and four nights in 1997?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

My understanding is that the average bed nights for visitors staying in hotels from Morocco has always been based on the average bed nights per visitor from visitors coming from Spain. That increased from two to four nights from 1996 to 1997 so the average bed nights for arrivals from Morocco increased from two to four.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So I am correct in stating that the position is that as a result of conducting interviews at the frontier which led the Statistics office to the conclusion that of the Spaniards who were crossing into Gibraltar and staying in hotels they were staying for four nights instead of two, they made the assumption that those who stepped off the ferry were also staying four nights instead of two with no other evidence to indicate that this was true?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct, this has always been the way it has been done traditionally.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am afraid the Minister is wrong. If in fact he cares to find out why it was always the same up to 1995 he will find that it was not as a result of interviews at the frontier but as a result of the residual figure and the residual figure was divided by a notional number and it was simply to make sure that there was no discrepancy between the survey result and the hotel reports. So if he cares to check he will find that up to 1995 the statement that he has just made is not accurate and that this is a new approach adopted in 1996



where an assumption is made that because one asks somebody at the frontier, "Are you going to stay in a hotel and for how long?" one then assumes that the person from Morocco will stay the same as the person who has answered the interview at the frontier. Before that all that was happening was that one was dividing the number of guest nights the hotel had by the number of people one assumed were coming in and one arrived at a figure which was 2.6 nights which did not mean anything except that the results squared. Will the Minister look into that and find if it is accurate?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the result is still the same, is it not? The result is still the same that for empirical purposes the same factor was attributed to the arrival over the border, which incidentally are not just Spaniards it is just I think the hon Member is using language loosely, people coming from Spain across the land frontier and people who arrive by ferry from Morocco. The same factor was always used, whatever factor was attributed to the frontier crosser was attributed to the ferry arrival.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But the factor that was arrived at by an arithmetical calculation did not result in a discrepancy between the estimate produced by the hotels of guest nights sold and the estimate produced by the interviews of guest nights sold because the reason why the interview is producing an estimate is because in fact what the Minister is telling us, will he confirm, is that the alleged 100 per cent increase in expenditure between 1996 and 1997 is principally due to arrivals from Morocco? Is that no correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think so, not just from Morocco because, of course, the figures arrivals from Spain were increased from two to four as well in the average stay. The tourist expenditure was principally due to the fact but not exclusively that a factor of four instead of two days was used as the average length of stay for visitors from Spain as well as visitors from Morocco.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But is the Government not aware that the visitors from Spain are assumed to be down and the visitors from Morocco are assumed to be up and therefore the factor of four is being added to a factor of 100 per cent increase in arrivals in numbers? Do the Government realistically think that if we had had, in 1997, 44,000 guest nights sold to people coming off the ferry the hotels would not know it? That is what the implications are of the discrepancy between the two figures. Do the Government really believe that people staying in hotels who arrived in Gibraltar on the ferry from Morocco bought 10,000 guest nights, which is 5,000 people buying two nights, in 1996 and 44,000 guest nights in 1997? Why is the Minister bothering to go to London to promote Gibraltar he should go to Morocco.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We are doing precisely that. The points that the hon Member I think omits to take into consideration when he makes all these statistical points is that the Government do not make a judgement on the relative worth of one statistics from one source or from another, the Government publish both. The statistics are published and the hon Member and others are at liberty to make their own value judgements on the figures such as they please. The Government do not create any of the figures except those that are created

on the basis of statistical assumptions by the Statistics Office. We are relying on exactly the same Statistics Office as he had and we have not given any policy instructions to the Statistics Office to perform their science of surveying and statistics creation in any different way. Therefore the hon Member, if he challenges the validity of the statistics, really what he is doing is challenging the skill and competence applied by the Government's Statistician to this statistical exercise and, of course, that would be a very different matter which we would have to look at as well but the hon Member has to acknowledge that these are statistics which are created by professional statisticians without any form of guidance from political Government.

HON J J BOSSANO:

First of all, will the Chief Minister accept that he is incorrect in saying that these are published figures because they are not published figures, they are figures that were produced subsequent to the last meeting of the House because they were not available to the Minister in the House and then after they were produced in respect of 1997 when I asked for the comparable figures for 1996 which I had asked for in the House I was told that I could have them in confidence both 1996 and 1997. I do not see why because it is in fact very difficult, this is why we have to get the information given to us in this House because for reasons best known to them they have decided that they did not want the calculation to arrive at the figure but that calculation was not in the public domain. That is to say, the only figure.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There never has been. No Government have ever published the basis upon which statisticians calculate the figures, what they do is publish the figures.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figures that have been published in the Tourist Survey for 1995 and the Tourist Survey for 1996 and the Tourist Survey for 1997, when one looks at the numbers in those surveys those numbers match except in 1996 and 1997, this is why we have raised the question. They match always except those. I know the Minister says he has got a letter with different figures and I am sure that we will be able to demonstrate the accuracy of what I am saying, I could do it now by reference to what is public. Therefore what I am saying is if the apparent 100 per cent increase in money spent seems strange and is questioned and it appears that the explanation that he has given is based on an assumption that there has been an increase of 100 per cent in tourist spending because there has been 100 per cent increase in the numbers arriving from Morocco and staying in hotels, and 100 per cent increase in the duration of their stay and that this is by far the most extraordinary increase that there has been and the hoteliers do not confirm that there has been a 400 per cent occupancy increase from the ferry service, then irrespective of the methodology or anything else it is clearly something that needs to be investigated so that the accuracy of the information is beyond question because these are the figures that are being quoted publicly by the Government and are the figures that are supposed to go into all sorts of other calculations about the economy of Gibraltar.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, if the hon Member is saying that the figures show fluctuation from one year to the other which he regards as extraordinary and the accuracy of which he therefore doubts in the absence of an explanation, then I think it is entirely legitimate of him to ask for the Statistician to explain that fluctuation from one year to the other so that he can revisit the issue of whether it is extraordinary but real or whether it is extraordinary and unreal. Certainly I think that the Statistician should be invited to explain this 100 per cent increase which his figures suggest and certainly the Government have no difficulty with doing that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I will take up that invitation because I am sure that the matter will be cleared up and the matter will be corrected. Is it not reasonable that the Minister for Tourism who, after all, is in the business of bringing people to hotels, does he not find it odd that according to the figures that he is quoting the numbers of people staying in hotels who arrive by sea from Morocco exceeded by 20 per cent the numbers who arrived by air from UK and that his calculations of the improved performance in the industry is based on that assumption? One would have thought that in looking at that figure the question would arise in the mind of somebody that has got his hand on the pulse of the industry, either the hotels are full of people who have just come in from the ferry service or they are not. Where are they? The hoteliers do not seem to know about them.

NO. 407 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA - MOROCCO**

Can Government state, in respect of 1995, 1996 and 1997, how many persons arrived by sea from Morocco and how many of these for each year are estimated to have stayed in hotels?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

In 1995, 3,100 visitors arrived by sea from Morocco. Of these it is estimated that around 550 stayed in an hotel.

The figures for 1996 were 9,500 arrivals, with about 5,200 visitors staying in hotels.

In 1997, there were 20,700 arrivals, with about 11,000 visitors staying at hotels.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 407 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Other than this estimate, has the Minister for Tourism had any indication that between 1995 and 1997 the numbers of visitors from Morocco in the hotels went up from 550 to 11,000? Would the Minister not agree that an increase of tourists from one particular source of this magnitude would draw some attention?

MR SPEAKER:

You do not want to reply? Next question.

NO. 408 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA - MOROCCO**

Can Government state what is the estimated expenditure by persons staying in hotels who arrived by sea from Morocco in 1995, 1996 and 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The estimated expenditure by persons staying in hotels who arrived by sea from Morocco was estimated at around £100,000 in 1995; £700,000 in 1996; and £3.1 million in 1997.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 408 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister not agree that the £3 million accounts for a significant percentage of the improvement in the figure that he believes to be accurate of £17 million expenditure in 1997?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is the same point that the hon Member is making except that this is the expenditure manifestation of the same point that he made in respect of the previous question in respect of arrivals and visitors. The only thing that can be said if there is a mistake in these figures, at least they are consistently extrapolated

HON J J BOSSANO:

They are all mistaken. Does the Minister have the per diem expenditure which has been used to arrive at these figures, the daily expenditure? The average expenditure per person per day?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The average expenditure per person per day in 1995 it was calculated to be £45 in respect of accommodation and £24 making a total of £69; in 1996 the hotel increased to £46 for accommodation and £25 expenditure; and in 1997 the figures are exactly the same, £46 for accommodation and £25 for any other expenditure.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister confirm that the figure of £25 for 1997 is, in fact, the same as is shown in Table 4 of the published Tourist Survey Report which says £25 arrivals from Morocco so that in fact that would indicate that it is all from Morocco notwithstanding that it says in the table "other visitors by sea"?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister explain why in the case of flight departures the figures do not match? I think when I asked him that question in the last House he gave me to understand that the reason was because the figures of people staying in the hotels represented numbers from different sources and I pointed out to him, if he would remember, it was recorded in the Hansard in April, I pointed out to him that the £36 was the highest figure. So can he explain why it is that in the case of visitors from the UK the published figure does not coincide with the figure that has been used in the estimates whereas it does in the case of Morocco and which he indicated it did in the last meeting of the House?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, the difference is because in the Tourist Survey the actual average expenditure per person on the UK flight departures includes passengers that may be travelling to the UK by air who are on transit in Gibraltar and may not actually have been in Gibraltar spending any money as such, whilst in the analysis which I sent him in the letter on the calculation of expenditure by visitors in hotels the figure is £53 and that is based on the surveys that have been conducted by the Statistics Office for people that have actually stayed in hotels so obviously the figure does change as a result of the average, I presume, on the fact that the number of passengers travelling to the UK includes the transit passengers as well.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether this is in fact also an innovation that came in in 1997 and 1996?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I cannot really tell him whether it is an innovation, all I did was request the Government's Statistician to explain to me the discrepancy or what looked to me like a discrepancy and it was pointed out to me why there was a difference in this. Whether the practice has been changed or not I really do not know. This was the answer when requesting information in respect of 1997, I do not know whether it also applies for 1996 or not. Yes, it does as well.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that in 1996 the figure that was used was £34 instead of £53?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I cannot answer on every single survey that is being carried out by the statisticians. The hon Member cannot expect me to be answerable for every answer that is given to every question carried out by the Statistics Office. These are the results that the Government's Statistician produces and I accept them on that basis. The sampling of some of these surveys and the cross-section of the sampling of these surveys is not adequate, that I do realise but that has been historical for many, many years. I have requested information

in respect of the sort of questions that are available of surveys that were carried out in the past to see whether the sampling was any better and the reality is that I am shocked to see some of the reliability of some of the statistics that have been produced historically under his administration. If I can just grab some of the information here that I had pencilled in as a result of my meeting with the Statistics Office.....

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then produce those statistics.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I beg your pardon?

HON J J BOSSANO:

The person who supplied the statistics which shocked him is the person who actually calculated them so why did he not tell him that he was shocked when he got them?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The idea that in 1992 the statistics that were produced for the Tourist Survey Report were based on 21 surveys being carried out at hotels is a very, very small sample; 21 questions in a whole year. How can one have in 1993 and 1994 school students carrying out surveys in April and May, two single months of the whole year, of a total of something like 270 – I stand to be corrected on that figure – but the actual amount of questionnaires that were carried out, it just does not show a good cross section of the all-year round type of situation and the numbers that are being used as the basis to produce these reports tends to be questioned but questioned historically, not now but going back a number of years. So I do not know why the hon Member should be questioning every single figure in these reports because at the end of the day they are figures that have been historically worked out in a very unsympathetic way.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The reason why I am questioning it is because I get paid to ask the questions and he gets paid to answer them, it is as simple as that and when we were in Government we were entitled to be questioned. I am not asking him about what happened 10 years ago or the method of sampling or whether it is good, bad or indifferent. I am asking specifically about three years: 1995, 1996 and 1997. Can the Minister confirm, given the explanation he gave to my previous supplementary, that the published figure in 1995 in Table 4 is £34 expenditure per person per day and the figure used to calculate expenditure in the survey is £34 per person per day? In 1996 the published figure is £39 but the unpublished figure is £34 and in 1997 the published figure is £36, so it goes down but the unpublished figure goes up to £53. This is not a different point, this is a different element. That is to say, I am trying to demonstrate to the House, for the benefit of the Minister, what I failed to demonstrate in my correspondence with him because he did not accept the point, that the alleged increase is the result of three elements: a discrepancy in numbers, a discrepancy in average daily expenditure and a discrepancy in length of stay and that such discrepancy exists for 1996 and 1997 and they do not exist for 1995.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the Government do not accept what the hon Member calls discrepancies. He may wish to call them discrepancies, I would wish to call them variables; in both cases they have been produced by statisticians, he is assuming that they are in error, I am not willing to accept that they are in error, all I am saying to the hon Member is that the people used to work out these statistics and the empirical statistic gathering techniques that they have used to put together the figures which eventually become these reports which are now tabled in the House, have not varied between now and as far as I am aware the last 10 years. The hon Member wishes to pick on 1995, 1996 and 1997 to start to cast out on a system which he presided over for eight years and chose to do nothing to correct. The hon Member may be right in believing, indeed I have no doubt judging by the nonsense that has historically been published in Gibraltar as a poor excuse for national accounts, GDP and GNP..... [HON J J BOSSANO: *Is that driven by the statistician, that remark?*] No, because there is a difference between the skill that one applies to making the calculation and the reliability of the information gathering techniques. What is deficient in Gibraltar is not the techniques that they apply when they have the information in hand, it is the legion amateurishness of the systems that have always been in place in Gibraltar for gathering information in the first place, whether it is about PAYE records, unemployment, national accounts or tourism, the techniques applied for collating information are such which casts serious doubt of the reliability of the raw material that is eventually applied by the statisticians to the formula. The hon Member must be aware that this is the view that the statisticians have been expressing for many, many years especially in relation to the national account figures where they have now stopped publishing them because they say that there is at least £100 million which they cannot find and whereas they have been required to publish these things in the past, this Government's view is that we do not require the statisticians to publish figures in which they, by their own admission, have no confidence. The hon Member may well be right in saying that what is now required is a complete overhaul of the techniques of the computerisation of the information gathering apparatus available to the Government and I am willing to take responsibility, given that I am the Government of the day, to do that as we are already doing in the computerisation of Government. So all those questions that the Hon Mr. Mor and the Hon Mr. Baldachino asked this morning which the Government could not answer because the information is not available because it is not kept in that form, in future years when the Government's computerisation programme has been put in place it will be available. But what I really do not think the hon Member is at liberty to do and in this respect I make the distinction between the main point that I am making and one of the points that the hon Member is making is that he doubts the reasonableness of one or two possibly of the assumptions that have been made. Save for that point, I do not think it is open to the hon Member to launch the attack that he has launched on the whole credibility of the statistics published by the same machinery, applying the same techniques, presumably as free from political interference as they were in the days when he was in Government and that is what I am saying, that he cannot now separate the criticism of the system post-1996 from the criticism of the system pre-1996.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In that long speech the Chief Minister has not addressed the question that I am asking and my question is a very simple one. My question is, given the explanation that the Minister read out for the figure of expenditure for 1997, average daily expenditure, can they explain to me, given that they say that everything is the same as it used to be, why it is that in 1995 the figure published in the survey is the figure used to calculate the expenditure and it is not in 1996 or in 1997? It is a very simple question, do they not know the answer?



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government cannot explain it because the decision was not made by the Government, it was made by the statistician in the exercise of his professional judgement and the Government cannot explain why these statistics are matters of statutory obligation, there is a statutory obligation on the statistician to produce these figures, these are not figures that the Government bring to this House as a matter of political judgement of the Government of this day, these are figures produced by the professional civil servants available to the Government for this purpose and tabled in this House pursuant to statutory obligations. If the hon Member is asking me or any one of my Ministerial Colleagues for us personally to explain why some public official has done this or that in the exercise of his public duty, the answer is that I cannot explain it but I am willing to repeat what I told him 20 minutes ago, that I am sufficiently interested in the answers to his questions to cause the statistician to provide the explanation so that we can both read it. That is where we were half an hour ago and we are going to get no further by simply pursuing this line. The Government cannot and therefore will not explain why the statistician has chosen to do it differently, if indeed he has as the hon Member suggests.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister accept that if a report is tabled in this House we are entitled, having read the report, to question all the figures that are in it and if the Minister then says, in answer to a question that it is being done the same today as it was being done before 1996, then I am entitled to say, "If you claim that it was being done how is it that I can demonstrate to you that in 1995 the figure in the House was £34 and the figure in the calculation was £34 but that it was not in 1996 and it was not in 1997? Since in fact the difference that exists in 1996 and 1997 is what produces the 100 per cent increase which you are claiming the credit for, you are claiming the credit for the 100 per cent increase but not claiming the responsibility for the accuracy of the calculation." The Minister must be satisfied when he is talking about 100 per cent increase that is not capable of being challenged and we are challenging it because we have spent many, many months trying to do it some other way and we have to wait for the opportunity that the House gave us.

MR SPEAKER:

You have finished, the Chief Minister has the last word and we will go to another question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

All Members in the House are entitled to rely on the accuracy and validity of officially published statistics and that includes Members in the Government since we do not all engage in the administrative function of statistics creation. What the hon Member is saying is that he doubts the accuracy and therefore the validity and reliability of officially published statistics and he asks Ministers to explain the reasons for things that he alleges are deficiencies. Well, I cannot commit the Government to provide explanations on the basis of assertions which he makes of things to be discrepancies which we have not conceded as a discrepancy because if indeed there is not a discrepancy, there cannot be an explanation because there is nothing to explain. So the first thing that needs to be established is whether or not the hon Member's primary assertion that there is some heinous inaccuracy in these statistics is accurate.....

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am bringing the matter to his attention and quoting the reports.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, fine, he is bringing it to my attention and I have told him that I am going to get the Government's Statistician to explain his statistics but he is going beyond that. He is not asking me to get the explanation from the statistician, he is asking us to explain the situation now and that is not possible and it is not going to happen. I told the hon Member half an hour ago what we were going to do about it.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 409 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - ENTRY POINTS - WORKS**

Have Government concluded their programmed works to the entry points of Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

No.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 409 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Could the Minister indicate by when Government expect those works to be completed?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The Air Terminal and the cruise liner and North Mole Avenue as far as Sir William Jackson Grove and part of Sir Winston Churchill Avenue has been finished although Sir Winston Churchill Avenue will require resurfacing. A tender has recently been awarded for the Ferry Terminal and should be completed in April next year. Then obviously there are the other entry points which is the Cruise Terminal and the Customs and Immigration building at the land frontier; the extension of the North Mole Avenue to Watergardens and the extension of the road from Watergardens to Glacis gates which will form part of the 1999/2000 beautification programme. The Coach Park, the Customs and Immigration building and the extension of the North Mole Avenue to Watergardens should be completed during this financial year.

NO. 410 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - YACHT ARRIVALS**

How many yacht arrivals have been recorded in the period 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of yachts which arrived at Gibraltar from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998 was 1,437. Figures for July and August have not yet been compiled.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 410 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

How does the number of visitors of yacht arrivals to the 31<sup>st</sup> June 1998 compare with previous years?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Is the hon Member asking for a comparison of yacht arrivals or people arriving by yacht?

HON A J ISOLA:

Yacht arrivals.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Covering the period January to June 1997, the figure was 1,428; in 1996 the figures January to June was 1,412 and 1995 January to June was 1,378.

NO. 411 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**RE-INTRODUCTION OF LONDON HEATHROW FLIGHTS**

What steps have Government taken to re-introduce flights to Gibraltar from London Heathrow?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The Government have taken the steps that are to be expected in order to try and re-introduce London Heathrow flights. I have been discussing the matter with GB Airways and other airlines. I will also be holding talks with potential new operators on the Gibraltar route in London later this month during the Routes '98 Conference. This Conference is designed to put airports in touch with airlines to discuss the opportunities that are available in the form of new routes.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 411 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Does the Minister hold out any hope of those operators introducing flights to Heathrow? Is it likely or does he believe there is no chance at all?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Let me say that representations to GB Airways have been made and there are possibilities but at the end of the day these are commercial decisions that have to be taken by the airline. We traditionally have put pressure, not just the Government but other bodies, in order for GB Airways to reduce their fares to Gibraltar and therefore they need to look at the most economical route to operate from the UK and obviously Gatwick represents a far more economical airport than Heathrow. Nevertheless Government attach a lot of importance to the connection between Gibraltar and London Heathrow and will continue to pursue it. Whether success will be eventually achieved the hon Member's guess is just as good as mine.

HON A J ISOLA:

My guess is not very good. Obviously in respect of GB Airways as the Minister has just said, the move to Gatwick airport by GB Airways is a commercial decision, my own personal view is that it is unlikely that they will re-introduce Heathrow flights because all their operations are centred at Gatwick airport and bearing that in mind, are Government considering or have they considered offering the same assistance as they did to Monarch when it first came to Gibraltar to any possible new operators that may contemplate such a move to fly Gibraltar Heathrow?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

We have not contemplated.

NO. 412 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - MADRID OFFICE**

Have any appointments been made in respect of the proposed Tourist Office in Madrid?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

No.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 412 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that interviews have already been carried out, I think that was the answer I have had in the past?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Interviews were carried out in November 1997 and a shortlist of candidates was approved by the selection board. However, the appointments have not taken place because there was no point in offering a job to somebody if an office was not available. The Licencia de Apertura has now been granted by the Madrid Municipal Authorities and this happened at the end of July. We are quite hopeful that the office should start operation possibly towards the end of October when we will be making the relevant appointments very shortly.

HON A J ISOLA:

Will the appointments that are made very shortly consist of people who were on that list in November 1997 and interviewed or are there people from outside that list who will be considered?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government cannot answer the last part of this question in the affirmative, it may turn out to be like that but depending on whether the Government change our view about the seniority and calibre of the person who should man that office it may or may not be possible to fill the post from the persons who have applied. If the Government take the view that none of the applicants are suitable, given any upgrading of the job specifications, in other words, if Government change our mind about the nature of the job there would be a readvertising process so either he will come from the existing selection process or from a new selection process started from scratch if there is any substantial upgrading of the job's specifications.

HON A J ISOLA:

The previous answer I received from the Minister for Tourism was that the appointments would be made shortly. Are the appointments that the Chief Minister is referring to in addition to those, are they the same ones?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it applies mainly to one of the posts, the lower of the posts will very likely be filled from the selection process.

HON A J ISOLA:

How many posts, are we still talking in terms of two posts?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

NO. 413 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOURISM - MARKETING CAMPAIGN IN SPAIN**

Which company have Government contracted for their marketing campaign in Spain and at what cost?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The company contracted is Copywrite, and the total cost is £16,983.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 413 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Is this contract for the promotion that the Government carried out in Spain in July and August? Is it restricted to that or does it extend to other aspects of marketing?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, it is totally restricted to the magazine advertising and billboards that was carried out in July and August.

HON A J ISOLA:

On what basis was this contract awarded? Was it a proposal from them to Government or did Government offer it out to a number of people on tender or any other way?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

There was a concept paper produced and it was offered to Copywrite and another company which had been used in the past Monte Publicidad and the proposals that were put by Copywrite were more competitive so we decided to go down the Copywrite proposal.

HON A J ISOLA:

So it was offered to Copywrite and Monte Publicidad, the one that was used previously. Was it offered to any other Gibraltar company or just those two companies, one from Spain and one from Gibraltar?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, they were only offered to these two companies because the availability of billboards in Spain is not really open to every company, it is fairly restricted, it is very much a closed shop and having talked to a number of others, and I mean 12, the idea of the billboards was not something of an option so we were able to get proposals from only these two entities.



NO. 414 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**PEDESTRIANISATION - PHASE I**

Has Phase I of the pedestrianisation works been passed on to the Government by the contractor?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

No.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 414 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister still waiting for the final modifications that were announced by the Hon Mr Azopardi in this House the last time I raised the issue for that to be completed and is that why Phase I has not been handed over?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I cannot recall what my Colleague, the Hon Keith Azopardi, said in this House but what I can say is that Phase I is the side streets off Main Street and these have not been handed over yet as there are certain aspects of lighting and adding small raised kerbs along Tuckey's Lane that require to be put in place and so therefore once the snagging is complete in addition to what I have said, obviously then Phase I will have been completed but until then it has not been handed over yet.

HON J C PEREZ:

Given that I understand that the work was to have been completed in December or January, does the Minister not think that an unreasonably long time has taken place between when the works were supposed to have finished and when these minor aspects have to be put in place? Is there not a procedure for this or a demand in the contract that these things should be done as quickly as possible?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, the hon Member is right in making that comment. However, the situation as it stands today is that there have been problems with the lighting in some of the area and the question of the kerbs along Tuckey's Lane have been a problem not just from the point of view of the resurfacing of the road but the actual property owners and landlords. The same can be said of the lighting because some of the lighting had to be fixed to the walls of some of the properties and that has meant getting permission from landlords et cetera which has been rather cumbersome. But we are now on the final stages of the marathon.

HON J C PEREZ:

So what the Minister is saying is that it is not all the fault of the contractor, that there are other people involved and that the delays are other than on the part of the contractor?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

NO. 415 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**I&D FUND - HEAD 103, SUBHEAD 6**

Is it the intention of Government to contract out all of the works paid from Head 103, subhead 6 in the Improvement and Development Fund?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Yes.

ORAL

NO. 416 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**I&D FUND - HEAD 103, SUBHEAD 6**

Can Government state how much of the £1 million in the Improvement and Development Fund under Head 103, subhead 6, has already been spent in the financial year and on what works?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The amount spent to date is £71,265.

This is made up as follows:

Upper Rock resurfacing (Phase I)	£51,878
Europort Avenue	£19,388

NO. 417 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - ROAD WORKS**

Can Government give details of the road construction and resurfacing programme for the current financial year with an order of costs for each of the projects?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The road construction and resurfacing programme has this year been divided into two parts. One part consists of the works to be carried out by contract under the Improvement and Development Fund. The second part consists of works of a smaller nature and these will be carried out by the Department's Direct Labour force.

Under the Improvement and Development Fund, the following works have been included:

- 1 Winston Churchill Avenue, from the Sundial Roundabout to Corral Road. Reconstruction of the inner lanes and total resurfacing.
- 2 Upper Rock Road Resurfacing. Works let out under the original tender were completed at a cost of £51,878.01.
- 3 Upper Rock Roads Resurfacing, extension to contract (phase II). Works on Queen's Road completed and about to start at Signal Hill up to the Cable Car Station.
- 4 North Mole Road, from Waterport Road to the roundabout at the junction with Europort Avenue. The works involve road construction, road widening and complete resurfacing

For obvious reasons, the order of cost of the projects to be let out to contract have not been included.

Resurfacing programme for the Department's Direct Labour

- 1 Much emphasis is now being placed on maintenance works, such as patching, reinstatements et cetera so the Department's Direct Labour has spent considerable time on such works. With respect to resurfacing works the following programme will be undertaken.

Works completed and in progress -

- 2 Glacis Road, form Waterport Roundabout to the junction with the new Marina link road has been overlaid and the section up to Winston Churchill Avenue will be overlaid once the works at Winston Churchill Avenue have been completed. Order of cost £23,000.
- 3 Turnbull's Lane. Resurfacing of the lane has been completed at a cost of £6,000.

Works to be carried out -

- 4 Naval Hospital Hill, from junction with Buena Vista Road to Europa Road. Order of cost £16,500.
- 5 South Barrack Road (south). Order of cost £40,500.
- 6 Buena Vista Road. Order of cost £16,500.
- 7 George's Lane. Order of cost £9,000.
- 8 Minor resurfacing as part of the maintenance programme will also be undertaken, such as a small section at Irish Town, to the north of Parliament Lane at an order of cost of £2,100.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 417 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister will probably agree with me, given the reply that I have had to the three last questions, that certainly if everything that is going to be used from Head 103, subhead 6, is going out to contract and of the £1 million he has only spent £71,000 from April this year and that there are four contracts pending, certainly it is ambitious to expect the Minister to spend the whole or even half of the £1 million provided in the Estimates for road resurfacing and construction.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We will expect to spend certainly more than half, at present rate we would hope to get to about three quarters and we are going to try jolly hard in the last six months, this is one of the projects that we wish to give some impetus to in the remaining part of the year but the hon Member is right, it seems unlikely that we will get through the whole £1 million. One of the problems is that there are not enough companies with the capability to do this type of work to have several companies working on road resurfacing at the same time, what tends to happen is that one company tends to win most of the contracts and then they do not have the capability to do several jobs at the same time.

HON J C PEREZ:

One tends to get the opposite story, that there are many companies willing to do it and only one gets them.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

But the reason why that company gets it is because it wins all the tender processes. Before only one company..... [*HON J C PEREZ: but certainly more than one company applies for the tender.*] Before, in years gone by, one company tendered to get them but without tender. [*HON J C PEREZ: most of the work was done by direct labour.*]

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it correct that when the tender goes out that it specifies a starting date? Taking up what the Chief Minister has said, if there are tenders coming out is one of the conditions of the tender that he has to start by a certain date?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, there was invariably a contract period indicated in the invitation to tender that is more usually the case but I just wish that we had the machinery to police a system like the hon Member is describing which would certainly be much more efficient and would get much more done much more quickly. The reality of it is that we struggle to produce the documentation and to carry out the tender procedures even on the basis that it is presently done.

NO. 418 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - ROAD WORKS - UPPER ROCK**

Can Government explain why it was decided to carry out road works in the Upper Rock during the month of August at the peak of the tourist season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The resurfacing works at Queen's Road were undertaken in August 1998 as an extension of the original contract as only one contractor tendered for the Upper Rock works in hot asphalt. The Contractor agreed to carry out these additional works at the same rate and conditions as the original tender. Queen's Road was patched as part of the original contract, but it was found that other potholes were forming and the road was deteriorating quickly. Therefore, a decision was taken to resurface this road immediately instead of at a later date as originally programmed. The date for the works was agreed in consultation with Sights Management and the Gibraltar Tourist Board who provided the slot when it was most convenient. An alternative route was provided for vehicular traffic while the works were in progress. These works have now been completed and the contractor will soon commence resurfacing works at Signal Hill up to the Upper Cable Car Station.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 418 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister is aware that during the works many of the tourist coaches and taxis could not get up to the Apes Den? I am asking not because I do not want the works to be done, in answer to a previous question the Minister said that there would be co-ordination in order to affect as least as possible the tourism during the tourist season, August and September are obviously two months where there is a lot of tourism and I am questioning the judgement of doing it in the middle of August when tourists could not get to the Apes Den as a result of the works. I am not questioning that the work needed to be done or that it should not have been done.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly the Government are aware that substantial inconvenience was caused. The reason for that is that the contractor had finished Phase I and the Government were advised that Phase II would be cheaper if the contractor could just carry on on site given that he was already mobilised on site up there and that for the contractor to have demobilised, gone away and then remobilised again several months later would have made it a brand new job and that the price and the quotation would have been higher. That is the reason, the Government made the decision in the knowledge that it was not ideally the time of the year to have done this work but took the risk and pressed ahead in order to obtain savings on the cost.



NO. 419 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - CASEMATES SQUARE PROJECT**

When is it envisaged that Casemates will be closed permanently to vehicular traffic if Government proceed with the final phase of the traffic changes announced in January?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Casemates Square is already permanently closed to vehicular traffic, other than deliveries in one segment.

Once the beautification project gets under way, Casemates roadway will be permanently closed to vehicular traffic. There is not as yet a specific date set for works to commence in the area of Casemates roadway.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 419 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Has the Minister not got an inkling of it, whether it is going to take six months, a year? The excavation works started and have been completed, the project is said by Government to start to begin. Obviously they should have at least an idea of when they expect the road to be closed permanently.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is difficult because although the tender process is almost complete, indeed I think the tender closing date is now passed and the tender bids are in. It is not until the Government allocate the tender to one particular contractor and agree with that contractor the phasing and the programming of the works which are scheduled to last in excess of one year, one year and three months I think is the latest estimate that I have heard, that it will not be possible to know when it will be necessary for the Square to be closed. There are several aspects of the works and it will not be necessary to close the roadway immediately that the contractor moves on site necessarily and it is not until the execution of the works programme and that is agreed between the successful contractor and the Government officials involved that it will be possible to make the decision but certainly that exercise of phasing the works with the successful contractor will be taking place during the next fortnight.

HON J C PEREZ:

But once the road is closed is it the intention of the Government not to re-open it again as part of the scheme? That is what Phase III of the Government changes announced in January mean.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, that is the intention which is not to say that once the road is closed to allow work in a particular corner of the Square, it will necessarily be kept closed. It may be re-opened during the continuance of the works...*[HON J C PEREZ: But not after completion.]* Yes, and the full pedestrianisation may be delayed until the project is finished.

NO. 420 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - SIR HERBERT MILES ROAD**

Is it expected that Sir Herbert Miles Road, from the Caleta Palace Hotel to Dudley Ward tunnel, will be open to vehicular traffic by December this year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Yes.

NO. 421 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - TRAFFIC FLOW**

Do Government still intend to put into effect the remaining phases of the traffic flow changes announced in January or have they now taken heed of the warnings and advice of the Opposition?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Yes, the Government's intention is to implement the remaining phases of the traffic flow changes which will indeed be introduced.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 421 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Has the Minister got any idea when this is going to take place given that the equipment for the changes have been erected since January and when it is expected that the Government would proceed with Phase II?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Government expect to implement some of the remaining phases in the autumn. Let me tell the hon Gentleman that the introduction of these changes are not purely geared on a specific issue as they have other considerations to consider like road resurfacing programmes, et cetera to ensure that there is as little disruption as possible whilst the phases are being introduced and they will be phased in by stages.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

On these changes in the flow of traffic, Hospital Hill will be two ways or will it be just one way? Does that also include the ambulance?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It will be accessible by the ambulance but not by general traffic.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is that going to be one way up or one way down?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If my memory serves me and I am testing it now, that is one way down except for the ambulance which will continue to be able to go up. It is two way for the ambulance but one way down for him and me.

NO. 422 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - DERELICT VEHICLES**

Are Government aware that there are a number of derelict vehicles lying idle in the Port area, in the vicinity of the Liner Terminal?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Derelict vehicles and other unsightly items in the vicinity of the North Mole and the Liner Terminal are being removed on a continuous basis to upgrade the area.

There were recently some derelict vehicles in the area of the Cruise Terminal and these have, of course, been removed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 422 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Yes, I did find out subsequent to the question being put that matters were taken in hand.

NO. 423 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - MOT TESTS**

Will Government state how many vehicles requiring to have passed an MOT test by the 1<sup>st</sup> November as a result of the legislation recently passed, have already undergone the said test?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of vehicles that have passed a roadworthiness test in accordance with Directive 96/96 is 9,450.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 423 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister satisfied that there are enough bookings available between now and the 1<sup>st</sup> November for the vehicles that need to pass the test to be able to do so by that date?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The Government are satisfied that there are enough bookings available to be able to have most of these vehicles tested before the deadline of November this year. However, as the Government notice did say in the Chronicle, it is imperative that people book a test and if they are in possession of a booking then obviously the Police will accept them until the test has been able to be effected.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

How many vehicles are still to take the test, has the Minister got that information?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The figure is 3,133.

HON J C PEREZ:

For next year, I presume, that there will be an average of 350 or 400 more vehicles added to the list that would need to pass the MOT test given that that is the average per year that is sold and therefore they pass on to the category of having four years or more?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Could the hon Member repeat the question?

HON J C PEREZ:

I am saying that every year a proportion of cars become eligible for MOT testing and that the number is increasing, whether they take an MOT test after 10 years or after four years now is neither here nor there, every vehicle after four years would take a test so it is supposed to eliminate the older cars from the road but that is not necessarily the effect of it. I am wondering whether the MOT Test Centre, supposing that everything goes well between now and November and by November/December all the cars that have passed the Mot test, whether there is sufficient capacity to do this which is 12,000 every year? I know they have been done in one year on this occasion.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I have discussed the matter with the Chief Motor Vehicle Examiner and he confirms that there are provisions to be able to intake the additional cars that will have to take the MOT. We also have to take into consideration that a number of them will leave the MOT register as well as a result of being abandoned as derelict or no longer in the public highway. [HON J C PEREZ: *Abandoned in the Minister's Liner Terminal.*] Yes, some of them do end up there.

NO. 424 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - BUS SERVICE STUDY**

Have Government now received the conclusions of the study into the bus service in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

No.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 424 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Has the Minister got an idea when it is that the Committee expects to report to him on this study?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

My understanding is that the Committee has now produced what they term as their penultimate draft and consideration is being given to compile the study very, very, shortly. As the House knows, Mr Brian Clark forms part of this Committee, unfortunately due to illness, he was not able to undertake the function that he was appointed to do with the speed that we would have liked but he is now on board and I am expecting something from this Committee very shortly.



NO. 425 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**TRANSPORT - APPOINTMENT OF INSPECTORS**

When does the Minister for Transport intend to appoint Transport Inspectors and what is to be the method he will use in selecting them?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

It would be inappropriate to appoint Transport Inspectors until such time as the Transport Ordinance and the Transport Regulations come into force. It is envisaged that this will happen during the latter part of this year, but no firm date for this has as yet been set.

No decisions have yet been taken with regard to the method of selection of Transport Inspectors. What has been decided is that there should be two distinct groups of Transport Inspectors: those who will inspect the mechanical and roadworthiness aspects of vehicles and those who will be charged with ensuring that standards are maintained and that a proper service is offered to the public.

**GIBRALTAR**

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**



**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**11<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER, 1998  
(Vol. II)**

**NO. 426 TO NO. 671**

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11<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September 1998 (Vol. II)

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NO. 426 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**CONSTRUCTION TRAINING COURSES**

Can Government state how many places are being offered in each of the disciplines in construction training courses?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

Fifty-two placements are targeted altogether for the new intake in 1998. At this stage six disciplines are being offered with eight to 10 (and not more than 10) trainees per discipline. However, the breakdown for each discipline is not entirely pre-planned but dependent on the dexterity, ability and interests of each trainee and all this is assessed and discussed during the interviews and aptitude tests which will take place soon after the 28<sup>th</sup> September which is the closing date for applications.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 426 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Could the Minister comment on the actual capacity for these courses and how that relates to the uptake when one compares it to last year?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am not entirely clear what the hon Member is getting at but if he asks me to compare with the intake originally, of this particular intake which is now finishing their training, well the intake then was tremendously inflated, we had 134 trainees in January 1996 against all the advice of management and staff in the Training Centre which yielded about a ratio of one instructor, one discipline for 22 trainees which was totally unacceptable.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Minister has said he is not able to say how many places are offered for each discipline this year. How many were offered last year? That was said before so why is it that last year they were able to say how many were offered and this year they are not?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have said exactly how many places are being offered, eight to 10 per discipline.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that he has also said that it depends on the interviews and the abilities and all the rest of it? Is there not a quota of places per discipline which is what the centre is designed to take?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The quota is eight to 10 per discipline. Between eight and 10, it will depend on the interests and the ability and dexterity of the students themselves.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Minister clarify, if it goes to the maximum which is 10 that would mean 80 new entrants, is that correct?

HON DR B A LINARES:

If my mathematics is right, 10 per discipline and there are six disciplines will yield a total of 60.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

How many are still in the training centre, plus the 60, how many will that be in total?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am afraid I need notice of that, I do not know how many from the previous intake are still in the training centre.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Obviously it would be much less than 136, I suppose?

MR SPEAKER:

This hardly arises from the original answer.

HON J J GABAY:

Could the Minister then give his opinion, even if he is not documented on it, as to whether there is a growing demand for such places or whether he spots a decline in applying for the number of available courses?

HON DR B A LINARES:

It is a matter of opinion, as the hon Member rightly puts it, I would have to study the evidence of the applications to be able to see any trends in that respect. I am afraid I am not, at this moment in time, ready for that.

NO. 427 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTRE**

Can Government state how many students have left the Construction Training Centre after having completed their two years training course broken down in each of the disciplines?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

The trainees leaving the Construction Training Centre having completed their two years training are as follows:-

<b>CARPENTERS:-</b>	8 passed at level 2; 2 more at level 2 are pending the submission of their portfolio;
<b>PAINTERS AND DECORATORS:-</b>	6 passed at level 2 1 passed at level 1
<b>PLASTERERS:-</b>	3 passed at level 2 1 failed at level 1
<b>PLUMBERS:-</b>	4 passed at level 2 1 failed at level 2
<b>TILERS:-</b>	4 passed at level 2
<b>BRICKLAYERS:-</b>	3 passed at level 2 1 failed at level 2

This gives a total of 30 trainees who passed at level 2 and seven at level 1 out of an original intake, as I pointed out in the context of the previous question, of approximately 134 trainees who started in January 1996.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 427 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Will the Minister state how many of these qualified students have found employment in the local construction industry?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have not got the data in that respect, I should need notice of that.

HON J J GABAY:

Will the Minister kindly provide me with that information subsequent to this?



HON DR B A LINARES:

By all means.

HON J J GABAY:

Is there any direct follow-up by the centre to place these qualified students in the construction industry locally or are they left entirely to their own devices?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, they are not left to their own devices. There is definitely a structured and systematic follow-up, particularly now through the Training Officer and the Training Unit which we are about to launch and I know that the Training Officer has been already quite active in liaison with the instructors and the management of the Construction Training Centre in finding employment outlets for these trainees.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the NVQ Level 2 the equivalent of the Indentured Apprenticeship in these trades?

HON DR B A LINARES:

It is a difficult and complex question. The comparison between the traditional Indentured Apprenticeships and the new NVQs is a complex thing that I would be happy to get my advisers to put before me but it would be too lengthy to explain here.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister explain whether people who come out with an NVQ 2 are equipped to carry out the job of a qualified tradesman which is what the Indentured Apprentice is set out to do?

HON DR B A LINARES:

As far as the market is concerned in the industry, employers do accept the qualifications of an NVQ as being the equivalent of what they used to get before from the Indentured Apprenticeships.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Am I right in thinking that the training courses that have been announced in the case of the catering industry where we were told in the previous meeting of the House they would come out as a chef and waiter and so on, that was at Level 1, have I understood him correctly?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, I think our aspirations there will be at Level 1 but there is always the open-ended possibility of a Level 2 but it will have to be assessed as we grow over the teething problems that no doubt we will encounter.

MR SPEAKER:

I know I always interrupt you but the thing is it does not arise from the answer. We are talking about the construction industry and you are now talking about potato peelers.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If you will allow me one question you will see how it relates. The Minister has said there are seven people who have come out with Level 1 in the construction trades so can he tell me what those people are qualified, given the answer that he gave about the Level 1 in the catering industry? What the seven who have come out with a Level 1 qualification, what that qualifies them to do?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Going back on the statistics that I gave, one is a painter and decorator; one is a plasterer; I think three are bricklayers – I am trying to work it out from the statistics that I gave earlier – so they are qualified to do bricklaying, painting, decorating at that level of attainment, at the level of an NVQ Level 1.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What I am trying to establish, as a result of the training if we have got 30 people who are considered by the industry to now be trying to be craftsmen, what are the seven people who have attained Level 1 considered by the industry to be capable of undertaking in terms of their employment prospects?

HON J J NETTO:

My recollection is that with an NVQ Level 1 he is classified as semi-skilled and not as a fully fledged tradesman.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Minister state if there is any problem with the work trade in the construction industry due to the way that they are qualified, for example, in Gibraltar is it that the industry still wants masons rather than having bricklayers, plasterers or tilers?

MR SPEAKER:

I have got to disallow this supplementary as it does not arise from the original answer. A supplementary must be on the original answer.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am always happy, as the hon Member knows, to try to search for information for the Opposition but there are areas where I would need notice in order to survey the situation.

NO. 428 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

## EDUCATION - GCSE RESULTS

Can Government state how many male and female students have completed their education this year having obtained three or more GCSE 'O' levels and how many with lesser or no qualifications?

### ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

I assume the question refers to GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) as there is no such thing as a GCSE 'O' Level.

The information requested is as follows:-

138 girls obtained 3 or more GCSEs  
29 girls obtained 2 or 1 GCSEs  
1 girl obtained no GCSE

103 boys obtained 3 or more GCSEs  
46 boys obtained 2 or more GCSEs  
2 boys obtained no GCSE

May I take this opportunity of congratulating the staff and pupils of the Comprehensive Schools for the magnificent results at GCSE this year with a record pass-rate of 69%.

### SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 428 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

In the United Kingdom analysis of the GCSE results, we all know that we used to call them 'O' levels but I am grateful for that final correction, concern has been expressed about what happens to an increasing number of children who obtain no GCSEs or the lower grades in three or four subjects. It would appear from the research that those are relegated really to the unemployment context without much possibility of further education, training or indeed employment. Since it is a growing trend I wonder whether the department has been carrying out a study to follow up on those students who get Fs and Es, particularly in mathematics and English and how employable are they in the local market?

MR SPEAKER:

This does not arise out of the original answer.

HON J J GABAY:

My feeling is, with all due respect, that it is absolutely and directly connected.

MR SPEAKER:

Well I rule that it does not.

HON J J GABAY:

We are talking about education and we want to know exactly what .....

MR SPEAKER:

You can ask the question in another form if you want to.

HON J J GABAY:

Given the results that have been explained by the Minister, has the Minister followed up the career possibilities of those who obtain very few GCSEs and particularly F and G or nothing in mathematics or English which, with all due respect, is exactly the same as I have already asked?

MR SPEAKER:

That is very cheeky of you. I have allowed you more freedom than anyone, in fact I even received a complaint from the Chief Minister that you are the blue-eyed boy so that is not fair of you. Anyhow if the Minister wants to answer.

HON J J GABAY:

Let me apologise and thank you for your leniency.

HON DR B A LINARES:

Of course, the Government as a whole are concerned about the fate and the outcome for pupils who do not reach academic standards at GCSE and who nevertheless have to fit into the world of employment. There are a whole number of strategies that we employ to try to assist and enable these pupils, both in training facilities, the Construction Training Centre that we spoke about, the School of Tourism, there is a whole variety of strategies that the Department of Education and Training, together with other departments, employ to try to enable and assist employment of these students.

HON J J GABAY:

May I subsequent to that ask the Minister perhaps to survey in a documented way exactly what has happened to those with the lower grades so that eventually we have some figures on which to comment a little more sensibly rather than saying that there is a structure to cope with it but that we know from example from previous years what has been the result for these youngsters?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have to point out that there is no implication that we have not got the data and the facts concerning this. The only point is that if the hon Member wants to know them he has to give notice, I was not prepared for this. We do have note and data in the department as to the outcome of these pupils who do not get GCSEs.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In his original reply the question asked for the people who had completed their education, does that mean that the numbers that he has given are people who, having obtained those results, have left school or are they people who are carrying on studying and have not completed their education?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The hon Member is referring to the GCSEs?

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, I am.

HON DR B A LINARES:

Some are continuing their education, obviously because they qualified to pursue 'A' level studies; some are seeking employment, I have not got the data with me as to the decision taken by the 138 girls and 103 boys who obtained more than three GCSEs, some will have opted, I think actually there is in tow now because there is still a lot in the pipeline, that the girls having achieved a pass rate at GCSEs and by pass rate we mean grades A, B and C of 75 per cent which is extraordinary, the intake into their sixth form this year is going to put quite a demand on the school's resources.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact from the figures I have been given it is not possible to calculate how many of these will be leaving school this year, of the 138 girls, for example?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Well, the options are open to them. Some may get five or six or seven or eight GCSEs and still decide not to stay in school. This, as I say, is still in the process of decision, interviews are carried out in the schools with all the pupils who obtain more than four or five GCSEs and they are counselled as to whether they should pursue 'A' levels and in what particular subjects and some are counselled to go into the College of Further Education, there is a Careers Advisory Service given to the pupils as a result of their GCSEs and the outcome is nearly ready. I could give the data to the hon Member very soon, there are still some pending and undecided but I have not got the data with me I am afraid.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figures that have been given seem to suggest that everybody who was in the relevant age group sat the GCSE or are there people who left school with no qualifications because they did not sit them?

HON DR B A LINARES:

They are in the minority, a very small group both in the girls school and the boys school who do not sit the GCSEs but they leave at 15 because they find an opening or they decide that way but I have not got the exact numbers but I think I have quoted that number on other occasions in this House and it is always a very small minority.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The original question asked how many had completed their education with no qualification but that element of the question has not been answered, am I correct?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, the hon Member is correct in that context. What I was referring to was those who did not obtain any qualification from those who sat it. I apologise for that, I understood the question in that context and not in the wider context which the Leader of the Opposition has now made.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Presumably the Minister will be able to give us that information?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes.

NO. 429 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - DTI MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

How many students have enrolled for the DTI Management Programme scheduled for September 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

Twenty persons have enrolled for the DTI Management Programme scheduled for September 1998 which in fact has already started. In fact the scheme has been over-subscribed this year and given the great interest shown the Government are considering a second scheme for February 1999 for an additional 20 persons.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 429 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Is the cost of the programme being shouldered entirely by the Government or is it being also partly subsidised by interested companies?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have to confess I will have to check on the reply to that.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Minister tell us whether there will be any qualification obtained at the end of the programme?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, it is a qualification awarded by the School of Business in Durham University.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Are the students employees of any company or is there a mixture between both, employees of companies and just students who will be doing the course?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I understand that the majority are already in employment. Remember that this is aimed at senior management and the participants in this course are already in key posts in different areas of employment in Gibraltar. The terms of the qualification asked for, I did not look at my supplementary briefing here but I do have a note that the potential of going into NVQ Level 5 after submission of a dissertation is available to these students after a one year course.

NO. 430 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - MANDATORY SCHOLARSHIPS**

Will Government state how many mandatory scholarships have been awarded for the academic year 1998/99?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

The hon Member must know that scholarships are awarded in most cases for more than one academic year. This year, as at today, the Department of Education and Training has processed 168 mandatory scholarships. There are a further 47 applications still pending confirmation of a place in university through the clearance process. It is estimated that the final figure of mandatory awards this year will be in the region of 180 to 200. An exact figure should be available by early October.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 430 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

In the last couple of years we have noticed a decline in the number of mandatory scholarships and this would imply, of course, that the number of mandatory scholarships has risen again in relation to the discretionary ones, so would the Minister comment on the reasons for the decline, I think it was 155 and then 159 and now there is a likelihood that it will go up to 200, can he give us some explanation for this, apart from the obvious ones? If there are any subtle reasons for this.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I do not identify any subtle reasons for this or any significant trends. I think those are the variables that will qualify one intake from another from year to year but perhaps it would be interesting to study more in depth, I accept the suggestion.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The estimate that was put for this year was £589,000 which was the same as the estimate put for 1997/98. Can the Minister say whether the figure that he has given means that there will be a need for more funds than the £589,000 estimated?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am afraid I have not done any actuarial analysis of the cost of this because obviously the cost of scholarships are not simplistically estimated by the number of entrants because the maintenance grants are means tested so the final cost is still open to a great deal of variation.



HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that for last year we had a supplementary and it says that it is because the parental contribution was less than estimated so there must be an estimate in the parental contribution and given that in the supplementary it says that last year the result was less than estimated and that it required more money, has he got any indication whether the £589,000, which is a repetition of last year's figure, is going to be enough?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have no reliable estimation or indication because the means testing in respect of parental contribution and all that is still in process. I can tell the hon Member that I am an interested party because my parental contribution has still not been assessed by the department, it has been left to the last I suppose. As I say, the final cost depends very much on the means testing mechanics and this has not been in any way yet finalised.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the £589,000 estimate produced on an average cost per student and a number of students?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, we do have an estimate in that respect. I have not got the figures with me but we normally work on 180 students per year at the cost of about £3,000 maintenance grant for each.

MR SPEAKER:

I have allowed all these supplementaries but they do not arise out of the original answer. Supplementaries are only on the original answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, with all due respect, and I bow to your ruling, if the original answer is how many have been awarded, once we get that information the only kind of supplementary that we can ask is relating what has happened to what was put in the budget which is what we have attempted to do.

MR SPEAKER:

What happened in the past not happening in the future. Next question.

NO. 431 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - NON-MANDATORY SCHOLARSHIPS**

Will Government state how many non-mandatory scholarships have been awarded for the academic year 1998/99?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

This year the Government, on the advice of the Scholarship Awards Committee, have awarded 40 non-mandatory scholarships.

NO. 432 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

## **EDUCATION - NON-MANDATORY SCHOLARSHIPS**

Will Government state for what courses and for what duration have such non-mandatory scholarships been awarded?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

The 40 non-mandatory scholarships this year have been awarded for the following courses:-

- 13 Post-Graduate Certificate of Education of 1 year duration
- 1 BA degree plus the Qualified Teacher Status of 3 years duration
- 3 NNEBs of 2 years duration
- 3 Masters (2 literature + 1 Food Science) of 1 year duration
- 1GNVQ in Health & Social Care of 1 year duration
- 1 First Degree in Ceramics of 3 years duration
- 1LLB – Law of 3 years duration
- 1BA in Counselling & Attitudes Skills Course of 3 years duration
- 1BA in Accounts, Marketing, Business Management of 3 years duration
- 1Bsc in International Disaster Engineering & Management of 4 years duration
- 1BA (Hons) Travel & Tourism with Spanish of 3 years duration
- 1BA (Hons) Media & Spanish of 3 years duration
- 1BEng (Hons) Marine Engineering of 3 years duration
- 1 – a 1 year subsidy for Part II Course of Institute of Legal Executives (ILEX)
- 1 – subsidy for PhD of 1 year
- 1HND in Hotel Catering & Institutional Management of 2 years duration
- 4 Diploma Courses:-
  - 1 in Photography of 1 year duration
  - 1 in HE/Social work of 2 years duration
  - 1 in Marketing Management of 1 year duration
  - 1 in Sports Therapy Studies of 1 year duration
- 2 Postgraduate Diplomas:-
  - 1 in Musical Theatre & Acting of 1 year duration
  - 1 in Performance of 1 year duration
- 1 – a 1 year subsidy for Diploma in ACCA (Association for Chartered Certified Accountants)
- 1 – a 1 year subsidy for Diploma in ICSA (Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators)

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 433 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Given the variety of subjects for which these are awarded and having previously debated the selection guidelines to the Board, could the Minister comment to what extent the selection is based on the individual career aspirations of the individual applicant and to what extent based on local needs? Is there a policy guideline to the Board as to how to balance these two very important factors?

HON DR B A LINARES:

We have debated this before. The guidelines are to the satisfaction of the Members of the Awards Committee. Yes, there is a balance but I would say that there is a prevalence in terms of the relevance of the course to the needs of the market in Gibraltar. Nevertheless, it is flexible enough to allow for very meritorious and deserving students who with a very good track record to pursue their studies into post-graduate work and research like Masters Degrees, as the House will have noticed, there are a number of Masters have been awarded.

NO. 433 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**EDUCATION - TUITION FEES**

Will Government provide figures for the cost to Government of "tuition fees" for the academic year 1998/99?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

No, it is too early to provide figures for the cost to Government of tuition fees for the academic year 1998/99. All the students have to be means tested by the Department of Education and Employment in UK to establish whether they may or may not be eligible for financial support from the Local Education Authority in which their academic institution is situated. This is a complex process whereby the students have to present evidence of their parental and other income – a process which is currently underway but we reckon we will not know the final outcome and its financial implications in terms of total cost to Government until probably the end of the year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 433 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Has the Minister at least some general idea of what might be recouped in terms of these tuition fees which are payable by the LEAs at the other end?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am afraid not. It is still too early to give any significant estimate in that respect.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The £70,000 estimate put in the budget this year, did that contain any element of the new cost or was that based on the fees traditionally paid by Gibraltar?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, the £70,000 has no reference at all to this commitment of the Government towards tuition fees for pupils who may not derive benefit from the Local Education Authority. That is the traditional figure for tuition fees which have traditionally and historically been paid by the Government in respect of Masters Degrees et cetera which have never been paid by the Local Education Authority.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask whether the £126,000 of the forecast outturn of 1997/98 is also that traditional and contains no element of the new system?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes.

NO. 434 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - 'A' LEVELS**

Will Government state how many candidates have taken A-level Spanish (either in year 12 or year 13) in addition to three other 'A' levels?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

In Westside School nine students have taken Spanish in Year 12 this year and will take three more A-levels next year.

In Bayside School 12 students have taken A-level Spanish in Year 12 this year and will take three more A-levels next year.

May I also point out that in Bayside three students have taken Mathematics A-level this year in year 12 gaining high grades and will take three more A-levels next year (which may I say do not include Spanish).

There is a student in Bayside in year 13 who has taken four A-level subjects this year one of which includes Spanish.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 434 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Am I right in assuming, hopefully as a result of some of our exchanges here in the House, that in the Comprehensives it is being promoted now that there should be a one-year course leading to A-level Spanish – what we used to call at the end of the year the Lower Sixth Year, that is year 12 – is there now a policy being instituted not on discouraging students as used to be the case before but of encouraging pupils to attend a one-year course and taken a full complement of three A-levels? Is this policy now in some of our schools?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, the figures speak for themselves, he will agree. However, let me qualify the fact that in terms of counselling and assessing and guidance and advice to the individual students, there is no generic policy that the department will impose on the schools but a lot of that is left to the careers advisers and the tutors in the schools themselves.

HON J J GABAY:

Would the Minister agree that when this happens and Spanish is taken in the first year of the Lower Sixth it gives us a more accurate picture of the performance of our youngsters at A-levels in terms of real performance?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I would agree.

NO. 435 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - 'A' LEVELS**

Will Government state with reference to 'A' level results the percentage achieved in A, B and C grades in each of the subjects taken in our Comprehensives and compare this with the percentage achieved globally in the UK for such subjects?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

The answer to this question can only be presented in the form of a complicated table of results running through individual subjects and different grades and it would be, if I may say so with respect, cumbersome to read out in this House. I do have all the detailed information sought by the hon Member and I would be happy to pass it on to him for his perusal.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 435 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I accept that I would be interested in seeing those figures but let me single out one particular factor which really motivated this question and is, in my opinion, related to it and that is both locally and elsewhere we are very keen on comparing needs and performances and taking pride on our achievement vis-à-vis standards in the UK. In order not to become complacent, I think when we analyse our A-level results we should take into consideration the implications of A-level Spanish. Looking at the Bayside results, for example, if we look at the total A grades obtained we have got 78, it is very imposing. But then we look at Spanish and we realise that 58 of these A grades were for Spanish that leaves us out of an entry of 208 candidates with 20 A grades. The same pattern repeats itself with Bs and the same pattern repeats itself with Westside. This is in no way trying to under-estimate the effort made by teachers and pupils.

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question?

HON J J GABAY:

The question I have already asked and I winded up by saying this as a corollary that it is not really to undermine or under-estimate the efforts made but perhaps then the Minister would agree with me that the point is that we should not become complacent when we quote the number of A grades.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I assure the hon Member that we shall never fall into the sin of complacency.

HON J J GABAY:

I sincerely hope not.

NO. 436 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - NATIONAL LITERACY STRATEGY SCHEME**

Have Government taken up the Literacy Hour in our schools as required in the UK under the National Literacy Strategy Scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

I am happy to inform the hon Member that traditionally our schools have provided our children with substantially more than a daily hour of literacy instruction. Most, if not all schools, provide one and a half hours per day as a minimum.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 436 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Will the Minister not agree that what we are referring to is a particular structured programme which has been imposed generally on most of the schools in the UK and although some have questioned its efficacy, generally it has been praised as having excellent results? This is the reason why I ask this question having raised it before.

HON DR B A LINARES:

The hon Member will be pleased to know that the Department of Education and Training was in receipt of "The National Literacy Strategy - A Framework for Teaching" - to give it its full title - well in advance actually of its official release to UK schools and certainly well before its publication in The Times Educational Supplement and the departmental advisers, of course, are evaluating the techniques and methodologies outlined in the NLS Framework for Teaching and although there is nothing, in our assessment, revolutionary in the NLS Literacy Hour, there is value in some aspects which will be studied by our Heads of English with a view to adopting and adapting some of these ideas and methods at classroom level which is what the hon Member was rightly pointing to, which is exactly what will be done by most schools in UK, after all we are dealing here with what is intentionally only a framework for teaching and not a prescriptive and magical package to be adopted wholesale into our schools.

HON J J GABAY:

Will the Minister agree that the system which is being implemented in the UK is prescriptive?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, I think it is over-prescriptive.

HON J J GABAY:

We were talking about complacency not so long ago in answer to another question.....



MR SPEAKER:

You cannot refer to another question, you can only refer to the answer to this question.

HON J J GABAY:

May I not refer to a question and his answer quite some time ago?

MR SPEAKER:

No.

HON J J GABAY:

I see. Would the Minister then agree that as he has said in the past that there are no scientific or technical reasons to believe that our children require that new dimension? Has he actually researched this to find out whether there is a lead or not? Has it been researched and not just simply general comments as to our standards?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I assure the hon Member and I was only hinting at the complex and elaborate work being done by the departmental advisers in researching all the aspects of literacy both as they emanate from UK directives and initiatives and also as they are being practised in the real classroom here which need, of course, and as I said, traditionally and historically there has been always a great concern in our schools, even before the literacy phobia has arisen in UK, in Gibraltar and I think those of us who have been close to the classrooms know that traditionally and historically our teachers have always been concerned with the mechanics of literacy, with the instructional aspects of literacy and given it a lot of time but they will now adopt new methodologies, new styles which are valuable in the literacy framework for teaching that is now being elaborated, I do not deny.

HON J J GABAY:

The system has actually nothing whatsoever to do with phobias. It reflects an interest on the part of employers in respect of their worry as to the declining standard in literacy. In order not to become complacent on this, has the Minister carried out any particular study as to the opinions of prospective employers in respect of the standards of literacy of children who leave our schools?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The Minister has not, I admit, but my advisers and my departmental technical officers have.

HON J J GABAY:

Is the result of that that all is well?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The hon Member has now made it a habit to accuse us of complacency. I would not accuse him of taking every opportunity to try to depreciate the efforts of our advisers and educators. I think it is not a question that all is well but not that all is ill as he would like to suggest.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it that pupils that fall into the category where when the Minister was Headmaster of Bayside introduced a system where some of the pupils used to be placed in the private sector, with employers and they used to go to the school for two or three days in the week, is that the same category of people that we are talking about? Are those the people who are affected by this?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, this literacy programme in UK is much wider than that and it does not just limit itself to the secondary schooling, it is really going down to the very beginnings of education, particularly in the First Schools, in the primary sector.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

And the system then of the pupils that I have just mentioned is exactly the same as it was when he used to be the Headmaster in Bayside, is that correct?

HON DR B A LINARES:

At the secondary level, in the Comprehensive Schools, there is a system like that where pupils are taken out into the world of work but nevertheless given a grounding in numeracy and literacy in the school in a sort of release type of system.

HON J J GABAY:

In respect of the Minister's last remark.....

MR SPEAKER:

You cannot ask a supplementary on the last remark, you have got to ask a supplementary on the original answer.

HON J J GABAY:

Talking about the National Literacy Strategy, which is the main object of this question.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, the answer, you have got to ask a supplementary to clear the answer.

HON J J GABAY:

Since the answer was that we are doing very well and we do not require it, may I remind the Minister that when.....

MR SPEAKER:

I am sorry, it is not a question of reminding, it is a question of asking a supplementary to clear the answer.

HON J J GABAY:

With all due respect I think an initial statement upon which the question comes as a natural corollary is acceptable unless today we are going to become so strict.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, maybe with the number of questions and answers the time might have come, I hope not.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if you will allow me to say so, given the fact that today, for example, in a number of supplementaries we have been asked to give notice, it is only logical that today's meeting will result in more questions because we have to give notice. Either we have to put a lot of supplementaries or we have to give a lot of notice of questions.

MR SPEAKER:

The rules of the House is that supplementaries are allowed to clear the original answer nothing else.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Also, surely, Mr Speaker, if the original answer, in the judgement of the questioner, does not address the question is that permitted?

MR SPEAKER:

Yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What is missing from the original answer, that was not the question.

MR SPEAKER:

That might be to clear up the original answer but not the original question.

HON J J GABAY:

If I may say, the original reply from the Minister was that we are quite happy as we are and there is no need, at the moment, for having the National Literacy Scheme implemented. Is that not the original answer?

MR SPEAKER:

That was not the original answer. Will you give him the original answer again?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am happy to inform the hon Member that traditionally our schools have provided our children with substantially more than a daily hour of literacy instruction. Most, if not all schools, provide one and a half hours per day as a minimum.

MR SPEAKER:

You can ask a supplementary on that.

HON J J GABAY:

He has not answered the question.

MR SPEAKER:

It does not matter.

HON J J GABAY:

We are talking about a specific.....

MR SPEAKER:

He is perfectly entitled not to answer a question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, on a point of order, I think what the hon Member is not entitled in any event to do is 45 seconds after he has heard the original answer attribute to the answerer sentiments which are not contained in the original answer. The original answer does not say that the Government think everything is fine and therefore for him to start a supplementary with the statement, "Since the Government think that everything is fine" is simply to deceive and mislead the House and listeners and is to attribute to the Minister sentiments which he has not expressed.

MR SPEAKER:

That was a point of order. It is no point of order because I decide the point of order, it is a comment. Ask a question and you will get an answer.

HON J J GABAY:

In terms of what the Chief Minister has said.

MR SPEAKER:

No, forget about the Chief Minister, ask the supplementary.

HON DR B A LINARES:

May I give him the answer before he asks the question.

HON J J GABAY:

After all he, according to you, described me as the blue-eyed boy so let me answer.

MR SPEAKER:

He is the second blue-eyed boy. Ask the supplementary.

HON J J GABAY:

All I want to say.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, all you want to ask.

HON J J GABAY:

All I want to ask is, would the Chief Minister not agree that what is said is one thing but there are implications as well and it is justified to take up these implications?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is not. I personally have no difficulty with it but actually since he asks the question he should know that Standing Orders do not permit questions to be asked which contain an inference. If he is asking a formal question the answer to him is that he is wrong, he is mistaken. He may not ask questions which contain an inference.

HON DR B A LINARES:

For the record, I have to add, that I did in supplementary answers say the following, the departmental advisers are evaluating the techniques and methodologies outlined in the NLS Framework for Teaching and although there is nothing revolutionary in the Literacy Hour, there is value in some aspects which will be studied by our Heads of English with a view to adopting and adapting some of these ideas and methods at classroom level. If that indicates that I am complacent, that we are not attending to the demands of this, then I do not know.

NO. 437 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS**

Will Government state how many pupils (temporarily or permanently) have been excluded from our Comprehensive Schools and explain the grounds for such exclusion during the school year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

One boy was excluded indefinitely, not permanently, from Bayside School. Short-term suspensions (one day to one week) were issued to 13 boys and eight girls. The grounds are usually disciplinary problems, aggression, fighting, disruption in classrooms, there is a whole variety of the normal misdemeanours which become unacceptable in the classroom situation and in the school authoritative structure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 437 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Were any of these cases that have not been specified related to drugs?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have the record here of all the cases of suspension and from the information that I have there is only one case where it was smoking cigarettes and there is, in brackets, hash with a question mark. So there is one case of that but it is not clear whether the smoking crime was, after all smoking is also a bit of a drug, is it not?

MR SPEAKER:

No, it is not.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The pupil that was expelled permanently, was he over the age of 15?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, the boy is not over the age of 15, the date of birth of this boy is June 1984 so he was 14 in June this year.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

If he was younger than 15, have any provisions been made so that he can carry on with his education up to the age of 15?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, of course, provision has been made for this boy. A special individualised programme mostly based on social education and behavioural modification has been planned for this boy with the grounding also of basic numeracy and literacy. This programme is being monitored by specialised teachers from the school outside the school context but in liaison with the Youth Office and the Youth Centre and working together with Social Workers and Youth Workers and, as I say, monitored by the teachers, hopefully this will yield an acceptable result.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Could the Minister confirm then that the education that this young lad is receiving is the same as he would receive if he were at school or would there be any difference?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, I would not say that it is the same in the sense that it is a differentiated type of education. As I say, an individualised programme, it is more tailored to the social and behavioural needs of this boy outside the classroom situation where he is totally disruptive and simply does not fit in that context socially and behaviourally. Nevertheless if what the hon Member is getting at is that the academic underpinning of his education is there, yes.

NO. 438 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - GCSE RESULTS**

Will Government state how many pupils in our Comprehensive Schools failed to get any GCSEs at grades A, B or C, excluding Spanish?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

Twenty-nine Bayside School students out of 151 sitting the exam, to make it clear that we are talking about those who sat the exam, failed to get any GCSEs at grades A\*, A, B and C, excluding Spanish. The corresponding number at Westside School was 21 out of 168.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 438 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

In view of these results, could the Minister comment on the relative performance in English and Maths at grades A, B and C locally and compare them with the United Kingdom since the lists have been published in The Times Educational Supplement?

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a supplementary but if the Minister wants to answer it he can, he has got answers for everything.

HON DR B A LINARES:

We are happy to say that the pass rate at this level, even excluding Spanish, is much higher than the rate in UK at GCSE.

HON J J GABAY:

I question those figures but.....

MR SPEAKER:

That is contrary to the Rules of the House.

HON J J GABAY:

I will put it in the form of a question.



MR SPEAKER:

You put a question on the original answer and nothing else.

HON J J GABAY:

Talking about the original answer, may I ask the Minister that having given me these details about As, Bs and Cs locally, would he then at some convenient moment discuss with me the comparable averages?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The hon Member knows that I am always happy to discuss issues of education with him.

NO. 439 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - MAINTENANCE WORKS IN SCHOOLS**

Will Government state what maintenance works have been carried out in our schools in preparation for the start of the school year, what remains pending and what amount of budgeted funds have been used?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

To give details of all the minor works which have been carried out in our schools during the summer months would be a cumbersome exercise in this House, but I can provide the hon Member with a full and detailed report of all on-going works and those already completed during the summer months.

As regards the cost element included in the question, the actual cost of the works completed during the summer months amount to £160,000.

NO. 440 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

## EDUCATION - SCHOOL HOURS

Have the Government now formulated their policy in respect of the proposals to change the pattern of school hours?

### ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

The Government have not yet formulated our policy in respect of a change in schools hours. The Government set up a Working Group chaired by the Director of Education and Training, whose terms of reference were to make recommendations to Government on the question of school hours. The Group first met on 19 February 1998 and on a number of occasions since. It has wide representation, namely, the Gibraltar Women's Association, the Gibraltar Teachers' Association, Parents' Associations, Headteachers, the Royal Gibraltar Police and the Traffic Commission.

The Group as such has not yet submitted its recommendations to the Government. Some of the individual organisations have submitted separate and distinct proposals. The situation at present is that the Gibraltar Teachers' Association intends to consult its members further on some proposals which the Committee have put to Government but which as yet have not been approved by the membership as a whole.

### SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 440 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Since it is obvious from the answer and the fact that this has been an on-going problem in terms of deciding one way or the other which has serious implications about the style of life in Gibraltar, given the variety of proposals would the Minister not agree that it is most important, apart from the Working Group, for the Government to take an initiative and provide a leadership in one direction or another?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government always provide leadership in the sense that we ultimately make the decision but we like to think that this Government are particularly characterised by the extent to which we seek and consult the views of knowledgeable and affected people before we arrive at that conclusion. I certainly do not accept the inference contained in the hon Member's last intervention which I think insinuates, to put it no more strongly than that, that broad consultation is somehow comparable to lack of leadership. It is not an analysis that this Government would share.

HON J J BOSSANO:

All those additional remarks are permitted in answers but not in questions, am I correct, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

That is right. Well the simple reason is that the question must ask a question on the supplementary. The people who answer one does not know what they are going to answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

And they can do what they like.

MR SPEAKER:

Provided they are within the rules.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If Mr Speaker will allow me for just a few seconds. It is not and nor is it an answer which does not flow directly from the supplementary. I do not accept what the Leader of the Opposition has suggested that somehow the answer was extraordinary in that it did not relate to the supplementary. It relates directly, it is a direct answer to the facts put in the supplementary question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister has used in his answer a reference to inferences in the question and not two minutes ago he was objecting to a previous question from my hon Colleague which he said was relating to inferences from the answer of the Minister for Education. It is a matter of judgement whether the inference is there or not. He read an inference into the question and my hon Colleague had read an inference; if we are being told we already have one and a half hours of literacy as opposed to one hour then that suggests we are okay, there seems to be an equally reasonable inference. It seems to me that either we have the latitude when we have questions that we reply or ask questions about what we think has been said as well as what has been said on both sides or on neither side.

MR SPEAKER:

Do not answer, ask.

HON J J GABAY:

Given the tremendous knowledge of our Chief Minister in analysing terms, is he quite sure that he knows the difference between consultation and sitting on the fence?

MR SPEAKER:

I think I have got to turn to the next question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I accept that as a supplementary, if Mr Speaker will allow it. The answer to the supplementary question is this, this issue has been what he calls a hot potato for many, many, many years in Gibraltar. For many more years than we have been in office. The difference between now and then is that this Government have accepted the challenge of trying to drive the issue forward whereas the previous Government buried it because it was too difficult to deal with. That is the difference between sitting on the fence and consultation.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am not one for sitting on the fence and the hon Member should know that but I do believe that in an issue like this one the repercussions can be quite complex and stretching to many spheres of life in Gibraltar, very thorough consultation with interested and relevant parties should be the order of the day and that is exactly what I am doing in all honesty and thoroughly and as efficiently as I can.

HON J J GABAY:

The Minister has said that he is not the sort of person to sit on the fence. Well, I tend to agree, on the other hand he is also very likely to fall accidentally on one side of it or the other.

MR SPEAKER:

Maybe grandparents were not asked about this because they might have something to say. Next question.

NO. 441 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - GIBRALTAR SCHOLARSHIPS**

In the award of the Gibraltar Scholarships will Government consider an "A" grade in A-level Spanish, obtained in year 12, as one of the three required "A" grades for that particular category?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

The position of Government at present is the same as when I answered a similar question, No. 283 of 1997, asked by the hon Member in October 1997. As he knows, the Education Awards Regulations introduced by the previous administration in 1990 regulates and thereby restricts the award of the Gibraltar Scholarship to students who obtain three "A" grades at A-level in one sitting. It is, indeed, generally acknowledged that obtention of grades in two sittings is less of an achievement. At this moment the Government do not see any pressing need to change the policy and the standards set by the previous administration.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 441 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Talking about merit, would the Minister not consider that taking three normal A-levels at the normal time and one A-level a year before is actually a greater achievement than waiting for the full complement of two years and at the same time sort of act as an encouragement, would it not further develop this business that we have discussed about a one year Spanish course?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 442 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - REGISTER OF GRADUATES**

Will Government report progress on the Register of Graduates meant to record the whereabouts of students after graduation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

Yes, some limited progress has been made. The Government have now set up a procedure to elicit the information concerning the whereabouts of students after graduation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 442 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can we have an indication of what the limited progress in the answer to the original question is?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The procedure is as follows:-

Of the 101 students who terminated in 1997 - 53 students returned questionnaires issued to them; 19 students sent in proof of qualifications but not the questionnaire; 12 did not reply at all; 17 students went on to the PGCE, student teacher programme or post graduate study.

Of the 53 students who have returned the questionnaire:- 10 found employment in Gibraltar; 16 found employment in UK or elsewhere; 11 intend to further their studies; 11 have returned to Gibraltar but no notice has been given of having obtained employment; 5 do not intend to return but no notice has been given of having obtained employment elsewhere.

NO. 443 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - JOHN MACKINTOSH HALL**

Will Government consider installing air-conditioning at the John Mackintosh Hall Theatre?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

The Management and the Board of Management of the John Mackintosh Hall have now scheduled a list of priorities in respect of repairs and improvements to the John Mackintosh Hall, and whereas the installation of air-conditioning is considered a desirable thing it ranks after other items such as a replacement of the fire-curtain which was made of asbestos based material, at a cost of £15,213; work on the roof which is in a very poor state of disrepair allowing seepage of rain-water causing extensive structural damage in parts of the building at a cost of £100,000; the construction of a lift for the use of disabled persons at a cost of £30,000; and the adaptation of toilets for the use of disabled persons at a cost of £3,964.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 443 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Referring to the priorities established, I do not think that we are asking for something really expensive or something really out of the ordinary in these days, given the fact that the theatre is the main theatre in Gibraltar, those of us who attended performances recently have found it stifling therefore might it not be reasonable to expect the Minister to influence these priorities since we were both there together and we know really what it is all about?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I think I am adopting the same prioritisation outlook that the previous administration did over the many years that they were responsible for the upkeep of the John Mackintosh Hall.

HON J C PEREZ:

In the context of all the expenditure that the Minister has read out which I presume is now committed to the Hall, perhaps the Minister could go back and see how much more the air-conditioning would be because if they are going to do a big overhaul in the area and whilst it is done the introduction of air-conditioning to the Hall is, say, another £30,000 or £40,000, if that sum is already committed – which I do not know whether it is or not – perhaps it makes sense to do it with the overall works that are envisaged by the Minister?



HON DR B A LINARES:

I have not excluded the possibility, I have said it is a desirable thing but I insist it must rank after these other priorities which I have announced to the House and which presumably are the same priorities that the previous administration had when deciding whether or not it was a feasible expense.

ORAL

NO. 444 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**REFUSE ACCUMULATION**

Will Government state for what periods refuse has been allowed to accumulate at the incinerator and explain the reasons for such accumulation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Answered together with Question No. 457 of 1998.

NO. 445 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**ELECTRICITY CHARGES - COLLECTION**

Can Government state how much has been collected in respect of electricity charges in the current financial year up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The funds collected by Lyonnaise des Eaux in respect of electricity charges up to the 31st August amounted to £3,367,558.92.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 445 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

On the basis of that figure, do the Government expect to reach the £8.8 million provided for as an estimate of revenue for the year?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I consider that a hypothetical question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given that every estimate is hypothetical, the entire budget that we have approved in this House is a whole hypothetical question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, with respect it is not. What the hon Member is asking is whether on the basis of a partial figure in respect of part of the year, the Government expect that at the end of 12 months extrapolated forward the estimate will be met and that is entirely hypothetical because it assumes that the rate of progression and collection throughout the year will be at the same rate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the Government do not know then how it is that they have been able to collect in the first five months of the year a pro rata rate which would appear to be five twelfths of the £8.8 million?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government have answered the hon Member's question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given the fact that at the time of the estimates I asked the Government for an explanation of why they were expecting to get £1 million more this year than last year, can the Government now that they have collected five twelfths of it explain whether this is due to a higher collection of arrears or a higher level of consumption?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is that a hypothetical question, Mr Speaker?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is a non-answer.

NO. 446 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**FIRE BRIGADE - EMERGENCY CALLS - UPPER TOWN AREA**

Can Government categorically state that the City Fire Brigade will be able to meet its target of response to emergency calls in the Upper Town area, if Government proceed with Phase III of the traffic changes announced in January?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The main factor influencing Fire Brigade attendance time to the Upper Town area is restriction of access to the Prince Edward's Road/Castle Road junction to only one road and this will remain so if and when Phase III of the Traffic changes is implemented. At present access is through Prince Edward's Gate via Prince Edward's Road travelling north east and in the future it will be from Town Range via Prince Edward's Road travelling south east.

The City Fire Brigade have indicated that the attendance times which they currently meet can be maintained provided that parking restrictions at certain key points indicated by them are strictly enforced at all times.

The Royal Gibraltar Police and the Traffic Commission have been informed of this requirement and the Fire Brigade will monitor the situation.

ORAL

NO. 447 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GBC - PROPOSALS**

Have Government now accepted the proposals by GBC for improving the public service television or are they negotiating with GBC the details of those proposals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 448 and 449 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 448 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GBC - PROPOSALS**

Do the GBC proposals envisage that Government should provide extra funding above the annual subvention?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 447 and 449 of 1998.

NO. 449 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GBC - PROPOSALS**

Do the GBC proposals envisage that the Corporation should employ more people?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The Government have neither accepted nor rejected GBC's proposed re-launch plan in its present form. Government are still actively considering the proposal and intend to have further meetings with GBC's senior management to discuss and fine tune the plan.

In general terms, the plan as submitted by GBC, envisages GBC increasing its hours of transmission to a minimum of four hours per day seven days a week. A gradual expansion of the alternative programme radio service is also planned.

The implementation of the plan would create a number of additional job opportunities at GBC and would involve extra funding.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 447, 448 AND 449 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

When does the Minister envisage that we will have an outcome of these proposals? I presume that the Minister is agreeing that the matter is being negotiated with the representatives of GBC and when does he expect to be able to reach an agreement so that the general public knows what the actual changes to GBC are going to be?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

It is not possible to forecast a date at this stage because negotiations, if that is the correct word and I doubt whether it is, have not really taken place; the proposals have been put forward, they have been discussed and there needs to be further discussion before anything else can happen. In any case, the answer to the following question may also throw some light to the hon Member.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister is aware, of course, of the length of time that the situation is in limbo and that there are expectations being created in the press and elsewhere and a decision on what is going to happen should be imminent?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

What I am aware is that in his period as Minister he forecast he would solve the problem of GBC in six months. Six years later, he went out of office as Minister and he still had not sorted out the problem. It is taking us a bit of time to sort it out, I have a good precedent to work on.



HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister is perhaps not aware that the problems that were faced by GBC at the time were sorted out by the previous administration and that the problems that GBC has today are different ones.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, first of all, the situation is not in limbo as the hon Member says. GBC continues to operate on the same basis as it has done. There is no "in limboness" about it. GBC is the statutory broadcaster in Gibraltar, it continues to enjoy Government's financial support in accordance with the subvention and estimates and therefore there is a continuation of a status quo. What has happened is that that continuity of the status quo was interrupted and whilst that continued to be the case the Government received proposals from a third party and the Government said to the third party, "Look, we will consider yours or any other proposals" and in the meantime the status quo continues at GBC. GBC also said to us, "We would also like to put proposals to change ourselves to the Government" and we said, "Well, fine, you put to us whatever proposals you like as well and we will consider those" and in the meantime the status quo continues and continues to continue. The Government have rejected the proposals from Peninsula and therefore it follows from that that unless Peninsula between now and 21<sup>st</sup> September when the Government close the opportunity for proposals comes in with something which I do not think they will come up with given the nature of the discussions that have already taken up between the Government and Peninsula, then the broadcasting in Gibraltar will continue in the hands of GBC and what is then left is GBC's own proposals to the Government to modify its own product and its own system. There are aspects of that GBC proposal to transform itself which are acceptable to the Government and there are aspects of it which are less acceptable to the Government in financial terms and those are the aspects, the latter one, that the Government need to discuss with GBC to try and minimise the fact that the financial impact in terms of Government subvention to the Government of GBC's plans which, if it were not for the fact that they needed Government subvention they would not need Government approval of at all and that is really the situation. I think it is not correct for the hon Member to suggest that there is some unresolved limbo situation where people are not able to get on with their jobs and with their work.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is there a date by which GBC has to stop retransmitting BBC programmes? Is there a problem in the present situation that something needs to be done to replace it with a different system?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is a decision to which GBC have come by with themselves, it is part of their proposals for their own future, it just involves eliminating the reliance on BBC Prime so that they have more flexibility with scheduled management and therefore can increase the public service broadcasting element during the evenings. The problem to which the hon Member may be alluding is that under the existing contract between GBC and BBC, GBC are not able to interrupt BBC programming so if GBC decides that there is a programme that they want to put out locally at 10.10 pm and there is a BBC programme, they cannot interrupt it for advertisements or for programme interjection and that severely restricts GBC's ability to manage its programme slots. Certainly the discontinuance of BBC Prime is certainly not anything that the Government are asking GBC to do, it forms part of their own proposals.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am aware that it is not the Government. What I was not clear was whether the need to produce changes on the part of GBC had somehow been triggered off because of BBC changing its own selling of the programmes through GBC with decoders because I seem to remember something in the press that it would be possible to get the BBC programmes without a decoder in the not too distant future and that therefore that apparently created a problem with the nature of the arrangements with GBC. Is there anything in that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

To the Government's knowledge and as far as the Government are aware, there is no connection between the two things. The Government's understanding is that the present arrangements relating to BBC transmission could carry on if GBC were happy for them to carry on. GBC has never put to us any connection between their proposals to change the BBC Prime broadcasting arrangements and any issue between GBC and BBC.

HON J J BOSSANO:

There was also in the press reflected at some stage a suggestion that a second channel would be proposed. Is the new proposal the result of GBC deciding they did not want a second channel or that the Government thought the idea of a second channel was something they would not be wanting to support financially?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I think I have already answered the question but in essence the second proposal does not envisage a second channel and that initiative was entirely GBC's with no influence from the Government.

NO. 450 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**PENINSULA PRODUCTIONS LIMITED - PROPOSALS**

Can Government confirm that they are still in negotiation with Peninsula Productions Limited for the provision of television and/or radio in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Proposals from Peninsula Productions Limited for the provision of television and radio services in Gibraltar were discussed with company representatives on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1998 and, after subsequent consideration by Government, formally rejected on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1998. Since that date, Peninsula Productions have written to Government indicating that they intend to submit new proposals. Government have confirmed that any such new proposal would be duly considered as long as they are received by 21<sup>st</sup> September 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 450 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Were the proposals by Peninsula Productions partly to take over part of the public service or were they for the provision of private radio and television?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

As I indicated and I cannot find it right now, but as I indicated to the hon Member in answer to a question that he asked me in the previous meeting of the House, the Government consider the detail of the Peninsula Productions proposals as commercial in confidence and we are not prepared to discuss it.

HON J C PEREZ:

I am not asking for the details but I think it is a matter of public interest and certainly of interest in this House if there is a proposal that envisages taking over a public service which is running at the moment or whether those proposals - and I do not want to know the details - are to provide private radio and television which is being provided in the rest of the European Union nowadays. That is not giving details of anything, it is just saying on what basis the proposals have been made.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I have to maintain the same position, in anticipation of possible new proposals coming in shortly, I think it would be inappropriate to discuss those proposals at this stage, even the previous ones that have been rejected.

HON J C PEREZ:

But one can take it then that if the Minister has said in answer to previous questions that they are in negotiation with GBC for GBC to continue to provide the public service and although I know it is only television that we were talking about, that therefore if they are still considering proposals from Peninsula Productions it must follow that those proposals are for private television because GBC is to provide the public service and Government are negotiating with GBC for the provision of that public service.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government are not considering proposals from Peninsula. The proposals from Peninsula have been rejected. Peninsula have asked whether they can submit new proposals and we have said that we are not willing to delay the decision for the GBC proposals any longer, that the Government want to be in a position to put this matter to bed by the end of September and that therefore if they want to come up with anything that the Government can consider quickly it has to be before the 21<sup>st</sup> September. There are not presently before the Government any proposals from Peninsula which the Government have not rejected.

HON J C PEREZ:

Then I can take it from the Chief Minister's reply that the proposals and since they are giving them time before they decide on GBC, have to do with taking over at least part or whole of the public service which is the question I am asking him, whether the Peninsula proposals envisaged taking over part of what is today a public service or whether they were for the provision of private television? That is all I want to know.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Peninsula proposals involved taking over GBC in effect, taking over the whole of the public service broadcasting. They were unacceptable to the Government for that and for several other reasons and indeed the Peninsula proposals contained the elements that the hon Member has described in his latest supplementary. It suffered other defects. During the course of the meeting and sensing that it was not going well for them, Peninsula Productions said, "Can we submit new proposals?" and we said, "We cannot prevent you from submitting proposals but time is running out. If you want to submit proposals you submit them but the Government are not willing to go back to square one in the timescale on this matter simply because you now want to submit new proposals". As we speak such proposals have not yet been submitted and therefore the Government's mind is already very much focused on what we would like to see GBC do to its own proposals from the purely financial point of view to make them financially more attractive in terms of the level of the subvention that they will require in the future.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it correct to draw a conclusion from that that in fact the time limit is because the possible proposals have to do with taking over GBC but that, in fact, is there anything stopping anybody at any time putting proposals for a second channel? Is there anything to stop that happening at any time?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

At the moment there is a statutory impediment in that television broadcasting is not yet liberalised and therefore under the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation Ordinance, GBC has a monopoly on broadcasting in Gibraltar. Secondly, I understand that there are more scientific and technical obstacles which is that all the frequencies allocated to Gibraltar and that are usable in technical terms for television broadcasting, are in the possession and use of GBC.

NO. 451 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GIBTEL/NYNEX - PROPOSED MERGER**

Have the Government, British Telecom and Bell Atlantic now signed a memorandum of understanding over the proposed merger of Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex Communications Limited?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

No.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 451 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Did the Minister not tell the House that it was imminent that that memorandum of understanding would have been signed by July and, if so, can the Minister explain what the delay is all about?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Essentially, one of the shareholders asked for a delay from July to August – BT in particular – for their senior management to take certain decisions and consideration and subsequently the other shareholder, Bell Atlantic, has asked for further delay because they want to study certain aspects of the merger and we are awaiting the results of that further consideration by Bell Atlantic.

HON J C PEREZ:

When does the Minister expect this to happen if there is a chance of it happening? Is it that the shareholders of these companies are having second thoughts about the possible merger and is it possible that at the end of the day there will not be a merger?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

The hon Member is almost asking me to give an opinion which would be against Standing Orders. All I can say is what I said before, Bell Atlantic are considering and when Bell Atlantic give us an answer we will be in a better position to judge. At the moment we are not in a position to judge.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the position of the Government that their preferred option is that the merger should go ahead or are they sort of neutral on the subject?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The preferred position of the Government is that it is content for the merger to go ahead. It is worth pointing out also that the fact that a memorandum of understanding is or may be signed should not be interpreted by the hon Member as meaning that the merger will take place. The memorandum of understanding itself is a very loose adherence to principles and is non-binding on any of the parties. In other words, even after the memorandum of understanding has been signed there is no commitment to a merger, it is just a step in the discussion process whereby everybody really puts down on paper for the first time that they are serious in the intent and therefore it would still have required very detailed, lengthy and complex contractual negotiations which could have taken and will take, if the merger does proceed, months and months to complete. So the hon Member should not attach undue importance to the fact that the memorandum of understanding has or has not yet been signed. I can tell Opposition Members that the fact that the memorandum of understanding has not yet been signed is in no way attributable to a position that has been taken by the Government of Gibraltar as shareholder in either company. It is for reasons in respect of both companies and their positions in respect of international telecommunications generally.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The answer that I got from the Chief Minister as to whether it was the preferred option was that they were content, I take it that means that they are content if it goes ahead and they are content if it does not go ahead, am I correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is absolutely correct. The last thing that anybody in this House I am sure would wish to do is to create the impression to those with whom the Government are negotiating on behalf of the taxpayers of Gibraltar is to give the impression of excessive enthusiasm for a transaction in manner that might debilitate our negotiating position.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the implication of that answer then that at this stage the negotiating position as to the respective benefits or cost to the Government have not yet been finalised? Is this something that will have to start after the memorandum of understanding then?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, this is not so much a question of cost. The discussions that have taken place so far have been on the premise from which the Government, in any case would not depart, that the Government would remain a 50 per cent shareholder in the merged company just as it is today a 50 per cent shareholder in both companies separately, therefore there is no question of cost here. We are not still negotiating the respective percentage shareholding, at least not as far as the Government's shareholding is concerned.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What precisely is the risk that the Government's position might be debilitated if they said their preferred option was for the merger to go ahead which is the answer he has just given? Where is the Government vulnerable in these negotiations that they are cautious about not being debilitated?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, the hon Member will understand, and if he does not he will have to accept, that it is not appropriate to invite me to lay out the Government's negotiating hand in this matter but even the hon Member, given that he is not a commercial lawyer and has little experience in these matters, must understand that in contracts of this nature there are dozens and dozens and dozens of issues of interesting concern to the taxpayer of Gibraltar, to the consumer of Gibraltar, indeed to Gibraltar as a whole in an international political context which needs to be satisfactorily protected in any such contract and they do not relate to matters of cost necessarily.

MR SPEAKER:

There is one thing that has got to be clear. You can ask a supplementary on the answer but what is not allowable is to ask supplementaries on supplementaries. The answer was, "No", but carry on, I am not going to stop you.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, if the Chief Minister chooses to draw my attention to the fact that I am not a commercial lawyer.....

MR SPEAKER:

That is a different matter, that you will be allowed.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Presumably I am allowed to show my ignorance of being a commercial lawyer.

MR SPEAKER:

At least a Californian lawyer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister then say that the implications of the latest answer he has given is that it is possible that in the new set up there will be changes to the Government's relationship with the merged company if the merger proceeds as compared to the Government's relationship now other than the 50 per cent shareholding? What is it that in the new joint venture would be demanded by others and why cannot simply all the things that exist now in the joint venture independent of each other be transposed into the new one, as far as the Government's part in it is concerned? What is there to change?



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member must know the answer to his question but let me point out just one more that I omitted to point out in my previous answer which should be obvious to him. The hon Member must know that usually the natural consequences of two commercial entities merging is loss of employment and that the Government, amongst many interests that we are seeking to protect, are the interests of the employees. That is not a matter of financial cost to the Government. I am not going to stand here taking the hon Member through an issue by issue list or discussion of the issues that arise in a negotiation between the merger of two of Gibraltar's largest companies. But I would have thought that some of the issues that he would expect the Government to be taking account of were so obvious as to obviate the need for him to ask.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am trying to establish why it is that the Government believe that their position can be debilitated, this is why I am asking at all. All that my original question asked was where they neutral on the merger and the answer was that it would be wrong to suggest they were predisposed or in favour of the merger as opposed to being neutral because that could debilitate their negotiating position. Since I was surprised by the nature of that answer I am trying to establish where the vulnerability of the Government lies and therefore can the Government explain to me so that I can understand the predicament that they are in, why it is that they feel that the two companies that presumably have got satisfactory arrangements today with the Government separately would want to have different arrangements when they are both in the same company with the same partner in the Government. I can understand what the Chief Minister says about the employees of the respective companies but, of course, those employees are well protected by their union. I would expect the Government to take an interest but I am sure the union can look after them.

NO. 452 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GIBTEL/NYNEX - COMPLAINTS**

What further developments have there been on the two telecom matters before the European Commission, namely the question of the numbering plan and the matter concerning roaming for mobile telephony?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The position in respect of the two complaints to the European Commission by Gibtel and GNC on telecommunication matters remains as outlined in answer to Question No.236 of 1998.

Apart from on-going bilateral contacts, there have been no tangible developments.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 452 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Is it not the case that the Commission is now considering the option of using the old 44 code for Gibraltar and is that not a development from the reply he gave me on the last question?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I have nothing to add to what I have said.

MR SPEAKER:

He has nothing to say.

HON J C PEREZ:

I am trying to convince him to add something.

MR SPEAKER:

If the answer is, "I have got nothing to say" how can you ask a supplementary on "I have nothing to say"?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Minister said, "I have nothing to add" which is not quite the same thing.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister not aware that by having nothing to add to nothing.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He has nothing to add to the answer that he has given which is complete, the answer is that the position is exactly as it was when he last asked the question and that is a full answer.

HON J C PEREZ:

But when I last asked the question the Commission had not written back to consider the old 44 code and my understanding is that what the Commission is today looking at, which it was not looking at when I last asked the question, is the possibility of using the United Kingdom code for Gibraltar and in that context I would like to know, because I know that the Chief Minister said that although the preferred option of the Government was the 350 code, there were commercial companies that were taking up these matters and at the end of the day it would be up to them. That is what the Chief Minister has said before.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, when the Minister says that the position is the same as in answer to Question No. 236, that means No. 236 and supplementaries thereto. Amongst the supplementaries that the hon Member has repeatedly put is what is the Government's position in relation to the 44 code and that situation has been explained to him repeatedly by me and it has not changed and that is what the answer to his question says. It is not for the companies to accept the 44 solution... *[HON J C PEREZ: It is not?]* Well, the companies can indicate that they would accept it but they are not in a position to deliver it. That is a political matter, it is not a commercial matter.

HON J C PEREZ:

Are the Government aware now that the position of the Commission is that they are looking at a solution by using the United Kingdom code? Are the Government aware that that is happening?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot say what the Commission is looking at now but I can tell him that the Commission have been looking, if that is the right word, they have been aware that that is a possible solution from the very outset. Indeed, it is part of the Spanish Government's submission to the Commission that that is what should happen. This is not something that arises since the hon Member asked the last question. The Commission are no fools, the possibility of settling this matter; well disposing of the current complaint which is based on competition matters and nothing else.... *[HON J C PEREZ: That is the other one not the numbering plan.]* Both complaints. The hon Member is not aware of what he is saying. Both complaints are made to the same part of the Commission and they are both made on grounds of competition and on no other ground. The hon Member's source of information should be equally knowledgeable about that as he appears to be about everything else that he feeds the hon Member.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Chief Minister is wrong, there are two different basis for the claims. One is purely on a commercial one which is the roaming for mobile telephony where there is unfair competition, and the other one is based on the numbering plan which is a different consideration. Although the Chief Minister said that in supplementaries to the question he explained what the Government's position was in relation to the 0044, what I am asking now is whether they are aware that the Commission is seriously looking at that avenue to give us that solution to the problem which the Chief Minister said was unacceptable to the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

First of all, the fact that the Commission may be looking at it has nothing to do with whether or not it is acceptable to the Government. The hon Member may think that he is omnipotent and that the mere fact that he indicates that something is unacceptable to him prevents anybody else even from thinking about it. That is not the real world. What the hon Members have been told is that the Government's position has not changed since the last time that we gave him an answer to these questions including the answer that we gave him about the 44 code and what I will tell the hon Member again is that he is mistaken, he is ignorant of the correct situation if he believes that one part of the complaint is on competition grounds and the other part is on numbering plans. Both the numbering plan complaint and the roaming agreement complaint are formulated as competition, abuse of dominant position competition complaints and formulated under the sections of European Union law that deals with those matters. I am not going to stand here repeating facts to the hon Member. He either accepts the facts that I give him or he can go away and consult somebody else but I am simply not prepared to stand here repeating facts just because the hon Member does not accept that what I am saying to him is true. Why would I wish to be misleading him about whether the complaints are competition or not?

MR SPEAKER:

One more question if it is a question and one more answer.

HON J C PEREZ:

It seems to me that the ignorance attributed to me is perhaps true of the Government since it seems to me that I am more aware of what is happening than they would like to admit from that side of the House.

NO. 453 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GIBTEL/NYNEX - TELEPHONE CHARGES**

Is it still the policy of the GSD that telephone charges should go down, even if it means that Government use the dividend payment they receive from Gibtel and Nynex as a subsidy?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

It is GSD policy, and therefore also the policy of Government as a major shareholder in both GNC and Gibtel, that telephone tariffs should be reduced to levels which are as competitive as possible. Such reductions must be achieved as the result of aggressive commercial policies, efficient management, technological improvements and increased productivity.

The use of Government funds obtained from dividend payments to subsidise telephone tariffs would be state aid and therefore, in EU terms, anti-competitive and against Article 92 of the EC Treaty.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 453 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

So the position is that the statement made by the Hon Mr Caruana from the Opposition side, that that would be the preferred policy of the GSD when in Opposition is now not the policy because it is not permitted by the EEC and not because he is in Government?

MR SPEAKER:

Do you want to ask a supplementary now?

HON J J BOSSANO:

Thank you, Mr Speaker, yes. Can I ask a supplementary on the answer that has been given, if in fact what prevents the use of the dividend pay, that is that this would be a subsidy which is not permitted under EU law, whether in fact the level of profits can be looked at on the basis that if the profits are rising then some of the benefit of those profits might be channelled back to the consumer which presumably it would not be the question of illicit state aid?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I answer the question on the basis that the hon Member is distinguishing between level dividends paid to shareholders and level of profits made by the company as an operator. The level of profits made by the company as an operator is determined by the issue of tariffs and demand as applied to those tariffs. That is a matter for the company. Of course the Government, not wearing our shareholder hat but our general hat as the custodian of the general public interest, impress upon the company the

need to keep costs to the consumer to a minimum consistent with the company's need to (a) retain sufficient profits to ensure that it makes the adequate level of capital investments, and (b) that gives a proper level of return to the shareholders, especially to the commercial shareholders. One of those companies, Nynex, indeed this year has collected the first dividend and has certainly not obtained – I think the shareholders from Nynex have had one dividend – anywhere near a return for the large sums of money that is invested in this operation since it was established. Certainly it would not be appropriate, in those circumstances, for the Government to use our powers as a telecoms regulator, for example, to set tariffs at a level which reduce profitability to a shareholder that has not even recovered his original investment let alone a return. But certainly if the Opposition Members are concerned that the profit motive should not lead to galloping tariff rises, well hon Members can rest assured that the Government are acutely sensitive to that fact and would not allow the companies to simply apply whatever tariffs they wished and indeed the evidence of behaviour of those companies is that they seek to reduce tariffs and have reduced tariffs in recent years rather than any inclination to increase them.

HON J J BOSSANO:

My question was directed to the nature of the supplementary answer which was given to the original question which suggested that the obstacle of the EEC legislation was something that was making it impossible for the Government to do, as the original question suggested and has been suggested by the Chief Minister in the past when he was in Opposition, to use the Government's share of the profits to reduce the tariffs which he says is against Community law. Given the fact that Nynex has collected a dividend in the last couple of years only and not before, I think there was an amount in 1997/98 shown in the Estimates and there is another amount shown this year, but Gibtel..... [*Interruption*] Well, we are assuming, until we get definite information, that the estimate is going to materialise otherwise we would be in the realm of hypothetical projections which we were told in answer to a previous question we should not indulge in, so assuming these Estimates are not hypothesis but expectations, they have got dividends for two years running but, in fact, the same surely is not true of Gibtel. In the case of Gibtel the original investment by BT has been recovered several times over and is it not the case that the international calls are in fact at the level that they are particularly because Gibtel takes a share of the cost in addition to what Nynex keeps from what the consumer pays? Is there not a different consideration in the case of BT's investment which, as I recall, has been recovered several times over and therefore the argument that has been used for Nynex is not the case?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, BT have made a spectacularly successful investment in Gibraltar on the back of the terms that they were able to extract from the Opposition Members when they negotiated the contract with them.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am afraid, if I may put the record straight, he should ask his friend, Brian Perez, who was the Minister that negotiated those terms and was a member of the AACR and I believe now a supporter of his party, we inherited the contract.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I hope that Mr Perez and many other people are supporters of ours, but very well I am grateful to the Leader of the Opposition for that correction as to the chronology. The position is the same and that is that the contracts do not give the Government the right to manipulate the level of profits in that way. The Government have not addressed our mind to what means it would apply if the contrary were the case. But, of course, it is almost impossible that the companies could seek to apply tariffs of which the Government did not approve because the Government are a 50 per cent shareholder in both companies and are able to impede tariff rises. So any tariff rises that take place would either be because they are contractually entitled and the Government cannot impede it, I think that is the case in the water contract with Lyonnaise but not in the case of the telephone contract, or because the Government were content with the tariff increases and that has not been the case. At the moment the Government are using our influence within the companies, as I understand Opposition Members used to do as well, to bring pressure to bear on the companies to employ new technology and to reduce tariffs. So the Government do not have that fear. I do not think that the hon Member can correctly make a distinction between Gibtel and Nynex in the context of the EU law point. The hon Member may be able to make a distinction between the two as to their merit if they were otherwise permissible and if the only obstacle was, "is it fair to do it?" the hon Member could well make the distinction that he draws but I do not think he can make it on the basis of what we are advised should be the applicable legal constraints. If what Opposition Members are trying to say is that the Government would not, if we were free to, use the dividends to reduce telephone tariffs, in other words, use the Government's revenue as a form of subsidy, the answer is that the Government have not considered that matter but indeed the position might be that we would now not be willing to. I am not politically shy about that, intelligent political administrations ought to have open minds and ought to be willing to change those minds when circumstances require and I would not feel at all shy in coming to this House if those were the facts and saying, "Although in Opposition we suggested to the Government of the day that they might do this, we have now taken the view that we would not do it either". That is actually not the situation but if it were I want the hon Members to know that I would not feel any sense of political shyness in adopting that position.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Government not agree, in fact, that the way that tariffs for international calls are coming down as a result of the liberalisation of the telecoms market worldwide means that indeed if there was a case when he suggested it from the Opposition side of the House, that case becomes more compelling all the time if Gibraltar wants to be in the field, as it does, where the cost of telecommunications is an important factor in the development, for example, of the financial services industry and that therefore in the context where competing centres are all bringing down charges because of the changes that are taking place with liberalisation, we need to be reviewing ours on the basis that if we just stay still and others are dropping then our charges look more expensive by comparison even though they may not have gone up.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government are anxious as always to give the Opposition Members full and complete answers to their proper questions but we are concerned, especially given the inordinate number of questions that the Opposition Members have chosen to put down on the Order Paper, not to allow them to initiate a lengthy debate on each and everyone of them. I believe that I have given the hon Members a full and complete

answer to his question, both at a technical level and gratuitously in answer to the last supplementary at a political level which is, where I think, was the thrust of the original question in the first place and I think on that basis that the hon member's last question has been answered.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the last question has been answered I am sure that I have not been able to glean it from all the other things that he has said. Is the answer yes, the Government agree that we ought to be moving to reducing tariffs for the reasons that I have given or is it no, they do not agree?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is self-evident that both companies are reducing tariffs.

HON J J BOSSANO:

When?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.



NO. 454 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GIBTEL - INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE CHARGES**

Are Government aware whether Gibtel is to continue to reduce international telephone charges, and if so, when is it expected that the next cut will be announced?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Yes, Government are aware of Gibtel's plan to continue reducing international call charges. The implementation dates for further reductions will be considered at the next Gibtel Board meeting.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 454 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister is perhaps not aware that there have been any cuts at all on charges by Nynex in the last three years?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That there have been no cuts?

HON J C PEREZ:

No reductions which is what the Chief Minister has just claimed.

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the hon Member is presumably aware that when there is inflation the effect of not increasing tariffs to keep pace with inflation is a real reduction. The Opposition Members may wish to giggle but the fact of the matter is that whilst his salary has risen during the last year to take account of inflation, his telephone tariffs have not and the hon Member must therefore know that in real financial and economic terms what that means is that the real cost of the local tariff has fallen. It would not surprise me to learn that they do not understand that point given the way that they have failed to increase tax allowances over the years to take account of inflation as well.

ORAL

NO. 455 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**I&D FUND - HEAD 105, SUBHEAD 1**

How much of the funds available in the Improvement and Development Fund in Head 105, subhead 1, have already been spent in this financial year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The total expenditure on this subhead as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 stood at £61, 742.

Total orders to the value of £322,601 have been placed in respect of expenditure to be met from this subhead and the balance of £260,859 is expected to become due for payment before the end of the current financial year.

NO. 456 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**CAMP BAY - ROCK FACE WORKS**

Can Government state when the works on the Rock face immediately above Camp Bay are expected to commence, and how much of the funds available in the Improvement and Development Fund under Head 104, subhead 15, will be spent on this project?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The permanent stabilisation works at Camp Bay are programmed to commence in mid-October 1998. The project is currently under the tender process and it is expected that an award of the contract will be made shortly. Given that the tender has still not been awarded, it is not possible at this stage to give a figure for the cost of the works but it is expected to be a substantial amount of the figure available in Head 104, subhead 15.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 456 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

I know that the Government were trying to make sure that the works would be ready before the end of next summer but given that the tender award would be in mid-October and that it is really the commencement of the rainy season, do the Government now expect that the project will be completed by the beginning of next summer or has there been a slight delay in the projections made by them?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

No, the works are programmed to be completed before the start of the bathing season in June 1999.

NO. 457 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**DISPOSAL OF REFUSE IN SPAIN**

Can Government state whether any Gibraltar refuse has been disposed of in Spain since April this year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORTS

Question No. 444 of 1998 does not specify what date parameters the hon Member has in mind. I have assumed that he is aware of the answer to Question No. 443 of 1997 applying to the calendar year 1997 and this answer therefore covers the period of the current calendar year. In any case, it would require ~~a disproportionate amount~~ of administrative time and effort to provide the information for the whole life of the Incinerator as implied in the question.

The Incinerator does not ordinarily store refuse during normal operations of the plant. However, when there is an outage of the plant due to maintenance, et cetera refuse is continued to be delivered at the plant as normal; but is then collected by larger vehicles for subsequent disposal. The plant was shut down from late June to early August 1998 for major repairs and maintenance, during which time refuse was collected and disposed of in Spain.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 444 AND 457 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I feel confident that the Minister will agree that the fact that mountains of refuse have accumulated actually outside the perimeter of the yard has drawn a lot of justified criticism. The answer gives the impression that it has been carted away efficiently, this is hardly the case. A spokesman, it appears, from the Government stated that repairs, as he rightly points out, would take two months during the summer months, in fact, to put right and no suggestion was given about possible plans to cope with the situation. I do not know if subject to the report that we have read in the press, the Government have now come up with a plan to counteract this ugly and unhealthy accumulation of refuse outside the incinerator.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

I refute the thrust of what the hon Member has said. Firstly, I have no report on mountains of refuse. Secondly, when there is an unexpected delay it always takes a few days for the system which is in place to get going and therefore the hon Member might be referring to the first three days after the shutdown. Thirdly, there is a contingency plan but that is the responsibility of In-Town, the management of the incinerator; the management, I should say, which Opposition Members put into place.

HON J J GABAY:

On the 29<sup>th</sup> June, a spokesman for the Government said that a contingency plan with details of new arrangements for the disposal of rubbish would shortly be made. I would have thought that shortly should have been before now and, of course, I quite disagree with the Minister in giving the impression that there has been a smooth collection of that refuse. This is far from the case.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister state under what conditions refuse has been sent to Spain? Whether there is an agreement with the Government of Gibraltar, with Kruger or with In-Town Developments and whether the Government have to approve or have approved that arrangement or are in any way involved in that arrangement?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

As the hon Member knows the responsibility for disposal of rubbish is that of In-Town as drawn out by the contract that Opposition Members, when in Government, drew up. When there is an outage at the incinerator it is up to In-Town or its delegated sub-contractor to make the arrangements. The Government of Gibraltar are not involved in those arrangements.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister not aware that a letter from the Department of Trade and Industry has been necessary in order for the contractor to be able to dispose of the refuse in Spain? Is he not aware that there is a semi-official arrangement with the Government through a letter from the Department of Trade and Industry?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

If the Opposition Member is referring to some letter from the Department of Trade and Industry which was written in his time then I am not aware. I am not aware and I know that there is no such letter in the period of this Government being in office.

HON J C PEREZ:

So the Minister is not aware then that in order for the Mancomunidad to accept the refuse it has to have a letter from a department from the Gibraltar Government approving the contractor and that there has subsequently been two letters, one approving the contractor which was a local one and then one approving the sub-contractor which was a Spanish sub-contractor because the local one could not take the refuse over notwithstanding that it was a contract?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

The Government of Gibraltar are not involved in writing letters in respect of disposal of rubbish in Spain.

HON J J GABAY:

Finally, will the Minister accept that refuse is being done outside the perimeter and that this is unacceptable and that it is the responsibility of the Government?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

No.

HON J J GABAY:

May I just then illustrate this as a final question, did the Minister see the excellent photographs that appeared in the Gibraltar Chronicle illustrating the fact without any doubt whatsoever?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

As a final answer, because I have already gone into the details, the incinerator has a certain capacity for burning refuse; trucks which take the refuse into Spain have a much smaller capacity. It follows to any constructive observer that it takes longer to dispose if it is taken out by truck than it does if it is put into the incinerator.

HON J C PEREZ:

To be absolutely clear on the previous point that the Minister was stating, I take it then that the Minister is not aware that a Government department has to write a letter to the Mancomunidad before the Mancomunidad agrees to accept a contractor to take refuse to the Los Barrios tip? The Government are not aware that that has happened?

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

The hon Member is wrong, that might have happened in the time of his Government, it has not happened in the time of this Government.

HON J C PEREZ:

And I am suggesting that it has happened in the time of his Government and that it has happened twice, for the approval of the contractor who could not take the refuse over and then for the approval of the Spanish sub-contractor that subsequently took the rubbish over.

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a question, that is a statement which is not part of questions and answers. Next question.

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HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

In supplementaries to Question Nos. 444 and 457 of 1998, the Hon J C Perez asked if "a letter from the Department of Trade and Industry had been necessary in order for the contractor to be able to dispose of the refuse in Spain" to which I replied, "I am not aware and I know that there is no such letter in the period of this Government being in office". The hon Member then asked, "So the Minister is not aware then that in order for the Mancomunidad to accept the refuse it has to have a letter from a department from the Gibraltar Government approving the contractor and that there has subsequently been two letters, one approving the contractor which was a local one,

and then one approving the sub-contractor which was a Spanish sub-contractor because the local one could not take refuse over notwithstanding that it was a contract?" To which I replied, "Mr Speaker, the Government of Gibraltar is not involved in writing letters in respect of disposal of refuse in Spain".

Following the hon Member's insistence that this had been the case, I have subsequently asked Support Services Department to investigate the matter. I can now confirm that following a request received from the Environment and Waste Management Services Limited in July 1997, Support Services Department did write a short letter to the Mancomunidad informing them that Monteverde and Sons Limited had been appointed by In-Town as their contractor for the transportation of domestic waste from Gibraltar to the Los Barrios tip. The letter reads as follows:

"I refer to my telephone conversation with your Mr Francisco Humanes and confirm the following as requested.

I confirm that Monteverde and Sons Limited, acting on behalf of the operators of the incinerator, is the contractor which is intending transporting domestic waste from Gibraltar to the Los Barrios tip".

The letter is on Support Services Department letterhead signed by the Senior Executive of this department.

In-Town had engaged Monteverde and Sons Limited to dispose of their refuse following a fire which occurred at the incinerator and Monteverde had engaged the services of a broker, namely Environmental and Waste Management Services Limited, to prepare all the necessary paperwork and obtain the necessary permits for the exportation of the refuse to Spain. This company had experienced some difficulties with the Spanish bureaucratic system and was informed by Spanish officials that a letter from a Government Department to the Mancomunidad, informing them of the name of the contractor who would be transporting the refuse, would expedite the process. This is the only letter written by a Government department to the Mancomunidad during this Government's term of office in respect of disposal of refuse in Spain.

The hon Member also requested confirmation that a second letter had been written by a Government Department authorising a Spanish sub-contractor to deliver the refuse to Spain due to the appointed local contractor not having fulfilled his contractual commitment. In this respect I would reiterate what I previously stated in the House which is that Government are in no way responsible for the arrangements necessary for the transportation of the refuse to Spain. Government have a contract with In-Town to dispose of the refuse by incineration at the local plant. Should the plant be out of service, it is then In-Town's sole responsibility to dispose of the refuse and in so doing to appoint whoever they please to act on their behalf. Government have only been approached once during our term of office, this being in 1997, for assistance in expediting the arrangements with the Spanish authorities as has previously been stated. No such request has been received this year when there has again been a need to deliver refuse to Spain I can also confirm that no Government department has written a second letter approving a sub-contractor either local or otherwise.

NO. 458 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**I&D FUND - KONVER PROJECTS**

Can Government state how much of the estimated £2 million expenditure of Konver Projects has been spent in the current financial year up to 31<sup>st</sup> August giving a breakdown of projects involved?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A total of £252,665.57 has been spent on Konver Projects up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998. £205,673.80 has been spent on the refurbishment/conversion of Bleak House and £46,991.77 on the Casemates project.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 458 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

The inclusion of Bleak House under the Konver, is it because Bleak House was an MOD building or is it because the use of the place is intended for redundant MOD workers?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

It is the former. Since Gibraltar is required to use Konver funds in the context of something connected with defence. The refurbishment of Bleak House was a golden opportunity for expenditure under the Konver programme.

HON A J ISOLA:

In respect of the Casemates project, in respect of what have the £46,000 been spent to date?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I have not got details of that expenditure but from memory obviously there is the excavation works that have been partly funded, there is also a project management that started in respect of the Casemates project in dealing with various aspects in respect of the co-ordination of that project so it is matters of that type. If the hon Member wishes a further breakdown then I can certainly have that prepared for him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the sum that has been used for Bleak House now the total cost from Konver funding for Bleak House?



HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I cannot confirm that. It would seem to me to be the case that it is because Bleak House is about to be inaugurated or is nearly finished but I would not want to confirm to the House that this is the totality of expenditure because indeed this talks of expenditure up to 31<sup>st</sup> August, I am not sure if any further expenditure has been undertaken in the course of September.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Are there any other projects that will be financed under the £2 million in subhead 3 of Head 106? Are there any other projects in the pipeline that will be financed from the £2 million?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

We will be looking towards other projects but there are none which expenditure has currently been undertaken.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Have the Government a figure for what is committed in respect of the Casemates project out of the £2 million, committed but not spent?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

The Government obviously have figures but since the project is one that will go out to tender the actual work involved in the refurbishment and a figure for the Government estimates will be the appropriate figure is not one that we wish to put specifically as a figure in the public domain. Obviously the Government have estimates and the Government have made a tentative allocation of those funds.

NO. 459 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**TOWER BUILDINGS**

Can Government state what is the intended use for the site previously occupied by Tower Buildings?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Government are still awaiting the transfer of the former Tower Buildings site. We will need to come to a decision on what it will be used for when the transfer is received. Various proposals have already been received.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 459 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The proposals that the Government have received, can the Minister elaborate a bit more on that? Are they intended for commercial or residential purposes?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

There have been a number of ideas, some involve possible reprovisioning of Government facilities; others have involved expressions of interest from the private sector for the construction of a mix of residential and light industrial use, garages et cetera. The probabilities really would boil down to either a Government lead project which would involve us being able to reprovide existing facilities that we are keen to vacate from current premises or indeed the tendering out of the site for commercial interest.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is not part of the site being used by the Government or is that the one where the hostel was? We are talking about the Tower Buildings area which is the one beside where the refuse.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that is Cumberland Buildings.

HON J C PEREZ:

No, that is Tower Buildings.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

There is another question on the Order Paper on Cumberland Buildings.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Let us be clear, the answer has related to the lower site.

HON J C PEREZ:

That is Cumberland Buildings.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I am referring to the one behind it, next to the scrap yard, where Community Projects are. So I take it that the answer the Minister has given me is for another question I have in the Order Paper.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

The proposals have looked at both sites which are normally looked at jointly by developers and both of the sites we are looking at in terms of possible reprovisioning of different parts of Government activities. As far as I am aware, if there is any use being made by any Government contractor it is not a formal arrangement that is regularised and it would be odd for that to be the case in view of the fact that there is no MOD transfer of the land to the Government at all. So any arrangement must presumably be purely ad hoc.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Referring to the original answer, if I understood correctly the Minister has said that that has still not been transferred to Government, is that correct?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Absolutely. The transfers of both Tower Buildings and Cumberland Buildings have not been transferred to the Government which is exactly what my answer, specifically in the context of Tower Buildings, confirmed. The Government are still awaiting the transfer of these sites now from the MOD.

HON J C PEREZ:

Certainly referring to the area of Tower Buildings and the building that was beside it, the arrangements that are there were put in place by us when we were in Government and the assumption then was that the land had been transferred and the arrangements are for the collection of things that people throw away and things the incinerator cannot take. That is exactly opposite the Kvaerner gate and is part of the site being used but the Minister says that the land has not been transferred.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

The land has not been transferred and the issue is one that I think I have eluded to in the House before which is very simply the fact that both Cumberland Buildings and Tower Buildings are areas in respect of which the MOD allege that they have freehold title and one of the matters in contention between the Government of Gibraltar and the MOD historically is the nature of freehold title allegedly held by the MOD. The Gibraltar Government view is that the MOD does not have freehold title because freehold title can only be held by the Crown and therefore the Crown, if it has property, should hold it for the Government of Gibraltar or the MOD but not as MOD itself. It is the Crown

that has freehold. It has been the whole question of freehold title which has given rise to the delay in these premises and elsewhere. The mechanism used to get round this problem, and although hon Members may recall this, I think, was an issue for them during their time to which we have sought to develop, the mechanism used to try to get round this problem is to swap title for title, like for like, in another property the MOD has, perhaps a Crown property, affording to the MOD what they say they have in a Crown property and leaving for determination the status of that. Unfortunately, notwithstanding the sensible and pragmatic way of proceeding that that would suggest, we have not been able to come to an agreement with the MOD to give effect to such a mechanism.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that that mechanism had already been used in respect of the lower part which is either Cumberland Buildings or Tower Buildings, whichever of the two it is? Has the Minister checked that that in fact was not agreed at one stage in respect of that building by the MOD?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

That is not my understanding. My understanding is that on both the plots we have the pending issue and there has been extensive exchanges of late to try and resolve the matter but it remains blocked and it is one of a number of issues arising from the Lands Memoranda with which we are uncomfortable.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

From my understanding when I was in Government that was not the case on Tower Buildings, is he absolutely sure that that applies to both sites?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I said that I would look at it. All the information I have, on the basis upon which I have been working for the last two years, is that there is no transfer of both those premises but in view of the comments made by Opposition Members I will certainly confirm the position and determine exactly where the situation stands.

NO. 460 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**PRINCE GEORGE'S BLOCK**

Can Government state if they have now accepted the transfer of Prince George's Block from the MOD?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The transfer has not been accepted yet. Government are still considering certain aspects of the transfer document.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 460 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it still the same position as when the Minister answered the same question last time that one of the considerations is to find somebody who would carry out the demolition of Prince George's Block and the development of the area? Is that what is holding up any agreement with the MOD?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Not really. The situation here again is one of principle rather than practical impediment. Hon Members may recall that when this question was last asked I did indicate that this was one matter that we had included in a series of issues with the MOD that we would be happy to take a view on, that is, we would accept the transfer of the block notwithstanding the fact that the MOD would not demolish if other matters in discussions with the MOD came right. Those points of which this forms one, still remain outstanding and therefore the Government are not keen to accept a transfer which if we accept it without the MOD having demolished, obviously the developer would have to demolish and if we accept it on the basis that the transfer should be as it is, in other words the building as it is, all sorts of residual value considerations come into play which the Government take a view are not an acceptable consideration when it comes to a transfer of a property of this type. So it is the same point of principle and not a question of identifying a developer who would be happy to demolish and then build something on the site.

NO. 461 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**SALE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES**

Which residential properties have been sold by Government to sitting tenants since 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1997, and at what price?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The following residential properties have been sold by Government to sitting tenants since 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1997.

1.	Mr & Mrs D Aguilera	5 Hargrave's Ramp	£ 22,000
2.	Mr & Mrs P Morello	69c/d Prince Edward's Road	£ 26,000
3.	Dr A and Mrs Soler	1 & 14 North Pavilion Road	£ 94,000
4.	Mr & Mrs J L Canepa	6 Mount Road	£ 85,000
5.	Mr & Mrs R Mir	29A/2 Hospital Ramp	£ 23,000
6.	Mr & Mrs J Mir	29A/1 Hospital Ramp	£ 33,000
7.	Mr & Mrs R Chichon	69B Prince Edward's Road	£ 17,500
8.	Mr A Freyone	46 Rosia Dale	£ 15,500
9.	Europa Views Terrace Management	D Block - Sale of Ten Flats 73 Europa Road	£111,550
10.	9B Europa Flats Management Ltd	Sale of Three Flats □ 9B Europa Road	£123,465

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 461 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The Rosia Dale flat that has been sold, does he have the same provision of restriction as originally when they were sold not by the previous administration but to the administration previous to the previous administration?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I cannot personally recall that. I can certainly have it looked at. The restrictions, I suppose that the hon Member is referring to resale in terms to somebody on the waiting list, I cannot recall.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I am asking because in the answer the Minister has given it appears by the sum that it has been sold is very similar to what it was sold in 1986 or 1987, only it appears that there has been an adjustment plus inflation as opposed to the years that have passed since the other people bought. Could the Minister, seeing that he has not got it, pass on the information to see if it has been sold with the same conditions as previously?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I am happy to do that. I would only say that with regards to the price, which is the matter which our property managers determine and there is a formula, the only point I would make is that, frankly, if I was asked whether the property market today was higher than in 1987 I would suspect that it was higher in 1987 than it is in 1998. It does not mean that property goes up by inflation-linked steps. But in any event, I can certainly procure for the hon Member the information he is asking for specifically.

HON A J ISOLA:

The formula that the Minister has just referred to, does that formula still have, as it used to, the percentage discount – I cannot remember what it was – in respect of sitting tenants? Is that still there?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes.

NO. 462 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**MOD PROPERTIES RELEASED**

Can Government state which MOD properties have been released to Government since 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1997 and of these, how many have been put out to tender for residential purposes?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The following MOD properties have been released to Government since 3rd October 1997:-

1. Block "A" Royal Naval Hospital Including Alexander House and Old Dental Centre
2. Queensway Tennis Courts
3. USOC Hockey Ground, Queensway
4. Old Naval Hospital
5. Nos. 1 & 2 Warrant Officer's Quarter, Europa Road

Of these only the Old Naval Hospital transferred on the 27<sup>th</sup> August 1998 will be put out to tender for residential purposes. The tender documents are already well advanced.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 462 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

On the Old Naval Hospital, is there a requirement before it is put out to tender to make the area safe seeing that there has been a landslide?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

The area that will be tendered out for development will not be affected by that part of the plot that gives on to the area of the landslide.



NO. 463 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**FSC - BANKING SUPERVISOR**

What are the terms of engagement of the new Banking Supervisor?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The new Banking Supervisor's appointment was announced by the former Commissioner on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July and is for a two-year period. His is an appointment of the Commissioner who, of course, consulted with Members of the Commission. The Banking Supervisor's remuneration and benefits is a private matter.

As in the case of the Commissioner, the Banking Supervisor was recruited only after advertising the post and after a careful selection with interview process. The Gibraltar Government was invited to participate as part of the selection panel.

NO. 464 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**LOWE BELL/FIRST FINANCIAL CONTRACT**

Have Government renewed the contract with Lowe Bell/First Financial and, if so, on what terms?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Anthony Fisher, our Finance Centre Development Director, has been in London from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> September at which time he met with First Financial to discuss the terms and arrangements for renewing the contract. The contract has not yet been renewed, the matter will be reconsidered by the Government in the light of the information which has been provided following that meeting, not at this stage.

NO. 465 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**FSC - FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMISSIONER**

What are the terms of engagement of the new Financial Services Commissioner?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

In accordance with the terms of the Financial Services Commission Ordinance, the new Commissioner has been appointed by the Governor with the agreement of the Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth Affairs. He has a contract that provides for an initial appointment of three years from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1998. His remuneration and benefits is a private matter but I can say they are broadly in line with those of his predecessor as Commissioner. I might add that the Government were invited to participate in the selection panel undertaken at the time of the announcement of the post.

NO. 466 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**FSC - INSURANCE COMPANIES/MANAGERS**

How many insurance companies or insurance company managers have applied to be licensed by the Financial Services Commission since 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Two formal applications for insurance companies have been received by the Financial Services Commission since 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998 and are under consideration. A number of other informal applications are under consideration.

In respect of insurance company managers in the same period two licences have been granted and one application is at the formal stage and has been approved in principle. There are no further informal applications.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 466 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

When I asked Question No. 107 of 1998, I was informed in relation to exactly the same question just for the previous period, that there were three draft applications pending. Would the Minister be able to tell me whether the two that have been granted stem from those three that were drafts or are they different applications?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I really could not confirm one way or the other what the position might be. One would suppose logically that the ones that have been granted might well be those that were in draft form previously but they could be entirely different ones. Details of that degree of regulatory specification are not ones that I would normally seek from the Financial Services Commission unless there were good grounds to do so and there was a specific question. So I could not confirm to the hon Member one way or the other whether they relate to the previous drafts.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What is the normal time it takes between the application and a reply being given, one way or the other, accepting it or rejecting it? Is there an average period?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I stand to be corrected but I am pretty sure that under the terms of the relevant legislation, in fact, an application made to the Financial Services Commission requires to be determined one way or the other within a period of six months once the application is complete. What does happen is that because the time scale starts to run the moment a formal application is submitted, it is the norm for informal drafts to be submitted and the length of that can vary enormously. In the case of a fairly simple application, namely the pedigree of the applicant is first class, the business is not unorthodox, the products are commonly understood, the management has good expertise, the draft application should be a very quick process and the licensing procedure also very quick. There are cases, of course, where that is not the situation and more work is required on a draft application. I should add, that I make these comments with some trepidation because the Gibraltar Government are not responsible for the processing of these applications, it is a matter entirely for the Commission and I give my reply therefore with that degree of qualification.

NO. 467 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**FSC - INSURANCE COMPANIES**

What was the number of insurance companies with their head office in Gibraltar licensed by the Financial Services Commission as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A total of 16 insurance companies with head office in Gibraltar are licensed by the Financial Services Commission as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 467 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

When I asked a similar question in 1997, the answer at that stage was 12, obviously we have heard in the two subsequent answers two and two which accounts for the four bringing it up to 16. In respect of the new four, if I can call them that, are they managed by current insurance companies or are they independent and stand alone with their own office accommodation and staffing, would the Minister know that?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Again I do not have details of the precise nature of the four individually. I am aware that some of the companies that come in are doing so on a managed basis and that is probably consistent with the view that the industry is taking, namely, that there is a very interesting opportunity in Gibraltar but before they commit a greater level of expenditure to the jurisdiction, they initially provide a service through a management operation. But I would not be able to tell him categorically that the four fall into that category or that even one does, I know that that is an option that many people looking in Gibraltar in this area are considering and may well be reflected in these new licences.

ORAL

NO. 468 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**NUMBER OF COMPANIES REGISTERED IN GIBRALTAR**

What was the total number of companies registered in Gibraltar as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The total number of companies registered in Gibraltar as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 is 66,060.

ORAL

NO. 469 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**NUMBER OF QUALIFYING COMPANIES REGISTERED**

What was the number of qualifying companies registered as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

As at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 there were 124 qualifying companies registered.



NO. 470 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**NUMBER OF EXEMPT COMPANIES**

What was the number of exempt companies as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 and what was the actual amount received in respect of exempt company tax in the years 1996/97 and 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Our records show there were a total of 8,168 exempt companies registered as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998. The actual revenue received in exempt company tax for the year 1996/97 was £2,237,007 and for 1997/98 £2,384,586.

NO. 471 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**INCOME TAX - REPSS**

Can Government state as at 1<sup>st</sup> July 1998, how many certificates were in issue to companies in respect of Relocated Executive Possessing Specialist Skills, giving a breakdown of the type of company by reference to the provisions of Rule 2(a)(i), 2(a)(ii) and 2(a)(iii) of the Income Tax Rules relating to REPSS?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The Rates of Tax (Relocated Executive Possessing Specialist Skills) Rules 1992 were revoked on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998. Up until this time 12 certificates have been issued all under the provisions of Rule 2(a)(iii).

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 471 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Are these 12, 12 that were under the previous and are now under the new?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

No, these are under the previous. Under the new there are transitional provisions that apply to people who were under the old Rules. These are the ones granted under the old Rules which is what the question effectively refers to.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Under the transition, if those were still in existence on the 1<sup>st</sup> July it means automatically they have continued in existence after the 1<sup>st</sup> July?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I cannot recall the exact details of the transition arrangements but I believe I am right in saying that an option is given to people who have the previous certificate under the previous rules of either working their term out, so to speak, under the old rules or applying for a certificate under the new rules. So there need be no change to the status of those individuals if they so wish but they are entitled to apply for a new certificate under the new rules if they so wish. I believe that is the case but I am speaking without the regulations in front of me.

ORAL

NO. 472 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**HEAD 7, SUBHEAD 6 - EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state how much of the £45,000 provided in the approved estimates in Head 7, subhead 6, has been expended to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, and in respect of what matters?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Answered together with Question Nos. 473 and 474 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 473 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**HEAD 7, SUBHEAD 10 - EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state how much of the £40,000 provided in the approved estimates in Head 7, subhead 10, has been expended to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, and in respect of what matters?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Answered together with Question Nos. 472 and 474 of 1998.

NO. 474 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**HEAD 7, SUBHEAD 14 - EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state how much of the £215,000 provided in the approved estimates in Head 7, subhead 14, has been expended to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, and in respect of what matters?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The figures as per departmental records are as follows:-

Head 7 Subhead 6

Provision £45,000. Expenditure to 31st August 1998 - £3,351.96

Head 7 Subhead 10

Provision £40,000. Expenditure to 31st August 1998 - £9,694.54

Head 7 Subhead 14

Provision £215,000. Expenditure to 31st August 1998 - £53,170.61

These three subheads represent the marketing, promotions and conference budgets of the respective DTI divisions. Expenditure has been incurred on matters such as air fares, subsistence, seminars, entertainment, marketing, et cetera.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 472, 473 AND 474 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Do Government anticipate spending the entire budget provided particularly in Head 7, subhead 6 bearing in mind the low amount spent so far?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

We certainly made an estimate at the time of the budget of what the expenditure would be and it is true to say that some, in fact substantial initiatives of promotion and marketing are yet to be undertaken in the course of the remaining part of the financial year but I can assure hon Members that I am not hungry to spend money unnecessarily and wherever the private sector, in particular, can be brought in to front and to lead and to promote the marketing of financial services all the better. We certainly envisage the substantial amount of expenditure being made but only if matters develop in a way that requires that and hon Members will know that we are keen to make sure that expenditure is not only kept to a minimum, in other words, within budgetary levels, but even within the budgetary levels if there are savings to be made then those savings will be made.

NO. 475 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**DEPOSITS - GIBRALTAR BANKS**

What was the level of deposits in Gibraltar Banks from – (a) residents and (b) non-residents, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The total level of deposits in Gibraltar Banks as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998 is £2,957,750,000. The breakdown requested is not currently available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 475 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the implication of the answer that it will be available at a later date?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

The reason that the figure is not available is that as from the beginning of this year there has been a change in the form of returns that the banks make in meeting their normal supervisory responsibilities. I have taken the matter up with the Financial Services Commission and we are looking at ways of seeking the information at present although the view taken by the Commission is that in the context of a new directive and in the context of on-going supervisory requirements, the information is not actually of any supervisory relevance. We think that it is important nonetheless for statistical purposes so we are looking towards having the Commission reinstate a provision whereby information of this type is collected.

NO. 476 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

## EU FUNDING - APPLICATIONS

How many applications have been received for EU funding since 1<sup>st</sup> February 1998 and in respect of what projects and which of these applications have been approved stating the amount of such funds being made available in each case?

### ANSWER

#### THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A total of 18 applications have been received for EU funding assistance since 1<sup>st</sup> February 1998. Thirteen applications have been approved, two have been rejected and three are under consideration.

The amount of EU funds made available in each case is as follows:-

#### Objective 2 1997-99 Programme

1.	Jalex Angling & Sports Specialist (marketing initiative)	£1,079
2.	Paul Auto Respray Co Ltd	£13,638
3.	M H Bland Stevedores Ltd (fitting out of workshop)	£3,861
4.	Department of Education & Training (Maritime NVQ Level 2 training)	£41,850
*5.	Department of Education & Training (Tourism 2000)	£70,429
*6.	Department of Tourism, Transport & Port (enhancement of Coach Park)	£317,442
*7.	Department of Education & Training (Business Management Programme)	£36,000
8.	Department of Education & Training (Fabrication and Welding Course)	£149,828
9.	Light & Industrial Activities Ltd (plant and equipment)	£1,425
*10.	Employment Service "Allied Support 98" (wage subsidy)	£39,780

#### Konver II - 1995-1999 Programme

11.	Department of Trade & Industry (Casemates re-development)	£1,327,000
12.	Department of Education & Training/Department of Tourism, Transport & Port (Bleak House refurbishment)	£120,000

#### Interreg Gibraltar/Morocco 1994-99 Programme

13.	Refurbishment of Ferry Terminal	£81,250
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#### Rejected Projects

14.	Calypso Tours (purchase of coaches)
15.	Origo Enterprises (purchase of forklifts)

Projects under consideration or in respect of which further information has been requested

16. Enhancement of Liner Terminal (Phase III)
17. Brewery Project
18. Bournemouth & Poole College UK (Education Project Interreg)

\*Projects marked with an asterisk are awaiting endorsement.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 476 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

The £1,327,000 Casemates project under Konver II, is this part of the £2 million of Konver funds that we asked in a previous question where we said what was the amount which the Minister said could not be put in the public domain because of the commercial implications? Are we talking about the same fund?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Well, it refers to the same fund but, of course, it does not mean that all the expenditure would be undertaken because the amount of work would be probably in excess of this. This is expenditure for this financial year.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Of the £2 million in this financial year was the original question. Is this the same?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes.



NO. 477 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**HEAD 106, SUBHEAD 5 - GIBRALTAR ENTERPRISE SCHEME**

How many applications have been received and in respect of which projects for assistance under the Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme (Head 106, subhead 5) from 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 and how many of these applications have been accepted and how much has been approved to be paid out in respect of each application approved by reference to the amount applied for?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Since 1st April a total of 14 applications have been received for assistance under the Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme. Of these four applications have been approved and two are under consideration.

The approved projects are the following:-

1. Carlton Design - a loan of £3,000 (Cross Stitch Patterns and Knit)
2. Straights Overseas Ltd - a grant of £10,000 (30% of Investment in plant and equipment).
3. Health & Fitness Centre Clinic - a loan of £39,457.
4. Prescott Ltd - a grant of £12,000 for International insurance marketing.

The two projects still under consideration are:

1. Mediterranean Aviation Services Ltd (provision of air taxi service).
2. New Age Electronic Ltd (refinancing of an existing loan).

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 477 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Of the 14 applications that have been received, four have been approved and two are under consideration. Have the remainder been rejected?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

They have either been rejected or more likely than that there has not been actually a great number that have been rejected formally. They simply have not met the very basic eligibility rules and therefore the process of actually working them up towards a formal application has not been completed. It is quite often the case that approaches are made, applications are made, requests are made for assistance that then cannot be translated into a formal application.

NO. 478 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**FINANCIAL SERVICES - DTI QUESTIONNAIRE**

How many responses were received by 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 to the DTI questionnaire on Financial Services?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

So far we have had 81 responses.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 478 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Would the Minister know how many questionnaires were sent out?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

This represents over 50 per cent but there were roughly about 150. We are over half the way there, so to speak, and we are pressing to see whether we can have returned those questionnaires that are still outstanding.

NO. 479 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**LATHBURY BARRACKS PROPOSED PROJECT**

Have Government now reached a decision as to the proposed developer for Lathbury Barracks and in respect of what project?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The Government have not yet reached a decision as to the proposed developer for Lathbury Barracks.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 479 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

I think the last time the question was asked we were told there was a short list of three projects from different companies, that was a considerable time ago. Do Government know by when they will be in a position to reach a decision on this?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

We would like to reach a decision on it as soon as possible. As I mentioned to the House, a number of bids were received; the one that was most attractive to the Government ended up throwing out a problem which was that the development which involved a touristic/residential type facility would not sit comfortably with a satellite park which would surround it and on looking at the project in greater detail the developer felt that this might be an issue which they would have to think about further. A number of ideas have been discussed with that developer, a number of alternative plots have also been identified. Since then I can inform the House that there has been, after the tender process, another consortium that has approached the Government expressing an interest in this area and we have said, "Although the tender process has finished, bearing in mind the difficulty we have come across with that process, you are certainly free to submit a proposition, but at this stage we are not in a position to take a decision." We are therefore awaiting to see how our discussions with the preferred developer goes. I do not regard Lathbury Barracks for an alternative site and to see whether there is any mileage to be had in the new proposals which a new consortium has promised to deliver to the Government. Obviously the arrangements in respect of three satellite companies are the ones that are firmest, they have had an interest in those areas for the longest and any development of the remaining areas of Lathbury Barracks which was, indeed, the areas that went out to tender, would have to be compatible with that other use.

HON A J ISOLA:

Are the discussions with the preferred developer in any way affected by a waiting time for the other interested parties who will be submitting proposals?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

No, both matters have been progressed on a parallel basis but clearly we are keen to move on the project as soon as practicable. Lathbury Barracks is an area that is very affected by the weather, many elements and obviously we do not want to see further deterioration of the buildings but it is a matter that has to be carefully considered. We have two avenues of approach and we are pursuing those jointly.

HON A J ISOLA:

Have Government actually received the proposal from this third party or the new developer?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, the Government received a few weeks ago proposals which outline the type of construction, the type of facility that this consortium had in mind. We wanted to be reassured that it was a real corporate, that there was a real funding behind the proposal. We have recently had meetings with this group that involves a large French group and therefore we are satisfied that in terms purely of the financial backing, that the proposal is a real one but that does not mean that it can be accommodated immediately. There are many requirements that the Government may or may not be able to meet and that is the process that we are evaluating.

HON A J ISOLA:

This proposal that they are discussing now, what is the nature of the project, is it residential, commercial?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I would not want to go into the details of the project because the actual specific proposal is actually now to be the subject of a submission formally to the Government. The tender went out largely for residential/touristic purposes, that is what we were looking for in that area and it will be within those parameters that I think this new proposal is going to be made.

HON A J ISOLA:

The only reason for my asking is that, in fact, in an answer to a previous question we actually had listed all the proposals, the names of the people and in fact the type of project that was envisaged. That is the only reason for asking this question.

NO. 480 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Lewis Stagnetto Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 481 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 481 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at John Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 and 482 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 482 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Victoria Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480, 481 and 483 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 483 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Napier Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 482 and 484 to 501 of 1998.



NO. 484 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Godley Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 483 and 485 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 485 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Children's Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 484 and 486 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 486 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Accident and Emergency?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 485 and 487 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 487 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at ITU?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 486 and 488 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 488 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Maternity?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 487 and 489 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 489 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at KGV?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 488 and 490 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 490 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the Eye Department?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 489 and 491 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 491 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the Blood Department?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 490 and 492 to 501 of 1998.



NO. 492 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Endoscopy?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 491 and 493 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 493 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Outpatient Clinics?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 492 and 494 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 494 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the District Nursing Services?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 493 and 495 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 495 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the Health Centre?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 494 and 496 to 501 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 496 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the Child Welfare Clinic?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 495 and 497 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 497 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the School Health Service?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 496 and 498 to 501 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 498 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the Dental Services?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 497 and 499 to 501 of 1998.

NO. 499 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the CSSD?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 498 and 500 and 501 of 1998.



NO. 500 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at the Community Psychiatric Service?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 480 to 499 and 501 of 1998.

NO. 501 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Can Government state what is the proposed new complement for manning levels to provide day and night cover and how this compares with the current complement by grade, at Lady Begg Ward?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Government understand the word complement in the questions to mean whole time equivalent staff members in post.

Government intend to achieve the increase in trained staff in a phased programme leading up to 2002.

The nursing review was published barely a few weeks ago. While nursing management has taken an initial view of the deployment of the future complement to be achieved by the year 2002 (as opposed to the present complement) these matters of detail have as yet to be finalised and discussed with the staff side. It is expected that Government will take a final view by the end of the year.

The figures can be made available to the hon Member if she wishes to put her questions then.

Of course any final figures arrived at must always be subject to some flexibility in order to allow management to fulfil its duties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 480 TO 501 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government provide what there is now in each of these areas?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Is the Leader of the Opposition asking if the Government can provide the initial view of management or the actual complement now in each of the areas?

HON J J BOSSANO:

What there is at present in each of the areas. Presumably there is at the moment a difference in the different grades employed as compared to what there was previously then they must be somewhere and what we would like to establish is where the changes are taking place. This is why there is a question about each area in the Hospital, to be able to compare one with the other.

HON K AZOPARDI:

If the Leader of the Opposition wants I can give him an outline of what the current situation is but I cannot give him the proposed so he will not be able to judge until a few months have elapsed. If he wants the figures of the current now, unless he wants to have the current and proposed altogether in a few months time, it is up to him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think we would prefer to have the current now and then we can see the changes as they come in.

HON K AZOPARDI:

I will give him the current as submitted to me by Nursing Management. Of course, these are initial notes taken by me so subject to the caveat that I may have mistaken some of my notes. But subject to that, if I go through the wards –

Lewis Stagnetto Ward	Day	1 Charge Nurse 2.5 Staff Nurses 1 Auxiliary Nurse 9.5 Nursing Assistants
	Night	2 Enrolled Nurses 3 Nursing Assistants
John Ward	Day	2 Charge Nurses 6.5 Staff Nurses 4 Enrolled Nurses 3 Nursing Assistants
	Night	2 Enrolled Nurses 1 Nursing Auxiliary 1 Nursing Assistant
Victoria Ward	Day	2 Charge Nurses 6 Staff Nurses 4 Enrolled Nurses 3.5 Nursing Assistants
	Night	4 Enrolled Nurses 1 Auxiliary Nurse 1 Nursing Assistant
Napier Ward	Day	2 Charge Nurses 8 Staff Nurses 3 Enrolled Nurses 2.5 Nursing Assistants/Auxiliaries
	Night	2 Enrolled Nurses 2 Nursing Assistants/Auxiliaries

Godley Ward	Day	1 Charge Nurse 6.5 Staff Nurses 1 Senior Enrolled Nurse 5 Enrolled Nurses 6 Nursing Assistants
	Night	Figures not available.
Children's Ward	Day	2 Charge Nurses 5.5 Staff Nurses 1 Senior Enrolled Nurse 2.5 Enrolled Nurses 1 Nursing Assistant
	Night	4.5 Enrolled Nurses (A&E) 2 Charge Nurses 6.5 Staff Nurses 2.5 Enrolled Nurses
	Night	2 Staff Nurses 2 Enrolled Nurses
ITU	Day	1 Charge Nurse 8 Staff Nurses 2 Enrolled Nurses
	Night	2 Staff Nurses 4.5 Enrolled Nurses
Maternity Ward	Day	2 Charge Nurses 6 Staff Nurses 1 Enrolled Nurse 3 Nursing Assistants
	Night	1 Charge Nurse 3.5 Enrolled Nurses 1 Nursing Auxiliary 1 Nursing Assistant
KGV	Day	3 Charge Nurses 6 Staff Nurses 2 Senior Enrolled Nurses 7 Enrolled Nurses 13 Nursing Assistants
	Night	2 Staff Nurses 4 Enrolled Nurses 4 Nursing Auxiliaries 6.5 Nursing Assistants
Eye Department	Day	1 Charge Nurse 2 Staff Nurses
	Night	No night duty cover required.

Blood Department	Day	1.5 Staff Nurses
	Night	No night duty cover required.
Endoscopy	Day	1 Senior Enrolled Nurse
	Night	No night duty cover required.
Outpatients	Day	1 Charge Nurse 1 Senior Enrolled Nurse 4.5 Enrolled Nurses 1 Nursing Auxiliary
	Night	No night duty cover required.
District Nursing Service		2 Charge Nurses 5.5 Staff Nurses 1 Senior Enrolled Nurse 1 Enrolled Nurse 0.5 Nursing Auxiliary 2 Nursing Assistants
Health Centre Clinics	Day	1 Charge Nurse 3 Staff Nurses 5 Nursing Auxiliaries 4 Nursing Assistants
	Night	No night duty cover required.
Child Welfare Clinics	Day	1 Health Visitor 1 Senior Enrolled Nurse 1 Enrolled Nurse
	Night	No night duty cover required.
School Health Service	Day	1 Charge Nurse 1 Senior Enrolled Nurse 1 Enrolled Nurse
	Night	No night duty cover required.
Dental Service	Day	2 Nursing Auxiliaries (We are getting a third, I should say, for the third dentist shortly)
	Night	No night duty cover required.
CSSD	Day	1 Enrolled Nurse 1 Nursing Auxiliary 1.5 Nursing Assistants
	Night	No night duty cover required.

CPU	Day	1 Senior Enrolled Nurse 3 Enrolled Nurses
	Night	No night duty cover required.
Lady Begg Ward	Day	1 Charge Nurse 2 Staff Nurses 1 Senior Enrolled Nurse 1 Enrolled Nurse 6 Nursing Assistants
	Night	2 Enrolled Nurses 2 Nursing Auxiliaries 2 Nursing Assistants

As I say, the decision on future complements will be taken shortly in the next few months, by the end of the year. If the hon Member wants to put her questions then, I would be happy to give the future complement.

NO. 502 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state how many sponsored patients have been treated in UK in the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 1996 to the end of September 1996 with the costs being met by the UK Government and what was this cost?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 503 to 509.

NO. 503 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state how many sponsored patients have been treated in UK in the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 1996 to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1997 with the costs being met by the UK Government and what was this cost?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 502 and 504 to 509.



NO. 504 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state how many sponsored patients have been treated in UK in the financial year 1997/98 with the costs being met by the UK Government and what was this cost?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 502, 503 and 505 to 509.

ORAL

NO. 505 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - PATIENT REFERRALS TO UK**

Can Government state for the financial year 1997/98 what was the total number of patient referrals to the UK and the cost of these referrals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 502 to 504 and 506 to 509.

NO. 506 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state how many sponsored patients have been treated in UK in the current financial year with the costs being met by the UK Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 502 to 505 and 507 to 509.

NO. 507 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state what was the figure of the latest available average cost to the UK of each Gibraltar referral used to calculate the number of sponsored patients treated with the cost being met by the UK in the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 502 to 506 and 508 and 509.

NO. 508 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state the number of sponsored patients treated in the UK for the financial year 1996/97 with the fees being met by the Gibraltar Health Authority and the cost of such fees?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 502 to 507 and 509.

NO. 509 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS**

Can Government state the number of sponsored patients treated in the UK for the financial 1997/98 with the fees being met by the Gibraltar Health Authority and the cost of such fees?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The number of sponsored patients treated in the UK at the expense of the UK Government between the periods in question were as follows:

1st April 1996 to 30th September 1996	25
1st October 1996 to 31 March 1997	130
1st April 1997 to 31st March 1998	125
1st April 1998 to 4th September 1998	120

Costs met by the UK Government:

1st April 1996 to 31st March 1997	£273,635
1st April 1997 to 31st March 1998	£550,281

The costs show the figures which have been provided to us by the UK Department of Health on 4th September, 1998. This therefore updates the figures which were made available in answer to question No. 11 of 1998. The figures reflect the costs which have been submitted to the department by the hospitals concerned during the year in question and not when the treatment was given.

Similarly, the following were the costs to the GHA which reflect the recorded expenditure in respect of accounts submitted by and paid to UK hospitals to date.

1st April 1996 to 31st March 1997	£ 895,724
1st April 1997 to 31st March 1998	£1,041,608

The number of non-quota patients treated in the UK in the financial year 1996/97 was 177.

The number of non-quota sponsored patients sent to the UK and the number of patient referrals in the financial year 1997/98 were 355 and 763 respectively.

The latest available average cost used to calculate the number of sponsored patients treated with the cost being met by the UK is £4065.95.

NO. 510 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government give the number of prescriptions issued and the number of items covered by such prescriptions under the GPMS in the month of April this year and last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 511 to 515 and 517 to 521 of 1998.

NO. 511 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government give the number of prescriptions issued and the number of items covered by such prescriptions under the GPMS in the month of May this year and last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 and 512 to 515 and 517 to 521 of 1998.



NO. 512 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government give the number of prescriptions issued and the number of items covered by such prescriptions under the GPMS in the month of June this year and last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 and 511, 513 to 515 and 517 to 521 of 1998.

NO. 513 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government give the number of prescriptions issued and the number of items covered by such prescriptions under the GPMS in the month of July this year and last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 to 512, 514, 515 and 517 to 521 of 1998.

NO. 514 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government give the number of prescriptions issued and the number of items covered by such prescriptions under the GPMS in the month of August this year and last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 to 513, 515 and 517 to 521 of 1998.

NO. 515 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government give a breakdown for the financial year 1996/97 of the number of items of medicines dispensed on GPMS prescriptions with a breakdown of the items in respect of which there was:

- (a) no charge
- (b) 20p per item
- (c) £1.20 per item?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 to 514 and 517 to 521 of 1998.

NO. 516 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Of the £400,000 of items of medicines allegedly dispensed as a result of GPMS prescriptions last year, how many do Government estimate were substituted for by other products by the dispensing pharmacy?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

It is a well-known fact that there have been abuses of the GPMS system of many types, some of which are outlined in the report prepared by Price Waterhouse on behalf of the Principal Auditor. The Government condemn these abuses.

The question highlights the problem of fraudulent practices. The Government do not keep statistics on fraud.

The Attorney-General would of course examine any evidence brought to his attention on abuses of this type and act as he thought appropriate.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 516 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Has in fact anything been done then about the letters that have appeared in the press alleging some fraud which presumably has come to the notice of the Attorney-General?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I think I can say to the Leader of the Opposition that a matter has been brought to my attention, a conference has taken place in Chambers. This is an on-going police matter at the moment. I think it would be totally wrong of me to say anything else.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Since the alleged fraudulent use of prescriptions to obtain other products has been highlighted as one of the things that the new controls are due to eliminate, have the Government got any idea at all of the level which one should be able to monitor as being put right by the new measures? How will they be able to judge how they are being successful if they have not got a clue as to what was happening before?

HON K AZOPARDI:

It is not that we did not have a clue what was going on before. We do have a clue because we have the Price Waterhouse Report. But specifically on the issue of fraud, I think it is difficult to say to what extent that practice was being engaged in. As to the level of savings, yes internally there are guesstimates of what can be kicked up by

these controls but in a variety of fields, things like generic prescribing, proper controls of dispensing and so on, on the net issue of these fraudulent practices it is impossible to say except to say that I think it is common knowledge that the rumours have gone on for some time that these practices have been undertaken and where there is evidence, as the Attorney-General has pointed out, he will investigate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I accept the explanation that has been given by the Attorney-General and if there is an investigation then that is a matter for the authorities to pursue it and not a matter for us to raise in the House. What I am trying to establish is if the Government expect to save £500,000, is it that their estimated saving is because they think it is £250,000 of generic being substituted for propriety goods and £100,000 because they are stopping the so-called abuse of people obtaining other products or vice versa? Can we have some kind of idea?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The Government's estimates on the savings that will be created are not based on fraudulent practices on the curtailment of them because it is so difficult to take a position on that. We do not know how much there is of that. We know that by having these controls perhaps those practices will be less attractive but we do not base our internal prediction on savings on the curtailment of those matters at all.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the internal prediction is then based on the substitution by generic medicines for propriety medicines and is there any other element or does that account for the whole of it?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, the internal assessment is based on the issue of generic substances which we think will be a bulk of the matter. Also the introduction of a formulary against which doctors will prescribe. The new prescription forms that I outlined, I may have left out some other control, there were seven listed in the press release we issued some time ago, it is some time since we issued it so I cannot recall exactly but there were a whole range of controls and generic was one, perhaps one of the most important but not the only one.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it then that there is an expectation that there will be less prescribing, less medicines will be prescribed because if the same number are prescribed except that they are generic then surely that is the difference? Are the controls designed to discourage the doctors from prescribing?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Doctors will prescribe however much they want based on the assessment of clinical need. If at the end of the day, let us imagine the hon Member is correct and no other control works and the exact same number of items are prescribed then it may be true that the denting effect is the generic issue only but, as I say, there are a package of

other measures and I think it is not realistic to expect that the same number of items will be prescribed, has never been the case. We will have to assess the matter at the end of the financial year. If the hon Member wants to raise the issue after 12 months have elapsed since the introduction of the controls I think we will be able to debate it more fruitfully.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In terms of the increased charge what happens when the value of the medicine is not as much as £2.50, how does that function?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Presumably the same as happens in the United Kingdom when the item price is £5.80, I suppose that someone buying a packet of panadol which may cost less than £2.50 will probably be discouraged and may want to opt to buy it without the prescription if that is what he requires. I think it will be an assessment for that particular person. If the hon Member is asking does the Authority have any role in the level of prescription should the price be lower, we have not addressed our minds to that and certainly there is no provision in the legislation for us to take a view on any specific issue.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What I am trying to establish is, if there is a price for a medicine how can the patient be required to pay more than what the price of the medicine is as a result of the new prescription charges? Presumably if there is a reduction in the number of medicines it would be because people would not be willing to pay £2.50 for something they can get off the shelf for £2. Is there any control on prescriptions being limited to things that require a prescription?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The Authority will, after a Bill is taken in this House, be introducing a formulary and a list of products, a black list of things that cannot be prescribed. There is no stringent control and there may be cases arising as the hon Member indicates, where the price may be less than the prescription. That is the case now and certainly is the case as it does arise in the United Kingdom where the prescription level is far higher than Gibraltar so it must happen far more often. As I say, there is no provision in the legislation for the Authority to take a view on specific instances referring of that type. If they do occur frequently we will review the matter. At the moment yes, they may occur but it is not a matter that we are addressing specifically or in general or at all.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Am I correct in thinking that the nature of the agreement is that the pharmacists charge the Authority for the medicine in addition to the £2.50?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The £2.50 is a prescription charge which is held by the pharmacists for the order and for the benefit of the Authority. What the pharmacists are paid is the value of the medicine plus £1.20 plus 4.75 per cent on each item. That is the current formula. So the answer is yes, they will be paid the price of the prescription plus £1.20 and 4.75 per cent.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think we are at cross purposes. It is true that the present agreement allows the chemist to charge the cost of the medicine and one or two other items which my hon Colleague has just described. But that is not to say that they retain the prescription charge. It may be netted out, I do not know whether as a matter of accountancy the practice is it is netted out but the collection charge belongs to the Authority and has to be paid to the Authority and the rest is the agreement as administered separately. In other words, the agreement is not formulated in terms that they retain the prescription charge. Although it is true, as the hon Member has suggested, that they do get paid more than just the cost of the medicine, they get paid the two extra items which the Minister has just described.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So they do not charge for the medicine in addition to the prescription charge which they retain, that is not the case?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Let us be clear. It is not that they retain the prescription charges, they do not retain it at all, they hold it to the order of the Authority. It is just that the confusion perhaps arises because what the two additional financial payments made by the Authority to the pharmacists, the £1.20 plus the 4.75 per cent of the basic item price, the £1.20 just happens to be the same price as the old prescription charge but I understand from the Authority management that while the prices were the same there should be no confusion in that the £1.20 prescription fee is held to the order of the Authority but coincidentally, of course, the Authority has to pay the pharmacist the £1.20, whether there is a netting I am not aware of that, but let us be clear about that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister confirm that, in fact, what he is saying is that the £1.20 which is provided for as the sum that is paid over the wholesale cost happens to be the same as the £1.20 prescription charge but is not in fact the prescription charge?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, we are talking about the old prescription charge.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Therefore in the context of the new one of £2.50, is it still £1.20 or is it now £2.50?

HON K AZOPARDI:

It is £1.20 but the whole contract is being looked at in line with the introduction of the Bill, the formulary and the regulations which no doubt will come to the House soon.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So at present the formula for paying continues to be the same?



HON K AZOPARDI:

It is the same.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Maybe the Minister can clarify because I am not too sure. I understand that a medicine that needs a prescription from a doctor, obviously if it is paracetamol or panadol the person can opt to buy that off the shelf because it is cheaper than £2.50. But what happens in medicine where he has to give a prescription of the doctor and the medicine is less than £2.50, is he still forced to pay the £2.50?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes but I think it would be rare to find many medicines which are prescription only medicines which are less than £2.50. I cannot think of any but I think it would be rare to find any.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm whether the Health Authority is continuing to engage in services of the UK Pricing Authority?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I think the longstanding discussions with the PPA were not brought to an end but have been put in abeyance given the contractual arrangement entered into with Mr William Guillem which I think was made public. So that matter has been kept in abeyance on the assumption that this contractual arrangement will work satisfactorily to the Government's advantage.

NO. 517 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government state the number of items covered by GPMS prescriptions in the month of April this year in respect of which £1.20 was paid by patients to dispensing pharmacists and the total value of the medicines so dispensed and the comparable figures for 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 to 515 and 518 to 521 of 1998.

NO. 518 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government state the number of items covered by GPMS prescriptions in the month of May this year in respect of which £1.20 was paid by patients to dispensing pharmacists and the total value of the medicines so dispensed and the comparable figures for 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 to 515, 517 and 519 to 521 of 1998.

NO. 519 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government state the number of items covered by GPMS prescriptions in the month of June this year in respect of which £1.20 was paid by patients to dispensing pharmacists and the total value of the medicines so dispensed and the comparable figures for 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 to 515, 517, 518, 520 and 521 of 1998.

NO. 520 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government state the number of items covered by GPMS prescriptions in the month of July this year in respect of which £1.20 was paid by patients to dispensing pharmacists and the total value of the medicines so dispensed and the comparable figures for 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 510 to 515, 517 to 519 and 521 of 1998.

NO. 521 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government state the number of items covered by GPMS prescriptions in the month of August this year in respect of which £2.50 was paid by patients to dispensing pharmacists and the total value of the medicines so dispensed and the comparable figures for 1997?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The number of prescriptions issued and the number of items covered by such prescriptions under the GPMS in the months of April, May and June this year and last year were as follows:

<u>Month</u>		<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>
April	N° of prescriptions	11,003	11,087
	N° of items	32,327	32,353
May	N° of prescriptions	11,642	14,229
	N° of items	33,480	40,998
June	N° of prescriptions	13,617	11,554
	N° of items	38,785	32,390

A number of pharmacies have not submitted their accounts for the months of July and August this year. Consequently, we are as yet unable to provide the House with these figures. I shall make the details available to the hon Member as soon as they are available. The equivalent figures for last year are:-

July	N° of prescriptions	11,118
	N° of items	31,782
August	N° of prescriptions	12,842
	N° of items	36,882

Statistics in respect of cost of medicines by charge group are being compiled with effect from June 1998.

The number of items in respect of which £1.20 was paid in June 1998 was 12,258. The value of medicines dispensed in this charge group was £135,545.60. As stated above the submissions by pharmacies for the July and August prescriptions are incomplete.

The breakdown of the number of items dispensed for the financial year 1996/97 is as follows:

(a) No charge	74,811
(b) £0.20p per item	165,988
(c) £1.20 per item	160,630

NO. 522 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GENERAL PRACTITIONERS**

Can Government state how many applications were received by the closing date of 5<sup>th</sup> June 1998, in response to the advert dated 26<sup>th</sup> May 1998, inviting applications for General Practitioners for the Gibraltar Health Authority?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 523 of 1998.

NO. 523 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - GENERAL PRACTITIONERS**

Can Government state how many doctors have been employed by the Gibraltar Health Authority since 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998, giving the name of the Doctor and the date of engagement?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Twenty-four applications were received in response to the advert inviting applications for General practitioners.

Offers of appointment have been made to four applicants and replies are awaited.

The Gibraltar Health Authority has recruited one consultant, three SHOs and one other non-medical doctor since 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998. The Consultant is Dr Thomas Moeser, Consultant Anaesthetist who commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1998.

The SHOs are Marie Chen Scholtz (who commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998), Asit Khan and Shakeel Abbassi, who both commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1998. Dr Graham McColl, Clinical Psychologist commenced on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 522 AND 523 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Am I right in assuming then from the answer that I have had from the Minister from the first question, No. 522, that no one who has applied has been offered the job of general practitioner at the Gibraltar Health Authority arising out of the advert?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, I have said that offers of appointment have been made to four applicants.



ORAL

NO. 524 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NUMBER OF OUT PATIENT ATTENDANCES**

Can Government state what was the number of out patient attendances due to accident and emergency cases at St Bernard's Hospital in 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 525 of 1998

NO. 525 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NUMBER OF OUT PATIENT ATTENDANCES**

Can Government explain what was the nature of the over 39,000 outpatient attendances, other than accident and emergency, at St Bernard's Hospital in 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Accident and Emergency attendances in 1996 totalled 16,436. The remainder was made up by attendances for injections, dressings and at the Trauma Clinic.

There were 18,181 outpatient A & E attendances in 1997.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 524 AND 525 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister explain the difference in the figure taken out of the Abstract of Statistics where it is actually stated that in 1996 there were 30,298 outpatient attendances?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, I cannot explain that difference but I will certainly endeavour to assess why that is so.

NO. 526 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - MINOR WORKS**

Can Government state how much money has been spent out of the £360,000 estimated for minor works, by the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, in the Gibraltar Health Authority?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The amount of money spent by the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 out of the £360,000 estimated for minor works was £195,781.45.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 526 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Does the Minister have available the actual works that have been carried out which make up the £195,000?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Because we are in the middle of the financial year I can supply the hon Member with the figure of money spent from that Head but I cannot give her the figure as it corresponds to specific works because in many cases the works are on-going. At this stage it is not possible for me to give the hon Member a breakdown specifically of the £195,000. I have a list of payments but the list of payments only corresponds to the person who has received the payments and they are not subdivided into specific works and will not be subdivided until the end of the financial year. That is my understanding of the matter.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

For example, does the Minister not have a works programme for this current financial year whereby he can inform the House exactly what the works are which are going to be carried out?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I can give the hon Member an idea of the works programme that has been approved but I cannot tell her how much money has gone to each work at the moment. I will give her an idea generally because my note does not reflect, even though this reflects the approved programme it does not reflect when they have started, if they have started now or if they have been completed. For example, there is an issue of repair of fire escape near the kitchen at St Bernard's; the patients' dining room at KGV Hospital needs urgent repair; the top floor above children's Ward is being refurbished for future use; there is internal painting at the KGV Hospital; there are substantial renovation works that need to be done to the Records and Physiotherapy departments; those are

the main works that are being conducted, I understand that have been approved and which may make the bulk of that £195,000, there may be a string of minor issues as well that has been tackled, but perhaps later on along this year when I have the specific indication from management the hon Member can put the question and I will be happy to give her a breakdown but at the moment I cannot give her a specific one.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm whether the kitchen will be remaining in what used to be the old Lewis Stagnetto Ward?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, for the moment yes.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

For the moment, that does not mean that it will be reallocated somewhere else?

HON K AZOPARDI:

It means for the moment. It means that no decision has been taken but for the moment yes.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Has any decision been taken as to the future of what used to be the old kitchen?

HON K AZOPARDI:

None beyond the indication I gave to the House last time the hon Member put a specific question on this, that management were thinking about rehabilitation space, nothing beyond that.

NO. 527 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - ENROLLED NURSE STUDENTS**

Can Government state how many Enrolled Nurse Students completed their two-year training course in the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Ten pupil nurses completed their training.

NO. 528 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - RECRUITMENT/CONTRACTUAL EXPENSES**

Can Government state how much money has been spent of the £325,000 estimated expenditure for the current financial year on recruitment/contractual expenses?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

A total of £243,257.64.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 528 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister explain why there is a difference of £100,000 forecast outturn 1998 on recruitment/contractual expenses to the estimate of 1998/99 of £325,000? There is a substantial difference in that. Can he explain why it is that they are estimating much more money for this current financial year?

HON K AZOPARDI:

It is a completely different question to the one that has been asked. I will certainly endeavour to examine what the hon Member has said. I suspect it is because funds have been reallocated to different Heads. I have a breakdown in front of me and it does not suggest that anything new has come in or come out of this Head so I cannot imagine it is anything other than rejigging of other funds.

NO. 529 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - ELDERLY PATIENTS**

Can Government state how many long stay elderly care patients there were at St Bernard's Hospital at the end of August this year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

There were a total of 40 elderly long stay patients at St Bernard's at the end of August.

ORAL

NO. 530 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

Question withdrawn.



ORAL

NO. 531 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**AMBULANCE SERVICE**

Can Government state what is the proposed manning level for the ambulance service, giving a breakdown of the posts involved by grade and salary?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 532 and 533 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 532 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**AMBULANCE SERVICE**

Can Government state what is the UK analogue for the post of Senior Ambulance Officer?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 531 and 533 of 1998.

NO. 533 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**AMBULANCE SERVICE**

Can Government state whether the post of Senior Ambulance Officer is a vacancy within the established complement of the Gibraltar Health Authority?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The answer to Question No. 531 is that the manning level of the emergency ambulance service to be provided by St John Ambulance to the Government when fully established will be as follows:

- (i) Senior Ambulance Officer - 1 post £18,338 - £21,946
- (ii) Ambulance Attendants - 15 posts £13,075

Question No. 531 is a carbon copy of Question No. 530 – the one withdrawn - and has therefore been answered. No doubt the Opposition's great question-making machine which has seen such high output in recent weeks has allotted the same questions to different Opposition Members as it perilously came close to overloading.

Question Nos. 532 and 533 consider the position of Senior Ambulance Officer. That person will be employed by and be on the establishment of St John Ambulance. It is up to that organisation to determine terms and conditions of its employees. The Government understand that St John have wanted to provide a package which will reflect the managerial, financial and organisational responsibilities of the post.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 531, 532 AND 533 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister perhaps explain whether any assistance is being given in the recruiting process given that the advert that came out for the post called for applicants to contact the Health Authority and not St John Ambulance?

HON K AZOPARDI:

It was agreed with St John that it would be easier if the Personnel Department of the Government, through the Health Authority or vice versa, handled the formalities of recruitment. The selection board itself will be the new Ambulance Service Board which has been set up which involves a number of St John representatives but the actual formalities it was thought to be easier if the bureaucratic procedures were followed like that.

NO. 534 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

Can Government state what policy decision they have taken on the recommendation in the Nursing Review Report that a full-time labourer should be attached to the CSSD?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 535, 536, 537, 540 and 541 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 535 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

Have Government accepted the recommendation of the Nursing Review Team to provide the Outpatients Department with alternative facilities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 534, 536, 537, 540 and 541 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 536 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

Have Government accepted the recommendation of the Nursing Review Team that a Senior House Officer should be based at the Accident and Emergency Department from 5pm to 9am the following day?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 534, 535, 537, 540 and 541 of 1998.

NO. 537 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

Have Government accepted the recommendation of the Nursing Review Team that there should be 24-hour cover by the administration clerks based in the Accident and Emergency Department?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 534, 535, 536, 540 and 541 of 1998.

NO. 538 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

Have Government accepted the recommendation of the Nursing Review Team that a second Staff Nurse be internally rotated onto night duty?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

As locally trained students come on line a second Staff Nurse will be internally rotated onto night duty in the Accident and Emergency Department.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 538 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

How long will that take?

HON K AZOPARDI:

It will take as long as the students take to pass their exams.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

How many are due to finish this year?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The hon Member knows that no RGNs will finish their training this year. I think the course commenced earlier this year or late last year, I cannot remember exactly, so it will take three years from the time that they started. Unless management take the view that it should be done on the basis of recruiting a contract nurse, which is not the advice I am receiving at the moment, then it will take as long as that. That is why I say, when I presented the Review Report, that a lot of the matters will be phased in at different stages, from now to the year 2002.



ORAL

NO. 539 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

Have Government accepted the recommendation of the Nursing Review Team that there should be four night Charge Nurses?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 542 of 1998.

NO. 540 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

Can Government state what decision they have taken on the Nursing Review Team recommendation that an appropriate number of Ward Clerks be allocated to the different specialities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 534, 535, 536, 537 and 541 of 1998.

NO. 541 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT**

What policy decision have Government taken on the recommendation in the Nursing Review Report that the system of summer hours be urgently reviewed with a view of providing more adequate cover?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Nursing Review is a wide-ranging document which touches upon very many issues.

Government have, through the Chief Executive of the GHA, appointed a working group of professionals to examine ways of implementing the different aspects of the Nursing Review.

The recommendations which are the subject of these questions are under consideration by Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 534, 535, 536, 537, 540 AND 541 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government say when they first received these recommendations? How long have they had them before they have been able to make their minds, which they still have not made up, whether they are going to be accepted or not?

HON K AZOPARDI:

As was made plain in this House, we received the Nursing Review Report in early October last year. The Nursing Review Report is, as I say, a wide-ranging document, it has been made public and I think the Opposition have a copy. We wanted to take a view on the fundamental issues which we see come through the recommendations, issues such as training, education, manning levels and recruitment and selection boards. We have done that and then what we have left are the issues of detail which have to be considered with the professionals in the field. But we have formed a broad view on the important issues, that is why we published the Report recently and that is why we said, at the time of publication, what we would do in these broad fields of training, education, manning levels and so on. Matters of detail remain to be discussed.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Surely if there is a recommendation that there should be four night Charge Nurses, for example, it is not a question of whether there are going to be four or there are not going to be four. The Government gave the impression, when they announced and they made public the Report, not all but that most of the recommendations were going to be accepted and what we have done is list them all to find out which are the ones that are going to be accepted. Is it that it is still not clear which ones are being accepted?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The point is that some of the recommendations prior to knowing whether they can be accepted simply require political judgement. Others require input from the management to see whether they are viable and what the consequences would be. That is the exercise that is still going on as the Minister has explained. The Government have taken a political view on whether the recommendations are acceptable to the Government politically and have now delegated down to hospital management and the Gibraltar Health Authority the assessment from the management point of view of some of the detail of the recommendations. The hon Member is seeking a definitive catalogue of answers as to which of the recommendations are definitely going to be implemented and when and the answer is that that is not yet available.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that the senior management who are now going to decide whether it is viable are the people who signed the report making the recommendation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So then who is the senior management if it is not the Director of Nursing Services and his deputy?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They are members of the senior management who are there in a representative capacity. They do not necessarily bind the Government. If the hon Member thinks that the fact that two members of management signed the report, if he believes that that commits the Government to accepting every recommendation that it makes then his question is unnecessary. He should not be asking me which of the recommendations Government accept, what he should be doing is telling me that given that two members of management have signed it presumably the Government are going to accept them all.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, I am not telling him anything. I am asking, in reply to the supplementary, if the information the House has been provided with is that a decision has not been taken because the senior management is going to be asked whether it is viable, then I am perplexed as to why they made the recommendation before they knew it was viable. If it is not viable it is not viable but if it is not viable why did they not say it was not viable in the two years they have already spent on this? I am not for one moment suggesting that the political Government are in any way bound to accept any or all of these recommendations otherwise they would not be recommendations.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I repeat that the recommendations are made by a group of people, two or three individuals, that happen to be management. That does not mean that before they signed up to that report every section of management in the Health Authority was given the opportunity to consider and approve those recommendations. The fact is that he knows that they are detailed recommendations and a proposal has got to be put up to Government as to how they might be implemented for Government to say, "Yes, that can be implemented at that time scale with those cost implications". That is the exercise that is presently being done and therefore we are not in a position to tell Opposition Members at this moment in time whether the green light is going to be given to what implementation programme.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, there is no decision on any of the recommendations so far then, on any of the ones that we have listed? He cannot tell us, "On this one we have now taken a decision but there are so many still pending"? Not one single one then?

HON K AZOPARDI:

There is no decision on the specific recommendations which are the subject of the questions but as I have indicated to the hon Member, what we have tried to do as the first phase is to concentrate on the large issues and take a view on those. So we have taken a view on the training recommendations; we have taken a view on entry requirements which are in the Review Report; we have taken a view on higher training standards which is in the Report; we have taken a view on higher manning levels of trained staff which is in the Report; and we have taken a view on the method of recruitment and selection boards which is in the Report. Those were the large issues that we wanted to first concentrate on and the remainder of the recommendations which are perhaps issues of a smaller nature of more detail, those need to be discussed further. So it is not true to say that we have not considered the report or acted on it at all.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think the Minister will find when he reads Hansard that I have not said he has not considered the report. In fact, as far as I can tell he has been considering it for the best part of a year and a half. The reason for the question is to try to establish on which of these areas a decision has been taken. Of course the Minister knows full well, virtually every question is a verbatim repetition of the recommendation which he has and we are trying to establish whether on any of this a final decision has now been taken. So the answer is that on none of the things which are the subject of the questions has a final decision been taken whether it will be proceeded with or not, is that the correct position?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I have answered that question before, yes.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer is yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister explain, given that he says that the broad issue is training, is not the training the result of the decision taken on the manning level? Is the training not derived from a decision taken on the manning level and not the other way round? If the Minister has decided that there are going to be more Charge Nurses then presumably the training requirement is determined by that so how can the decision on the training be taken until he has made a final decision on what the requirement is going to be?

HON K AZOPARDI:

We have taken a view on total numbers on the manning level, we have taken a view on that and we have said what it is. While we have done so as an internal process, what I cannot give the hon Member is publication of the specific deployment of that agreed manning level. We have taken a view on manning levels, we have said so and we have also taken a view on training and the restoration of the Nursing School, that is why there is now a new programme of training of RGNs. The basis of the hon Member's question I think is misconceived.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact the decision that has been taken on the number of RGNs that are going to be eventually in post is, as far as the Government are concerned, already in substitution of other posts and that exercise is the one that needs now to be implemented, is that correct?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The exercise that has to be done, I have answered in reply to a previous question, is to agree a deployment, that needs to be discussed with the Staff Side and has not yet been done. The manning level as such has been stated.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But what I am saying is, that exercise in that deployment which needs to be gone through on which we would be expecting to be able to get the information in a few months time we were told earlier, would mean that if an RGN was being placed in the complement of a particular ward or, for example, if there was a decision taken that there would be four night Charge Nurses who would be RGNs, there would have to be a compensating diminution somewhere else so that the total will still come to 330, am I correct?

HON K AZOPARDI:

At the moment the basis of the hon Member's question is very hypothetical.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, the hypothetical nature of the question is given by the hypothetical nature of the answers we are getting. Am I correct that.....

MR SPEAKER:

Not on the original answer. There is nothing hypothetical about the original answer.

HON K AZOPARDI:

If we both agree they are hypothetical, I would rather leave the debate until a decision is taken in three months time.

HON J J BOSSANO:

We are trying to establish in anticipation of what is going to happen in three months time.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you are not trying to establish anything. You are trying to clarify the answer, that is all.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given that the Government have answered a lot of questions together all of which contain specific recommendations in the Report, for example, it is normal practice when a lot of questions are taken together that one can ask supplementaries about each and every one of them.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, you can.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Since there is one that says, "Have the Government accepted the recommendation of the Nursing Review Team that there should be four night Charge Nurses?", in the light of the answer that has been given, is it correct that in order to have four night Charge Nurses the Government have first to reach an agreement as to where there is going to be one body less to compensate for the ones extra that are going to be in that area. Is that what needs to be done?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I have not answered that question yet.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then in the case of the Staff Nurse rotated internally, has he answered that question because he has answered so many together I am not very sure which one he has left out?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, I have not answered that one yet, I think the hon Member should perhaps follow the numbers.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In the case of the Ward Clerks, can the Minister say whether the additional work that now needs to be done involves the management determining where the Ward Clerks should be or in fact a compensating change in manning levels somewhere in the structure to offset the additional manpower related to the Ward Clerks?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I cannot engage in that sort of debate at the moment because, as I say, discussions and examination of that is being undertaken at the moment by management. So no, the answer is I cannot say at the moment.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask, the management that is considering that, other than the management that made the recommendation, who else in the structure is involved in those discussions?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Such part of management that was not involved in the recommendations.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister give us some indication, are we talking about people outside the nursing structure?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes.



NO. 542 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - MANNING LEVELS**

Given that the Nursing Review Report links the recommendation on manning levels to making provision for the introduction of internal rotation in all wards by all grades from Staff Nurse down, what policy decision have Government adopted on this issue?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Government policy is to support the issue of internal rotation whilst protecting those who have been on long term night duty. However as officers retire it is the policy of Nurse management to have a full internal rotation system implemented throughout all wards and departments in the GHA. This would make the need for the Charge Nurse supervisory grades external to the wards unnecessary, such posts would be incorporated into the wards internal rotation system.

NO. 543 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - CONDITIONED HOURS**

Can Government state how they calculate the whole time equivalent complement in respect of nurses whose conditioned hours are in excess of 37.5 per week?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 549 of 1998.

NO. 544 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SOCIAL SECURITY PENSIONERS**

Can Government state how many Gibraltar social security pensioners, who were not also in receipt of a UK social security pension, were resident in UK as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 545 of 1998.

NO. 545 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - SOCIAL SECURITY PENSIONERS**

Can Government state how many UK social security pensioners, who were not also in receipt of a Gibraltar social security pension, were resident at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997 and registered with the Group Practice Medical Scheme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The details are not as yet available. We expect to have the details available in the near future and will be pleased to let the hon Member have them as soon as I have received them.

NO. 546 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**GHA - NAVAL HOSPITAL**

Will Government state whether the old Naval Hospital has been handed over to them and whether there are any plans for its future use?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The property has been transferred to Government. Arrangements are in hand to put out to tender the refurbishment of the building for residential use.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 546 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

Given the fact that the building is of great historic and heritage interest, in fact the old Naval Hospital figures in literature of naval architecture and in other books on the heritage history of Gibraltar, will these plans take this fact into consideration and has the Gibraltar Heritage Trust been consulted in the plans for refurbishing the building?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

This is, in fact, an identical question asked by the Hon Mr Baldachino.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

This is not an identical question because what I asked was about MOD properties being released. This one is specifically asking for old Naval Hospital.

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

No, there was a specific question this morning asking about the old Naval Hospital.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

No, with all due respect, my question was on MOD properties generally. I did not know that the old Naval Hospital had been handed over to the Government.

HON K AZOPARDI:

The Government are keen to be sensitive about the historical nature and the background to the building and so, of course, we will consider that in any plans to use the site for residential purposes and will consult the Heritage Trust. Indeed, I toured the area with a couple of heritage consultants and members of the Trust so there is no difficulty in keeping the Trust fully informed of the process.

HON J J GABAY:

May I ask whether the Minister is aware that there is an element of vandalism since the departure of the former residents and, if so, might it not be a good idea to protect the place until such moment when the workforce arrives?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I am grateful to the hon Member for alerting me. I was not aware that there was vandalism, I will certainly have it investigated.

HON J J GABAY:

Some of the former residents seem to have been concerned with the possibility of vandalism and had suggested that some of them stay there on temporary leases, almost as caretakers, but the feeling is that this was rejected and I ask the question, as I say because certain representations were made to me on an individual level?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I have no direct knowledge of those matters.

NO. 547 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**HERITAGE - GIBRALTAR SKULLS**

Do Government agree that serious representations should be made to keep the Gibraltar skulls permanently in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Not at this stage. The Government believe it would be in Gibraltar's best interests to maintain the good working relationship between the Gibraltar Museum and the Natural History Museum in London who are the current permanent custodians of the Gibraltar skulls.

As everyone is aware when the skulls were recovered they were taken to London in keeping with tradition at the time.

There is, as has been mentioned, excellent collaboration between the Gibraltar Museum and the Natural History Museum and Gibraltar stands to gain from this in many ways. That collaboration has led to the skulls returning to Gibraltar for a period of four months for the benefit of the Community. The skulls have never before left London and are not publicly exhibited. As a whole there is no reason why the skulls should not be exhibited in Gibraltar again in the future.

It must also be accepted that there are very real benefits to Gibraltar in the skulls being in London. They are part of a large series of Neanderthal specimens from all over Europe and Asia which are still being studied by students and scientists in the subject and the Gibraltar skulls and Gibraltar therefore are receiving much exposure as part of a larger collection.

Again as a result of the good working relationship world experts on Neanderthals were able to convene in Gibraltar last month. This and the forthcoming conference publication have given Gibraltar much welcomed international media exposure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 547 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

As Chairman of the Heritage Trust some years ago, we did make representations and I do not accept the premise that it would affect our collaboration with archaeologists in the British Museum. The objection seemed to be on grounds of security and conditioning and accessibility for research and so on. I think the fact that the skulls have been exhibited here on a temporary basis a fairly long period and no problems seemed to have arisen, I cannot see why they should not be returned to their original source.

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a question really.

HON J J GABAY:

Would the Minister agree?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The present Trust are not making those representations, it is a matter of judgement as to whether that is the case or not and I have stated what the position of the Government is at length so therefore no, I would not agree.

HON J C PEREZ:

Has the Minister actually been told by the British Museum that were we to ask for the skulls that that collaboration will not be there because that is what he is insinuating? That the mere representations to return the skulls to Gibraltar would result in the breakdown of collaboration between the British Museum and the Gibraltar Museum. Has he had this indication from the people in the British Museum that that is the case or is it just that that is the opinion here and that is why they do not want to make the representations in the first place?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The skulls had never left England and it was agreed to have them on loan in Gibraltar for a period of four months on public exhibition which, again, is never the case in the United Kingdom. I think it would be somewhat incongruous and reminiscent of the Elgin marbles incident to now ask for them back now that they are here and to say that we will not return them. No, I have not broached the subject with the Natural History Museum directly if that is what the hon Member is asking. I have taken advice from those professionals who have negotiated that loan and I accept that judgement.



NO. 548 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

## ENVIRONMENT - MONITORING OF RADIATION LEVELS

In view of the nuclear submarine base and the recent Acerinox radiation leaks, will Government explain what equipment is required to monitor radiation levels within Gibraltar and its immediate vicinity?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

The Ministry of Defence holds the necessary equipment for the monitoring of radiation levels from nuclear submarines and the Gibraltar Local Liaison Committee which is composed of representatives of Government Departments and the MOD is established for the discussion and review of these matters.

The Acerinox incident is not typical in this type of industry. Government are therefore looking into what measures, if any, need to be put in place to safeguard the public in this type of situation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 548 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

We are pleased to hear that they are looking into it. Would the Minister not admit that there was a long gap in terms of information coming our way in respect of the Acerinox leak which we found out belatedly from the Spanish side even though people further afield seemed to be equipped to detect this? Would he not agree that therefore it is up to the Government really to reassure the public that the necessary steps are being taken independent of course of MOD exhibitions on the subject and, of course, the controversy that has arisen with local groups?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I should say, of course, that we have never had radiation monitoring capability. The local Government have never had that, the MOD has always had responsibility for that because they are the only ones who run that sort of undertaking in Gibraltar with that sort of environmental risk and they are the ones in possession of the equipment. The hon Member may recall in respect of Acerinox in particular, that we did say in our press release back in June that there is a general duty to communicate matters which can pose a potential environmental risk and we were not informed by the Spanish local authority or the Spanish Government or any other Spanish institution of that matter until after it had been detected internationally. Yes, I do agree that certainly there was a failing in communication of risk from those on the other side of the border. Having said that, there is legislation by which the Government have a duty, specifically the Ionising Radiation Regulations under which there is a duty to inform the public in relation to certain risks and that is why Government officials are meeting to consider that matter and to take it further.

HON J J GABAY:

Would the Minister not agree that the situation is unsatisfactory and that there is a controversy going on over this subject? There are citizens organisations that feel concerned even though their views are being cast aside or dismissed abruptly as alarmist and so on and so forth, quoting the fact that the chances of an accident are minuscule. Well, they may be minuscule but at the same time we have to be aware that an accident would not be minuscule and that I think the people of Gibraltar can only rely on the informed advice given by the Government. Would he not agree that this is a reasonable approach to the problem?

HON K AZOPARDI:

My information is that the first nuclear submarine berthed here round about 1962 and so the situation today is as it has always been, whether it has always been unsatisfactory, I suppose is a matter of judgement. All I can tell the hon Member is that pursuant to the obligations put on the Government by recent legislation, meetings are being held to take the matter further. I cannot give the hon Member more detail than that.

HON J J GABAY:

Bearing on the question of responsibility, I think we all appreciate the expertise in this subject of Mr Bishop, with a fine reputation abroad in these matters and I would like to add this because it sheds light on the suggestions that I have been making to the Minister and it is this.....

MR SPEAKER:

Is this a question? A question on the answer, we do not want to hear what Mr Bishop has to say.

HON J J GABAY:

Well, I think the Government should.....

MR SPEAKER:

Not in questions and answers.

HON J J GABAY:

Let me put it this way, I am not entirely satisfied with the answer that I have got in terms of the safety of people and so on and therefore I think it is legitimate to get the opinion of an expert.

MR SPEAKER:

No, it is not in questions and answers. You can only ask a question to clear up the answer of the original question.

HON J J GABAY:

Is the Minister aware of what has been said by Mr Bishop in respect of the responsibility to safeguard the people against radiation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government are aware that Mr Bishop has written an article in a newspaper and I do not think it is appropriate to invite the Government to comment on newspaper reports.

HON J J GABAY:

May we then invite the Government to take expert advice which is objective on this matter?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I realise that the hon Member's position in the party where he now sits is relatively recent but he appears to conduct himself as if the party of which he is now a member has no recent past. Surely it did not take his hon Colleague sitting alongside him to experience a radiation leak at Acerinox to appreciate that there is the possibility of radiation contamination and that in the eight years that they were in office no one saw fit to cause public opinion in Gibraltar to develop an anxiety about the risk which, if it exists at all, has always existed and certainly they, as a responsible Government which I suppose is what they regarded themselves to be, did not consider it appropriate either and I therefore think it is excessive for the hon Member now to ask a series of questions calculated to give the impression which, let me tell the House, the Government do not accept that there is a particular or serious risk of nuclear accident in Gibraltar and, frankly, that if there was a nuclear accident in Gibraltar, having a bit of equipment to tell one that there was nuclear contamination in the air is not going to prevent the accident. Which is not to say that the Government are not concerned about the possibility of nuclear contamination as we are about the possibility of Gibraltar being infected with contagious diseases of all sorts and about Gibraltar being ravaged by fire and about all the possible natural and man-made calamities that could befall this community. Of course the Government are concerned but we do not do everything that is possible in the case of every possible eventuality that might occur because that is not the way that reasonable Governments behave anywhere. Having said all that, the Government are entirely satisfied, specifically in the case of potential radiation contamination in Gibraltar, that the Ministry of Defence has both the responsibility of attitude and the equipment available to detect radiation contamination in the air in Gibraltar and that the Government duplicating not only the equipment but the expertise to use it, would simply be an unnecessary expense to the taxpayer which would provide it with no additional service to that which it is already benefiting from here. If what the hon Member believes is that the Government of Gibraltar should maintain monitoring equipment for every possible contamination that there might be, then he should say so and then we can just agree to disagree.

MR SPEAKER:

That is more of a speech than an answer.

HON J J GABAY:

We are talking about a specific danger that has actually concerned the people of Gibraltar, therefore I come back to the point that I was saying and certainly unrelated to whether I know the history of my party or not. Fortunately in Gibraltar we know everybody's history so we need not enter into the personal biographies of every individual Member. In any case, if nothing was done then it does not mean to say that

it cannot be done now by a progressive Government such as we have at the moment. This is one point. But I come back to the point that it was said and this has, I think, alarmed a number of people, that at this moment in time, given the concern and the awareness, it is felt that the local authorities should be better briefed in their own right and give the feeling of security that the people of Gibraltar need and not simply to repeat what is being said by the MOD or even by pressure groups but to really alert the people and if the chances, as I said, are minuscule, there is the possibility if not a probability of an accident and therefore the people of Gibraltar should be well alerted, informed of a plan of action should unfortunately such an occurrence take place. I think it is very reasonable, it is not for fun that so many other countries do not want nuclear submarines. I am not commenting on that but there is an obvious risk and we should not dismiss it as just one more risk.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I beg your pardon, I had understood that we were discussing Acerinox. The only person who has relied on the public statements of pressure groups is the hon Member, the Government do not rely on public statements by pressure groups that have not demonstrated any expertise on the matter in which they make public statements about. But I do not see why the hon Member should be free to rely on public pressure group statements and the Government should not be free to rely on the Ministry of Defence. There is an Environmental Agency in Gibraltar which has statutory responsibility for public health in all its various ramifications, pursuant to their statutory responsibilities in relation to environmental health, the Environmental Health Agency has publicly stated that it has meetings with the Ministry of Defence, that they have the necessary and prudent iodine tablets and that there is in existence a civilian plan which is the subject matter of discussion and liaison between the appropriate MOD and Gibraltar Government officers. I do not know what the hon Member wants. Is he suggesting that we should carry out a drill or something?

HON J J GABAY:

Let me correct the impression that the Chief Minister is giving that I am here defending pressure groups but we must listen also to what the public feel and there is a concern. All I am suggesting is that the Government take a greater initiative in informing the public and making it aware, he mentioned these pills and so on which are an antidote, well nobody knew before this went out into the street to ask people, nobody knew what it was all about. There is nothing wrong in asking the Government to take an initiative on an important subject which is worrying an element of the community, that is all I am saying which I think is a very reasonable statement.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

And the Environmental Health agency has made a public statement on the matter precisely for that reason and the arrangements that exist have been explained. But, of course, if one asks an ordinary citizen, indeed if any of us are asked, I suppose we are all ordinary citizens as well, "Would you be concerned about a nuclear accident?", one has to be terribly laid back in life to say, "No, I am not worried", but all these risks and the way that Government should react to these risks and to these concerns have got to be measured against the real incidence. There are risks of all sorts of tragedies befalling Gibraltar of any number of situations. Gibraltar, for example, is in the earthquake belt, admittedly at one extreme of it, but it is in, and if one went out into the street and asked people, "Would you be concerned if there was an earthquake in Gibraltar?" people would say, "Yes" which is what they have said about the nuclear radiation. Frankly, if the hon Member asks me whether Gibraltar has a plan to deal

with the aftermath of an earthquake I would have to admit that I do not know. So I suppose we could go through one possible calamity that could befall Gibraltar after another and we could debate it as if it was imminent or we can debate it on the basis that there should be sensible plans commensurate with the risk of the thing happening. And I am telling the hon Member that the advice that the Government have from the Environmental Agency is that that is the case. There are plans in existence, there is medication available, liaison between the MOD and the Gibraltar Government takes place in a manner and to an extent commensurate with the perceived risk of this happening which, of course, is not to say that we might not all be terribly unlucky and it might happen tomorrow but this is a question of risk management. If what the hon Member is really getting at – I suppose this might be what he was saying in his last point – is that however minimal the risk might in fact be there ought to be a higher degree of public awareness of what we should all be doing if the alarm suddenly rings, well I agree. I agree but that has always been true, that has been true of many other things and I suppose that if anybody believes that more is necessary than the Environmental Health Agency has already done, they have a statutory duty to do it and I will certainly pass on to them the hon Member's view that more than has already been done should be done to bring to public attention what people should be doing in the event of this happening.

HON J J GABAY:

I agree entirely that is the main thrust of my question, the rest was irrelevant on both sides.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Government state if they have the equipment to detect radiation leaks or is it that the monitoring and the equipment is held by the MOD which then liaise with the local authority?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He can ask the question again but the Minister for the Environment has already answered that question. I admit that it was so long ago and we have debated the matter for so long that the hon Member may have forgotten but the Minister said that the Government of Gibraltar do not have this equipment and that we rely on the Ministry of Defence who do and what is more, have the operators qualified in handling it and reading it. I hear what the hon Member has inferred and that is that he thinks that we should have it as well, that is a matter of judgement, I suppose it depends on the extent to which one trusts the Ministry of Defence. But in any case I think we are agreed that perhaps more attention should be given to the public awareness of what is expected of them by way of reaction in the, hopefully, unlikely event of Gibraltar being afflicted with a nuclear accident.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether in fact the MOD, that is apparently the only one that does the monitoring, does any monitoring outside MOD property?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I cannot say for certain. My understanding is that they monitor their area of risk, that is why they did not pick up the Acerinox issue.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact, it is no good saying we are relying then on the MOD to alert us if there is a radiation leak other than from their own equipment because they would not know anymore than we do? There is no monitoring outside military establishments?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that is somewhat unfair. I do not think radiation knows strict property boundaries, the suggestion that simply because the actual equipment is held up on an MOD property as opposed on the adjoining public highway that it is not going to pick it up. In England and in Spain they do not monitor for radiation every 100 yards of highway. Radiation monitoring is something which is done in respect of a large area at a time, once radiation is in the air it spreads out and the idea that because they actually hold out the instrument to measure radiation leaks on MOD land that therefore the area outside MOD land may be rife with radiation and they are all right Jacks so they do not tell us, I think is somewhat of a simplification of what this sort of monitoring involves. My information about why they did not pick up the radiation on Acerinox in fact is that the cloud never came over Gibraltar, fortunately the prevailing weather conditions took it directly in another direction.

MR SPEAKER:

It was a healthy levanter.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, I have not made any of the simplifications that are in the answer so I do not accept that any of them can be attributed to me. My question is, is it not in fact the case that what the MOD monitor is the possible leak from their own radiation sources and not that they go to the top of the Rock and hold up the instrument in the air to see if there is any leak coming from anywhere else whether it is into MOD land or into non-MOD land? Is it not the possibility of a leak from an MOD source that is monitored and nothing else?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is not my understanding. I cannot say exactly on what programme basis the MOD measure or whether it is done randomly or routinely, whether it extends the whole territory of Gibraltar or indeed whether, as the hon Member is insinuating in his question, that it might be a monitoring function limited to making sure that they themselves are not the source of a radiation leak. If the hon Member wants the answer to that question he is as free to write to the MOD as I am and ask them but certainly I have got no information that will enable me to answer that question with certainty.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I know that I am free to ask the MOD. I suppose then I can put notice of this question because it does arise from the original reply to the original question which was that the MOD was doing the monitoring and I am trying therefore to establish whether in fact as I understand it the monitoring that they are doing is monitoring their own potential radiation sources to make sure that they are not responsible for producing an uncontrolled radiation leak. If that is not the case then we will give notice now that we will be putting that question down for the next time.

NO. 549 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - CONDITIONED HOURS**

Can Government give a breakdown by grade of the nurses currently employed on conditioned hours in excess of 37.5 per week?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Full-time nurses work 40 hours a week. Calculations concerning these are carried out on a one to one basis.

The information requested in Question No. 549 is as follows:

Director of Nursing Services	x 1
Deputy Director of Nursing Services	x 1
Clinical Nurse Manager SN6	x 1
Clinical Nurse Manager SN7	x 4
Tutors	x 2
Clinical Teacher	x 1
Charge Nurse	x 32
Staff Nurse	x 81
Senior Enrolled Nurse	x 10
Enrolled Nurse	x 61
Auxiliary Nurse	x 16
Assistant Nurse	x 43
Pupil Nurse	x 17
Student Nurse	x 12

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 543 AND 549 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

The Minister is replying to so many questions at the same time I am not quite sure whether he has actually answered how it is that they calculate the whole time equivalent complement?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The question asked how the Health Authority calculates whole time equivalents in respect of nurses who work in excess of 37.5 hours a week. Full timers are calculated on a one to one basis. In other words, whoever works in excess of 37.5 hours, they work 40 hours, are calculated on a one to one basis. If there are 20 people working more than 37 hours we count them as 20.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What we can say is the person whose conditioned hours are more than 37.5 count as one body on the complement, is that correct?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say, in the complement that has been announced as a result of the changes, are the full-time equivalents which he has quoted publicly in the new structure, are they based on 37.5 or on a higher number of hours?

HON K AZOPARDI:

The subsequent question asks me to list how many members of staff in the nursing staff work more than 37.5 hours. That is what I have done, I have given the House those figures. The number of nursing officers that today work more than 37.5 hours, that is what I have done. It does not ask about future complements, it talks about now.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, I know. I know that that is what the question says. In the light of the answer that we have been given, we have been given that the answer is that it is not done on a pro rata basis and that therefore it is not a question of a full-time equivalent. If somebody works, for example, on 48 hours because they do four nights of 12 hours, they count as one body of 37.5, is that correct?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, they count as one body working 40 hours because all nurses work 40 hours instead of 37.5 hours. I think the hon Member will recall that.



HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact the complement is based then on a 40 hour week?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes. All full-time nurses work 40 hours; they work for 37.5 and then 2.5 are added on to their shifts as a historic thing.

HON J J BOSSANO:

When the Minister has given in answers to questions here and publicly a figure which he says is the full-time equivalent, is the manpower in terms of the man hours available, that number multiplied by 37.5 or that number multiplied by 40?

HON K AZOPARDI:

In respect of nurses that work more than 37.5 hours, in other words, working 40 hours, we count them as one. Then there are two different types of nurses, apart from full-timers, ones who work 20 hours are counted as half, mostly Nursing Assistants and Nursing Auxiliaries and then the Nursing Assistants/Auxiliaries who do 28 hours, the mathematical equation that management work are that they take the number of nurses and divide it by 37.5. So in respect of full-timers and part-timers who work 20 hours, it is basically on a one to one basis or on a half to one, it is a strict ratio. In respect of Nursing Assistants/Auxiliaries who do 28 hours, because it is a funny figure, it is a somewhat more complicated issue but it is as I have indicated just now.

MR SPEAKER:

I am glad you have understood it. Next question.

ORAL

NO. 550 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**MOD - UNDERWATER EXPLOSIONS**

Will Government state whether they have taken an initiative to assess the damage to coastal marine life resulting from MOD underwater explosions?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 558 of 1998.

NO. 551 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**ROSIA ROAD - PROPOSED BUILDING**

Will Government state whether they are having second thoughts about building on the open space beside the Piccadilly Bar in Rosia Road?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Government are not having second thoughts on this issue. Government have received representations which have been considered and Government intend to proceed with this project.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 551 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

What encouraged me to believe that perhaps there might have been second thoughts is the fact that not all that long ago the Minister for Education waxed lyrical about the millennium and having more green spaces and so on and since these cannot be fabricated at the last moment, I thought that perhaps this might be a good indication particularly when one views this area from above it is a wonderful opportunity, in fact, to have a green space there and have a bit of a garden but I appreciate the Government's decision on this.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government are self-evidently committed to the creation of green and greenery and green spaces as must be obvious to the hon Member from the great amount of planted areas in which the Government are indulging and indeed the creation of such things as the promenade down at the reclamation. The question of Government's commitment to open spaces and greenery, which we like to think is more demonstrable than it has been in the past by other Governments in Gibraltar, cannot be measured against the criteria of whether we apply every site to open space. Indeed one of the points that the Heritage Trust made to us, when asking us whether we considered this decision, was the amenities for the residents of that area. The Government considered this and came to the conclusion that the residents of that area were mainly the residents of Alameda Estate and areas to the south of it and that they were very fortunately endowed in terms of green and open spaces by the fact that they are neighbours of the Alameda Gardens themselves and that there was therefore no localised need there for the creation of additional open and green spaces. I think the hon Member whilst he may not be entirely or at all happy with the Government's decision to proceed with this project, should have regard to two things: first of all, the fact that the Government have with the result of higher expenditure on the project, amended the project to create a promenade between the structure and the Ragged Staff so that the site is as far as possible brought in from the wall rather than up against the wall and that is an improvement and it makes it a site near the wall rather than a site on the wall. I know that the hon Member does not like me to remind him of his party's responsibilities for things in the past which will no doubt provoke him to get up to remind me of what he regards as my insalutary and unhealthy political past but

still, he ought not to lose sight of the fact that this is one of the projects that we inherited from the Opposition Members and that it was the Opposition Members who identified this site as the relocation for the Orange Bastion Depot and it was a commitment between his party, when in Government, with the workforce of the Electricity Department at Orange Bastion to have that site there and that we actually inherited the proposal, we inherited the project, we inherited the plans and what we have done, given our well documented and increased and superior commitment to heritage sensitivity than was evident when they were in Government, we have actually amended their plans to make it as heritage sensitive as possible by bringing it in from the wall. Although I am quite happy to take responsibility for continuing with the project, in formulating his criticisms he ought not to lose sight completely of the fact that it was actually they when they were in Government who made the decision to proceed with this and who entered into the commitment to reprovide the Orange Bastion Depot on that site and that indeed the Opposition Spokesman for Government Services, the Hon Mr Perez, will no doubt remember, that in the first Question Time after the election, he continually would ask me, "Are the Government proceeding with the relocation?" or "When are they proceeding and how are plans going?" of course, trying to cause us to proceed with it because he knew that this was a commitment that the workforce there were expecting from the days when he was the Minister with responsibility.

HON J C PEREZ:

The memory of the Chief Minister fails him very conveniently, he recalls only part of the story but not all of it. Is he not aware that it took the Government over a year to take on the recommendation that I was making of fulfilling the commitment of putting the people there and is he not aware that there was no plans, that there was only a verbal commitment at the level of the Personnel Manager with the workforce and that every plan that has been done for any buildings that are going to be built is something that has been done by his administration and that the site was located but any buildings that were going to go or any contracting that was going to take place on that site is only the responsibility of his Government and his planners because there were no plans at all ready? The site was identified, the commitment was there but I believe that the objection that the Heritage Trust has has to do with the erection of some buildings that are taking place there. I believe that that is the case. Just to clarify and to put straight the position of the Chief Minister since he has brought me into the argument which I was not involved in.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I regret to say that the hon Member's recollection is not correct and that indeed nothing that he has said is inconsistent with what we are saying. The hon Member should be aware that what we are doing here is not contrasting the Heritage Trust's opinion with the Government's, what we are doing is contrasting his own Heritage spokesman's view with ours. His view is not that the buildings should be put here or there or this way or against the wall or away from the wall, the view that he is recommending is that the depot should not go there at all and that such structures as exist there, except for the historical ones, should be demolished and that the area should be an open park space and that is completely incompatible with what the hon Member has just admitted which is that his own administration was committed with the workforce to relocate the depot there and the issue under discussion here does not turn on who drew the first plans. He concedes that he had a commitment to reprovide the Orange Bastion Depot there and that the hon Gentleman sitting at the other end of his bench in the House is urging the Government not to have the depot there at all and to demolish everything in sight and put up park benches. What the Hon Mr Gabay is now recommending is completely

incompatible with the fact that he, the Hon Mr Perez, when he was in Government entered into a commitment which we inherited to relocate the depot there. To the extent that what the hon Member has said is that there were actually no plans drawn out when he left office on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1996, I would not feel any great need to quarrel with him on that but it is hardly central to the point that we are making which is that the Opposition Members devised this project, made the decision to relocate the depot there, entered into a commitment with the workforce to relocate the depot there and that therefore when we now honour that commitment it is really not open to them to criticise it on heritage grounds and that is all that I am saying.

HON J J GABAY:

Given the implications of what has been said, perhaps we are not infallible in the Opposition as they are in the Government and if there is an element of incompatibility at times in certain projects the only way I can interpret that is that there is still some hope for a healthy political life in Gibraltar when this can happen.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Surely what the Chief Minister said prior to that does not come into the equation where the people from the Alameda Estate have the Alameda Gardens or not. What comes into the equation is that there is a commitment to move the workforce there immaterial of whether there is an open space or not.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is not just a commitment. There is also a commitment, which is what I think disqualifies the hon Members from pressing the criticism too far and I think that the Hon Mr Gabay's last intervention is really unfairly ungenerous towards me. I have debated the matter with him and the only use that I have sought to make of the fact that it was their project in the first place was just to urge him not to press the point too much and at least to have regard to the fact that this was their decision and not ours. We are not proceeding with this project only because the Opposition Members had entered into a commitment. We also recognise the fact which is sometimes something that those that pursue only the heritage lobby exclusively and narrowly pursue, everybody assumes when they think that something should not happen on a particular site that there are plenty of other sites on which it could happen. So of course the Government have been written to on this issue and been asked, "Why put the depot there when there are plenty of other places in which you could put it?" The reality of the matter is that there are not plenty of other sites on which Government can put depots such as this. The Government, for example, want to relocate the north depot of the Buildings and Works Department out of the Landport Ditch, we want to relocate the roads and sewers depot away from British Lines Road and we have not been able to do it yet because we just cannot identify another site. One of the reasons why we are doing it is not just the commitment point, it is the fact that in Gibraltar heritage has got to be placed in the balance with other things that need to be done and it is a matter of balance and judgement whether one gets the balance right in any particular situation. In this case the Government have judged that an open space of that nature which is a space near a wall, given that we have brought the buildings in from the wall and created a promenade, but we recognise that there will be others who would make judgement differently and who would therefore disagree with the decision, we believe that on balance and given the conflicting interests that there are for development, for public services, for commercial development and for heritage preservation, but on balance it is correct to proceed with the decision made by the Opposition members. So it is both a question of commitment and the fact that even if there was no commitment

by the Opposition Members, I believe that the Government would have still made the decision to build a depot there because we just have not got enough sites to attend to pure heritage considerations in manner which in an ideal world they would deserve to be attended to.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I am glad that that is the Government's position now which it was not when they were in Opposition especially by the hon Member who is now the Minister for the Environment, he had a different view to the one that the Chief Minister has just said.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

On what issue?

HON J L BALDACHINO:

In issues like that consideration – I agree with the Chief Minister that sometimes one has to balance between the environment and obviously necessities that the Government have. That was not the view previously especially by the Government.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know to what extent the hon Member had private conversations with the Minister for the Environment who is Mr Azopardi but it is certainly nothing that he said in the House because he was not in the House before the last election.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

He used to make public statements.

NO. 552 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**KING'S BASTION - PROPOSED BUILDING**

Will Government state whether they are having second thoughts about transforming the old Generating Station at King's Bastion into a leisure centre?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I have to say that one could become schizophrenic if one took the advice of the hon Member. This morning he was accusing us of sitting on the fence and dithering and falling accidentally on one side through lack of leadership and inactivity and this afternoon he keeps on asking me whether I am having second thoughts about everything.

Fortunately, we suffer none of those character deficiencies and I can tell the hon Member that the Government are proceeding to convert the non-historical part of old King's Bastion Generating Station on Queensway into a multi-purpose sports hall. That is the ugly modern part that is seen from Queensway.

Government have also been considering, or rather more accurately, Government had also been considering the possibility of creating a leisure centre in the historical parts of King's Bastion. Whilst that idea has not been entirely rejected, it is not currently being actively pursued.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 552 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

In respect of that remark about schizophrenia, that is only one of the many human ailments. Human beings are very complex but I shall not go now to distribute particular ailments in one direction and another. Let me say that my arguments would be virtually the same as in the previous case and it is not a question of sitting on the fence, it is a question at times of correcting one's approach to a particular problem and not considering oneself infallible.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

ORAL

NO. 553 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**MOD - AMERICAN NUCLEAR SUBMARINES**

Have Government made any enquiries vis-à-vis the MOD as to whether it has plans to establish in Gibraltar a permanent base for American nuclear submarines?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The MOD, so they inform me, have no plans to establish in Gibraltar a permanent base for American nuclear submarines. American submarines have been welcome visitors to Gibraltar for many years.



NO. 554 OF 1998THE HON J J GABAY**TERRITORIAL WATERS - INCURSIONS**

Can Government list the number of occasions, giving dates and number of vessels, on which Spanish fishing boats have illegally operated in Gibraltar waters as from 14<sup>th</sup> April 1998 to the present?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Between the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1998 to the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1998 there have been a total of 43 instances involving 89 vessels. I will pass the list to the hon Member. The details are as follows:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NO. OF VESSELS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>NO. OF VESSELS</u>
14.04.98	2	26.07.98	3
20.04.98	1	27.07.98	1
22.04.98	1	29.07.98	3
23.04.98	1	04.08.98	1
24.04.98	4	08.08.98	1
25.04.98	6	10.08.98	4
29.04.98	1	12.08.98	1
02.05.98	2	13.08.98	1
05.05.98	6	17.08.98	1
06.05.98	1	20.08.98	9
07.05.98	1	21.08.98	1
11.05.98	1	22.08.98	2
14.05.98	1	23.08.98	3
19.05.98	1	24.08.98	1
21.05.98	2	25.08.98	3
22.05.98	1	26.08.98	2
28.05.98	1	27.08.98	3
17.06.98	2	28.08.98	1
20.06.98	1	30.08.98	4
14.07.98	1	31.08.98	1
15.07.98	2	01.09.98	<u>1</u>
24.07.98	3	TOTAL	<u>89</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 554 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

The main point I wanted to stress was that there has been a continuation of these breaches of our territorial waters and I would recall in the initial stages the Chief Minister's noble words, "I will not tolerate it" and it seems, from what we know, that it is being tolerated all round other than for verbal protests. Until when will the situation carry on as it is?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What the Government said was that the Government would not accept, in other words, that the Government would not agree to the continuation of these incursions. The hon Member must know and I am sure that he attributes to me also the knowledge of the fact that the Government of Gibraltar controls neither the Royal Gibraltar Police nor the Ministry of Defence and that I do not have the physical wherewithal to protect either the territorial waters of Gibraltar or indeed to enforce the laws in it. But certainly I can agree that the list of dates that I will give to the hon Member confirms that there has been a continuation. A continuation of what he calls breaches of sovereignty of the waters which have always occurred and have occurred for the last 20 or 30 years and certainly during the last 10 years although I would acknowledge with a degree of frequency, regularity and defiance which is much greater now than has been the case certainly in recent years, I cannot speak from memory from what may have happened 20 years ago.

HON J J GABAY:

Could the Chief Minister tell us whether he is happy with the response of the Foreign Office or His Excellency the Governor when he puts pressure on them for correcting what is a serious contravention with very serious consequences for our jurisdiction and indeed for our sovereignty?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do believe that the hon Member pre-empts a question that he has got on the Order Paper. We can debate them all now together or take them in turn but I think that really is the natural supplementary to two questions on.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The figures that the Chief Minister has given, are they the times that the Royal Gibraltar Police have gone out to the boats to ask them to leave? Incursion does not mean that they are just passing through is it, those figures are actually that the Police have gone and asked the fishermen to leave?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot say that. The question asks, "Can the Government list the number of occasions on which Spanish fishing boats have illegally operated?" Illegal operation, I think, does not raise questions of sovereignty incursion but rather fishing in breach of the terms of the Nature Protection Ordinance, in other words, using illegal nets. For example, I would very much doubt if these statistics include the instances in which Spanish fishermen have incurred into the waters and fished using legal fishing methods, the ones that are permitted. So this list is of recorded instances and that might not be all of them that have occurred, these are those instances which the RGP has recorded of instances of Spanish fishing boats fishing in Gibraltar waters illegally.

HON R MOR:

The Chief Minister has mentioned 43 instances which involved 89 vessels, is that correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

HON R MOR:

May I ask whether the 89 vessels are different vessels or are they the same? Is the RGP recording the names, et cetera?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I do not think there are 89 fishing boats in La Linea and Algeciras of the sort that fish here. In most days there are one or two incursions and from reports that I sometimes see of Police monitoring it is almost always the same seven or eight recognisable names or 10 or 12, it is not 89 different boats, it is the same boats however many number they are frequently and regularly offending.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government say whether there is any truth in the reports that the British Ambassador in Madrid offered a solution on the basis of a limited number of vessels being allowed to fish on certain occasions? If he has got knowledge of that, is that something that has been proposed with the support of the Government of Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have seen the reports in Saturday's Area and Europa Sur. The Government of Gibraltar have absolutely no knowledge of any approach by the British Government through the Madrid Embassy or any other organ of the British Government proposing terms upon which fishing by illegal means could be tolerated. Indeed the position that I have repeatedly put to His Excellency the Governor and which he has always in conversation with me accepted as being the correct view, is that it is not possible for the British Government or anybody else to purport to sanction by agreement any number of instances by any permutation of numbers or locations of an activity which is a breach of the criminal law of Gibraltar because neither the British Government nor the British Embassy in Madrid have the power to repeal or amend an Ordinance which has been approved in advance, as the records appear to show, by the British Government which has been lawfully enacted by this legislature, which has received the assent of the Governor of the day and which the Secretary of State at the time did not exercise his powers of disallowance in respect of and therefore this is a valid law and the British Government simply lacks the constitutional and legal wherewithal to purport to enter into agreements which would place the other contracting party in breach of the criminal law of Gibraltar and therefore on that basis I have always said to His Excellency the Governor that the position of the Government of Gibraltar is that no such agreement can be entered into and His Excellency the Governor has always replied that he is not seeking to enter into such an agreement and that he agrees that such an agreement would not be possible whilst the law remains what it is. Therefore if the reports in the Spanish press, which is an "if", are accurate to the extent that they attribute to the British Ambassador a formal proposal to arrive at what in effect would be a fisheries agreement, but a fisheries agreement that would place the fishermen in breach of the criminal law of Gibraltar, then I think that that would be improper and it

would be unenforceable and it would be contrary to what I have expressed to His Excellency the Governor to be the position of the Government of Gibraltar and what he has expressed to me is the position of the British Government. So one can only suppose, and of course I have been in the House all day and therefore I have not been able to pursue the matter, but one can only suppose that or that the reports in the Spanish press are indeed not accurate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Will the Government note that that also happens to be the view of the Opposition and that therefore we would want that to continue to be the position and that there should be no change in that position without us having an opportunity to discuss the reasons for considering any change in the House to the extent that the Chief Minister makes the representation which I myself have made from the Opposition to the Governor, will he note what I am saying so that he can take on board that the position is shared?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Indeed I do and I think I should just add that in a sense this is not a question of political policy. It is just not possible for anybody who asserts the rule of law in Gibraltar and that has a responsibility for upholding the rule of law in Gibraltar as in a sense we all do, how anybody in such a position could possibly believe that it is possible to enter into an agreement to give permission to any number of individuals, let alone by what criteria one selects them, to breach the criminal law of Gibraltar. I think that it is just not legally possible, regardless of what one's view is about the politics of the situation and therefore for that reason I assume and I am in no sense prejudging the position of the British Government. I therefore assume because they must know this as well as anybody else, I therefore presume that whatever might be the degree of accuracy of those Spanish press reports, it cannot be the position that the British Ambassador has sought to make agreements with the Spanish fishermen to do things which are illegal under the laws of Gibraltar. I think that we owe it to the British Ambassador to give him the benefit of that doubt until such time as the doubt is clarified, one way or the other, which I will seek to do with His Excellency the Governor tomorrow when I am free from this House.

NO. 555 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**TERRITORIAL WATERS - INCURSIONS**

Will Government state whether "monitoring" the illegal activities of Spanish trawlers in our territorial waters by the pertinent authorities simply amounts to keeping the trawlers company until they choose to leave?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 556 and 557 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 556 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**TERRITORIAL WATERS - INCURSIONS**

Will Government state how effective the interventions of the Royal Gibraltar Police and Trumpeter have been in deterring illegal incursions into our territorial waters?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 555 and 557 of 1998.

NO. 557 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**TERRITORIAL WATERS - INCURSIONS**

Will Government state what representations have been made by the Gibraltar Government to Her Majesty's Government in respect of the protection of our territorial waters and what assurances have been received?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The meaning of the word "monitoring" is available to the hon Member in the Oxford or any other dictionary. However, the meaning that he offers in his question would be entirely consistent with the proper definition of that word, as I understand it.

The Government cannot state how effective the interventions of the RGP and HMS Trumpeter have been in deterring illegal incursions into our territorial waters since the Government have no way of assessing whether the level of incursions would have been higher but for their intervention. However, it is self-evident that those interventions have been far from totally effective.

The Government have, on several occasions, made representations to Her Majesty's Government to the effect that British sovereignty jurisdiction and control of the waters have to be asserted and upheld as well as respect for our law enforcement agencies as they go about the execution of their duties in the enforcement, as they see fit, of our laws. The British Government have assured the Government that they share this view.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 555, 556 AND 557 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I do not feel that I have to consult the dictionary as often as the Chief Minister does but looking at the word "monitoring" I presume that it comes from moneo monere to warn, that is probably the Latin etymon for it, from monere and if it so, one can see the significance in which it is used of warning people not to carry on doing what they should not be doing.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, tempting as it is to engage the hon Member in a semantic debate, I believe that the word "monitor" involves passive observation, keeping a situation under observation and review and implicitly means not doing anything about it which is why I said that the meaning of the word "monitor" contained in the hon Member's question by reference to waiting until they have finished and then choosing to leave is perfectly consistent with the meaning of the word "monitor" as I understand it.

HON J J GABAY:

Is it the feeling of the Chief Minister that we are reaching a point where something really positive should occur in order to see that the flouting of our laws does not continue indefinitely? Does he feel that the necessary help and willingness on the part of the British Government is there?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

His Excellency the Governor has told me and the whole of Gibraltar that he has obtained assurances from Her Majesty's Government to that effect and, of course, I take His Excellency entirely at his word. If the British Government fail to deliver on such assurances as they may have given His Excellency then that is a different matter for which we cannot hold him personally responsible. But I have no reason to believe that we are in that scenario. The Government in no way relishes the prospect of an escalation in this situation, we would much rather we were not in this situation of tension which can have incalculable consequences to many things that are of importance to Gibraltar. Let me say to the Opposition Member that whilst I believe that those incalculable consequences have to be faced when what we are protecting is something fundamental such as sovereignty as jurisdiction and control and the upholding of our laws, and whilst I think that Gibraltar must and, as far as the Government are concerned, will maintain a firm line on those issues, certainly I would not wish to suffer all those consequences simply because of fish and environmental arguments. In other words, let us not lose sight of the fact that we are justified in taking a strong line in this matter because what is at stake ultimately is the sovereignty and jurisdiction and control of our waters and if those important fundamental things were not at stake, it would be most unwise for Gibraltar to enter the uncertain era that we may enter simply to protect fish stocks underneath our waters which nobody in Gibraltar depends upon economically and about which I think few people must lie awake at night worrying here in Gibraltar. Therefore we must not lose sight of the fact that this is not about fishing and I regret when people in Gibraltar, especially in the press, refer to this issue as the fishing dispute. This is not a dispute about fishing, this is a dispute about the authority of the RGP in those waters, it is about the validity in those waters of laws passed in this House and it is about the sovereignty of those waters, as to whether they are British, whether they are Spanish or whether peculiarly there would be no sovereignty at all and frankly, to describe the waters as disputed is unhelpful because it suggests that that somehow neutralises the question of sovereignty. Therefore I would urge Members in this House and indeed public opinion in Gibraltar at large to keep in mind that distinction and that if at any stage in the future a solution can be found which may prejudice the fish but which does not prejudice our sovereignty and our jurisdiction and our control and the validity of our laws in those waters and the authority of the RGP, then that the public interest of Gibraltar requires to pursue those avenues rather than take some masochistic relish in watching the situation escalate with the incalculable consequences that that could bring.



NO. 558 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**MOD - UNDERWATER EXPLOSIONS**

Will Government state what steps they have taken to keep track of the nature and location of underwater explosions by the MOD?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I am informed that the Ministry of Defence has been using Governor's Beach as a military range during the past 10 years and that for the last three years it has been used for detonating explosives on the shore and below the surface. All underwater explosions take place at Governor's Beach range.

I understand that the MOD liaises with the GONHS regarding the type and timing of explosives to minimise the damages caused to marine life and the area in general. No debris is left on the water or on the beach and all explosives are strictly accounted for. Other steps are taken to help minimise the impact of explosives, including the reduction in underwater training during the spawning season.

In the circumstances, given that the Ministry of Defence requires to have this type of training facility, the Government are satisfied that reasonable steps are taken and that there is reasonable consultation with the GONHS to address environmental concerns.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 550 AND 558 OF 1998

HON J J GABAY:

I am not aware actually of the line taken on this by the GONHS but I am sure that the Chief Minister has also been reading the correspondence in respect of others who are quite knowledgeable on marine life and have been in their own right documenting the harm done. There has been an exchange, in fact, of letters between Mr Bonfiglio and His Excellency the Governor, of course we have assurances from His Excellency the Governor as indeed we have already mentioned in the case of radiation leaks and so on. Apparently a letter was sent to the Minister for the Environment seeking his opinion as to a possible alternative site which would not do as much damage and I wonder whether he might respond to this?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not privy to any correspondence involving Mr Bonfiglio. I can only suppose that the hon Member is referring to that font of question material for him which appears to be letters to the editors page of the Gibraltar Chronicle which I have to admit I do not read with the frequency and the regularity and the intensity which obviously the hon Member would recommend to me. I can tell him, however, that I know that pursuant to

the regular consultation that takes place between GONHS and the Ministry of Defence, they are indeed seeking to identify an alternative site. I do not know whether it responds to the matters that the hon Member alludes to in his last supplementary but I am told that this very month HQBF Gibraltar is to survey alternative sites for underwater explosions with the assistance of GONHS and what my briefing notes euphemistically call local fishermen. Whether that is for the reasons that the hon Member has said or not I cannot confirm to him. I can also say to him, however, that I do not know what difference of view there is, if any, between GONHS and these other fishermen including the gentleman, Mr Bonfiglio, that he refers to. What I am aware of is the extent to which over the last two or three years the Ministry of Defence have modified the way they carry out this and the amounts of the size of the explosions in response to concerns expressed to them by GONHS and recommendations made to them by GONHS to minimise the damage to sea life. I am informed that the measurable damage to sea life in the form of fish seen floating around dead after these explosions is monitored and is not great. I think the record so far is 20 fish seen dead following one of these explosions and that the matter is constantly under review and that the MOD tell me that they have a close working relationship of liaison with GONHS and it remains to be seen whether an alternative site can be found and indeed that that alternative site is not inappropriate given the plans the Government may have in relation to the areas around that site but the Government will keep our mind open until those alternative sites, if any, are identified.

HON J J GABAY:

I am quite satisfied with the answer in the sense that the Chief Minister is suggesting to a certain extent that GONHS are in fact quite happy with the situation, that very little damage is being done but then he follows on to say that he will look into the question of alternative sites. It seems to me a contradiction.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No. I am informed that following discussions between the MOD and GONHS, MOD is looking into alternative sites. The Government are not looking for alternative sites nor are the Government saying that GONHS is quite happy with everything that is going on. I think that GONHS as a responsible environmental organisation pockets what progress it can achieve and that because it understands that it is not going to succeed in eliminating this practice altogether, I suppose prefers to maintain good relations with the MOD which have enabled it, I have here a catalogue of the behaviour modification that they had been able to extract from the MOD over the last two years and it is significant and I suppose they take the view that they would rather use their influence to minimise the environmental damage rather than concentrate on trying to eliminate the practice altogether which I suppose they see as a less attainable objective and indeed it is the MOD that have informed me that they are following consultation with and indeed with the assistance of GONHS looking for this alternative site.

HON J J GABAY:

I sincerely hope that in the near future we shall hear of an alternative site. But to round off the reference about my being an assiduous reader of the Gibraltar Chronicle and implying that he does not read it, I suggest that he reads it more often because it dearly loves him.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The reason why I have given up reading it is that I do not have the ability that others claim to have to distinguish the letters which are written by genuine correspondents and those that are provided to signatories by political parties and their professional letter writers and because I am not willing to waste time trying to work out which comes from which, I think the safest thing is not to do it and in any case the hon Member should know that neither he nor I should be having exchanges across the floor of the House on the basis of things that are reported in the newspapers, that is in Standing Orders of course but the hon Member says things and I take them at face value and I hear them from him. That is what I am reacting to and not what it says in the letter to the editor.

ORAL

NO. 559 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**RATES - COMMERCIAL PREMISES**

Can Government state what was the total amount of rates paid in the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997 in respect of commercial premises where the 20 per cent rebate was charged by those paying the rates demanded within three months of the due date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 560 and 561 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 560 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**RATES - COMMERCIAL PREMISES**

Can Government state what was the total amount of rates paid in the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998 in respect of commercial premises where the 20 per cent rebate was charged by those paying the rates demanded within three months of the due date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 559 and 561 of 1998.

NO. 561 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**RATES - COMMERCIAL PREMISES**

Can Government state what was the total amount of rates paid in the quarter ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998 in respect of commercial premises where the 20 per cent rebate was charged by those paying the rates demanded within three months of the due date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The total amount of rates paid in respect of commercial premises in respect of which the 20 per cent discount has been claimed is as follows:

Quarter ended 31 <sup>st</sup> December 1997	£1,110,428
Quarter ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 1998	£1,101,301
Quarter ended 30 <sup>th</sup> June 1998	£1,081,324

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 559, 560 AND 561 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

The figure that has been quoted, that is the gross figure from which the 20 per cent has been deducted or is this the net figure?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would hate to say so but if the question has been accurately answered, the question did ask what was the total amount of rates paid so I suppose that it is the net amount, in other words, the amount paid so that the gross amount would have been higher.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that there is, as I recall when the system was introduced, the rebate ending one quarter was credited to the following quarter, is that how it was done?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, so that in respect of any quarter 75 per cent is paid and not the 100 per cent, so the amount paid in respect of a quarter is the net amount. This must have an obvious answer which I can find out. One must bear in mind that this amounts to a net reduction of 20 per cent so however the system is started it must result in people actually paying 20 per cent less, whether it is by way of credit against the next quarter or not is just the mechanics of payment in respect of the quarter to which it relates, 20 per cent less is actually paid.

NO. 562 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**COMPANIES - WINDING-UP PROCEEDINGS**

Can Government state in respect of how many companies winding up proceedings have been initiated on account of non-payment of debts to Government in each month since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1998 winding-up proceedings, that is petitions for winding up filed in the Supreme Court on account of non-payment of debts to Government totalled 43. Of these, companies actually wound up so far totalled 20. The breakdown by month is as follows:

	<u>Filed</u>	<u>Liquidated</u>
January	5	4
February	2	3
March	13	4
April	2	0
May	12	8
June	9	1
July	0	0
August	0	0
September	0	0

Obviously there is noticeable inactivity during the summer months.

NO. 563 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**GOVERNMENT REPORTS/STUDIES ETC COMMISSIONED**

What reports/studies, reviews/surveys/consultancies have Government directly or indirectly commissioned since May 1996 and in respect of which matter and at what cost has each such report been commissioned?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I hope the hon Member will accept that the answer is put together and given in good faith. An attempt has been made to recall all such instances and if there are any omissions it is explained only by reference to the fact that there is not a central register of these things and at the end of the day what we can do is a departmental trawl to identify them.

The following have been commissioned since May 1996:

1. King's Bastion Feasibility Study:

To conduct a preliminary feasibility study into the potential Sports and Leisure future of the King's Bastion and the Generating Station. That was commissioned from the firm that have done the same in Jersey.

£11,309.48 - Roger Quinton Associates Ltd

2. Urban Renewal Study:

The revision of laws governing private rents in the Town area with the aim of revitalising and enhancing said areas.

£8,375.00 - Mr S Prescott

3. Eco-motion Survey:

To assess the potential benefits and cost of introducing electronic transport in Gibraltar.

£7,652.35 - Sydkraft Konsult

4. Gibraltar Port Strategic Study:

£20,393.28 - Commissioned to MDS Transmodal

5. Import Duty Report:

£30,509 - Commissioned to KPMG



6. Project Runway:

Process of commercial valuation of the shares in both Gibtel and Nynex for use in any possible merger discussions involving those two companies.

£24,873 - Commissioned to KPMG in the United Kingdom

7. Study on Higher and Further Education in Gibraltar:

£3,515 - Commissioned to DTZ Piedad Consulting

8. Environment Pollution Study:

To monitor Air Quality Control. Hon Members may recall that we exchanged questions and answers about this recently and that is the creation of a study to try and avail ourselves of exemptions in Air Quality Control Directives which would substantially reduce the amount of capital investment that would be required to comply with directives if we can persuade the Commission that our air is not polluted by certain things and to establish that we had to do this survey.

£22,600 - Commissioned to the Environment Agency

9. Building Survey Report on the Theatre Royal:

£15,000 - Commissioned to Mr D Mosquera

10. Report commissioned by the Gibraltar Health Authority to review the Health Service in Gibraltar and to inform the development of a long term Health Service strategy including the state and future of the Estate, in other words, of the real estate use for the delivery of the Health Service in Gibraltar.

£68,931.91 - N.H.S. Estate

11. A review of the public bus service commissioned at no cost from Messrs B Clark, E Pinna and R Garcia to whom we should be grateful for the work that they have done at no cost to the taxpayer.

I suppose, although I am not sure that it is a report as such, the Government did commission a report initially from Milbury on disability care, child care and elderly care which we debated, hon Members will recall, at budget time. There was a one off payment for the initial consideration payable to Milbury which is to provide detailed assessments and report on various aspects of our social services, indeed I can tell hon Members that the Government have now received reports on a number of issues, foster service, care of children, care for the elderly, disabled people with challenging behaviour, of all the reports they had to do they have now given them all in to the Government and the Government are considering them. That is not included in my original answer. I cannot remember what the cost of that was. There was a sum provided in the contract for which, amongst other things, they had to do these reports. I have just been informed my hon Colleague, the Minister for the Environment and Health, that the MOD is paying one-third of the cost of the Health Authority Report to which I referred a moment ago.

NO. 564 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**COMMITTEES/BOARDS/REVIEW TEAMS**

What committees/boards/review teams have Government directly or indirectly set up since May 1996, for what purposes and who has been appointed to serve on such boards/committees?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

If the hon Member agrees what I will give him is a list of the committees/boards et cetera and the purpose and separately give him a list of the members of each board otherwise I will have to read a very long list of names which he will not be able to keep up with anyway, which I will hand to him now.

The following Committees/Boards/Review teams have been set up since May 1996:-

1. The Tax Reform Working Group

Working Group set up to look into tax reform in Gibraltar.

2. Enterprise Initiative Board

A recommending body which considers applications under the Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme and the Gibraltar in Europe Business Development Scheme. It basically evaluates applications for Government and EU funding.

3. Gibraltar National Week Organising Committee

A committee about which much has been heard recently and who have done sterling work during the last few months.

4. The Millennium Committee

The aim of this Committee is to plan ways in which Gibraltar may suitably and meaningfully mark the close of the second Millennium and to celebrate the start of the Third in the year 2000.

5. The Gibraltar Health Authority Review Board

A review team set up to review the structure and operation of the Gibraltar Health Authority and to closely examine specific medical issues.

6. The Nursing Review Board

A body set up to review issues of nursing manning levels, training and selection procedures.

7. School Hours Working Group

Working Group set up to look into the question of school hours.

8. Tourism Advisory Council

A non-executive Council created to assist the Minister in the development of the tourism industry in Gibraltar.

9. Labour Advisory Board

To provide a standing forum for consultation and to seek consensus on matters relating specifically to labour, training and working conditions issues.

10. Economic Advisory Council

A regular forum of consultation between the Government, the Trade Unions and business representatives in matters relating to the economy and economic policy, in a process aimed at achieving broad consensus where possible.

11. Gibraltar Sports Advisory Council

To advise Government on all matters relating to sport.

12. Health and Safety Council

To advise Government on all aspects of health and safety issues.

13. Cemetery Board

Board which Government have resuscitated after five years of being dormant prior to 1996 in order to do its statutory job of advising the Government in relation to matters appertaining to the cemetery.

NO. 565 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**QUALIFYING (CATEGORY 3) INDIVIDUALS RULES 1998**

Can Government state how many applications have been received by the Financial and Development Secretary from statutory bodies requesting a certificate designating an individual occupying a post within such entity, as a category 3 individual paying £10,000 income tax and not subject to normal PAYE income tax rates?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Since the Qualifying (Category 3) Individuals Rules 1998 were brought into operation on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998, we have received five applications from statutory bodies in Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 565 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Are these five different statutory bodies or five applications from one statutory body?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

There are only two statutory bodies to which the rules apply, they are in respect of the Gibraltar Development Corporation and the Financial Services Commission and the applications refer to applications from each; in fact one from the Development Corporation and four from the Financial Services Commission.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In the case of the Financial Services Commission, is it that they are recruiting somebody who has been told that there is available this special tax rate which was not the case before?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

No, there is no formal commitment and there have been no applications on the basis that the status will be extended but it is a matter that has been raised between the Commission and the Government and it is a matter which the Government, in the exercise of the discretions that are vested in these rules will look at sympathetically. Essentially since the Government subsidise the Financial Services Commission significantly we are talking really about an accounting issue rather than a cost issue in net terms. So it is applications that are made by a number of the regulators, they have put them in on the basis that it would seem to make sense as a way of reducing the Government subvention and it is in that context that the applications have been submitted and will be considered.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Although it raises separate issues, I will not go into that, but is it not the case that the salaries that are paid in the Commission are on the basis that people are taxed on those salaries the same as everybody else? Is it that the salaries would be reduced if they were granted?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, they should be. Certain officers have been recruited on the basis that they would be expecting to receive a certain salary and if normal Gibraltar tax were to apply then the salary would be grossed up and, of course, this would be a matter which will give rise to a higher level of subvention.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the commitment then on the part of the Government that they will provide a subvention to meet whatever salaries are negotiated with people that the Commission recruits?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Let us get this straight. There is a commitment from the Government that we will properly add resources to ensure the proper function of the Financial Services Commission but the amount that is to be allocated from time to time is the matter of detailed scrutiny that involves the Financial and Development Secretary looking in a detailed fashion at the budget submitted by the Commission and making sure that any contribution made by the Government is entirely required. What has happened is that in recruiting new supervisors to the Commission; the Commission has offered to the supervisors the potential of a salary at a service level depending on whether the application for rep status is successful or not. The net figure that these supervisors have been contracted to receive will be the same, the only thing that would change will be the amount of gross contribution that the Commission would have to pay to the supervisors and that will have an impact, obviously on the overall cost to the Commission and probably directly on the level of subvention. There is no direct link between the salary paid to these supervisors and the subvention but clearly if the costs that the Commission incurs are higher then it is likely that that will reflect itself in a higher level of subvention, much will depend of course on the type of fees that are collated by the Commission which will depend on how well the industry is doing and how many licensees contribute in any given year.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is not the rationale of that argument applicable virtually to everybody who gets paid out of public funds? That is to say, if none of us paid tax then presumably we would all get a lower allowance in this House?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I am not prepared to debate with the hon Member the rationale or otherwise of the rules. If he wants to discuss the matter I am quite happy to do so in a debate on that issue and I am quite happy to defend the Government's position and this is a question simply on how many people have applied within those rules. But in the case of the Financial Services Commission we are talking about, like in the case of a private sector company that might wish to apply and this now applies to qualifying and exempt

companies. We are talking about individuals who have very specific skills not available in Gibraltar and who are therefore forward in the general areas which these rules were originally designed and that is the basis upon which it was felt reasonable to extend these two statutory bodies to which I have referred. They do not extend to any other. The merits or otherwise of having a scheme of this type is no doubt a question that the hon Member himself must have debated in his own mind when these rules were introduced, rules that are not a great deal different from the ones that they had substituted.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I just take the Minister up on two things that he has said. First of all, he says they are limited to these two statutory bodies. There is nothing in the rules that limits it to any one or two or any, does it?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, it is described as such. They are described as "the statutory body" means the Gibraltar Development Corporation and the Financial Services Commission.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So, for example, the Health Authority would not be able to make use of such rules?  
*[HON CHIEF MINISTER: No.]*

HON A J ISOLA:

Of these five applications have any of them been approved already or are they pending?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

They are still pending.

NO. 566 OF 1998THE HON A J ISOLA**QUALIFYING (CATEGORY 3) INDIVIDUALS RULES 1998**

Can Government state how many applications have been received by the Financial and Development Secretary from companies requesting a certificate designating an individual occupying a post within such entity, as a category 3 individual paying £10,000 income tax and not subject to normal PAYE income tax rates?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A total of six applications have been received from either qualifying or exempt Gibraltar companies since the Qualifying (Category 3) Individuals Rules 1998 were brought into operation on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 566 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

In answer to the previous question the Minister said the rules are virtually the same as the ones that they replaced. Is it the case that the applications that have been received from qualifying or exempt companies in respect of the six are applications that would have met the criteria as they stood before that date?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I speak from memory, but they would not in terms of exempt companies. If I remember the change correctly, the previous rules were limited to qualifying companies and the so-called 1992 holding companies of which not a single one was ever incorporated and were in fact limited to companies that I think were incorporated after 1992. There was a time scale, in other words, it was for new companies coming in but if one was a qualifying company or an exempt company that had been in Gibraltar 15 years but one happened to want to have a member of staff that fell otherwise within the criteria of the rules one could not do so and we took the view that that was an indefensible prohibition. If a company really has a case to be made for the application of the rules it is sensible that it should apply whether or not the company has been incorporated before 1992 or not. One of the things that the new rules does and there are other matters that are different with the previous rules, one of the things that the new rules do do is that it basically extends these rules to all qualifying and exempt companies, of course the other criteria has to be met but in principle any qualifying or exempt company can now make an application under these rules for the status in question.

HON A J ISOLA:

Am I right in saying that the new rules, as in the last ones, have a requirement that the applicant cannot have been working in Gibraltar any time within the previous 12 months? In respect of these six applications received, is that the case with these? Are they all new entrants or have some of them been waiting for some time for these regulations to come into place?

HON P C MONTEGRIFFO:

I cannot confirm that to the hon Member but the criterion in respect of residence has not changed, I am 99 per cent sure of that. In other words, there is a criterion which is replicated from the previous rules, namely, that such a person should not have been residents of Gibraltar for the previous five years before the application is made. Whilst there is a discretion vested in the Financial and Development Secretary as existed in the previous rules to waive that requirement in circumstances that might be seen appropriate. There has been no change in the regulations regarding to that and I cannot tell the hon Member whether these applications are in respect of people that are here and are asking for that discretion to be waived, I would very much doubt it frankly, there is no reason to suppose that these applications are not applications as have been received in the context of the previous rules, namely, by new people seeking to access the labour market albeit on this preferential basis. But I am quite happy to confirm that position to the hon Member if he so wishes.



NO. 567 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOBACCO WHOLESALE LICENSES - APPLICATIONS**

How many applications were received for tobacco wholesalers licences and of these how many were refused or rejected by virtue of the unsuitability of the applicants?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Twenty applications for a tobacco wholesale licence were received and one of them was rejected.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 567 OF 1998

HON A J ISOLA:

Was that rejected by virtue of the unsuitability or was it some other reason?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not willing to identify by name the applicant in question but I can say that the premises from which the particular applicant wanted to carry on the wholesale business was incompatible with other licences that he had for trading on those premises. In other words, it was really a reference to the unsuitability of the premises rather than to the unsuitability of the applicant.

NO. 568 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**TOBACCO RETAIL LICENSES - APPLICATIONS**

How many applications were received for tobacco retail licences and of these how many were refused or rejected by virtue of the unsuitability of the applicants?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Two hundred and thirty-five applications for a tobacco retail licence were received and three of them were rejected. They were all rejected on the grounds of unsuitability of premises from which the retailer intended to trade.

ORAL

NO. 569 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**GOVERNMENT REVENUE - TOURIST INDUSTRY**

Can Government state what they estimate the contribution to Government revenues derived directly from the tourism industry in the year 1997/98 as compared to 1996/97?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 570 of 1998.

NO. 570 OF 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

**GOVERNMENT REVENUE - FINANCIAL SERVICES SECTOR**

Can Government state what they estimate the contribution to Government revenues derived directly from the Financial Services Sector in the year 1997/98 as compared to 1996/97?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Government cannot with any reliable degree of accuracy estimate what are the direct contributions by these sectors to Government revenues either for 1996/97 or for 1997/98 nor indeed for any year after 1987. As I am sure the Opposition Members are only too well aware, in order for the Government to be able to provide such estimates there would need to be an up-to-date Input/Output model of the economy. Such a model would allow reasonably accurate estimates to be made of the relative contributions of each sector of the economy in terms of national income, employment, Government revenue et cetera.

As the hon Member I am sure is aware, Associated Research Consultants carried out two separate surveys in 1980 and in 1987 as a result of which Input/Output models were derived. Unfortunately, the results of both these surveys were rendered highly suspect as forecasting tools as the structure of the Gibraltar economy underwent fundamental change during that decade.

The Government are, therefore, as unable to provide the estimates for the years in question, as Opposition Members were, during the years 1988 to 1996.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 569 AND 570 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Did the Government not answer a similar question previously without that problem, what has changed since then?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not believe that the Government have answered a similar question. What I believe happened is that in some speech outside of Gibraltar or in some marketing material the Government asserted that tourism or perhaps it was the Finance Centre, was contributing 20 per cent of GDP and the Opposition Members pressed us on that and asked us how we knew. That is the exchange that I recall but I do not think we have had this particular question before. It may be that the hon Member's recollection is better than mine. Certainly I do not recall giving, if it has been asked before, such answer.

NO. 571 OF 1998THE HON R MOR**SOCIAL SECURITY - CLOSED/OPEN LONG-TERM BENEFITS SCHEMES**

Can Government identify the provisions in the Ordinances setting up the Open and Closed Benefits Funds which cover the transfer of monies from one fund to the other on an “as an when needs basis”?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The provisions which allow the transfer of monies from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund to the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund are found in section 3(2)(d) together with section 3(6) of the Social Security (Closed Long-Term Benefits and Scheme) Ordinance and section 10(3)(c) together with section 10(6) of the Social Security (Open Long-Term Benefits Scheme) Ordinance.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 571 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that on several occasions in the past when we had asked whether it was the powers of the Financial and Development Secretary that were being used similar to those in the Public Finance Ordinance that we have been told that that is not the case and that there was a specific provision?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, and the answer is that there is a specific provision but one provision depends on the other. In other words, if we take as an example, the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund, section 3(2) says, “there shall be credited to the Fund (a), (b), (c), (d) the monies for which provision is made in section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance”. Then when we read section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance which the hon Member is more than familiar with given that he used it extensively for inter-special fund transfers, he will recall that that gives power – I am not sure who has the power technically, I suspect it is the Financial and Development Secretary – to transfer monies from one special fund to another. Therefore the answer is both, there is a particular provision in each of the pension ordinances but both are by reference back to section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that the Chief Minister has been insisting on a number of occasions that they were not relying on section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance or on a similar provision and at one stage he suggested that it could be found in regulations and when I asked in a supplementary to Question No. 198 whether it was in the regulation which he said to me, “He should have read the principal Ordinance and of course the regulation made thereunder”, and then I said, “It is not in the principal Ordinance, is it in the regulations?” The response of the Chief Minister was, “I am not indicating anything to the hon Member. As the hon Member has stated that what I indicated to him is not enough, my position is I am not indicating

anything to him at all". So, in fact, it is the case then that the answer we have been given before was not accurate, that it is the same provision that we could find in the Ordinance which is the one that says that the Financial and Development Secretary may transfer money which is surplus to the requirements of the fund.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, there is a specific provision and certainly if I told him some time ago that he should look to the principal Ordinance that was very good advise because the provisions.....[HON J J BOSSANO: *I have already looked at it.*] .....that I am reading from are in the principal ordinance. The principal Ordinance contains a provision which authorises the crediting for the special fund to each of the two pension funds of the monies for which provision is made in section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance, that is a specific provision of each of the two pensions ordinances. I suppose we could also rely on subsection 3(c) relating to surplus requirements of the Open Fund but they are specific provisions contained in the principal Ordinance. I do not recall saying anything to the contrary before and certainly what he has read out does not seem to me that contradicts what I am now saying.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I suggest the Chief Minister reads all the supplementaries to Question No. 198 in which he will find that when I kept on drawing his attention to this clause he kept on telling me that this was not the case, that there was a specific provision allowing the money to be transferred from one fund to the other as and when needed. Is it not the case that what this says is that if there is a surplus in this special fund as indeed in any other special fund, the Financial and Development Secretary has got the discretion to determine where that surplus should be transferred to, whether it be the Consolidated Fund or any other special fund? The reply that we have been given of £800,000 being transferred every month since December is what, the judgement of the Financial and Development Secretary since last December that these were £800,000 surplus?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, because the hon Member is looking only at one of the two provisions that I have pointed out to him, the one dealing with the transfer of surplus funds. In other words, in the case of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund he is looking at section 3, subsection (3)(c) and I would urge him to look also at section 3, subsection (2)(d) which makes, in addition to the surplus at each point allows for the transfer to the Pension Fund of the monies for which provision is made in section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance. Section 20..... [HON J J BOSSANO: *Says the same.*] No, section 20(e) has at some stage, my copy does not have the date, been amended to read, "Any monies transferred to the fund from any other special fund", without references to surplus. The reference in the Pension Fund Ordinances, both of them, to the monies for which provision is made in the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance brings in section 20(e) of that Ordinance which simply says, "Any monies transferred to the fund from any other special fund" which I had assumed was the provision on which the hon Member had always relied for transferring monies from one special fund to the other historically.

HON J J BOSSANO:

And which is, in fact, the question that I put to the Chief Minister previously to which he said no. When I asked him, "Is he relying?" the answer was, "No, we are not relying on section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance. I think that is a section

to which the hon Member is referring, there is a specific provision in the Open Long-Term Fund and in the Closed Long-Term Fund for this to occur otherwise it would not have been possible to create different funds because one fund is receiving the contribution and the other is receiving none of the contributions". Now what he tells us is that the answer should not have been no, it should have been, "Yes, we are relying on the provisions of section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance because the law says that we can do what the section 20 permits" which, of course, if section 20 permits it even without a provision that here it says that one can do it, in the absence of a positive prohibition he would have been able to do anyway. The only reason why we put this question down on the Order Paper was because we could not find anything other than section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance and we had already been told that this was not the case.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have to say to the hon Member that I think that he is mistaken, he is not giving due significance to the fact that the provisions of one Ordinance are specifically imported into another by a specific provision of that second Ordinance. We are not relying on section 20 directly. In other words, we would be relying on section 20 directly if the Pension Scheme Ordinances were silent and if the Pension Scheme Ordinances were silent on the issue then we would be relying on the overall application of section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance. What I said to the hon Member, which is entirely accurate, is that there is a specific..... *[Interruption]* Well, the hon Member either just wants to hear his own allegations or he wants to hear the answers as well. What I said to him was that there was specific provision in the Pensions Ordinances and there is specific provision in the Pensions Ordinances which in the section that I have quoted in my first answer, on the face of the Pensions Ordinance make specific provision for relying on that section and therefore the reliance on that section is not direct, the Pensions Ordinances, both of them, make specific provisions for the transfer of funds from one special fund to the other. It is true that that specific provision does not explain verbatim the regime and that it imports the regime by reference to a provision in the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance but it is still entirely correct that each of the two Pensions Ordinances make specific provision for the fund transfers.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Chief Minister two questions? First, am I correct in saying that without the specific provision to which he is drawing attention, which I pointed out to him in supplementaries to Question No. 198 and he told me it was something else, I pointed to this specific provision, I said, "There is a provision here which is the same as the one in section 20" and he said I should read the Ordinance again, that is what he told me the last time. Will he accept that, in fact, the absence of that provision would not alter at all what is being done? That is to say, without that specific provision exactly the same thing could have been done under section 20 of the Public Finance (Control and Audit) Ordinance?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Absolutely and that does not detract from the fact that also there is specific provision to do that in the Pension Scheme Ordinances, both propositions are correct. We could have done it without the specific provision in the Ordinance and there is also a specific provision in the Ordinance, both propositions are correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So, in fact, the answer is that when I asked him to confirm that it was the provision in the Ordinance which was the same as section 20 that was being used and I was told that I should take another look at the Ordinance, the reply should have been to confirm that it was the same provision that was being used?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If that is the effect of the question in supplementaries that he has in front of him then the answer is yes, that in effect the Ordinances import by reference the same regime as is otherwise provided for by section 20 and I suppose that that is the reason why Standing Orders do not allow hon Members to ask opinions from others.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It is not a question of opinion, I was seeking information because the impression was being given to the House that there was some other route being used.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not now, originally.



ORAL

NO. 572 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**MOROCCAN WORKFORCE - REPATRIATION OFFER**

Can Government state how many Moroccan unemployed workers took up the Government's repatriation offer?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 573 of 1998.

NO. 573 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**MOROCCAN WORKFORCE - REPATRIATION OFFER**

Can Government state how many Moroccan unemployed workers did not take up the Government's repatriation offer?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

A total of 173 unemployed Moroccan workers have to date taken up the Assisted Resettlement Scheme.

A total of 193 unemployed Moroccan workers have not done so.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 572 AND 573 OF 1998

HON R MOR:

Do the Government accept that the total of these two figures are way out with the 700 estimated at the time?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government, as I have said in the House before, have had in the order of 400 Moroccans registering under the scheme but, of course, registration did not require them to actually do it and of the 417 who originally registered for the scheme, 48 registered subsequently but of the 417 who originally registered for the scheme, 173 have taken it up. That is not a measure of anything, that is not a measure of the number of unemployed Moroccans, there may be unemployed Moroccans out there who never registered for the scheme. If the hon Member is trying to suggest that numbers do not tally with the alleged number of unemployed Moroccans I do not think they are supposed to.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In the amount that was put in the Estimates, what was the assumed take up?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is an answer to that question, I do not recall it. I think it was just under the £1.5 million that the Government said that we would provide. The hon Members are trying to get to the point of enquiring what might be my view on whether it has been a success or not, I think it has been a partial success. I think it would have been better if more people had taken it but 173 people have taken it and gone and that is better than none. I would have been much happier if as many as possible of the structural long-term unemployed Moroccans had taken it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the position then that it is no longer on offer, there was a time limit?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not recall that. I do not think so. I think it would still be available to anybody who applied and took it now. I cannot remember the rules of it but whatever was originally said the Government will, in principle, be willing to extend it up to the maximum amount that we were willing to spend on this if anybody else now wants to take it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Was there a condition on how long people had to be out of work before they became eligible?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, there was, but I cannot remember what it was. I think it was three years or five years, there was a requirement. Although it has to be said that in the end the rules about who could take it and who could not became quite elastic and, frankly, so long as numbers were being reduced I think people have been allowed to take it who would not have complied with the original rules as drafted. There were rules to the scheme but I do not think those rules have been strictly adhered to.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So it would not be the case, for example, that some people might not have been eligible because they had not been unemployed long enough but would become eligible in the future? Anybody who had not met the time requirement would still have been allowed to go, is that it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think the rule that has not been strictly applied is the one about the period of time during which they had to have been unemployed. I do not think anyone has been allowed, in fact I can tell him from my notes here for supplementaries, that 46 people applied and were not accepted because they were still employed. So the rule that they had to be unemployed was not being relaxed. They had to be resident in Gibraltar for a certain period of time and therefore those that have applied, Moroccans who had left Gibraltar over the years and gone back to Morocco, they were not allowed obviously to benefit either. The idea of this was to get people away and not to pay people that had already gone. Five persons have not so far been allowed to participate because they became unemployed after the scheme was implemented so they are five people in whose case the scheme might be relaxed and extended so that they might feel to take it up, and two who have been in Gibraltar for less than five years. So the rule that they had to be unemployed for a certain amount of time has been relaxed but not that they had to be unemployed having been in Gibraltar for a minimum period of time.

NO. 574 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**APPROVED CONTRACTORS COMMITTEE**

What is the criteria used by Government in selecting companies to form part of the approved list of contractors?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Applications for inclusion in the Government's list of approved contractors are considered by the Approved Contractors Committee which investigates the firm's financial status, its managerial and technical expertise, its past performance on other projects and the number of workmen it employs on a permanent basis.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 574 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Does the Chief Minister know whether local companies have recently been discarded in favour of companies from outside Gibraltar in the criteria used?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have no knowledge of that. In any case, it would not be a question of discarding. It is not as if there is a maximum number of companies that are allowed on the list. If the committee wanted to put Spanish companies on the list it would not have to be at the expense of kicking out a local company. I am not quite sure how the discarding comes in, it may well be although I have no knowledge whatsoever about it, that some companies may have been disqualified or deregistered having failed to keep up to the criteria upon which they originally earned accession to the list. But certainly I have no knowledge of it. If the hon Member is interested I will find out and inform him. I have just been reminded that, in any case, I know the hon Member knows that he knows that there are certain categories.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In the original reply a list of criteria was given but is it that they have to have a certain number of employees to be able to be on the list?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is an issue that we are considering as a means of achieving this and other things but at the moment it is just a question of the committee assessing the capacity of the company to do work, it is not that there is a minimum that has to be met statutorily although I suppose that if the committee is consistent in its application of these criteria it must have a view of what is the minimum personnel that a company should have in order to qualify for one of the various categories.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is there a requirement as to the length that the company has had to be trading, that is the previous track record of the company?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not believe that there is. I think in a sense the criteria about past performance would operate negatively against them, they are better off with no track record at all than with a bad one. There is no minimum length of time otherwise one could never get on the list in the first place.

HON J J BOSSANO:

That is not quite true. One could get on the list after one has been operating without necessarily being on the list. Is it in the case, in fact, that the UK departments in their own short listing of tenderers put in a requirement that they have had to be undertaking work for a certain period of time before they can get on?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not aware of what UK departments may be doing. Certainly we have not got such a policy that I am aware of.

ORAL

NO. 575 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**CIVIL SERVICE - AA VACANCIES**

How many of the applicants for the Administrative Assistant vacancies advertised for the Civil Service in August were shortlisted for interview and what criteria was used?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 579 of 1998.

NO. 576 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**CIVIL SERVICE - AA VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many of those recruited before August as Administrative Assistants into the Civil Service held the following qualifications:

- (a) Degrees
- (b) 'A' levels
- (c) 5 'O' levels or more?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Of those applicants recruited as Administrative Assistants before August into the Civil Service; three held Degrees, five held 'A' levels and three held 5 'O' levels or more.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 576 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Were there any persons shortlisted over the 11 people employed and, if so, what were the qualifications of those?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Three other applicants recruited held Higher National Diplomas. I believe that there was a shortlist and I believe, although I would not like the hon Member to hold me to this particular part of the answer, that that shortlist has been drawn on but that is as much information as I have available to me right now.

ORAL

NO. 577 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**CIVIL SERVICE - AA VACANCIES**

Can Government now state how many of the 128 applicants shortlisted for interview for Administrative Assistant posts advertised in the Civil Service before August, were persons registered as unemployed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 578 of 1998.



NO. 578 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**CIVIL SERVICE - AA VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many of those recruited before August as Administrative Assistants into the Civil Service were unemployed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I regret that in answer to Question No. 267 of 1998, I unwittingly gave the hon Member incorrect information. I said that there were 128 applicants, which is why he uses that number in the last question, shortlisted for interview when in fact there were 110. I apologise to the hon Member for this error which stems from erroneous information to my office from the Personnel Department.

Of the applicants shortlisted for interview for the post of Administrative Assistant in the Civil Service before August, 11 were registered as unemployed. Eleven applicants recruited before August were unemployed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 577 AND 578 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

So I take it that all the 11 mentioned in answer to Question No. 576 were the 11 unemployed in the shortlist for interview and the 11 selected?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It follows from the answer. I think I have said before that it is the Government's policy, without sacrificing standards, but if we have a group of people with much the same qualifications and some of them have got stable jobs in the private sector and others are unemployed, it is the Government's policy that preference be given to the unemployed persons because otherwise we may be destroying jobs in the private sector because the vacancies may not be filled.

HON J C PEREZ:

So that we have a much clearer picture, can the Chief Minister when he can, supply us with the number of people who were shortlisted after the interview for those recruited before August and of those shortlisted how many have now become employed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not follow the hon Member's last part of the question. How many were shortlisted; yes, that is the information I have not given him.

HON J C PEREZ:

And the Chief Minister said that some of those might have been drawn from already. What we want to know is the total number that have been employed of the shortlist, 11 plus whatever and what qualifications they hold?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He means wait listed then?

HON J C PEREZ:

That is right.

NO. 579 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**CIVIL SERVICE - AA VACANCIES**

Can Government state how many applicants there have been for the Administrative Assistant vacancies advertised for the Civil Service in August, and of these, how many were from persons registered as unemployed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Two hundred and three applications have been received for the Administrative Assistant vacancies advertised in August for employment within the Civil Service. Applications are currently being processed.

The criteria will, once again, be the qualifications of the applicant whilst giving preference to applicants who are without employment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 575 AND 579 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

When the Chief Minister says qualifications, has the minimum standard of five 'O' levels for interview been used again on this occasion?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot tell the hon Member with certainty whether that is the case. I believe that it is not the case. In other words, I do not think that that is the criteria by which applicants will be called in for interview. It is not an issue that has been put to the Government, it has not been put to me, it may be that the decision has not yet been made. I do not think that people have been asked to come in for interviews yet.

HON J C PEREZ:

It was the criteria used the last time, that is what I am trying to get at, whether it is going to be the same one or that has changed. Could the Chief Minister perhaps give me of the 203 applicants, how many of those are unemployed, which is Question No. 579?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have not been given that information. For some reason that I cannot now explain to him, I have not been given the information of the August applicants how many were unemployed. I will have to give that information to him tomorrow.

NO. 580 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GHA - DIRECT RECRUITMENT**

Can Government state whether any direct recruitment has been undertaken by the Gibraltar Health Authority and, if so, whether such recruits form part of the Civil Service?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Direct recruitment has been undertaken by the Gibraltar Health Authority on behalf of the Government. All officers appointed have initially been on contract terms and are employees of the Government and subject to General Orders.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 580 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister state, over and above those which would normally have been engaged on a contract basis by the Government themselves, posts that would normally become permanent and pensionable within the Civil Service have been taken on by the Health Authority and they are civil servants?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Any recruitment done by the Health Authority has only been done on behalf of the Government and when people have received a subsequent letter of appointment on the letterhead of the Health Authority it has summarised the employment terms and referred to an agreement signed by the employee that that agreement is between the Government of Gibraltar and the employee.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is this a new procedure that is being used for recruitment into the Civil Service other than in the Health Authority or only in the Health Authority?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I do not understand that to be a new procedure. I was replying to the hon Member trying to give him a reassurance that all recruitment done by the Health Authority on behalf of the Government, recruits are subject to Civil Service General Orders and so on and are employees of the Government.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But the Minister referred in that answer to the agreement entered into. I cannot recall employees entering into an agreement with the Government other than they accept the job, is that what he means?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, contract officers generally sign an agreement, that is my understanding of it and then if I take my mind back to a specific appointment, for example, a Dietician that we did on contract for a year on probation and then reviewed and made permanent and pensionable. That person passed from being a contract employee of the Government to being permanent and pensionable with the Government even though he had received the letter of appointment from the Health Authority. The reason was that there was a reference in that letter of appointment to an agreement in respect of which the Government were a party.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister can then confirm that although the Health Authority is employing people there are no actual people employed by the Health Authority, they are all employed by the Government of Gibraltar in the public service?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes.

NO. 581 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**NUMBER OF 50CC MOTORCYCLES REPORTED STOLEN**

Can the Government give a quarterly breakdown, since May 1996, of the number of 50cc motorcycles reported stolen to the Royal Gibraltar Police and of those subsequently recovered?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The number of 50cc motorcycles reported stolen to the Royal Gibraltar Police and of those subsequently recovered giving a quarterly breakdown are as follows:

<u>1996</u>	<u>Unrecovered</u>	<u>Recovered</u>	<u>Other</u>
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	2	4	1 Gazetted and destroyed
3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	10	6	
4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	8	4	
<u>1997</u>	<u>Unrecovered</u>	<u>Recovered</u>	<u>Other</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	16	4	
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	5	3	
3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	7	16	
4 <sup>th</sup> quarter	8	8	1 found totally burnt
<u>1998</u>	<u>Unrecovered</u>	<u>Recovered</u>	<u>Other</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> quarter	13	5	
2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	5		
3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter	1		

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 581 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Although one can see an improvement in the recovery rate since 50cc motorcycles became registered in 1992, despite that there seems to be a high level still of unrecovered vehicles. Notwithstanding the fact that they are now registered, is it that they finish up in Spain, is that what is happening?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I presume so because Gibraltar is a small enough place in which to find motorcycles. The only other explanation that I can think of is that false plates are put on them in Gibraltar and they do not get found out. I suspect that most of them get into Spain. I recall that when I had a motorcycle stolen it was eventually found in Spain.

NO. 582 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**DEPARTURE TAX**

Are Government in a position to explain how the figure of £584,000 was arrived at as a forecast outturn for the financial year 1997/98 in respect of departure tax?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The £584,000 was arrived at based on collections reflected in the Treasury books at the time the forecast estimates were prepared.

This figure erroneously excluded collections by Terminal Management Ltd in respect of the period January to March 1998 as well as some adjustments in respect of collections during the year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 582 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact the estimate for this year suffers from the same defects because it seems to be a repetition of the forecast outturn?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, one of the problems is that at both ends of the year there are monies which are collected in the different financial year in respect of a particular financial year and last year was the first year in which these statistics were shown as part of the estimates, previously these had been collected by I think it was Gibraltar Information Bureau and there was some difficulty in getting to the bottom of exactly what was collected and when and I think the first estimate suffered a bit from that. Yes, I had not noticed that the estimate was a repetition of the forecast outturn but it would seem to suffer from the same defect as an estimate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The original figure was £650,000 so we questioned, as I recall in the estimates, given the fact that there is not supposed to be a drop in numbers, is it then that in fact the original estimate of 1997/98 of £650,000 is a more accurate reflection of what is happening?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I know that the hon Member has received a letter from my hon Colleague, the Minister for Tourism and Transport, explaining to him how the actual figure for the year of £630,558 is arrived at. I think he has had such a letter.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I have had a letter except that the letter explains the breakdown of the £584,000 and then he attaches a breakdown of the £632,000 to which the Chief Minister refers and that was in June and I wrote back pointing out that he was not giving a breakdown of the £584,000 and I have not heard anything since. He is right that I have had a letter except that the letter tells me that the explanation refers to the £584,000 which it does not.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The figure is arrived at as follows: There is an element of departure tax for the period December 1996 to March 1997, in other words, in respect of the year before of £2,393; then there is a departure tax for the period May 1997 – I cannot imagine why that does not read April 1997 but still – to November 1997 of £334,737 and that adds up to £337,131. But at that time amounts were retained by Terminal Management and therefore credited although cash was never actually received and then debited to the appropriate revenue and expenditure account in Treasury and the following amounts fall under that category that I have just described: departure tax for January 1997 of £13,200; departure tax for February 1997 to March 1997 of £29,914; departure tax for April 1997 to December 1997 of £200,606; totalling £243,721. Departure tax for January to February 1998 of £49,703, making a subtotal of £293,425 which when added to the first subtotal that I gave of £337,131 is the figure of £630,558 which is the actual amount credited to Head 6(43) in respect of 1997/98. A breakdown of £630,558, £45,508 related to 1996/97 and £585,047 related to 1997 and 1998.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, but surely the Chief Minister having read all those figures will agree with me that the £584,000 do not appear anywhere? So the question that I asked at budget and then the letter that I got on the 8<sup>th</sup> June which said, "The figure of £584,000 was arrived at as follows", it does not follow because if in fact the amount of Terminal Management was left out one would have expected the £370,000 would have been shown and if it was included one would have expected that the £632,000 would have been shown. The £584,000 seems to bear no relation to either the inclusive or the exclusive figure.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I agree, Mr Speaker. The figure of £584,000 as the original answer suggests is erroneous.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister confirm whether in fact the performance of this year suggests that we are going to finish up with the figure of the order of £630,000 which is in line with what was originally estimated for the 1997 Budget?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot say what the incidence of the fluctuation in passenger volume coupled with the rebates that have been given to the extent that they have been given by rebates of passenger tax. I would not dare make that prognostication.



NO. 583 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**I&D FUND - EXPENDITURE**

What is the estimated expenditure of the Improvement and Development Fund by Head of Expenditure up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August this year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The estimated expenditure of the Improvement and Development Fund by Head of Expenditure up to 31<sup>st</sup> August of this year is as follows:

<u>HEAD</u>	<u>AUGUST 1998</u>
101 – Housing	£1,089,575
102 – Schools, Youth & Cultural Facilities	£192,040
103 – Tourism & Transport	£1,447,227
104 – Infrastructure & General Capital Works	£1,003,269
105 – Electricity	£72,539
106 – Industry & Development	<u>£971,292</u>
	<u>£4,775,941</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 583 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, given that the pro rata expenditure for five months would have been £7 million higher, does this indicate that the estimate is unlikely to be met?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think the estimate is unlikely to be met but not by as much as that “back of the envelope” projection extrapolation would suggest. The fact of the matter is that although there has been delay in entering some of the commitments for this expenditure in terms of contracts, there are now a number of large contracts about to be awarded or have already been awarded and entering the heavy expenditure phase. The question asked for money spent, not money committed, and I think the hon Member can expect an acceleration of expenditure under these Heads, but I agree, it is unlikely again to reach the amount estimated over a 12 month period.

NO. 584 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GIBRALTAR ECONOMY**

Can Government now say what has been the estimated loss of the direct, indirect and induced income to the Gibraltar economy from the reduction that has taken place in service and civilian personnel in MOD in the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The answer to this question is that the Government cannot provide such estimates for the same reasons as explained in my answer to Question Nos. 569 and 570. In other words, the Government do not have at their disposal a model of the economy that would permit such estimates to be calculated. Moreover, the levels of employment and earnings in respect of civilians within the MOD as at April 1998 will only be available once the Employment Survey for that date is completed from the information provided to the Income Tax Office. As I am sure the Leader of the Opposition knows only too well, this is not possible so early into the 1998/99 tax year as records for the previous year are still being received and processed by the Income Tax Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 584 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government say in relation to the previous estimates that have been provided which were based on the Touche Ross calculations, whether in fact there is any relationship between those estimates and any other indicator of the effect in 1997/98?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, we cannot say it at this stage. One possibility that the Government are aware will be available to it once the information becomes available on employment and things like that is to invite Deloitte Touche to round the new statistics past the models such as it was that they created for the benefit of their Report and that would give an indication of sorts. It would at least give an indication as reliable as they could use for their original report. They are not scientific but it is some sort of economic model to which one could round the figures.

ORAL

NO. 585 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATES**

How many employers have not yet returned the 1995/96 Employees Declaration and PAYE certificates and what is the estimated number of employees affected?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

One hundred and twenty-nine employers under which approximately 400 employees are registered had at the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998 not returned the 1995/96 Employer's PAYE Declaration and Certificate.

NO. 586 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATES**

How many employers have not yet returned the 1996/97 Employees Declaration and PAYE certificates and what is the estimated number of employees affected?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Two hundred and forty-one employers under which approximately 300 employees are registered had at the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998 not returned the 1996/97 Employer's PAYE Declaration and Certificate.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.586 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government say whether the 1995/96 ones, the 129 are part of the 241, that is, whether they have not returned for the two years consecutively or are they different groups of people, or is there no idea of the connection between the two figures.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The 129 would have to be compared against the list for the 241. That exercise has not been done. I would, however, suggest that there must be a substantial degree of overlap if the idea that somebody, having not returned the 1995/96 Declaration should return the 1996/97 would, I have thought, been odd and certainly if they had made a payment with the 1996/97 return, I would have expected the Commissioner to apply it to the 1995/96 liability thereby eliminating that wholly or partly. I have not got the information but I would guess that the answer to this question must be yes, or yes to a very large extent.

NO. 587 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATES**

How many employers have not yet returned the 1997/98 Employees Declaration and PAYE certificates and what is the estimated number of employees affected?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Four hundred and seventy-eight employers under which approximately 4800 taxpayers are registered, had as at the close of business on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998 not returned the 1997/98 Employer's Declaration and Certificate.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 587 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government say whether in fact this figure is significantly different from the level of non returns at around the same time last year, a figure was provided last year, I think, I am not sure whether it was at the end of September or August.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In respect of 1996/97, when he asked that question in September 1997, the answer was 360 employers and 2,200 employees. On the basis of the answer I have just given to Question 586 that has now fallen to 240 employers, from 360, and to 300 employees as opposed to 2,200. In September last year there was still 2,200 employees covered by 360 employers. It is now more or less the same time of the next year and we are talking about 478 employers and 4,800 taxpayers so there is some evidence there that the figure this year is a bit higher than it was at more or less the same time last year in respect of last year's figures. Has the hon Member taken a note or would he like me to repeat that?

HON J J BOSSANO:

I have made a note.

ORAL

NO. 588 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATES**

How many employers have not yet returned the 1997/98 Employees Declaration and PAYE certificates to date, and what is the number of employees affected and the total amount of tax deducted?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

One thousand four hundred and forty-one employers, reporting on approximately a total of 17,400 taxpayers, had at the close of business on the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998, lodged their 1997/98 Employer's declaration and PAYE certificate. The amount of PAYE tax deducted is approximately £33.1 million.

NO. 589 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - PAYE DECLARATIONS AND CERTIFICATES**

How many of the employers who have returned the 1997/98 Employees Declaration and PAYE certificates have not yet paid over to Government the tax deduction from their employees up to 1<sup>st</sup> July 1998, and what is the number of employees affected and the total amount of tax due?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I can inform the House that, as at the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998, the position regarding 1997/98 Employers Declaration and PAYE certificate is that of the 1441 declarations received there is PAYE tax outstanding on 347 returns totalling £1.8 million.

It is not possible to answer that part of the question that refers to number of employees, as there is no way that it can be established to which specific employee an amount of PAYE outstanding refers. The Income Tax Office does not assume that the tax paid is in respect of particular employees and that that which is not paid is in respect of other particular employees. It cannot be attributed to particular employees.

ORAL

NO. 590 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state what is the total now collected in respect of Corporation Tax for the tax year 1994/95 and the number of companies involved?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 591 and 592 of 1998.



ORAL

NO. 591 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government confirm whether there are still assessments to Corporation Tax for the tax year 1994/95 due to be made, and if so how many companies have still not been assessed for that year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 590 and 592 of 1998.

NO. 592 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state which is the sum now outstanding in respect of 1994/95 Corporation Tax Assessments and the number of companies involved?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I am informed by the Commissioner of Income Tax that all companies which have declared a tax liability or who in his opinion may be chargeable with tax for the year of assessment 1994/95 have had an assessment raised for that year.

The total outstanding in respect of 1994/95 Corporation tax Assessments is currently £2.1 million in respect of 354 companies. The total amount collected, as at 4<sup>th</sup> September 1998, was £10.4 million in respect of 440 companies.

In the preparation of this reply it has come to light that the figures provided in reply to Question Nos. 245 and 246 of 1998 were incorrect. The position as at April 1998 when these two questions were tabled was that £10.3 million had been collected in respect of 428 companies and not in respect of 1,401 companies. £2.5 million were outstanding in respect of 391 companies and not £1.3 million in respect of 383 companies. I apologise to the hon Member for this error.

NO. 593 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how many companies have now had assessments for the tax year 1996/97, the total amount of Corporation Tax assessed and the amount received up to 31<sup>st</sup> August?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Corporation Tax payable as at 18<sup>th</sup> September 1998 on 1,072 companies assessed for the year of assessment 1996/97 totalled £11.9 million as follows:

Assessed	£15,301,216
Less discharged	<u>3,362,826</u>
	11,938,390
Less paid	<u>7,283,841</u>
Outstanding	<u>£4,654,549</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.593 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figure of the total number of companies assessed at 1,072 seems odd compared to the one for 1994/95 where the figure that had previously been given was corrected at over 1,000 bringing the total down to 428. Are we talking about an extra 200 companies now becoming assessable?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think becoming assessable is probably the right emphasis. Whether any of these will turn out to be actual taxpayers remains to be seen and I think that picture only becomes clearer as this tax year progresses and the Commissioner starts sending out assessments on companies that he has become aware of from the Company Register.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is he in fact saying that of the £4.6 million there could be some companies in there which turn out not to have the liability? The figure of the £3.3 million discharged, could that increase at the expense of the £4.6 million?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, it could given that £7.283 million have already been collected. I would expect this figure to come in somewhere above £10 million for a year which is the target figure really for Corporation Tax, I would not expect too much more to be shaved off from the outstanding figure.

NO. 594 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how much of the company tax collected in the financial year 1997/98 was in respect of amounts due in the current year and how much in respect of amounts relating to preceding years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

In the financial year 1997/98 the revenue from corporation tax in respect of assessments for the year of assessment 1997/98 was £2.7 million and in respect of assessments for previous years of assessment was £8.4 million.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.594 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government provide the breakdown of the £8.4 million which they have done in answer to similar questions previously?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am sure it is possible. However, the people who think up the hon Member's possible supplementaries have not come up with that. I do not have the information here. As between years?

HON J J BOSSANO:

As between years, yes which is what has been provided in answer to the same question in previous Houses.

NO. 595 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state how much has been collected from 31<sup>st</sup> March to the 31<sup>st</sup> August in respect of corporation tax on assessments for the tax year 1997/98 and the number of assessments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

In the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998 to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 the sum of £3.81 million was collected in respect of corporation tax on assessments for the year of assessment 1997/98.

The number of assessments was 291.

NO. 596 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - WITHHOLDING TAX**

Can Government state how many construction subcontractors were involved in the withholding tax totals of £670,000 in 1997/98 and £630,000 in 1996/97?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The sum of £630,000 collected in the financial year 1996/97 was in respect of 63 subcontractors.

The sum of £670,000 collected in the financial year 1997/98 was in respect of 76 subcontractors.

NO. 597 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - DIRECT ASSESSMENTS**

Can Government state how much of the tax due by direct assessments on individuals amounting to £13,491,754 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1996 was by 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998: (a) paid; (b) still outstanding; (c) otherwise discharged, and the number of assessments in each category?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

When the Leader of the Opposition sought exactly the same information by Question No. 243 of 1998, I informed him that the Information Technology Unit of the Government would need time to look into the possibility of producing the information sought and that the information would be made available as soon as produced.

I have since been informed that the sophistication of the computerised system does not extend to being able to produce the information required. Regrettably it will not be possible to satisfy the hon Member's apparently insatiable appetite until such time as a more sophisticated system is in place.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.597 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, quite apart from whether my appetite is insatiable or not and it will only be proved by the degree to which it is fed by the answers it is quite obvious that it cannot be satisfied by not getting an answer. Is it that they are not able to give a reply to any of the elements, or is there one element that they are unable to produce from the system?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, obviously they must be able to say how many have been paid but they just cannot produce it without laboriously checking manually. The information technology system available in the Income Tax Office is one of the areas which the Government wish to concentrate because I am sure there must be programmes in existence which will enable information to be obtained on almost any reporting factors, but this is the information that I am given so I regret that I cannot help. If the hon Member wants me to run it past the department again to see if any of the categorisations can be satisfied, I am quite happy to do that for him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I would have thought they ought to know, if they were owed in December 1996 £13.5 million whether they have collected it or it is still outstanding. I would have thought that amount of knowledge ought to be available to the department.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, I would have thought so too, Mr Speaker, I will try and get it for him.

NO. 598 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government give a breakdown of PAYE collected in 1996/97 showing the amounts collected in respect of employees in:

- (a) MOD
- (b) Gibraltar Government
- (c) Government owned companies and joint ventures
- (d) Private sector employment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The total amount of PAYE collected in 1996/97 was £43.4 million analysed as follows:

(a)	MOD	£5.0 million
(b)	Gibraltar Government	£13.8 million
(c)	Government owned companies and joint ventures	£2.5 million
(d)	Private sector employment	<u>£22.1 million</u>
		<u>£43.4 million</u>



NO. 599 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government give a breakdown of PAYE collected in 1997/98 showing the amounts in respect of current PAYE and the amount in respect of arrears of previous financial years?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

£41.9 million is the total PAYE revenue collected in the financial year 1997/98 of which the sum of £28 million is in respect of the tax year 1997/98 and £13.9 million is in respect of previous tax years.

ORAL

NO. 600 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE ARREARS**

Can Government state what was the amount of arrears of PAYE for the tax year 1996/97 and the amount in respect of the previous years as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The PAYE tax outstanding as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998 was £2.36 million of which £1.08 million was in respect of the tax year 1996/97 and the balance of £1.28 million was in respect of previous tax years.

ORAL

NO. 601 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - REVENUE COLLECTED**

Can Government state which is the latest estimate in respect of income tax collected in the financial year 1997/98 and of this the total from PAYE?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The total revenue collected in respect of income tax in the financial year 1997/98 was £46.45 million of which £41.94 million is in respect of PAYE.

NO. 602 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state how much was collected in PAYE in each month since February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The PAYE tax collected in each of the months February 1998 to August 1998 was:

February 1998	-	£3,287,905
March 1998	-	£3,473,331
April 1998	-	£3,343,812
May 1998	-	£3,479,653
June 1998	-	£3,938,987
July 1998	-	£5,656,736
August 1998	-	£2,999,886

These figures are based on the Tax Office records and are subject to change when reconciled with the Treasury books.

NO. 603 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state which is the total amount collected in corporation tax in each month since February 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The corporation tax collected in each of the months February 1998 to August 1998 was:

February 1998	-	£457,121
March 1998	-	£2,223,619
April 1998	-	£1,737,907
May 1998	-	£465,831
June 1998	-	£2,227,031
July 1998	-	£862,168
August 1998	-	£637,443

ORAL

NO. 604 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state what was the total number of all employees in the private sector, based on PAYE returns, giving a breakdown by sex and nationality for the month of October 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 605 to 611 of 1998.

NO. 605 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state what was the number of all employees in the banking, finance and insurance industry in the private sector, based on PAYE returns, giving a breakdown by sex and nationality for the month of October 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 604, and 606 to 611 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 606 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state what was the number of all employees in the construction industry in the private sector, based on PAYE returns, giving a breakdown by sex and nationality for the month of October 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 604, 605 and 607 to 611 of 1998.



NO. 607 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state what was the number of all employees in the hotel trade in the private sector, based on PAYE returns, giving a breakdown by sex and nationality for the month of October 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 604 to 606 and 608 to 611 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 608 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state what was the number of all employees in the hotel trade in the private sector, based on PAYE returns, giving a breakdown by sex and nationality for the month of April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 604 to 607 and 609 to 611 of 1998.

NO. 609 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state what was the number of all employees in the construction industry in the private sector, based on PAYE returns, giving a breakdown by sex and nationality for the month of April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 604 to 608, 610 and 611 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 610 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state what was the number of all employees in the banking, finance and insurance industry in the private sector, based on PAYE returns, giving a breakdown by sex and nationality for the month of April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 604 to 609 and 611 of 1998.

NO. 611 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - PAYE**

Can Government state what was the number of all employees in the private sector, based on PAYE returns, giving a breakdown by sex and nationality for the month of April 1997?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Since these questions were tabled the information that they seek is now available in the Employment Surveys as at October 1996 and April 1997 which the hon Members now have.

ORAL

NO. 612 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GOLD BULLION - IMPORTS**

What was the value and number of legal tender gold coins of weight exceeding 1oz imported between the 25<sup>th</sup> March and the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 613 of 1998.

NO. 613 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**GOLD BULLION - IMPORTS**

What was the value and number of legal tender gold coins of weight exceeding 1oz or less imported between the 25<sup>th</sup> March and the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Ninety legal tender gold coins of weight exceeding 1oz were imported between 25<sup>th</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998 valued at £521,918 and 32,842 legal tender gold coins of weight 1oz or less were imported between 25<sup>th</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 valued at £6,013,565.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTIONS NOS.612 AND 613 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

The first figure for the exceeding 1oz was up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March, is this in fact a consignment that came in and was then made subject to the duty?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I should have mentioned the dates 31<sup>st</sup> March and 31<sup>st</sup> August twice. Does the question arise from the fact that I misread this?

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, both sets of information relate to the period 25<sup>th</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So then my supplementary is a different one. Did the 90 coins exceeding 1oz, were they subject to the new level of import duty that was introduced by the Government on the 25<sup>th</sup> March?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, Mr Speaker. They must have been. I know that there was one consignment but I do not know whether it accounts for all of this. There was one consignment that was caught in transit, the bulk of it would appear to be accommodated by this one which was in transit and which the Government were asked to look at and asked whether they would make an exception of it but obviously it has not been dealt with here favourably to the taxpayer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

And the £32,000 unfavourably to the taxpayer of the under 1oz? Because presumably what has happened then, Mr Speaker, is that the switch to less than 1oz means, that on that note, duty has always been paid?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, in effect what has happened is that the demand that was previously being satisfied with coins in excess of 1oz has partially but not entirely but very substantially transferred to coins less than 1oz. This was never intended as an import duty raising measure.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the remark about the benefits to the taxpayer is incidental because that was not the intention, Mr Speaker, am I right? Therefore, do the Government envisage that the fact that the gold is now entering the market with smaller sized coins that they are satisfied with that situation and therefore they see no need to try and tax those coins, am I right?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, the situation is kept under review. There were several objectives. The natural consequence of imposing duty is to raise money for the taxpayer which is in its interest and that I think was the strict answer to the question that he put to me and to which he is sarcastically alluding in his supplementary. But I think I also indicated as much as I could that it was not the only reason for doing this. I explained to him that Government took the view that the demand for coins of 1oz or less was more consistent with the sort of conventional demand that would not be open to criticism and the Government will keep it under review. The Government presently have no intention of taxing coins of 1oz or less and I do not envisage that that situation would change. But, of course that is not an open ended commitment. The matter is not in our line of sight, it is not in our range at the moment at all, it is not under consideration.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Government agree that in the light of that which is in fact a reaffirmation of what was said previously, people entering into commitments for delivery of these coins would have a legitimate expectation that they would not find themselves with an unexpected cost once the coins arrive and that should there be a change of view that that would be communicated to those who are in the trade so that they would not be caught unawares?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government do not try to penalise people by catching them unawares. On the other hand I do not think that the premise of this question is correct either. I think whenever governments tamper with duty rates, almost in every country, people fall on one side or other of the line. It very often happens that there are "victims" of the sort that the hon Member is referring to. It happens in every commodity in every country when there is a change of rate of duty, for the benefit or to the prejudice of the taxpayer until such time as the duty is paid on any particular consignment. The



Government do not seek to cause the commercial disruption prejudice that is caused thereby and certainly should the Government consider introducing duty again or changing the duty on this again and knowing what occurred on the previous occasion, the Government would certainly give favourable consideration to giving as much advance warning as possible of its intention without thereby prejudicing the intended purpose. But the intended purpose is long term and therefore one would not expect that the Government should be unable to give warning provided of course it is not abused by importing an enormous amount of stock for a year or two. But given the value of this commodity it is unlikely that anybody would wish to invest that much capital in that. Yes, the Government are sensitive to what has occurred and would wish if possible to avoid a recurrence of it.

NO. 614 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**HAGUE CONVENTION**

Can Government state what further action has been taken by Her Majesty's Government since 1997 in response to Spain's notification that it no longer recognises the Supreme Court of Gibraltar under the Hague Convention?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

In response to enquiries from my office, I was informed on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1998 that HMG had protested against the Spanish Government's stance on the applicability of the Hague Convention to Gibraltar. A Diplomatic Note was sent on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1997 to the Dutch Government, which is the depository of the convention, answering the Kingdom of Spain's declaration. This Note had been reinforced by a further Note which had been sent to the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1997. Both documents made it clear that as far as HMG were concerned, the UK had designated the Supreme Court of Gibraltar as an "authority" under the UK's right of nomination as the contracting state.

We have asked HMG to keep us informed of any further developments. We have continued to monitor this matter. The most recent communication was sent by my office on the 24<sup>th</sup> August 1998. I have not had any indication that there have been any responses from Spain or any other new developments.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.614 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

I hate to speculate on what they do in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Madrid with the Notes they get from the British Government but in fact does that mean that there is nothing open to the United Kingdom to challenge the decision that Spain took to stop recognising the jurisdiction of Gibraltar under the Hague Convention? Was it not said at the time that it was not open for Spain to do this?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, indeed and that is what has been communicated to the depository country of the Convention and to the Spanish Government. I suppose the UK Government take the view that at the end of the day this is going to be tested in the practice. It remains to be seen whether the next attempt by the Registrar of the Supreme Court to effect an outward service of process is satisfied or whether it is rejected. I think that can be the acid test. I do not see what else can be done. The chances of the Foreign Office persuading the Spaniards to write a letter now saying, "I am sorry I have made a mistake, of course we will recognise the Supreme Court," is unlikely but certainly if there is a test of it, and it is rejected again the Government would take a serious view of it and would take the matter up with the UK Government. We will have to wait and see until it is tested.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think the Chief Minister said in answer to the original question that there had been no response from the Dutch Government either, is that correct? Do the Dutch Government, as the depository state have any responsibility in this matter?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, they are a secretariat, they are the depository of declarations and ratifications and notifications. They have no powers of refereeing or arbitration or settlements of disputes. They just file everything that is sent in. I suppose that ultimately the United Kingdom if Spain were to continue to challenge it, the United Kingdom could argue that Spain is in breach of an international treaty and seek a declaration in the International Court of Justice or something like that. I should find a comfortable chair to sit and wait.

NO. 615 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**INCOME TAX - MUTUAL ASSISTANCE DIRECTIVE**

Can Government state how many requests have been received by the Commissioner of Income tax, as the competent authority, pursuant to the Mutual Assistance Directive giving the nationality of the requesting competent authority?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I am informed by the commissioner of Income tax that since the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1997 when he was appointed as the Competent Authority in respect of Gibraltar for the purposes of Council Directive No. 77/799/EEC (the Mutual Assistance Directive) he has received no request for exchange of information.

NO. 616 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**CROWN DEPENDENCY STATUS**

When were the Government informed by UK that the status of Crown Dependency was not considered an appropriate option for Gibraltar's decolonisation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Government have not been informed by HMG that the status of Crown Dependency is not an appropriate option for Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.616 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given that the Gibraltar Chronicle was so informed, did the Government go back to check the accuracy of the supposed confirmation by the Foreign Office, which was the link story?

MR SPEAKER:

As you know, from a newspaper you cannot ask a question. Anyhow, if he is willing to answer it, I do not mind. It is contrary to the rules.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given that the newspaper in question allegedly had official sources.....

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, I know, but the only official sources here is our Standing Orders. Carry on because I am quite sure the Chief Minister will probably answer it but I thought of letting you know.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He forces me to answer, I was tempted not to do so. There was a degree of contact obviously the Gibraltar Government expressed their dissatisfaction to the British Government that matters that are supposed to be under discussion between them should be communicated and placed in the public domain if indeed it was the policy, or even if it is not the policy in the newspaper I expressed the view to Her Majesty's Government that they are constantly saying that they do not carry out megaphone diplomacy and that they should not make an exception of the Government of Gibraltar in that rule. They produced a draft of a press statement that they offered to put out. We did not pursue it. Basically what it said, that nothing in what was said or intended would exclude the approach to constitutional reform advocated by us but of course it did not go so far as to say that the United Kingdom Government was willing to countenance a formal Crown Dependency status. In other words, transferring Gibraltar from the Overseas Territories list to be a fourth Crown Dependency after Jersey,

Guernsey and the Isle of Man. I know much use has been made of this phrase "Crown Dependency" and that indeed I have contributed to the usage. I think I have also said on a number of occasions that the importance of the Crown Dependency concept as far as the Government are concerned is that it demonstrates that it is possible to have a constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom which is not colonial in nature and that the Government seek such a status but of course the Government do not seek a Constitution like Jersey or a Constitution like the Isle of Man which are very different one to the other. The Government seek a constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom which regulates a relationship of dependency but which is not colonial in nature. It remains to be seen whether that can be achieved and that is more important whether it enables the formal categorisation with Crown Dependencies or otherwise. It is certainly a statement which of course I read in the Chronicle about remarks attributed to the Foreign Office. Whilst certainly disappointing, because they are unhelpful at this point in time, are actually not regarded by the Government as incompatible with the thrust of the Government's policy objective in relation to Constitutional reform. The acid test of whether we succeed, the acid test of whether what turns up to be available is sufficient or is not sufficient to satisfy the Government and presumably the House, it can reach a consensus position, will depend on the substantive content of the Constitution and not on any label from any pigeon hole that can be attached to it. The acid test for assessment of success or failure is the substance and not the label.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that the Government are no longer committed to the status of colony as the internationally legally recognised status being altered? Would the Government not agree that, for example, Bermuda would have a less colonial relationship than Jersey, that that would not convert Jersey into a colony or decolonise Bermuda, so the substance is a separate issue from whether our international legal status is that we are a colony on which there has to be a reporting requirement to the United Nations or there is not one and are the Government seeking no longer to remove that international legal status?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It follows from that that the hon Member's definition of a colony is any territory that features on the United Nations list of non self-governing territories. That, of course, is not a definitive test. There are colonies that were not on that list, Hong Kong the most recent example, but there are others of other countries, there are only 23 territories on the list. There are many more than 23 non self-governing territories that are not integral part of the metropolitan state. The Government have not abandoned the idea that really what Gibraltar needs to do is find a status with which it is content to live in its relationship with the United Kingdom and that that should be an end of the search for self-determination and that therefore Gibraltar should cease to be. Certainly it ceases to be a territory that goes to the United Nations seeking decolonisation because we would have taken the view, if we get that far, that we will have achieved that measure of decolonisation that we want. Whether Gibraltar is taken off the list may not depend on whether the Constitution justifies being taken off the list. We could have a constitutional relationship with the United Kingdom, it is an if, which he and I may think more than justifies Gibraltar being taken off the list and that for political reasons which have nothing to do with anything that he and I can do of our own..... we can continue to go to the United Nations and say, "We have got a Constitution with which we are happy, take us off the list", they may refuse to do so. The United Kingdom may refuse to apply to have us taken off the list and therefore I do not think that he should set as the acid test of whether we have actually achieved a status with which we can

be satisfied as being non-colonial that the sole test of that should be whether or not we are taken off the list because we may be taken off the list for reasons which have nothing to do with the actual characteristics of the new relationship. But yes, the Government would like to see this cull made in the context of the United Nations and we will just have to see to what extent that happens.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not in fact the case that it is the United Kingdom that put Gibraltar on that list and therefore unless and until, irrespective of what anybody else thinks, us or the rest of the members of the United Nations, if the administering power makes no move to remove us from the list, effectively the position is that the administering power continues to accept that it has an obligation to report on us as a colony under Article 73 of the Charter. There may be people now who think the relationship between Gibraltar and the United Kingdom is no longer colonial. Is it not the case that under international law, until the administering power makes an attempt to change that, that is what we are?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, not necessarily. Certainly, I accept what the hon Member says to the extent that it was incumbent on the administering powers originally to place territories or not place territories on the list. If the administering power chose not to place Gibraltar on the list then Gibraltar would be a colony today and not be on the list and that would demonstrate what I was saying before. However, I do not think that the corollary of all of this is necessarily true anymore. I have attended, as I am sure he has, specially the Regional Seminars of the Special Committee in which they make it perfectly clear that taking territories off the list is not a matter for the administering power as indeed the Americans have tried to do with Guam. The fact of the matter is that the Committee has now formed the view that territories can only be taken off the list following an act of self-determination, by which they mean a properly and freely and democratically exercised referendum and that they, the Special Committee, are the judge of whether it is a genuine democratic act of self-determination untainted by machinations from the administering power. Therefore, I am not sure that it is true that it is incumbent on the administering power. I think it is incumbent on the Special Committee if it is satisfied that the territory has exercised its right to self-determination in accordance with the free and democratic act of self-determination. If the Committee was satisfied of that I do not think the fact that the reluctant administrative power refuses to submit the application for withdrawal from the list would be relevant.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Surely, the Chief Minister is using a totally wrong example. Is it not the case that the example that he has given with Guam and the United States is that of course the administering power will not remove Guam because the United States want it when the Chamorro people do not want it removed. But if we have a situation in which the Chief Minister is saying, "Well, we are satisfied here in Gibraltar we are no longer a colony and therefore we stop going to the United Nations" but the United Kingdom continues to support a resolution with Spain every year which says we have to be decolonised by negotiating with Spain can he explain to the House what he thinks we will have gained by that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the United Nations takes Gibraltar off the list, which is a big if, a very big if, I believe, then of course the United Kingdom will have no mechanism pursuant to which to report and certainly the committee will not accept report on territories which are no longer on its list of non self-governing territories. By making that remark I do not want to give the impression that the Government underestimate the difficulty of being removed from the list given the creature that the Special Committee is showing itself to be. But it remains to be seen. The question of whether Gibraltar is taken off the list or not is a matter ultimately for the Committee. I do not believe that the member state could impede it if the Committee were satisfied. Frankly, the Committee has not shown that degree of support for Gibraltar's aspirations in this regard to give me any confidence that it would rush to take us off the list the moment we asked to do so.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am totally perplexed by the nature of the answers I am getting from the Chief Minister because I am not for one moment suggesting that we have got a problem in that the Committee wants to take us off the list and the United Kingdom wants to keep us there. What I am saying is if he is saying that if we can get a status, that is to say if we can get a content to our Constitution which satisfies us in Gibraltar but which does not alter the status of Gibraltar in international law then as far as he is concerned we will have achieved decolonisation to our satisfaction even though the rest of the world and the administering power continue to discuss us but we stop going to the UN because we deem ourselves to have been decolonised, is that what he is saying?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What I am saying is that whether that final step happens or not is ultimately not down to us alone. This is not something that we can do. Therefore, it remains to be seen either whether the United Kingdom will be willing to apply to the extent that her application is required or whether or not her application is required, whether the Committee of 24 will be willing, on our application, to remove us from the list. What I have said in that second respect is that I have not seen an inclination, a degree of support for Gibraltar in the Committee of 24 given that we have not yet been able to persuade them to stop calling for bilateral dialogue between the United Kingdom and Spain. I have seen no evidence of a sufficient degree of support for Gibraltar's aspirations from the Committee of 24 or, put another way, I have not seen in the Committee of 24 a sufficient indication that they consider themselves to be the champions of the colonial people as opposed to engage the usual horse trading that the United Nations is rife with to suppose that they will act any differently when it comes to exercising the judgement to take us off the list and I suspect that they will then take the same view as they are presently taking in relation to the consensus resolution which is that provided that the UK and Spain come along once a year, they sign on the dotted line, regardless of what the representatives of the colonial people is saying to them. Frankly, with this track record we may find the same attitude when it comes to any possible future application to take us off the list. That is not a statement of my aspiration. It is not a statement of what I would like. It is just a realistic assessment of where I think we are now in relation to that.



HON J J BOSSANO:

Irrespective of what we might or might not expect from the Committee of 24, given their track record, is it still the position that as far as the Government are concerned, as he stated in that meeting we addressed in the Mackintosh Hall the position is that what we are seeking is to finish up with a new status which we would then send to the United Kingdom, we would put this to a referendum, the referendum is an act of self-determination, one can then tell the United Nations that one has decolonised with our agreement, whatever they think in the Committee of 24.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is exactly what I would like to end up with. A situation where it would be as incongruous for Gibraltar to continue on the United Nations list of non self-governing territories as it would be for the Isle of Man to be on it now.

ORAL

NO. 617 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**EU CONVENTIONS**

Can Government list the EU conventions that have been extended to Gibraltar, with Gibraltar's agreement, giving the date of the extension in each case?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 620, 621 and 622 of 1998.

NO. 618 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**PROPOSALS BY SR MATUTES**

When did Her Majesty's Government reply to the Chief Minister's letter of January 1998 requesting that the Matutes proposals of December 1997 should be rejected?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I have not received a written reply to my letter of 15<sup>th</sup> January to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 618 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Chief Minister expect to receive a reply to the letter?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If I get one in less time it took him to get one in similar circumstances I will be happy but certainly it is an issue that I do raise orally with the Foreign Secretary and with Ministers on every occasion that I meet them, but if the hon Member is asking whether I have yet obtained, in writing, a commitment, or even orally for that matter, a commitment to reject the proposals I have not yet done so. If the hon Member is asking if I have had a written statement for the reasons why they have not been rejected I have not had that either.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister presumably wrote in January in the expectation of getting a reply in writing. Otherwise, he could have raised the matter orally in the first place. Is it that he thinks the matter is going to be left there? He has been told what the British Government thinks orally but the British Government is not prepared to commit itself in writing and he knows it? Is that the position? Or is it that he still thinks he will get a written reply? Which of the two is it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, one never knows. I have often called him that in the past in appropriate circumstances. One puts things down in writing for the record but one can use political persuasion orally rather than in writing and that is the process in which the Government are engaged and we expect it to be a long-term thing. But we will certainly treat it with persistence and not with occasional perfunctory attention. The fact of the matter is that the first batch of reasons was, "not whilst we have got the Presidency". The Presidency has now finished and we have not had it yet and one looks forward to what the next reasons are going to be. Gibraltar could not have made

its position clearer, both Government in writing to the Foreign Secretary, the Government in many public statements, by myself in international fora, the United Nations and elsewhere. Indeed, the hon Member has made the Opposition's position perfectly clear publicly as well and all the king's horses and all the king's men have not yet procured the formal rejection of the proposals by the United Kingdom. It is something which I think ought to happen but which has not yet happened.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Strictly speaking the question is not asking the Government when they think the United Kingdom will reject, or indeed whether the United Kingdom will reject. The point is that presumably the purpose of putting it on the record in January was in the expectation that the UK position would also be on the record in writing irrespective of the verbal persuasion that is being attempted. Frankly, it has not been clear until now that the United Kingdom needed persuading of this because as I recall it the original position that Mr Cook had attributed to him in the press was that this was a non-runner.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, that is indeed so and I think that the position that Mr Cook takes when asked is that he has made it perfectly clear, indeed he made it perfectly clear on the steps of Carlton Gardens immediately after Mr Matutes had handed in the proposal that he was committed and the British Government was committed to not entering into any arrangements involving sovereignty to which the people of Gibraltar did not consent or approve. He regards it completely as a non-starter as a proposal but I suspect that there is a reluctance to formally reject them for fear of how the Spaniards might react. We have advised the Foreign Secretary that that is a mistaken view because it would simply encourage the Spaniards to believe that there is hope where really there is none and that this would condition their management of the affair in a way which would disincline them to reasonableness. As to the reason why I have not yet had a reply in writing, I suppose, on reflection, that it is a difficult position to answer in writing. What does one put on the record? Given what the British Government's position is in relation to sovereignty and given the commitments that they have made, given what Mr Cook has said publicly in response to the Matutes proposals, what could he possibly say? He could either say, "yes, Chief Minister, I will reply as soon as I can" or set out some reasons why he will not. That must be almost impossible, so I suspect that that is the reason why I have not had the reply in writing.

NO. 619 OF 1998THE HON J J BOSSANO**GIBRALTAR IDENTITY CARDS**

Can Government give the date when Spain replied to the European Commission's notification of the 5<sup>th</sup> June 1996 on the validity of the Gibraltar ID Card as an EU travel document, and when were Government informed of Spain's reply?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Spain replied to the Commission on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1996 and the Government were informed on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1996.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.619 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given that they were informed so quickly after the event, can the Government explain why it is that two years and three months later there seems to have been no further progress on this issue?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, because progress on this issue as he mischievously calls it, does not depend on the Government of Gibraltar having been informed. It depends on the willingness of the Government of the United Kingdom and of the European Commission to pursue the matter as expeditiously as possible through all the mechanisms available to either or both of them. I think they both demonstrate a lack of proclivity to doing that. The Government of Gibraltar have raised again this matter, this is on the agenda at every meeting that we attend in the Foreign Office. The issue has been on the agenda for consideration at infraction meetings every six months since it was first raised at an infraction chefs meeting in December 1996 and every time it is just carried forward. I am not present at infraction meetings of the European Commission to see why it is carried forward or to witness the intensity or enthusiasm with which British and other representatives may address this matter. Mr Stephen Wall, the Permanent Secretary, the Permanent British Representative to the EU wrote on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1998 to the Commission requesting the Commission to ensure that Gibraltar's rights under EC law are upheld and beyond lobbying, raising the matter, it is on every lobbying list of issues that I raise with MPs and I am sure it must be with the Leader of the Opposition and therefore, Mr Speaker, I reject the premise of the supplementary which suggests that because we knew two days after the event that it is very surprising that we have not yet secured Spanish recognition of the Identity Cards themselves.

ORAL

NO. 620 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**EU CONVENTIONS**

Can Government list which EU conventions can be extended to Gibraltar, but have not been so extended because Gibraltar has not exercised the option to be included?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 617, 621 and 622 of 1998.

ORAL

NO. 621 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**EU CONVENTIONS**

Can Government list the EU conventions from which Gibraltar had been excluded because of Spanish objections prior to May 1998 giving the date of each exclusion?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 617, 620 and 622 of 1998.

NO. 622 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

## EU CONVENTIONS

Can Government list the EU conventions from which Gibraltar has been excluded because of Spanish objections prior to May 1998?

### ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

From the records available to the Gibraltar Government, a total of five EC or EU Conventions have been extended to Gibraltar with the approval of GOG. These are:-

1. European Convention for the Protection of Arrivals during inter transport (September 1974).
2. European Convention Abolishing the legalisation of documents in Member States (August 1986).
3. European Convention on Human Rights (January 1987) with reservations.
4. European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism (May 1988).
5. European Cultural Convention (May 1998).

The extension of an EC Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe to Gibraltar has been delayed at Government of Gibraltar's request. One European Union Convention in the pipeline, namely EURODAC will not be extended to Gibraltar at the request of the Government of Gibraltar. One other Convention, the Drivers Disqualification Convention was approved by the EU and adopted by the UK in June 1998 but will also not be extended to Gibraltar at the request of the Gibraltar Government. The Mutual Legal Assistance Convention, which builds on the 1959 Mutual Legal Assistance Convention, has not been extended to Gibraltar, with Government of Gibraltar concurrence, because the 1959 Convention itself does not extend to Gibraltar and can only be extended to Gibraltar by bilateral treaties.

The Naples II Convention has also not been extended to Gibraltar by agreement with the Gibraltar Government. Its scope was restricted to the Community Customs Territory. The Europol Convention has not been extended pending implementation of Data Protection Legislation when the matter will then be considered by the Government. There are no EU Conventions which have not been extended to Gibraltar because of objections from the Spanish Government.

### SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTIONS NOS. 617, 620, 621 AND 622 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

If there has been no problem of objections with the Spanish Government why is it that the Government have asked Her Majesty's Government not to extend these Conventions to Gibraltar?



HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, for the reasons that I have been explaining publicly in response to every misleading press statement by the hon Member during the early summer. He cannot change the goal posts during the course of this Supplementary. His questions seek to ask can Government list the EU Conventions from which Gibraltar has been excluded because of Spanish objections since May 1998? That question means in English a list of the Conventions from which the United Kingdom has excluded Gibraltar because Spain objected to Gibraltar's inclusion. The answer is that to my knowledge Spain has not objected to the inclusion of Gibraltar in any of these Conventions. However, which is a different matter, Spain objected to the United Kingdom, well initially her objection was to the United Kingdom nominating a separate competent authority in Gibraltar for Gibraltar, although she was happy for the Convention to be extended to Gibraltar so long as the United Kingdom domestic competent authority was the competent authority for Gibraltar. Eventually, Spain hardened her position beyond that even and objected to the Convention unless there was language in the text of the Convention itself which prohibited the United Kingdom from nominating a competent authority for Gibraltar. They were no longer willing to trust the United Kingdom not to do so if it possibly could. The United Kingdom throughout all the time that the Gibraltar Government were discussing these Conventions with her which was from the very early days when we discovered the existence of these Conventions was pressing the United Kingdom on the competent authority issue as we do generally on the competent authority issues and the United Kingdom wrote to us saying that they would defend the propositions. Amongst them was the right of Her Majesty's Government to nominate competent authority in and for Gibraltar if Her Majesty's Government chose to do so. At the eleventh hour the United Kingdom Government resiled from that position and unwilling to be the cause of in effect a Spanish veto any longer indicated to the Government of Gibraltar that she was no longer able or willing to maintain the position that she had told us in writing hitherto that she would defend and actually proposed to extend the Conventions to Gibraltar not only without language which specifically enabled her to nominate a competent authority but indeed with the inclusion of language that positively prohibited it and the Gibraltar Government said that we were unwilling to have the Convention extended to us in such circumstances that we believed that the United Kingdom Government had an obligation to Gibraltar to ensure that the Conventions were in terms which protected Gibraltar's rights to have a competent authority extended to it if the United Kingdom so chose. The United Kingdom indicated that because these are inter-governmental agreements which require unanimity, they could not drag Spain to a trough from which it did not wish to drink. The alternatives facing the United Kingdom was in effect to give up the position that she had until then upheld or sacrifice the Convention knowing that there would be a succession and that she was not willing to do the latter in preference to the former and therefore she did the latter regardless of the last minute protestation delivered by me not only in writing but in person in the Foreign Office and in those circumstances the Gibraltar Government took the view that if it had to choose between being left out of the Convention or being included in terms which gave away the competent authority point irredeemably and generally that we would prefer, as the lesser of two evils, not being in the Convention at all. Those are the circumstances in which Gibraltar has been excluded from the two Conventions, the EURODAC and the Drivers Disqualification.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I can only conclude from that explanation that in fact apart from being mischievous the explanation clearly demonstrates that if Spain had behaved as any other normal EU partner and had not raised objections to the normal Convention unadulterated being applied to us, we would not be out. So it has not been that the Government did not want to be in these Conventions, but that the Government, because of the Spanish objection, was faced with having to choose the lesser of two evils and that the United Kingdom, rather than sacrifice the Convention, sacrificed us. That is the position.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Indeed, but Spain, as the hon Member's question suggests, Spain did not object to the Convention being extended to Gibraltar. Spain was very happy for the Convention to be extended to Gibraltar provided it did not make provision for a competent authority in Gibraltar, for Gibraltar, separately to the United Kingdom. There is a distinction there. What I said was mischievous, not vicious, was the attempt that the hon Member had repeatedly made to try to blame the Government of Gibraltar for the fact that we are not participating, that we are not included in the Convention which I understand why the hon Member tries that, but certainly it is not an accusation which is justified.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the Government of Gibraltar have started off putting more blame on itself today than I have done throughout the episode since it starts off by saying that it is not true, that it was Spanish objections to these Conventions being extended, that is us being left out. We have been left out at the request of the Government of Gibraltar. It seems to me that all that the Government of Gibraltar is saying is that they put up a fight on this as they have done on other things and they have lost the fight and having lost the fight they expect not to carry the responsibility for losing the fight on the basis that they tried to win it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That remark is typical of the intellectually dishonest mischief that the hon Member gets up to. He talks as if the Government of Gibraltar have the political and legal wherewithal which he was never able to deliver to force the British Government, either to include us in the way that we wanted to be included or not to sign the international treaty at all. It is precisely that, that complete lack of sequential logic because the hon Member is not interested in sequential logic. What the hon Member is interested is in contaminating the Government of Gibraltar with the aura of having failed in some things in which it could have achieved success and the answer is that the Government of Gibraltar did everything that it was within its power to do, no less than the hon Member has done, or not more than the hon Member has done in the past, on occasions in which he has met with the same lack of success. No one blames him personally for doing so, not necessarily in relation to Third Pillar Conventions because in effect these are the first three Third Pillar Conventions but there are plenty of Directives, let alone inter-governmental agreements, in which the hon Member was not able to secure the inclusion of the right to nominate a competent authority for Gibraltar. He knows that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

During the time that we were in Government or before we were in Government, Spain did not object because in fact Spain was not there prior to 1986 to object to anything. That is a complete red herring, that we tried to achieve directives for Gibraltar being included as a competent authority and that Spain was able to block it which is what has happened on this occasion, is a complete red herring. What the Chief Minister seems to be incapable of doing is in discussing anything at all without at the same time embellishing it with adjectives to describe what he thinks is the legitimacy of the approach of the Opposition in this matter, irrespective of whatever he used to do when he was in Opposition and where he blamed the Government for every single thing under the sun. That is irrelevant. The fact is that the problem with the Chief Minister is that it is not a question of sequential logic. He has got no logic at all because he says that he tried everything that was humanly possible but he did not succeed, but it is dishonest of us to say that he failed. Mr Speaker, if he did not succeed, he failed and whether somebody else might have succeeded or not succeeded, one will never know, whether enough was done or not done one will never know because it is his responsibility and if he had been successful he would expect to come out taking the credit for the success and since he was not successful he has to take the responsibility for having failed, however hard he has tried. The position is, Mr Speaker, am I not correct that before May 1998 Spain had not attempted to prevent the United Kingdom from carrying out what is its constitutional right in terms of determining who is responsible for what in the territory for which it is the administering power and in respect of which it is the member state responsible in the EU? Is it not the case that the nearest parallel that we have to this is the exclusion of Gibraltar under the 1987 directive on air liberalisation when we were given the choice of either going in on the terms that Spain would accept or being left out or Spain would veto the whole process? Is it not the same strategy that has been used?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No Mr Speaker, it is not. I can give him a much closer parallel for which he is responsible. First of all let us be clear, the reason why this has not arisen before in the context of European Union Conventions is because since the third pillar was erected by the Maastricht Treaty, these are the first three inter-governmental agreements, which is what third pillar instruments are, not Instruments of the Community, not regulations, not directives, not Community instruments but international agreements between countries acting in their own right. Albeit the whole 15 of them happen to be members of the European Community and like any other international agreement they require unanimity and because they require unanimity Spain is free to sign or withhold her signature from whatever she pleases and neither Gibraltar nor the United Kingdom is able to oblige Spain to enter into an international agreement of which Spain for whatever reason, whether it be because of Gibraltar, or because she does not like the colour of the paper it is printed on, does not like. But the nearest analogy, given that the exact fact could not possibly have existed before, because there were no inter-governmental agreements before, arise in the several directives for which the hon Member failed to ensure that the United Kingdom was able to make provision for Gibraltar in terms of things annexed. One example that comes readily to mind and of which he made a great fuss and failed was the parent subsidiary directive which he was about to launch with great fanfare on some new financial services product for Gibraltar and when the thing was published it said "United Kingdom companies incorporated under the Companies Act" and made no provision either for Gibraltar or companies incorporated in Gibraltar or companies incorporated under the Companies Ordinance. There is any number of directives that fall into that category where there is no specific provision for competent authorities in Gibraltar. The hon Member knows

that. The hon Member knows the number of occasions in which he was unable in directives to obtain specific provision for the distinct constitutional circumstances prevailing in Gibraltar. My opinion, with which I know the Leader of the Opposition will not agree, is that that is the nearest analogy to the situation. In other words, the extent to which Gibraltar has an ability to oblige the United Kingdom when entering into collective obligations, collective agreements internationally or in an EU context, to make provision for the separate constitutional status of Gibraltar in the future administration of that measure when the United Kingdom decides in the context of a last minute negotiation that she does not wish to uphold. I do not know, short of anything, at the end of the day one points out the United Kingdom's obligations as one thinks she has them, one points out the moment one spots the Gibraltar point, one raises the point at every possible opportunity and with Parliament, with Ministers, with officials, one obtains from them the agreement to uphold one's position and to defend one's position and then at the eleventh hour they give away their position in the context of selling up the deal at the end. The hon Member thinks that that represents failure on the part of the Government of Gibraltar in circumstances where success might be impossible, it is a standard by which I am very happy to be judged.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, I do not want to.....

MR SPEAKER:

I do not want to stop either of you because this is very interesting.....

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given the fact that the Chief Minister is saying that he is happy to be judged by that, then he should not be moaning about the fact that that is what I am accusing him of, in his failure. Is it not a fact, Mr Speaker, that the examples that he has given are totally inaccurate, irrelevant and misleading because the wording of that directive, the one that he has chosen, the parent subsidiary directive, was something that was brought to the Government of Gibraltar's notice long after the directive had been agreed and implemented and it might not even have been implemented when Spain was in the EEC. It had nothing to do with the Government of Gibraltar being consulted by the United Kingdom as he apparently has been; being given a commitment by the United Kingdom as he apparently has been; and then the United Kingdom at the eleventh hour not honouring the commitment that has been given. That has never happened in respect of any directive.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the hon Member is saying that in addition to everything else he did not, during his term in office, put in place a mechanism as we have done to get our own early warning of directives and that he put himself in the position when he made no attempt to protect the interests of Gibraltar unless and until Her Majesty's Government informed him of the existence of a particular directive, then he was in serious dereliction of his duty and the loss of the battle to oblige the United Kingdom to include us in a particular way in a Treaty, which is entirely a matter for the United Kingdom, is certainly not a greater defeat for us than his loss after a long, painful and costly, for Gibraltar, battle to withhold implementation of the directives which he eventually had to do when Britain squeezed his arm hard enough behind his back, no more of a defeat than giving up the battle to keep control of the Financial Services Centre which he tried to do and he gave up the moment the British Government twisted his arm behind his back, both

issues which were within his control and he chose to give up. I am not saying that I would have fought those battles any differently but certainly those are battles that the British Government and he fought and lost when he could have, if he had wanted to, stood his ground. We cannot prevent the Prime Minister from sitting down at a table and signing an international Treaty with whatever content he chooses regardless of whether we like it or not.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, then if the Chief Minister cannot achieve a success, is he saying that he knew or is it that he has just discovered it from the beginning that in fact there was no way that he could get the United Kingdom to accept it and in fact is the Chief Minister saying that as long as he thinks he can drag up something to prove that I did not put up a sufficiently strong battle or was not sufficiently successful that that exonerates him from the responsibility that he has? He has to answer for the things that he does since the 16<sup>th</sup> May irrespective of how successful or not I was before. Can he quote one single case, Mr Speaker, when we have said to the United Kingdom we want to be included in this? The United Kingdom has said "you will be included" and then at the eleventh hour the Prime Minister has decided not to order what has been promised. Of course he cannot. He cannot quote one.

MR SPEAKER:

The time has come when you give a short answer and that is the end of this question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I think there is no shorter answer than to say nothing at all.

NO. 623 OF 1998THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - EXPENDITURE**

Can Government state what is the latest forecast outturn for expenditure by the Gibraltar Health Authority in respect of the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, £23,279,344.98.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.623 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister tell the House why there is a contribution of £99,000 to make up part of the shortfall in income as receipts from the GPMS in reallocation No.13 of 1997/98?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

The reason is that in the Estimates 1998/99 we forecast at that time that the income was going to cover all the expenditure for that year. It has turned out that we overestimated the amount of money we would get from the Group Practice Medical Scheme because of rates. I do not think the final figure has been sorted yet for that £500,000 of which the first tranche has been pushed through in supplementary funding from last year and the remainder has to be resolved some time this financial year.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The extra expenditure, Mr Speaker, in the answer that has just been given about the forecast outturn is it in fact £23,790,000 as opposed to £250,000 so that does not seem to explain the note in the supplementary funding requirement of a shortfall in income. Is it that the GPMS is £99,000 short of the £14.8 million or is it to meet extra spending?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

As I explained, Mr Speaker, and I am sorry if I did not make it clear, the expenditure is just slightly over what we forecast the outturn would be by £70,000-odd. The actual shortfall has really arisen because of a shortfall in income, has not been as much, and therefore if the shortfall in income from the Group Practice Medical Scheme and other sources of health funding, then it means that the contribution from the Consolidated Fund has to go up and so it is a shortfall in income.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I am aware that the explanation given for the extra funding from the Consolidated Fund is a shortfall in income but if the expenditure is higher then the need is not a shortfall in income but a higher expenditure. Is it in fact that the £99,000 that is given is due to a shortfall in income or is it really due to the fact that the expenditure is higher than the estimated forecast outturn given at the time of the Estimates.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Mr Speaker, I think it is a combination of both. There is a higher expenditure by about £60,000 and there is a shortfall in income of £30,000, higher as the Financial Secretary indicated.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have not got the exact figures in front of me but my understanding is that the total excess expenditure over income of the Health Authority for 1997/98 is going to be in the region of £500,000 and the major reason for that as I explained earlier is because the receipts from the Group Practice Medical Scheme have not come out in the order of £14.8 million and are considerably £400,000-odd less than that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figure is closer to the original estimate then of £14.3 million is that what we are being told?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

That is correct.

NO. 624 OF 1998

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

**GHA - LEGAL FEES**

Can Government state what is the latest forecast outturn in respect of legal fees paid by the Gibraltar Health Authority for the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, £15,561.06.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.624 OF 1998

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister state what this figure is in relation to? Is it, for example in relation to claims against the Gibraltar Health Authority?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, these are all legal fees paid in respect of defensive claims against the Authority.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Minister in a position to state how many legal firms have been contracted by the Gibraltar Health Authority, private legal firms?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I do not have a breakdown with me of the fees but if I remember rightly I think of the £15,500, about £8,000 or £9,000 was paid to Hassan & Partners in respect of various claims, of a variety and if I could correct what I have just said about it being all in respect of defence legal fees, of claims, I would say the majority of that is paid in defence of claims but I do recall now that we took advice on the interim MOD agreement from Triay & Triay, for example, so that part of it obviously would not be in respect of defence and I think that leaves a balance of about £2,000 to £3,000 or £4,000 perhaps. I would not be able to say in respect of what the remainder is but I suspect that it is for litigation matters.



NO. 625 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**DISPOSAL OF ASBESTOS SHEETING**

Can Government state whether there is any asbestos sheeting requiring disposal as a result of the demolition of the former Governor's Meadow School?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Yes, there was asbestos sheeting requiring disposal as a result of the demolition of the former Governor's Meadow School.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.625 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Obviously, under the Factory Ordinance (Amendment) Ordinance 1997, the Minister did give authorisation for the removal?

HON J J NETTO:

There are substantial and compelling evidence that the company that was awarded this tender could be in breach of the Works Contract, the Factories Ordinance and the Employment Ordinance. The comprehensive report is being prepared by the Ministry for Employment which will serve the basis for advice from the Attorney-General's Chambers in due course. Therefore this matter is sub judice and I would not want to enter into any further details.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

But the contract was given by the Government, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

As far as I can recollect the tender was given by the Government Tender Board.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

And therefore the company must have been made aware of the requirement under the Ordinance I have just stated, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

These are the kind of details that I would not wish to entertain, given that there are possible implications of the case that have to be taken to the Attorney-General.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The question of asbestos is something that has come to light subsequent to the demolition because that sometimes happens, that people discover that the asbestos is there when they start knocking things down, but in the original contract, were the Government conscious before it even started, that there was asbestos there which had to be handled, was that specified in the contract?

HON J J NETTO:

From my recollection from what I have been told both the company that was awarded the tender and the various other companies that actually could have bid for the tender were informed that there was asbestos sheeting that had to be taken out.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, Mr Speaker, indeed, I can add that they were aware of it, which was the reason why the contract had to be carried out in a specific window opportunity whilst the school was not in operation and why indeed they knew that the school's opening had to be delayed by a week or two, I do not remember, to do that. They were well aware of the nature of the demolition contract.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I do not understand the answer that has been given by the Chief Minister. Was not that a vacant building?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is a nursery there, Tiny Tots.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I understand what the Minister has stated, that may be there is proceedings against the company, but I would like certain information even if it is on a private basis, is he prepared to do that?

HON J J NETTO:

The Ministry is actually preparing this Report which will then serve the basis to go to the Attorney-General's Chambers. Therefore, I do not think at this precise moment in time I am at liberty to be able to disclose this to the hon Member even if it is private and confidential. I think I am disqualified from doing this.

NO. 626 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - WAGE SUBSIDY**

Can Government state the number of employees that were receiving a wage subsidy from the ETB and in respect of how many employees from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 1997 up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998 giving a breakdown for each month?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information requested is as follows:

WAGE SUBSIDIES

Month	Expenditure	Number of employers	Number of employees
October 1997	£43,928.91	30	88
November 1997	24,499.38	17	51
December 1997	9,054.34	17	25
January 1998	20,266.13	16	50
February 1998	5,727.57	15	16
March 1998	<u>23,327.86</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>54</u>
	<u>£126,804.19</u>	<u>116</u>	<u>284</u>

ORAL

NO. 627 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT**

Can Government state how many of the 101 full-time weekly paid male adult workers shown as employed in the hotel industry in April 1997, according to the Employment Survey Report, were Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question No. 630 of 1998.

NO. 628 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT**

Can Government state how many of the 101 full-time weekly paid male adult workers shown as employed in the hotel industry in April 1996, according to the Employment Survey Report, were Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

According to the april 1996 Employment Survey Report, the number of Gibraltarian full-time weekly paid adult males in the hotel industry was 13.

NO. 629 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT**

Can Government give a breakdown as between the MOD and the Gibraltar Government employment in respect of the 952 full-time weekly paid adult male workers in April 1996, as shown in the Employment Survey Report, and give the average weekly earnings of such workers in each sector?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information requested is as follows:

Full-time Adult Male (Weekly Paid) Employees

Gibraltar Government	427
Ministry of Defence	<u>525</u>
Total	<u>952</u>

Average Weekly earnings

Gibraltar Government	£297.18
Ministry of Defence	£238.55

NO. 630 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT**

Can Government give a breakdown as between the MOD and the Gibraltar Government employment in respect of the 926 full-time weekly paid male workers in April 1997, as shown in the Employment Survey Report, and give the average weekly earnings of such workers in each sector?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information requested is not readily available. The computer is being programmed to enable the information to be processed. Once it is available, it will be given to the hon Member.

ORAL

NO. 631 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT**

Can Government state of the 1097 full-time employees shown as earning over £25,000 a year as at April 1996 in the Employment Survey Report, how many of these were employed in (a) the private sector, (b) the MOD and (c) the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Answered together with Question No. 632 of 1998.



NO. 632 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**ETB - EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT**

Can Government state of the 1276 full-time employees shown as earning over £25,000 a year as at April 1997 in the Employment Survey Report, how many of these were employed in (a) the private sector, (b) the MOD and (c) the Gibraltar Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

In the short time available to answer this question it has not been possible to obtain the information requested. This is being processed and once ready it will be made available to the hon Member.

NO. 633 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - TRAINING LEVY**

Can Government state what is the latest estimated outturn in respect of receipts from the training levy for the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The forecast outturn for 1997/98 as provided in the approved Government of Gibraltar Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure under Appendix E is £1,300,000.

However, the actual outturn is £1,231,721.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.633 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether in fact this has required an additional contribution from the Consolidated Fund? Or there are other changes in the Estimates of Income and Expenditure which compensate for the £70,000 difference between the forecast and the figure he has given now?

HON J J NETTO:

No, I do not have that kind of information available with me here..

NO. 634 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how many, if any of the vocational cadets whose employment terminated in April, May and June were cadets with the Ministry of Education?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:

April	-	6
May	-	9
June	-	3

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.634 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Were these in fact cadets who were attending the Construction Training Centre?

HON J J NETTO:

I am actually hesitant to confirm that because I have not got the information with me. I can obviously find out and if the hon Member so wishes I can pass that information to him, whether in fact they belong to the trainees from the Construction Training Centre or indeed any other particular course.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But was there any other course going on in April, May and June?

HON J J NETTO:

Mr Speaker, given the lateness of the day, I have to confess that I am not exactly with it. I can find out exactly where they belong, to what particular course or indeed if they come under the Construction Training Centre and pass the information to the hon Member if he so wishes.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Would those in the Construction Training Centre have finished all at the same time?

HON J J NETTO:

That would depend because my assessment is that all the trainees follow the particular modules, some are more advanced than others and it is likely that not all finish at the same time. That is the flexibility with the NVQ that my hon Colleague in the previous session was talking about.

NO. 635 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**ETB - VOCATIONAL CADETS**

Can Government state how much has been spent by the ETB in the current financial year up to 31<sup>st</sup> August out of the £1.1 million provided for payments to vocational cadets?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:-

Vocational cadets (employment)	-	£149,022
Vocational cadets (training)	-	<u>£142,560</u>
Total for 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter		<u>£291,582</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.635 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is it expected by the Government to spend the £1.1 million or does the Minister estimate that it would fall short of that?

HON J J NETTO:

So far the total of £291,582 represents 26.5 per cent of the amount used so far, so we still have available 73 per cent. Yes, it does appear that at this trend not all the money allocated will be spent.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Am I correct in thinking that this is the money paid to the individuals, there is no other cost here, is that right? This is the money the ETB pays to the individual cadets, the wage they get?

HON J J NETTO:

That is correct.

NO. 636 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**EDUCATION - TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT COURSES**

Can Government state how much has been spent in the current financial year up to 31<sup>st</sup> August out of the £811,000 provided for Training and Development courses?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

Up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August, £87,185 have been spent in the current financial year out of the £811,000 provided in the 1998/99 estimates for Training and Development courses.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.636 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, this money is spent where? Is this money that goes to the College of Further Education?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, this money goes for training schemes which are now on course. In some cases payments have been made and also we hope to draw this fund for other training schemes which are very much in the pipeline and which have been costed but which entail considerable expenditure out of the estimated £811,000.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are not the courses run by the Department funded from the Consolidated Fund and then covered by the reinvestment of a £250,000 back to the Consolidated Fund?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, Mr Speaker, the £250,000 which is reimbursed from the Gibraltar Development Corporation funded by the Consolidated Fund is for the Personal Emoluments and the Wages of the Construction Training Centre.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the £87,151 money that has been paid to whom then? If it is not the College and it is not the courses that come from the Education Department, where has the £87,000 been paid to?

HON DR B A LINARES:

My answer was given from the start, that it has been paid into training schemes which are now on course and for which payments have to be made on an on-going basis. I have a list of all these training schemes which are already on course and I would be quite happy to give the information to the Opposition Members.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are these the training schemes in Bleak House, or are they something different?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, they are not the courses at Bleak House.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are they training courses run by the private sector?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I apologise, the School of Tourism is one of the schemes which is now being operated in Bleak House and that would be funded from this. There is another course run by the University of Durham Business School which I referred to in an earlier answer to an earlier question which is also being funded to the tune of £28,000 from this.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The last one that the Minister just mentioned, can he tell us how many students there are in that course?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The number of students in the Durham course is 20 and it was over-subscribed so it is very likely that by February we will have another 20 to follow.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

These 20 students do they cover any Government employee as well? Is any Government employee doing this?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am not too sure what the answer to that is, but I do not think so. I think they are mostly senior management in the private sector.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

And is this partly funded by the private sector? Is there a ratio of Government and the private sector?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, Mr Speaker, there is a ratio of 45 per cent from ESS funds, 35 per cent from the Government and 20 per cent from the private sector.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

When he says 45 per cent by the fund and 25 per cent from the Government, is it that another 25 per cent is paid from the Government from another source, other than from this one? If I understood the Minister correctly in the answer he just gave, he said that 45 per cent is financed by the Fund, 35 per cent is funded by the Government and 20 by the private sector. Is it that the Government's 35 per cent other than the 45 per cent that is paid from there is funded by another fund from the Government?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, Mr Speaker, as I said before it is funded from the £811,000 which has been estimated for training schemes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

When I asked earlier on about whether the money was going to the College and the answer was no, are none of these courses run at the College of Further Education?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I do not think so, but at this time of the night, as we agreed before, I am not entirely with it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

He does not have a list that he could let us have? I believe that he said earlier on that he could provide a list to us of the cost.

HON DR B A LINARES:

Mr Speaker, it is intended and it was announced today at the opening of Bleak House that the Chief Minister will be presenting and making public a comprehensive blueprint, a developmental programme of our intended training schemes and therefore all these courses which are now in the pipeline are being processed and costed and negotiated will soon be made public and of course will be available to the Opposition Members.

NO. 637 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**HEAD 2B, SUBHEAD 6**

Can Government state how much has been spent up to 31<sup>st</sup> August out of the £1 million provided for Housing Maintenance – Materials under Head 2-B, subhead 6 – Buildings and Works?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The amount is £346,946.97.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.637 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Minister say if out of the £346,000 does it also cover the tender that has been awarded for the scaffolding for one of the Alameda Estate buildings?

HON J J NETTO:

It is difficult to tell that, not giving me notice to that effect. I would like to say yes but I would need to confirm that if he so wishes.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Obviously he has not got that information. Could he give me a breakdown when he has it available on how the £346,000 have been spent?

HON J J NETTO:

No, I have been told that is totally impossible to give a breakdown of all the materials in all the jobs. One has to bear in mind that there are thousands of jobs done in Buildings and Works. I am prepared to pass on the information of the scaffolding, yes, but not on every single material, in every single job.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

That is not what I am requiring. Could he say how much has been spent on materials, on a global figure. I am not asking for any specific job and what is not spent on materials, like scaffolding. Is he prepared to do that?

HON J J NETTO:

There has to be some more of a generic item. If the hon Member is saying things like outside materials, the purchase of scaffoldings and heavy plant and things of that nature, fine, I might look into that, but is that specifically what he wants?

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, that is specifically what I want.



NO. 638 OF 1998THE HON J L BALDACHINO**ETB - WAGE SUBSIDY**

Can Government state how much has been spent in the current financial year up to 31<sup>st</sup> August out of the £600,000 provided for wage subsidies in each month giving the number of employees receiving a wage subsidy and in respect of how many employees?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The information is as follows:-

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>NO. OF EMPLOYERS</u>	<u>NO. OF EMPLOYEES</u>
April 1998	£4,051.35	13	13
May 1998	£14,406.51	20	40
June 1998	£6,362.86	12	17
July 1998	£10,971.00	15	27
August 1998	£10,412.77	17	30

NO. 639 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**I&D FUND - HEAD 101, SUBHEAD 6**

Can Government state how much has been spent from the I&D Fund, Head 101, subhead 6 – Housing Consultants Fees, from April 1998 to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

£9,200 has been spent to date from the Improvement and Development Fund, Head 101, subhead 6 – Housing Consultants Fees.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.639 OF 1998

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Mr Speaker, in relation to what projects?

HON J J NETTO:

This is the backing information which I have, which I can make available. In June 1998, Proclain Ltd, reference contract work, Macfarlane House, that was £2,350; July 1998, Proclain Ltd, in relation to Macfarlane and Willis's tender documents, that was £4,700 and in September, 1998, Proclain Ltd tender document 62, Flat Bastion Road, which is £1,850, bringing the total to £9,200.

NO. 640 OF 1998THE HON J C PEREZ**VARYL BEGG ESTATE - GARAGES**

Can the Minister for Employment and Buildings and Works explain how the figure of £94,243 as the cost of the construction of the garages at Varyl Begg, has been arrived at?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUILDINGS AND WORKS

The breakdown is as follows:

Provision of bases and ancillary works	£23,587.91
Electrical Works (inc Meter cupboards to Phase 1 garages)	£6,655.09
Purchase and erection of garages	<u>£64,000.00</u>
	<u>£94,243.00</u>

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.640 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

Can he confirm that the bases and ancillary works for £23,587.91 was the subject of a tender which included other things for the car park?

HON J J NETTO:

I do not know whether it was included as a subject of tender. I should imagine so.

HON J C PEREZ:

I did ask him at the last Question Time whether he could provide me with a breakdown between what the part of the garages was and the part that was related to the car park which he said in this House he would, but then subsequently he wrote to me and said he could not give me the breakdown; the point being that if he is able to give me the breakdown now, I wonder why it is that the Minister wrote to me saying that he could not give me the information when he had promised in this House that he was going to give it to me. That is the point I am making, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 641 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government state what was the number of Social Insurance Cards in issue at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1996 which had not been renewed as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 and the number of employers concerned, giving a breakdown as follows:

- (a) Gibraltarians
- (b) non-Gibraltarians?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The number of social insurance cards in issue at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1996 which had not been returned as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1996 is 385, broken down as follows:-

British/Gibraltarian	266
Non-British	<u>119</u>
Total	<u>385</u>

The number of employers concerned is 232.

NO. 642 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS**

Can Government say how many employers are involved in relation to the 448 social insurance cards in issue at 31<sup>st</sup> December 1997, which have not been renewed as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The information requested is not readily available. However, the Department of Social Services is now in the process of compiling lists of different employers. This will be made available to the Opposition Members once it is ready, hopefully in two weeks.

ORAL

NO. 643 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURED PERSONS**

Can Government explain the drop from 115 to 84 in the distribution of insured persons in respect of adult British females in the construction industry as at the end of 1997 compared to the end of 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 645 and 646 of 1998.

NO. 644 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURED PERSONS**

Can Government explain the increase from 702 to 950 in the distribution of insured persons in respect of adult male British employees in the defence sector as at the end of 1997 compared to the end of 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Prior to 1997 the annual statistics of insured persons have not included the permanent cadre of the Gibraltar Regiment. The increase in respect of adult male British is due to the inclusion in the 1997 statistics of 163 members of the Gibraltar Regiment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.644 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Since that accounts for 163 of the 248, is it that the MOD actually increased the employment of people in 1997 contrary to every other statistic?

HON H CORBY:

I have not got that information with me and I cannot answer the hon Member as such because I am not responsible for the MOD, who they employ.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But what we are talking about is the explanation that we have been given that of the 248 increase shown in the statistics, 163 are Gibraltar Regiment permanent cadre that presumably were not included as part of the insured population previously, is that correct?

HON H CORBY:

That is correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I understand, what we are being told is that 163 is people who did not appear anywhere else before because they were not included, but what I am asking is that still leaves an increase of 80 which is 12 per cent increase in numbers employed in the MOD in 1997. Is he saying that the MOD employed 12 per cent more in 1997 than in 1996? That does not seem to fit in with every other indicator we have had.

HON H CORBY:

I will try to find that out for the hon Member and produce, if I can, the figures for him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In respect of the previous question, there was a figure of adults from 115 to 84, the Minister gave the explanation of vocational cadets, were the adult females in the construction industry also vocational cadets?

HON H CORBY:

Yes, they were



ORAL

NO. 645 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURED PERSONS**

Can Government explain the drop from 44 to 2 in the distribution of insured persons in respect of female juveniles in the construction industry as at the end of 1997 compared to the end of 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 643 and 646 of 1998.

NO. 646 OF 1998

THE HON R MOR

**SOCIAL SECURITY - INSURED PERSONS**

Can Government explain the drop from 114 to 13 in the distribution of insured persons in respect of male juveniles in the construction industry as at the end of 1997 compared to the end of 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

A detailed analysis of the figures quoted in respect of the construction industry in the annual statistics for 1996 and 1997 reveal that the drop of 115 to 84 in respect of adult British females; from 44 to 2 in respect of female juveniles (British); and from 114 to 13 in respect of male juveniles (British) was due to the manner in which the vocational cadets were distributed in the different industries at the end of 1996. It seems that part of the distribution was based on inaccurate information of their place of training.

The statistics for 1997 take account of a more accurate distribution of the vocational cadets. However, in order to avoid any future discrepancies in respect of the distribution of vocational cadets, I am considering that for the 1998 statistics they should all be included under industry No. 29 "Educational Services".

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 643, 645 and 646 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister not reconsider that allocation given that in fact educational services shows the people employed in providing education as opposed to people receiving education? Would it not be better, if he wants to group them altogether to have a column just showing the vocational cadets?

HON H CORBY:

What happened before was that the vocational cadets were entered in bulk and they were all put in the construction industry. I will reconsider the observation made by the hon Member.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the explanation obviously is that people if they were, for example, presumably in the retail trade or bars or whatever, that is where they should have appeared and they appear in construction. That is what happened in 1997 but not in 1996. So in 1997 it must appear somewhere else presumably?

HON H CORBY:

No, in 1997 they have appeared in different sections.

HON J J BOSSANO:

And they are distributed throughout?

HON H CORBY:

Throughout.

NO. 647 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ

**VARYL BEGG ESTATE - INSTALLATION OF LIFTS**

Can Government say whether they have received representations from tenants at the Varyl Begg Estate for the installation of lifts?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Yes, I have received representations from the tenants of one block at Varyl Begg Estate for the installation of lifts.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 647 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

And is it going to be pursued further? I understand from one of the tenants concerned that the Minister for Employment has given them an appointment for December, is that how it is going to be pursued or will Government take a policy decision on it, or what is the position?

HON J J NETTO:

Can the hon Member elucidate on the question of the December meeting?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government constantly receive representations from tenants in any number of Government blocks of flats asking for the installation of lifts in their block. Indeed, there is a sense in which it is a policy that recommends itself because given that many of the tenants that were originally put into Government housing estates are now becoming elderly and increasingly immobile. Installing lifts is a way of rendering elderly people being able to live for longer in those houses as opposed to put pressure for transfers to ground floor flats and flats where they can remain active in their older age, therefore the Government have commissioned from the Support Services Department engineers a report to assess each block in all the Government Housing Estates to advise which blocks lend themselves to the installation of a lift and at what cost and which blocks do not because of the particular peculiarities of the layout. Some blocks lend themselves much more easily than others. Some lend themselves to the installation of lifts at a greater or lesser degree of expense and some do not lend themselves to the installation of lifts at all. The response that the Government have given to Action for Housing that has raised this issue generally on behalf of housing tenants is that the Government are not going to give priority to that matter this year and there is no possibility of the Government proceeding with this but a phased lift installation programme is a project that the Government may initiate at some time in the future. The Government would not consider ad hoc applications from tenants of particular

blocks. The Government are now seized of the issue, has done its assessment, has a survey report on all the blocks, will try and create some sort of phased programme and will initiate that programme if and when it decides that the priority allocation of resources permits initiating that programme. In the meantime, no lifts will be installed in any block.

HON J C PEREZ:

I understand that an appointment has been made. I might have made a mistake, but I did understand from the gentleman that raised the matter with me that it was with the Minister for Employment and that a meeting had been fixed for December. Perhaps I am mistaken and the Hon Mr Corby has given the meeting instead of the Hon Mr Netto.

HON H CORBY:

That is correct. The letter came to me and the appointment was made with me.

NO. 648 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA – MOROCCO**

Can Government explain why in 1995 50 per cent of the visitors arriving by sea from Morocco were assumed to be staying in hotels and for 1996 and 1997 the proportion was increased to 75 per cent?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The chronology of events in relation to this percentage business is as follows: In 1993, and when we talk about dates we talk about the year to which the statistics relate which are normally worked out in the following year, in respect of statistics year 1993 the assumption was 100 per cent. It was assumed that 100 per cent of visitors arriving by sea from Morocco stayed in hotels. During 1995 and in respect of the statistics for 1994 but during calendar 1995 when considering the survey for 1994 statistics year, the Chief Secretary, then known as the Administrative Secretary, reviewed tourism expenditure calculations generally and directed the Statistics Office that the statistics should be altered as follows:- There should be an assumption of 50 per cent in respect of visitors from Morocco by sea staying in hotels and there should be an assumption of 66 per cent, two-thirds, in respect of visitors from the UK staying in hotels. The practice was 1993, the assumption was 100 per cent. It was lowered in respect of the year 1994 to 50 per cent in respect of visitors by sea from Morocco and 66 per cent in respect of visitors by air. In 1997, in respect of the 1996 statistical year, it was raised by the Government Statistics Office to 75 per cent because it was assumed that if there were a higher number of visitors a higher proportion of them would stay in hotels. It is a coincidence and a curiosity nevertheless that the survey results in respect of the months so far lapsed in 1998, survey results as opposed to assumptions, actually show it coming in at about 50 per cent on the basis of survey. That is the reason, the practice of assuming did not start in 1996 or 1997, the assumption has moved from 100 per cent in 1993 and in previous years, to 50 and 66 per cent in respect of 1994 and 1995, 75 per cent in respect of 1996 and 1997 and this year 1998 we are trying to do it on the basis of survey rather than assumption but we will see how that goes given the earlier exchange in relation to that practice. It just occurred to me that I never actually read the original answer to the question which is: The Government Statistics Office has increased the percentage of visitor arrivals from Morocco by sea from 50 to 75 per cent to reflect the fact that the improved frequency of service led to an increase in the number of arrivals and consequently in their assumed propensity to stay at hotels.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.648 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

On the basis of that non-sequential logic, if the point that I drew to the attention of the Government earlier which is that in 1995 there were a total of 23,000 arrivals of which only 3,100 were taken to be visitors, and that in 1996 the 9,500 which were assumed to be visitors were perhaps a misallocation of the total of 9,500, then by that peculiar logic the percentage should have been reduced in 1996 because the numbers that arrived went down from 23,000 to 9,500 so the percentage should have gone down from 50 to 22 per cent given that it went up because they thought it had gone up from 3,000 to 9,500.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I make no attempt to defend the statistic data assumption of management, those are the facts as they have been explained to the Government and I think the hon Member is free and entirely justified in evaluating them as he pleases.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister say, since he has quoted 100 per cent for 1993 and 50 per cent for 1994, what that translated into in terms of numbers of visitors? What was 100 per cent of 1993 and 50 per cent of 1994?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In 1993..... I assume he is interested in the number of arrivals by sea from Morocco....

HON J J BOSSANO;

The other figure he has quoted is 66 per cent by air but he is not sure where from by air. That is why I am asking back....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

From Morocco. Mr Speaker in respect of the 1993 survey the arrivals from Morocco were 2,568. In respect of 1994 the arrivals from Morocco were 1,465. Of course, 1994 is the first year in which the proportions were applied. Mr Speaker, if I could just take the hon Member back to 1993, of the 2,568 from Morocco, 475 are said to have come by sea and 2,093 are said to have come by air, totalling 2,568. In 1994, 2,401 came from Morocco of which 817 are said to have come by sea and 1,584 by air. A third of the visitors arriving by air from the UK alleged to have stayed in hotels, two-thirds of the visitors from Morocco by air and half of those by sea stayed in hotels. That is confirmation of the earlier point. Two-thirds of the figure that I have just given him in respect of the air Morocco passengers are alleged to have stayed in hotels and half of the 817 alleged to have come by sea are assumed in 1994 to have stayed in hotels. Then in 1995 the figure from Morocco is 2,278 of which 1,085 came by sea, 1,193 came by air and the same proportions for the purposes of assumptions of hotel stayers are applied. Two-thirds of the air arrivals and one half of the sea arrivals are assumed to have stayed in hotels. That takes us up to 1995. In 1996 we then have the situation where the percentage of arrivals by sea is raised to 75 per cent from the 50 per cent that had been assumed in 1994 and 1995. Of course, that is repeated again in 1997.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What that information reveals is that the number of visitors staying in hotels arriving by sea from Morocco is around 500 in 1993, 1994 and 1995 and then it goes up in 1996 to the 75 per cent of 9,500 and then to 75 per cent of 20,000.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I beg your pardon, Mr Speaker, there are two variables, there is the percentage of arrivals by sea which are assumed to stay in hotels which is raised from 50 per cent to 75 per cent and then there is a substantial increase in the gross number of arrivals to which that increased percentage is applied.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The result of that is that the increase in hotel occupancy in 1996 and 1997 is predominantly reflected by the fact that of the source of clients in 1993, 1994 and 1995, arrivals by sea from Morocco is, from the figures that the Chief Minister has given me, it was 475 in 1993, 458 in 1994 and 500 in 1995. It is virtually static in those three years and then it shoots up in 1996 and 1997.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, at no stage in any of these years have the hotel visitors actually been calculated working back from the information we have just been discussing. For example, starting in 1997, although I will take the hon Member back to demonstrate, there is information provided by the hotel of visitors to their hotel, and those statistics in respect of 1997 are, from the UK 10,796, from Morocco 12,137 and from Spain 25,487. In 1997 we have a total of 48,420 visitors to hotels and that information is provided by hotels. The number of arrivals for the purposes of the Expenditure Survey is allocated by these assumptions but always subject to the controlled total of 48,420 which is the statistic provided by the hotels. One may wish to argue about whether the 48,000 visitors that the hotels tell us they have had, one may wish to argue about the allocation of, for example, 10,700 of those 48,000 to arrive from the UK, arrivals from Morocco, arrivals from Spain and then one may also wish to argue with the average length of stay and with the average daily expenditure but the number of arrivals in the Tourism Report, the figures and the number of arrivals has to add up however it is distributed between the various countries of provenance has to add up I am told to the controlled maximum which is the figure provided by the hotels. There is an equivalent such figure, I have said it is 48,000 for 1997 but there is an equivalent figure of 46,000 in 1996, 45,000 in 1995, 37,800 in 1994, 39,000 in 1993, 41,000 in 1992 and so on and so on, I have got them going all the way back here to 1987. If the hon Member wants to open one of those tables, I cannot tell him right now which table it is, but the one that says "CATEGORY, NUMBER OF ARRIVALS, AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY, AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER PERSON PER DAY, TOTAL EXPENDITURE IN THOUSANDS", that first column "Number of Arrivals" does add up to the figure provided by the hotels.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the point is that the hotels provided information to the Government saying 48,000 people have bought 144,000 nights and have paid for 144,000 nights at the hotels in 1997. The Government then say "well, we believe that they are telling the truth about the 48,000 people but we do not believe they are telling the truth about the 144,000 nights. We believe they have bought 200,000 nights and the reason why we believe they have bought 200,000 nights is because we believe that of the 48,000 people, 20,000 came by sea from Morocco and stayed four nights which is 80,000 nights and that in the previous year we believe that it is true that 46,000 arrived but we believe that in 1996 they are not understating how long they stayed." In 1996 they are overstating how long they stayed. In 1996 the hotels tell us that they bought 141,000 but we do not believe that. We believe they only bought 107,000 and that is the point that I have been questioning ever since the report was tabled in the House last June. I have been asking the Government to check the incompatibility of that because why should the Government come to the conclusion that they accept half the story of the hotels but not the other half and that they believe the hotels decided in 1996 to exaggerate the number of nights that they had sold and to understate them in 1997. The only explanation that has been given is that the calculation that was made on the numbers of visitors reported by the ferry operator was such that it led them to think that



there were more Moroccans staying there and that because they made an assumption in 1997 that not only as a result of 20 people at the frontier saying they had stayed four nights, did they then assume that 30,000 Spaniards had stayed four nights because of these 20. They also assumed that 12,000 people from Morocco had stayed four nights because of what the 20 said at the frontier because the numbers staying by sea from Morocco in 1996 was altered from an average of two to an average of four based on the response of the interviews at the frontier which have nothing to do with the people coming on the ferry.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I cannot say whether the hon Member is right to believe that the way these statistics are handled create errors as he has described. But if he is right, it has happened every year since 1987 because the Tourist Expenditure Survey has always been worked out using the number of visitors reported by the hotels which has never coincided and has always been different from the guest nights sold figure separately provided by the hotels. It has always been the case. In 1994 the 10,000 arrivals by air from the UK were assumed to have stayed for an average length of seven nights on the basis of a tourist survey result. We reduced that down to four. The arrivals from Morocco are put in at 2.6 per cent on the basis of a residue having taken the seventh night assumption from the Survey and the arrivals from Spain are put in at two point six and there is a little footnote here that says "inflated", I do not know what that means. This is 1994 but I can assure the Opposition Members that these calculations which at the end of the day are the working papers for what gets into the published survey reports have always been done using the number of visitors, number of arrivals at hotels, multiplied by an average length of stay which have always been done on the basis of survey at least in respect of the major figure which is the UK and Spain and then applying an average expenditure for day which is also the result of a survey. Therefore, it has always been done in this way. The only difference may be subject to the enquiries as I said this morning I would initiate if whether the Moroccan average length of stay has always been assumed or used to be done in another way. Even if that had changed, it would be one of six factors which will continue to be done the way they have always been done.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, Mr Speaker, I am afraid the Chief Minister is still wrong.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I am reading straight from the working papers.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister may be reading straight from the working papers, it does not mean he understands them. Mr Speaker, does the Chief Minister not accept that in fact he has just said that the two point six average length of stay is a figure which is not arrived at by interviews but a figure that is arrived at as a residue after deducting from the total number of guest nights sold the number arrived at from the interviews by departures from the United Kingdom.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, it depends in respect of what year he is asking me. That is true of some years for which he wanted to allege that but not true of others. In the case of 1994 the figure of seven as the average length of stay for arrivals from the UK and the figure of two point six in respect of arrivals from Spain are both said here to be the result of tourist surveys. Not just the figure from the UK, the average length of stay of visitors from the UK and the same statistics in respect of arrivals from Spain are both said to be the result of survey. That is in respect of 1994. My paper here suggests that in respect of 1995 that is true only of arrivals from the UK, it does not say that it is from tourist surveys so it must be by some other means in respect of Morocco and Spain.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, this is precisely the point that I have made on a number of supplementaries to bring this question. In 1995, which is the year that I am comparing with 1996, the figure for arrivals other than from UK was calculated by removing from the total reported by the hotels of 144,000 guest nights the calculation made from interviews from UK arrivals. If the interviews from UK arrivals were deducted from the total, the total being the residue could not help but match the figure when it was added back so the figure of two point six was the rounding up of a formula used which produced two point five nine nights sold and that is the working figures that we have been provided with for 1995.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Except that in 1995 there were two variables to assess by deduction, the arrivals from Morocco and the arrivals from Spain. In fact they are both given the same value.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, they are both given the same value because it is being done by simply saying if 144,000 nights have been sold which is accepted as being accurate and 10,000 people have come from the UK and the 10,000 people have bought four nights and that gives 40,000 nights one is left with 104,000 to account for. Then, given that one has got an estimated number of people arriving one divides the 104,000 by the number of people and one arrives at 2.59 and there is a formula that says that is the residual figure and the residual figure was not based on interviews and the interviews were supposed to be in 1996 being conducted with higher frequency and consequently the explanation was given that in 1996 the result of the interviews which we have discovered was four people at the frontier in 1996 was supposed to increase the accuracy of the calculation downwards so that it was reduced from 2.6 to 2.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member asserts repeatedly as he has during the day that the figure of two point six in respect of arrivals from Morocco and Spain in 1995 is deduced as the residual basis and he asserts that and as I cannot prove the negative I am not able to disprove what he is saying. What I can say is that these working documents which are in typescript, they are not in manuscript, they are not rough early documents, they are the final working papers, explain in considerable detail how these calculations have been drawn. Under the headings of the table it has notes which shows how each of the figures was worked from, whether it is a source and nowhere here does it give the remotest indication which would be consistent with the general content of this document that the figure for Morocco and Spain was the product of some neat

mathematical deduction. On the contrary, the impression that it clearly gives is that it has been arrived at not by applying some process of neat deductions to the figure of guest nights sold but by the same communal garden way of applying a figure of average length of stay to the figure of total visitors to hotels as reported by the hotels, nothing to do with guest nights sold. By the same token nor does it say that it was not done the way the hon Member says but there is no indication in these working papers that the radical departure that the hon Member is suggesting has been done and they do have footnotes showing where these documents deduced from and it does not say footnote 4, two point six is the product of some genial process of deduction which the Chief Minister of the day worked out for us and taught us about. It just does not say that. It gives the clear impression to me that I accept it is nothing more than an unsubstantiated impression that two point six is a figure that has been carried forward. Indeed, it was two point six in 1994 as well, when it is said to be the result of a survey. Is it not much more logical that the figure of two point six finds its way into the 1995, not because it is the result of some great scientific process of deduction but because it has simply been carried forward from the figure of 1994 which is also two point six and which is said to be the result of the Survey. I am not suggesting that that explanation is necessarily factual but it is at least as likely as the hypothesis that the hon Member repeats which does not become any more credible and does not become any more scientific simply because the hon Member repeats it and repeats it and repeats it throughout one day.

MR SPEAKER:

This is no longer a Question and Answer session, only a session to prove who is right and who is wrong.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, in the previous meeting I asked the Chief Minister whether he would go back and ask the Statistics Office whether this formula that I am referring to was used for 1995. That is what I asked him to do in the previous session and the reason why I gave notice of the question that I put today obviously was because I anticipated that in the intervening week he would have asked and he would have got an answer.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I will ask them.

NO. 649 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA - MOROCCO**

Can Government confirm that the number of persons arriving by sea from Morocco in 1995 was over 23,000 and can they further confirm that only 3,100 of these were assumed to be visitors for the purpose of the Tourist Survey Report?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The Government can confirm that for the purposes of the 1995 Tourist Survey the number of visitor arrivals, excluding workers, from Morocco by sea was 3,109. This is an actual figure and not a proportion of total arrivals.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 649 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are the Government saying that the total arrivals was not 23,000? Are they confirming that figure or not confirming it?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The figure of 23,000 is not the Government's. The figure must obviously include workers as the number of visitors to Gibraltar from Morocco is supplied to us by the operators of the Morocco/Gibraltar ferry, therefore our statistics have to be based on these figures which are 3,109.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the Minister then saying that the figure of 3,109 is the figure that the ferry operator claimed were visitors arriving on the ferry?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that the ferry operator has to pay an arrival tax to the Government in respect of all arrivals and can he not confirm that in fact that amount represented in excess of 23,000 people arriving in Gibraltar?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

It is correct that there is an arrival tax on passengers on the ferry from Morocco but this figure has not been checked. I have not checked whether the figure is 23,000 or not but if the hon Member has checked it himself and it comes out to that then obviously the figure of 23,000 must be correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

We were in Government then that is how I know that it was in excess of 23,000. Would the Minister not agree that if the amount of money paid is on the basis of over 23,000 it is something that the Minister is able to establish, would he not agree that that is the case, by looking at the revenue received in respect of arrivals?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, but just so that the Government can be aware of the premise upon which the hon Member is arguing, where does he get the statistic for passenger taxes in respect of visitors by sea from Morocco?

MR SPEAKER:

There is no need for you to answer questions.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Will the Government confirm that in the amount shown in the audited accounts for the financial year the sum received in respect of arrival and departure tax by sea is a reflection of the numbers arriving by ferry from Morocco and will they confirm that if they were to seek a breakdown of that figure from the recipient of the revenue they would find that there are 23,000 arrivals in that year?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member makes the deduction and I am not conceding the premise upon which he does so. There is a published statistic for estimated revenue and the forecast outturn – the 1995 figure by now is an actual figure – of revenue to the Government from passenger tax. I do not accept that the published figure enables the hon Member to deduce that 23,000 people must have arrived by sea from Morocco.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not suggesting that I have deduced it from the published figure. I have pointed out that I am talking about 1995 and I am asking the Government will they look at the figure because my recollection is that it was 23,000. It is not possible to do it by looking at the figure published because the figure published does not tell one, for example, whether half of it is from arrivals and half of it is from departure. But I am saying to the Government, since the information is in the possession of the Treasury and there is a return made, can the Government confirm that figure which is what the original question asked them to do which they can do simply by asking somebody in the Treasury to look at the figure for that year and there is a return in respect of the tax paid?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the hon Member wanted to know from the Government how much according to our records we have collected in passenger tax in respect of passengers arriving by sea from Morocco, that is the question that he should have asked. In fact, he has not asked that question, he has asked the Government to confirm a figure of 23,000

people as arrivals by sea from Morocco and the Government have answered that question to the effect that the Government do not confirm that figure. It is a figure which he throws up into the wind and starts a debate on it and we do not accept that it is a proper basis for a debate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well then if they cannot confirm that the figure of people arriving from Morocco in 1995 was 23,000, can they say what the figure was?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, it is in the answer to the question which I will read to him again, "The Government can confirm that for the purposes of the 1995 Tourist Survey the number of visitor arrivals, excluding workers, from Morocco by sea was 3,109." If the hon Member wants to know what that figure would be enlarged to if it included, for example, workers, that may be possible, I do not know whether either from the ferry operators themselves or perhaps the Immigration Department may keep control or, as he suggests, perhaps from the collection of tax at the ferry. It is possible, I suppose, to collect that information but it is not the information that he has requested in his original question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The original question asked for confirmation of two pieces of information, one is that the total number of people arriving by sea was over 23,000 and that of those 23,000 3,100 were recorded as visitors for the purpose of the report. Therefore, is it the case that the Government can confirm that 3,109 were deemed to be visitors because the operator said they were visitors but they do not know other than the visitors how many other people arrived?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is precisely the case, yes. The Government, for the purposes of the Tourist Survey Report, rely on the statistics provided to us by the ferry operator as to the number of people that are brought to our shores who were visitors as opposed to people because "people" includes Moroccan workers and "visitors" does not.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the answer is that in terms of the original question the Government have been unable to establish whether other than visitors for the Tourist Survey Report there were 20,000 or more or less? They have not been able to establish that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government do not have the information available to tell the hon Member whether it is 23,000 or 43,000 or 13,000; it is not statistics that the Government keep.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the ferry operator have to make a regular return of the total numbers of people disembarking to the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot answer that question. I suppose that there must be, for immigration purposes, some sort of check, whether that check is limited just to people who require visas or non-EU nationals, it may well be that some sort of check is kept but not necessarily of every person who arrives. If it is, it is not information that the Government have and it is certainly not information that is tallied up or aggregated and reported to the Government. It may exist in some room in the Immigration Department but it is not information that the Government have available in a usable form, if it is kept at all in the form that the hon Member suggests, in the form of arrival sheets and things of that sort.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In making the payment for the arrival tax, does the operator not have to say, "payment of so much in respect of so many people arriving"? Is that not the way it is normally done? That is how it used to be done.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot say on what basis the passenger tax collection mechanism is administered and to what extent it provides the information of arrivals. If it were that easy to collate the information then presumably we would not have to do surveys, we would not have to make guesstimates. I suppose that those in the Government who have to collate statistics have the natural inclination that we all have to do our job of expending as little energy and effort as possible and if information were readily available to Government in the sort of scientific way that the hon Member is suggesting, then it would not be necessary for my Government now or for his Government over the last eight years before 1996 to have done it in the basis of guesstimates.

HON J J BOSSANO:

There has not been any guesstimate about the total number of people arriving and paying 50p on arrival, this is the point I am making. I am telling the Chief Minister that I have asked for confirmation of the 23,000 because my recollection is that it was 23,000 in 1995.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What I am not willing to do is to cause the civil service to invest the necessary time if all that the hon Member wants to do is to satisfy his curiosity about whether his memory is good or not. If the hon Member wants to know whether there were 23,000 people who arrived in Gibraltar by sea from Morocco in 1995, which information it has not been possible to obtain in the time scale I am told that we have had, I shall remit the question back to the Statistics Department and ask them please, given that the Leader of the Opposition is particularly keen to have this information, whether it cannot be dredged up from somewhere. The hon Member should accept that there is absolutely no reason why the Government should not want him to know that statistic, but it is not available to us at this moment in time and if he particularly wants it, I shall ask those whose job it is to do so to do all that they can to get it or if not, to give an explanation why it is not available.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am grateful for that. Will the Chief Minister accept that it is not a question of confirmation of the accuracy of my memory but of trying to establish the ratio between the total number of people who arrive on the ferry and the numbers that are visitors to Gibraltar for the purposes of tourism? That is what the question is clearly designed to do.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If that is why he wants the information, the offer to do all that is possible to obtain it for him stands but if that is the purpose for which he wants the information, I think I shall be able to satisfy him before we have finished this exchange of questions, that there is in fact no ratio of the sort that he seeks and that the information that is used for Tourism Survey purposes, both in relation to expenditure and in relation to stays at hotels, is in no sense derived from the total number of arrivals by sea.



NO. 650 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA - MOROCCO**

Can Government state what was the total number of persons arriving by sea from Morocco in 1996, and how in relation to this figure the estimate of 9,500 for other visitors by sea was calculated, for the purposes of the Tourist Survey Report?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question no. 651 of 1998.

NO. 651 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA - MOROCCO**

Can Government state what was the total number of persons arriving by sea from Morocco in 1997, and how in relation to this figure the estimate of 20,700 for other visitors by sea was calculated, for the purposes of the Tourist Survey Report?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The total number of visitors arriving by sea from Morocco in 1996 and in 1997 was 9,460 and 20,720 respectively. These were the figures that were taken for the purposes of the 1996 and 1997 Tourist Survey Reports.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 650 AND 651 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, that is the total number of visitors taken for the purpose of the Tourist Survey Report but that is only half the answer. The other half of the answer is in 1996, 9,500 were visitors and how many of the arrivals were not visitors and in 1997, 20,700 were visitors and how many were non-visitors?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The ferry operators provide the Government with statistics only relating to visitors, in other words, tourists as opposed to returning workers. In respect of 1996, that figure was 9,460. In respect of 1997, that figure was 20,700. In other words, according to the operators of the ferry, as reported by them to the Government, there was an increase of 100 per cent, indeed slightly more than 100 per cent, in the number of visitors that arrived to Gibraltar from Morocco by ferry in 1997 over 1996. The number of those persons who were stayers is taken from the hotel returns, it is not assessed and in respect of 1996 that figure was 6,869 and in respect of 1997 it was 14,700 visitors. We then have a percentage applied to that as to how many of them stayed in hotels.

HON J J BOSSANO:

A percentage applied to what?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, of the people that arrive in Gibraltar by boat the only category of visitors – they are, first of all, divided into two categories, we only get told about the visitors, we do not get told about which of them are workers so the ferry operator gives the Government a statement of the number of visitors. But of course visitors are not necessarily hotel stayers because we have excursionists as well arriving in Gibraltar by sea. So of the number of persons that arrive by sea from Morocco, the number of

them that are stayers in hotels is taken by applying a percentage of 75 per cent in 1997, the percentage applied was 75 per cent also in 1996. In respect of 1997, I will also give the hon Member the figures for 1996, of the 20,700 visitors that arrived by ferry from Morocco, 14,671 were assumed to be staying in hotels and the balance of 6,038 were assumed to be excursionists. That assumption is applying the 75 per cent ratio that we debated at the last Question Time, which was also applied in 1996. In 1995 that had been 50 per cent and when we come to debate Question No. 648 I will explain to the hon Member what the history of that percentage is, why it became 50 per cent in 1995 and why it became 75 in the following year. Therefore if I can just summarise that. In respect of 1997 the figure of 20,700 are the visitors by sea from Morocco as reported to the Government by the ferry operator. That figure breaks down into 14,700 stayers, 6,000 excursionists. Of the 14,700 stayers – this is another subdivision – not all of them stay at hotels, some of them stay with family and friends and the proportion of those is 25 per cent thereby giving the 75 per cent that are assumed to stay in hotels amounting to 11,000 therefore in respect of 1997. The equivalent figures for 1996, the equivalent of 20,700 would be 9,460; arrivals of the visitor type by sea from Morocco of which 6,869 are stayers, 75 per cent of those stayers, 5,152 are presumed to stay in hotels for purposes of the survey and 2,631 are assumed to be day excursionists.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister repeat the last sentence of his explanation because it does not seem to add together, 2,631 is what, the difference between.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, in respect of the calculation for 1996 there is one calculation I have not done. Of the 6,869 stayers, 75 per cent of those are assumed to stay in hotels and that amounts to 5,152. The other 25 per cent, 1,717 are assumed to be stayers but not staying in hotels which leaves 2,631 excursionists. The 9,460 is 5,152 plus the 1,717 plus the difference who are excursionists.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In respect of Question No. 649 where the figure was confirmed to be 3,100 for the purposes of the Tourist Survey Report, is the 3,100 people staying in hotels or the figure of stayers inclusive of excursionists?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In respect of Question No. 649 the answer gives visitor arrivals excluding workers. In other words, that is a figure of the people who land on the wharf who are visitors, that is not a figure in relation to hotel stayers.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So the 3,100 is comparable to the 9,460, is that correct and to the 20,700?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is argumentatively correct, yes. In other words, that is the comparable figure.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government, in fact, confirm or research whether in fact the figures of 9,460 and the figure of 20,700 which they claim to be the reported visitor arrivals by the ferry operator could in fact be the figure of total arrivals comparable to the 23,000 of 1996?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, indeed it could be but we have asked and we are told that it is not. At the end of the day we get asked questions, we obtain the factual information from the appropriate Government department, he then puts in additional questions and we say, "Are you sure that what the man is really saying is that there cannot have been an explosion of visitors of the sort, 100 per cent?" and they assure me that that is what has happened and that the explanations range from increased frequency of ferries and all sorts of things. I accept that it is a large increase but the mere fact that it is a large increase does not compel me to agree with the hon Member that there must therefore be a mistake. What it does do is cause me to ask, "Are you sure?" and they say, "Yes, we are sure", this is as sure as the Government statistical set up can be about these things. This is the source of information. But I agree that it is possible that that would be an explanation but I am told that it is not.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Chief Minister says he is sure it is not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I am not saying I am sure it is not, I am saying I am sure that I am told that it is not.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that in fact in 1996 the ferry was out of operation for a considerable part of the time and that the total number of arrivals by sea from Gibraltar was down, when it showed the 300 per cent increase?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Again, the hon Member asserts that this was a period of ferry breakdowns, I am not in a position either to accept or reject what he says. Again, it is one of these facts that he throws into the ring which we then continue our discussion on on the assumption that it is accurate. The survey, tourist arrivals by sea suggests that there was an increase of the order of two thirds from 3,100 to 9,500 between 1995 and 1996 and those are not years for which I would seek to take any credit myself. 1995 is 3,100; 1996 is thought to be 9,500, they are both years for which I would have to give him credit given that I arrived in office in May 1996, I would not claim instant success for my tourism policy such as would have rocketed the 1996 ferry arrivals so there is no reason why I should wish to be giving to the hon Gentleman figures that shows that even his non-existent tourism policy had this salutary effect on visitor arrivals from Morocco but this is what the official statistics show and at the end of the day, I can only repeat to him what he said to me at the last House. What he said to me at the last meeting was that he was

surprised by the size of the increase, no matter in whose year of office or in whose term of office they fell. If he wishes to put to these specific questions in writing perhaps, because he is genuinely interested in having this quadruple checked I am very willing to do so but he must submit specific concerns to me and I will look at it. The last thing that the Government want is the Government, the hon Member and everybody else who are making use of these statistics for any number of reasons to be relying on statistics which can be demonstrated to be inaccurate. So far all the Government's reasonable attempts to check at the hon Member's bidding whether these statistics are demonstrably and obviously inaccurate have met with the response that they are not except to the extent and to the margin that all statistics are inaccurate when they rely on an element of judgement. But the hon Member's point does not relate to margins of judgement because what he is saying is that the increase is so large that there must be some counting error. In other words, that something which should not be included in a figure has been included in a figure in one year but not in the previous year and the next. I understand that to be the essence of what the hon Member is saying.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The point that I am making is indeed that the 9,460 arrivals in 1996 and the 20,700 arrivals in 1997 are not visitors but include all the workers, that is the point that I am making. Has that been checked because it seems to me it has not been checked other than to say that the people who compile the statistics have been asked whether in fact they compiled the statistics on the assumption that they were all workers and the answer that has been given is that they did not compile it on that assumption?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, all I can say is yes, we have asked, we have checked, we have been told that the information is right but if the hon Member wants me to I shall do it again and I shall ask them, "Triple check because the Leader of the Opposition is still not persuaded". But, of course, the Leader of the Opposition suggests that the worker element is included in both the 1996 and the 1997... [*HON J J BOSSANO: And not in 1995.*] But then how would he explain, if they are absent from both why should one be 9,500 and the other 20,700?

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am happy to explain it to the Chief Minister. Will the Chief Minister confirm that because the ferry was broken down for a large part of 1996 in 1996 all the arrivals by ferry from Gibraltar, including all the workers, pensioners and everybody else, fell from 23,000 to 9,500 and that when the ferry was brought back into action in 1997 it went back to 20,000, can he check that fact?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, that is put in a question in another way, that is the essence of the triple check that he has suggested should be done. I can do no more than assure him that the Government Statisticians and the appropriate departments that collect these statistics from the ferry operators who will read this debate in Hansard will be instructed to check the providence of those statistics for the simple test of whether or not the 1997 figure includes workers or not which is what the hon Member is in effect suggesting is the case.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask the Government to state whether other than on the basis of the report of the ferry operator, there is no other independent source to corroborate this jump? That is to say, there is no indication from hotels or anybody else that they have three times as many people from Morocco staying in the hotels in 1996 than they had in 1995 or that they had seven times as many people from Morocco staying in the hotels in 1997 as compared to 1995 which presumably they would have noticed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I would have thought so, they certainly would have noticed.

NO. 652 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY SEA - MOROCCO**

Can Government state, of the 7,010 visitor arrivals by sea from Morocco in the period from January to July this year, how many are estimated to have stayed in hotels and what is the estimated average length of stay?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The estimated number of visitor arrivals by sea from Morocco between January 1998 and July 1998 staying at hotels is estimated at some 50 per cent. This is based on interviews carried out at Waterport during the months of June, July and August. There is no survey data for any other month. The estimated average length of stay during this period was over three days.

I would like to take this opportunity to clarify that the figures which were given to the Leader of the Opposition last Friday should have added up to the figure of 7,935 and not 7,010.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 652 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figure that was given in the last House with the new total for January to July this year is this a monthly return from the ferry operator?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is this the return that the operator sends to the Government on the basis of the people that he deems to be visitors to Gibraltar as opposed to all arrivals?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government say whether, in fact, in terms of arrivals from Morocco there is any indication of the visas or visa waivers that are provided for these visitors to come to Gibraltar?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not sure that I know exactly what the hon Member is asking. Many Moroccans who would fall into the visitor variety as they are not currently working but who are old age pensioners who come to collect their pensions enjoy visa waivers but I am not sure that that is taken note of. I suppose that the Immigration Department must keep a record of their comings and goings but it is not a statistic that is provided to the Government but I suppose that as part of the ordinary entry point control, Security and Immigration Limited, must make a note of the visits by visa requiring nationals and that must include visa requiring nationals who enjoy visa waivers.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am trying to establish how it is that the visitors are identified if it is indeed true that there is a figure for visitors independent of total arrivals. What I am trying to establish is if somebody says 500 visitors arrive in one month then how is he arriving at the figure of 500 if the implication is that those who are not visitors are not being recorded, that the record only shows the visitors? Is it because of their documentation, the visas or the visa waivers?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think that that necessarily follows. I think the hon Member needs to recall what the source of this information is and that is the ferry operator. Whether they have a degree of familiarity with frequently travelling resident workers..... My hon Colleague says that one way that he believes that they identify the workers is that they have a special ticket because they are entitled to special discounts. I could not say what means they use to differentiate between a returning worker and an arriving visitor but this is the basis upon which it has always been done. I have no reason to believe that the basis that they use to make the distinction has changed in the last two years but the hon Member asked me how they actually do it physically.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In relation to the original reply, has the Minister got the numbers that were interviewed at Waterport to arrive at the estimate of 50 per cent of 7,935?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It appears it is not readily to hand, perhaps the officials can look at it and provide it to the hon Member when they have it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I would also be grateful when they look at it if in fact there is an indication of whether we are talking about Moroccans staying in hotels or people who do not need visas and so on, if that is available as a result of the interviews I would be grateful if that would be included, I do not know whether it is or it is not.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If it is available it will be provided to the hon Member.



NO. 653 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - ARRIVALS BY AIR**

Can Government give the number of visitors arriving by air, showing the numbers staying in Gibraltar and those in transit in each month from January to July 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information requested is as follows:-

Month	Stay Gibraltar	In Transit	TOTAL
January	2003	1904	3907
February	2481	2676	5157
March	3245	3306	6551
April	2784	3920	6704
May	3353	4573	7926
June	3292	3511	6803
July	3625	4505	8130

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 653 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government say whether in fact the apparent higher percentage of people in transit is due to any specific reason? Is it, for example, the fact that they have had the hotels under refurbishment in the period which was what we were given in a question earlier about the hotel occupancy?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is usually about half and half with the exception of one or two months in which there are 1,000 more transits. I must admit I have not seen these statistics before. These statistics are kept by Terminal Management Limited and whenever I have, as a matter of interest, on the occasions that I have been at the Air Terminal myself waiting for an aeroplane and asked this very information about roughly how many, obviously the Government are interested to see to what extent subsidising extra flights to Gibraltar actually results in in benefit to the local economy, I have always been told, albeit casually and informally, that it is about 50/50, it is about half and half and that on the whole is supported by these figures. But I would not be able to analyse them as to what the particular reason is for the two months in which the in transit is slightly more than 50 per cent more than the stays in Gibraltar.

NO. 654 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - VISITORS INTERVIEWED**

Can Government state, of the 86 persons interviewed in 1996 who said they had stayed in a hotel, how many were interviewed at the airport and how many were interviewed at the land frontier, and in each case what was the average length of stay in hotels?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 655 and 656 of 1998.

NO. 655 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - VISITORS INTERVIEWED**

Can Government state, of the 125 persons interviewed in 1997 who said they had stayed in a hotel, how many were interviewed at the airport and how many were interviewed at the land frontier, and in each case what was the average length of stay in hotels?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 654 and 656 of 1998.

NO. 656 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO**TOURISM - VISITORS INTERVIEWED**

Can Government state, of the 77 persons interviewed from January to July 1998 who said they had stayed in a hotel, how many were interviewed at the airport and how many were interviewed at the land frontier, and in each case what was the average length of stay in hotels?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information requested is as follows:

Year	Land Frontier		Airport		Total	
	N° of Interviews	Length of Stay	N° of Interviews	Length of Stay	N° of Interviews	Length of Stay
1996	4	2	80	4	84	4
1997	24	4	91	5	115	5
1998*	20	2	44	6	77	5

\*January to July – these figures are provisional.

I take the opportunity to inform the Leader of the Opposition that in Question No. 398 there was a typographical error which should have made it 115 and not 125.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 654, 655 AND 656 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government confirm that in fact the implication of these figures are that the calculation made for the Tourist Expenditure Survey in terms of expenditure by tourists in hotels which showed 100 per cent increase has been, other than the Moroccan element, determined by the result of interviews from two days to four days and that this has been what has been used to multiply the length of stay of 30,000 Spanish visitors?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Tourist Expenditure Survey is done by applying two bits of information that are assessed from the questionnaires and that is the average length of stay and the average expenditure, those two bits of information are derived from the questionnaires but the final multiplicand, in other words, how many people, is applied to the figure of hotel stayers as provided by the hotels.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Government not agree that on the basis of the final calculation being a residual figure then the increase of bed nights sold of 200,000 as opposed to 140,000 which is the difference that exists in 1997, would not exist?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I have to admit I do not follow him. The bed nights sold element, in other words, the numbers of people involved is taken from actual information provided by the hotels not by any assessment or guesstimate or questionnaire. The only thing that is derived from the questionnaire is how much each such person spent and the average length of their stay. That would not explain, without going into the question whether there is the defect that the hon Member describes, but I do not think it would be explained by the reason that he has said.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If the average length of stay, based on the response of the questionnaire, is that in 1996 as a result of asking four people at the frontier how long they stayed in Gibraltar those four persons said they stayed two nights and then in arriving at the guest nights sold 32,083 persons were assumed to stay two nights because four people said they had stayed two nights and that that meant that the calculation of £8.5 million of total expenditure assumes that the bed nights sold was £40,000 less than the hotels claim. That is the consequence of applying this information to the breakdown that was given previously. Would the Chief Minister not confirm that that is the case?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I repeat, what the hon Member might want to say is that the sample is too small to provide a reliable figure of average length of stay. He might want to do that, that is a matter of judgement of how ..... *[Interruption]* Well, I personally would have regarded 24 as too small myself but there again I am not a statistician. I would query whether they are asking 91 people but statistics operate from this basis. Opinion polls are done on this basis, there is a sample and then there is an extrapolation and the final result of the opinion poll certainly depends entirely on the reliability of the sample that one takes. The hon Member might wish to criticise whether the sample is large enough to produce an average length of stay of two, I do not know whether he is suggesting that he thinks the average length of stay is less than two but I would urge him not to forget – I am sure he has not – that it is then applied to people who have stayed in hotels and somebody who has stayed in an hotel must have stayed for at least one night and therefore an average of two is the next highest figure from what is the minimum which is one. It cannot be too far off as an average, there must be people presumably who have stayed for more than two.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that the Chief Minister does not understand that what has distorted the figure in 1996 is that in 1995 the numbers staying in hotels and the length of their stay was arrived at by taking the information provided by the hotels, removing the UK arrivals and being left with the residual figure and therefore the residual figure could not help but be accurate in the sense that if the hotels said 144,000 nights were sold in 1995 and they removed the 11,400 arrivals from the United Kingdom, the average length of stay which was deemed to be 2.6 was not assumed to be on the basis that people stayed 2.6 nights and they left before the 40 per cent of the night was over but that that was an arithmetical average by starting from the figure of 140,000. Can the Chief Minister not confirm that in fact in 1996 the Tourist Expenditure assumes that because four people were interviewed at the frontier, the figure provided by the hotel of 141,000 nights was wrong and that the right figure for computing expenditure was 107,000 nights because of these four people?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not in a position to say yes or no to that. I am not aware that there has been any difference in the way these figures are assessed but certainly if what the hon Member is saying that whether I believe that it is statistically sound to replace actual empirical information provided by a service supplier like the hotels with a survey conducted on the basis of a sample of four people, I would have little difficulty in agreeing with the hon Member that if I were a statistician I would not be minded to rely on that. But I cannot tell him here and now that what has happened is exactly what he has described. I would need to find that out for him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then will the Chief Minister look at the explanation that was provided to me on the 12<sup>th</sup> June by the Minister and he will find in that explanation the statement that I have just made. That is to say, that whereas in 1995 the arrivals from Spain which led to an estimated expenditure was based on a formula in which the hotels said they had sold, for the sake of argument, 80,000 nights and there had been 40,000 people then it was assumed they stayed two nights on average because that was the arithmetical result of dividing one figure by the other. In 1996, instead of that happening what was done was that because the response of these four was supposed to be more accurate than the report of the hotels, the figure of the hotels was ignored and the calculation produced a drop in tourist spending to £8 million because of the figure of two nights which did not concur with the Hotel Occupancy figures in the rest of the report.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member does not increase my knowledge by simply repeating the point time and time again. What he does is make sure that I understand it fully but he is just saying what I have understood him to say and he can repeat it in any number of formulations, I think I have understood his point and I will certainly seek for him the explanation of (a) why if there was this change that he has described, why the change was introduced by the Statistics Office and indeed what their comment is about the relative statistical merit and reliability of the two systems if indeed there was a change, the old system and the new system. I am as interested in the answer to that as the hon Member appears to be.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Given the answer that has been provided to the original three questions, will the Government establish, when they look into this further, that on the basis of the system that has operated in 1996 and 1997, what the implications of that would be for the figures of 1998 if we used the average of two from the 20 interviews that have taken place to date. The Minister for Tourism who has said that he was very happy with the 100 per cent increase which is going up from two days to four would now have to express sadness at the 50 per cent decline from four to two and that if that same methodology were used for the first six months of this year we would have half of the tourist expenditure lost by applying this multiplier as the bed nights sold. That is to say, if the Chief Minister looks at the information he has provided in the original answer which is two days and then four days and then two days, when they look into this will they establish the accuracy of what I am saying which is that applying this methodology would lead to the first six months of this year showing a 50 per cent drop and that, in fact, will they agree that if on the basis of interviewing four people or 20 people we are going to have fluctuations in assumed spending in the economy by tourism which goes up from £2.1 million in 1996 by frontier visitors to £3.9 million in

1997 and now if we have the average of two accepted for the first six months, it would then show a collapse back to £2 million that in fact is not going to be conducive to proper planning on the part of the Government never mind the use that anybody else does of these statistics.

MR SPEAKER:

What is the question?

HON J J BOSSANO:

The question is that given that the Government are going to look into this in response to my previous question, will they also consider the wisdom of continuing with the method that has been used for 1996 and 1997 which on the basis of the answer given for 1998 would then produce a 50 per cent drop in tourist spending?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think it would follow that if we conclude that the questionnaire system produces unreliable statistics it follows then that it should not continue to be used. Hon Members will have heard me say, even from the Government benches, on several occasions what I used to say from the Opposition, that these are the statistics that all Members of the House have, these are not collated by the Government, they are presented to the Government just a few days before the hon Member sees them, I have to say that I personally have always had a great deal of scepticism about the quality of some of these statistics because the machinery for collating information and it is not limited to tourism is suspect. The hon Member will recall the extent to which I used to criticise his economic growth projections on the basis of statistical input which we all knew was of less than reliable scientific providence and the Government are investing considerable resources in altering that. We are having studies done into the whole question of national accounts, the development of economic models that the Government can apply statistics to, the computerisation and the networking of Government records so that, for example, immigration control information, Treasury information about passenger tax, some of the points that the Leader of the Opposition has been saying here today, will be available for other statistical use and in that way over a period of time try to improve the reliability of Government statistics. Certainly the statistics which rely on this degree of guesswork and to the extent that they rely on questionnaires conducted in uncontrolled circumstances, are statistics that are published because the law requires them to be published. I would tend to share the hon Member's misgivings about their reliability. None of that is supposed to mask what the hon Member said in his last supplementary which I have already agreed to do. As to whether it is necessary to go on to apply the results of our enquiry to the 1998 figures to satisfy ourselves that the result would be a decrease, I am not sure that that will be necessary, I think it will be self-evident from the results of the reliability of the statistic itself.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am just asking the Government to ask what the implications of the results of the first six months survey would be if the same methodology were applied so that they could be able to see for themselves that the effect of that would be a huge drop in tourist spending.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

NO. 657 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - TOURIST EXPENDITURE**

Can Government confirm that the average expenditure per person per day of £34 in respect of visitors from UK staying in hotels published in Table 4 of the 1995 Tourist Survey Report was the sum used to calculate tourist expenditure for that year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 658 and 659 of 1998.



NO. 658 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - TOURIST EXPENDITURE**

Can Government confirm that the average expenditure per person per day of £36 in respect of visitors from UK staying in hotels published in Table 4 of the 1997 Tourist Survey Report was not the sum used in calculating tourist expenditure for that year, and instead a daily rate of £53 was estimated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 657 and 659 of 1998.

NO. 659 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - TOURIST EXPENDITURE**

Can Government confirm that the £36 daily average expenditure by visitors from UK staying in hotels for 1997 was arrived at by interviewing persons who said they had stayed in hotels, and if so, can they explain how the additional £17 per person per day was arrived at to reach the £53 daily rate used to calculate tourist expenditure for that year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The Government cannot confirm this. The average expenditure per person per day of £36 in respect of all visitors from UK is not solely for those staying in hotels. The daily rate of £53 used in calculating tourist expenditure is in respect of those UK visitors staying in hotels and has been calculated from the survey questionnaires.

The Government's Statistics Office has not been able to retrieve the information for 1995 as this forms part of the now disused database.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 657, 658 AND 659 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the fact that irrespective of whether it is part of the disused database or not the figure for 1995 is published in the Tourist Survey Report for that year?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

This could have been coincidental.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What could have been coincidental?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The figure that has appeared in the Tourist Survey Report 1995 of £34 is used both for the calculation of the expenditure figures and as appeared in the Tourist Survey Report.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact the average expenditure per person per day in 1995 of all persons is £34 and in 1997 it is also £34 for all persons and yet what the Minister is saying is that in 1995 the tourists who did not stay in the hotels spent the same amount of money as those who did but this was not the case in 1997?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am afraid that is what the figures do show, yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am well aware that that is what the figures show but I am asking for an explanation of how that was arrived at.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is the same point, it is the reliance on the results of the survey which of course relates to people other than staying in hotels but that is what the survey, either we use survey results or we do not and the survey, whatever the reliability of its results might be, produce that figure and therefore the Government's statisticians use them. We are debating, in a sense, the same issue as in the previous question and that is whether it is legitimate to use surveys and that is a decision which is made by the Government's Statistics Office and that is the result. It remains to be seen whether it is the £53 that are inaccurate or the £34 that are inaccurate. The fact that the £53 were used for 1997 because that is the figure that the survey shows does not mean that it is inaccurate. It is certainly a different sort of figure than the 1995 figure.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The point that I am making is, in fact I am questioning obviously in a number of questions the three components of the £17 million; the numbers, the length and the amount of money which is how the £17 million is arrived at. Since I have been questioning since the figure was first mentioned in the House six months ago the accuracy of that figure, I can only do it by reference to how the £12 million in 1995 was calculated. In the report tabled in the House in 1995 it showed average expenditure per person per day arrived by interviewing visitors to Gibraltar on flight departures it showed £34. In 1997 the same interviews with the same people which we have been told today were 91 persons leaving for the United Kingdom, produces an average expenditure of £36 but whereas in the case of 1995 the £34 figure is the figure that was used to multiply by the number of bed nights sold so that it was so many thousand bed nights by £34, in the case of 1997 it is so many bed nights by £53. How come that before the figure that was published was the figure that was reflected in the Tourist Expenditure and in 1997 the figure that is published is not the one that is reflected in the Tourist Expenditure?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

What the Leader of the Opposition is saying is not correct. In 1995 the average expenditure per person per day on UK flights covering all visitors was £34, Table 4 in the Tourist Survey Report 1995. The figure that he claims that was used for expenditure purposes which could be coincidental to be £34 or could be the result of the actual surveys that were carried out last year. The Statistics Office have not been able to confirm to me the reason for the use of the same figure or whether it is coincidental that the figure was used for that purpose as a result of the results of these surveys. In respect of 1997 the average expenditure per day as per Table 4 of the Tourist Survey Report has an average expenditure per day per person of £36. However, on comparing that to the average expenditure per person per day of people staying in hotels, the results of those surveys shows £53 and therefore as we are calculating the expenditure of people staying in Gibraltar in hotels, the figure that has to be used is £53 and not £36.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Let us be clear. What we are advised is a coincidence is the fact that in that year, in 1995 the average expenditure of people staying in hotels was the same as the average expenditure of people not staying in hotels. There is the element of alleged coincidence.

NO. 660 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - VISITORS INTERVIEWED**

Have Government now been able to confirm that the use of replies to interviews to calculate guest nights sold by hotels to visitors other than from UK was introduced in 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question No. 661 of 1998.

NO. 661 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**TOURISM - VISITORS INTERVIEWED**

Can Government state what the expenditure by tourists staying in hotels in 1997 is, based on the number of guest nights sold for 1997 reported by the hotels and published in the Hotel Occupancy Survey?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The Tourist Survey questionnaires are not used to calculate guest nights sold by hotels.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 660 AND 661 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then can the Government confirm that the use of the reply of interviewers in 1996 and in 1997 produces an expenditure figure which is the equivalent of 100,000 guest nights sold and 200,000 guest nights sold respectively in 1996 and 1997?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

What the Leader of the Opposition is saying is strictly correct but I do not accept that that is really the issue. The reality of the situation is that there have always been discrepancies between the guest nights sold which are provided by hotels in their Hotel Occupancy Report and the Tourist Survey Report as produced through questionnaires. So therefore the issue is that discrepancies have always existed and these were illustrated in the last meeting of the House when I highlighted the discrepancies between 1990 and 1997 which clearly showed that none of the figures in any of the years really tallied.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that the Minister does not know that the so-called discrepancy in 1996 which is about 50 persons in 144,000 is not the result of calculating the guest nights sold in two different ways, one by interviews and one from the hotels but in fact of rounding up the average from 2.59 bed nights per person to 2.6 bed nights per person and that that rounding up is the only thing that accounts for the discrepancy, not two different ways of calculating it, is the Minister not aware of that?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am not aware of that but if we analyse figures for 1994, 1993, 1992, 1991, 1990 they all seem to have discrepancies of 54,000, 23,000, 39,000, 5,000, 7,000 which I do not think, strictly speaking, is rounding up figures I am afraid.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I do not know how it is that the Minister has lost the database for 1996 and has found the database for all the previous years. Can he confirm that in arriving at the Tourist Expenditure Survey published in the Tourist Expenditure Report tabled by him in this House for 1996, the figure that was used was based on response to interviews but that in the preceding year the response to interviews was not used to calculate the expenditure figure and that therefore my question, which still does not appear to have been answered, which is can he confirm that this was done in 1996 and not in 1995, the answer to that is yes?

MR SPEAKER:

You have already answered your own question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, I asked the question previously and I was told by the Government that they did not accept that simply because I said so, it was true but that they would go back and check. I have now given notice of the question which is to ask them to confirm in Question No. 660 that interview replies were not used in 1995 to calculate the expenditure figure, they were used in 1996. Can he confirm that having checked it the answer is yes, if they were used in 1996 and not in 1995?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The insinuation in the hon Member's question that the result of survey questionnaires were used to calculate tourist expenditure in 1996 but not in 1995 is incorrect. I have here in front of me the working papers for the calculation of the Tourist Expenditure Surveys for 1995 and I can tell him that it states quite clearly those bits of the information, namely the average length of stay which is drawn from the Tourist Survey results conducted in that year and that indeed the same applies for 1994 and the same applies for 1995; the papers that I have in front of me do not say and therefore I will not assert where they came from in 1993 but I suppose that we can deduce it and so on. But certainly his statement which is what he is now asking as to whether in 1995 the Tourist Expenditure Survey was in any part based on the average length of stay, that that was not done relying on questionnaires is not correct. Indeed, how could it be given that if one does not get the information of average length of stay and of average expenditure from a survey, how can we get the information at all? One certainly cannot get it from bed nights sold provided by the hotels.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, if he rereads my original question of which I gave notice which is a repetition of a question I put in the previous House when I was told to give notice, it says whether they can confirm that the use of replies to interviews by visitors other than those from the United Kingdom. So will the Chief Minister look at the bit of paper that he has been given again and can he confirm that in fact other than for visitors in the United Kingdom the procedure that was adopted in 1995 was that of the total guest nights provided by the hotels the element of the United Kingdom arrived at by the survey was removed and the figure assumed for the non-UK arrivals was the residue left and that a formula was used which was estimated number of visitors from the UK multiplied by length of visitors from the UK, minus the visitors from the total leaving a residue and the residue of course produces an average of 2.59 because it is not based on a survey, it is based on an arithmetical calculation in 1995 and that the 2.59 when

rounded up gives back the same number of bed nights as the hotels reported and that therefore in 1996 they assumed length of stay of visitors from Spain which is based on four people saying they had stayed two nights was not the method used in 1995, it was introduced in 1996 and that it is the consequence of that change in 1996 that produces a figure of £8 million of expenditure whereas if the Government had used in 1996 the method used in 1995, expenditure in 1996 would have been shown as £11 million.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not in a position to confirm that. What I can assert to the hon Gentleman is that if he was willing to rely on the reliability of an Expenditure Survey in respect of visitors from the UK, I do not see why he can be so critical of the application of the same techniques to people who come other than from the UK. His own figures, never mind about the accuracy of the residue, that is just a simple mathematical deduction, but his own results could not have been any more accurate than the survey conducted in respect of the UK visitors.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Let me explain to the Chief Minister by phrasing it by way of a question. Can the Chief Minister not understand that given the method used in 1995, the number of bed nights sold reported in the survey of 144,553 nights produced expenditure of £12.8 million and that in 1996 because instead of a residue being used the four interviews were used, the figure in the published accounts of the House is that tourist spending went down from £12 million to £8 million and because the interviews of 24 people were used in 1997 the figure went up from £8 million to £17 million? So if he asks me why it is would he not agree with me, that if the introduction of the response of four interviews is what led to the decision that the response was more accurate than relying on hotel returns, in fact, that is what led to that fluctuation down from £12 million to £8 million and then up from £8 million to £17 million so would the Chief Minister not agree that the reason why the 1995 figure can be assumed to be more accurate is because the 1995 figure is actually based on 144,000 bed nights sold and the 1996 and 1997 do not rely on the bed nights sold that the hotels claim they sold?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member himself assumes that his suppositions are necessarily correct and, of course, his suppositions might be correct but his suppositions are not inevitably correct as he believes. I have told the hon Member that the Tourism Expenditure Survey in 1996 and 1997 have been calculated by applying the average length of stay and average expenditure information which is drawn from the survey to the hotel statistics provided by the hotels. What he regards as a new system in 1996 does not involve any form of guesswork about the number of visitors that stay in hotels, that is provided by the hotels and he can attack, if he wishes to – not that we would agree with his attack – but he can if he wishes level any criticism he feels he can justifiably do against relying on the surveys for average length of stay and for average expenditure and that is all. We have not used those because to calculate the hotel occupancy or the hotel bed nights sold statistics, those have been used as provided by the hotels. Therefore I do not accept that the arguments that the hon Member builds on the suppositions that he relies upon are correct.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It is quite obvious that I am not succeeding in making the Chief Minister understand the nature of the question that I am phrasing.



MR SPEAKER:

I think this should be your last question and the last answer. Carry on.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The point is that I did give notice in Question No. 660 that interviews were used to calculate the number of guest nights sold other than from the United Kingdom, that that was introduced in 1996 and I have got confirmation that this procedure was adopted from 1996 onwards so I know that that is the case and, in fact, all that I was asking was since the last time the Chief Minister was not sure whether this was the case or not, I was asking for confirmation that indeed it is the case. If he insists in not confirming this is the case then I will insist in putting questions to get it confirmed because I have no doubt that this is the case. I have got the formula that was used in 1995 and the formula that was used in 1996 and the difference between the two methods is that in giving us a figure in this House of £8.4 million in 1996 what that figure implies is that the 141,000 guest nights sold in the report is wrong because if indeed 141,000 guest nights had been sold by the hotels and an average used to calculate the £8 million in terms of expenditure per day the result would not be £8 million. If the Chief Minister multiplies the guest nights sold in the survey by the daily cost he will not come up with £8 million, he will come up with £11 million. So therefore in saying the £8 million is accurate he is saying that the accurate figure is 107,000 guest nights and not 141,000, otherwise the £8 million is inaccurate and the 141,000 is accurate. So will the Chief Minister not agree that if we want the survey report to reflect accurately in 1996 and in 1997 the position of 1995 should be used to calculate the expenditure which would have given us £11 million in 1995 instead of £8 million?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 662 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**EDUCATION - REIMBURSEMENT OF TRAINING EXPENSES**

Can Government state how much has been spent up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August from the £250,000 provided from the reimbursement of training expenses funded by the Consolidated Fund?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

The £250,000 funded by the Consolidated Fund for training expenses and reimbursed by the Gibraltar Development Corporation is intended to cover the "personal emoluments" and "industrial wages" as estimated under Head 1-B, subheads 1 and 2 of the Estimates for 1998/99. Up to the 31<sup>st</sup> August this year £92,021 have been paid out for this purpose.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.662 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the £250,000 in the Estimates for the Construction Training Centre is what, for the materials that are used for the Construction Training Centre?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Those are the running costs for the Construction Training Centre as opposed to these sums which are for the Personal Emoluments and Industrial Wages.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is not the Personal Emoluments for the Training Centre covered under Head 1B, Subhead 1?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, Mr Speaker, it says so under Head 1B, Subhead 1 and 2 of the Estimates for 1998/99 from the Consolidated Fund reimbursed from the Gibraltar Development Corporation.

NO. 663 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - MANDATORY/DISCRETIONARY SCHOLARSHIPS**

Can Government state what is the latest forecast outturn in respect of (a) mandatory; (b) discretionary scholarships awarded in 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

For the financial year of 1997/98 we have now a definite figure for the cost of scholarships as follows:

- (a) mandatory - £1,823,000
- (b) discretionary - £277,000

This gives a total cost of £2,100,000.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.663 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Supplementary Estimates provision which contains an increased amount for the Scholarships Head due to a shortfall in parental contribution, is that already reflected in these figures?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes Mr Speaker.

NO. 664 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - SUPPLY TEACHERS**

What is the estimated forecast outturn for the cost of supply teachers in the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

For the financial year 1997/98 we have a definite figure of the cost for temporary assistance in our schools under Head 1-A, subhead 1(d) which includes classroom aides, lecturers, laboratory and workshop technicians, nurses, vehicle escorts and teachers is £627,088.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 664 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the supplementary provision which was shown in the Reallocation Warrant cover the amount or is there a further reallocation required for the figure that has been provided?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, it covers the amount.

NO. 665 OF 1998

THE HON J J GABAY

**EDUCATION - SCHOLARSHIPS**

Can Government state what is the latest forecast outturn in respect of the contribution from the Consolidated Fund for scholarships?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND YOUTH

I presume the question refers to the forecast outturn of expenditure for scholarships for the current financial year 1998/99 and my answer must be the same as that to the previous question No. 663 of 1998, that is, that at this stage when grants and tuition fees for individual students are still being processed it is unrealistic to give any significant estimate of our final expenditure.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.665 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

In terms of the 1997/98 year the figure from the Consolidated Fund that goes into the scholarship is the amount shown in Appendix G, on the Expenditure side, is that reflected on the figure that has been given from the reallocation of funds from the Supplementary Vote?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I think the answer is yes, Mr Speaker.

NO. 666 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**GIBTEL - JOINT VENTURE AGREEMENT**

Can Government state what was the cash investment made by British Telecom in the setting up of Gibtel following the agreement for the joint venture in 1987?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

The 1987 Joint Venture Agreement between the Government and British Telecom, which established Gibtel, includes British Telecom's payment terms for their investment. The Joint Venture agreement includes a confidentiality clause restricting the disclosure of information by either party without the prior consent of the other party to the Agreement. British Telecom's consent has not been forthcoming as they consider the information to be commercially sensitive.

I would, however, be happy to disclose this information on a confidential basis to the Opposition Spokesman for Government Services. I wonder, however, whether this should be necessary because I know that the hon member is already aware of the terms as he was the Chairman of Gibtel for eight years between 1988 and 1996.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.666 OF 1998

HON J C PEREZ:

I knew the figure, it is just that eight years ago I had the figure and I cannot remember but although British Telecom might now tell the Minister the confidentiality clause, certainly there was a public statement made at the time which can be gone back and looked at and I will do that myself, no problem. But those terms, certainly the figure that I am looking for is something that must have been made public at the time by the AACR Government. The figure was not renegotiated by the GSLP, what was renegotiated was the amount of lines given in the exchange and the release of property by Gibtel to the Government which is something that was made public at the time and is therefore not conditioned to the confidentiality clause. That is why I am mentioning it now.

HON LT-COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, if the information, as the hon Member says, was made public at the time then he should be able to accept that he does not need me to provide it. I would repeat what I have already said before, I am prepared to make the information available to him as long as it is clear that it is on a confidential basis and not for publication. I have a letter from one of the BT Directors on the Board of Gibtel restricting me from providing the information so I cannot provide it publicly.

NO. 667 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**ELECTRICITY CHARGES**

Can Government state what has been the value of billings of electricity charges in the current financial year up to 31<sup>st</sup> August?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND SPORT

Total billings for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 1998 to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 amounted to £3,647,969.57.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.667 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government confirm that this in fact indicates that the amount that has actually been collected in that period is very close to the amount for the consumption of that period? The amount collected was given in answer to a previous question.

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

As the hon Member says the amount was given, I can wait for the pile of figures, I know it is about within £300,000 approximately so the answer to that question, as the hon Member knows is yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Are the Government then in a position now to say whether the expectation of collecting £1 million of arrears in the current financial year which does not seem to have happened so far in five months is still expected to happen in the remaining seven months?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, realistically speaking we no longer expect to collect £1 million of the arrears element in the Estimates, that is the truth of it.

ORAL

NO. 668 OF 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

**CUMBERLAND BUILDINGS**

Can Government state what is the intended use for the site previously occupied by Cumberland Buildings?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY

The site has still to be transferred by the MOD to the Government. No decision has been taken on its future use.



ORAL

NO. 669 OF 1998

THE HON J C PEREZ

**ELECTRICITY CHARGES - ARREARS**

Can Government state what was the level of electricity charges arrears as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998 and as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The level of electricity charges arrears as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 1998 was £5,010,888.48 and as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998, £5,330,425.19.

NO. 670 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING - 1997/98**

Can Government state what was the total requirement met from supplementary funding in respect of the financial year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The total requirement to be met from supplementary funding in respect of the financial year 1997/98 is £2,583,000.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.670 OF 1998

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Chief Minister say whether in fact any further transfers of the supplementary provisions head need to be tabled in the House or is the last ones the ones we have had in this House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The supplementary provision fund head is I believe now exhausted and therefore it will now be a matter of Supplementary Appropriation Bill, I do not think there is any more supplementary provision left unused under Head 14.

HON J J BOSSANO:

This is in fact after taking into account that there was a transfer from the pay settlement to the supplementary funding head.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That takes that into account and all sorts of virements from savings and heads and things of that sort.

NO. 671 OF 1998

THE HON J J BOSSANO

**GOVERNMENT ARREARS - HOTELS**

What amounts were due and owing to Government on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 1998 by hotels broken down by item and in respect of which periods these monies became due?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The arrears due by hotels currently stand at £1.1 million. These arrears are in respect of amounts due over a number of years dating as far back as 1991. The breakdown is as follows:

Social insurance	£0.4 million
PAYE tax	£0.3 million
Electricity	£0.3 million
Rates	<u>£0.1 million</u>
	<u>£1.1 million</u>

Agreements were recently entered into for the repayment of most of these arrears as well as for ensuring that current bills are settled as and when due. Hon Members will remember that that was part of the Hotel Assistance Scheme.