

GIBRALTAR

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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

INDEX

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

20th March 1998

Questions 1 – 147

SUBJECT	NO(S)	PAGE(S)
Access to Sandy Bay	59	90
Breathalyser Tests	122	179
Brussels Process – Proposals for Co-Sovereignty	147	221
Building Materials – Imports	135	201
Buildings and Works – Hiring of Motor Vehicles	38	57
Camp Bay – Rock Face Works	102	148
Cancellation of Scheduled Flights	52	77
Casemates Hostel – Expenditure	86	124
Civil Service – Vacancies	126	186
Cost of Drafting Legislation to Transpose EC Directive	116	173
Crown Dependency Status	145	213
Cruise Liner Visits – 1997	53	80
Cruise Liner Visits – 1998	54	81
Devil's Tower Hostel – Expenditure	85	123
DTI – Promotional Literature	110	162
Education – Calendario of Educational Events and Activities	88	129
Education – Co-Operation with Mancomunidad de Municipios	87	125
Education – Discretionary Scholarships	95	137
Education – Ince's Hall	90	132
Education – Mandatory Scholarships	94	136
Education – Newly Qualified Teachers on Supply Work	92	134
Education – Student Tuition Fees	91	133
Education – Supply Teachers	93	135
Education – Working Group – School Hours	89	131
ETB – Approved Estimates of Expenditure Contribution	23	31
ETB – Expenditure	22	30
ETB – Frontier Workers	47	66
ETB – Unemployed Gibraltarians	26	35
ETB – Unemployed Gibraltarians	42-46	61-65
ETB – Vacancies at Cammell Laird	28	44
ETB – Vocational Cadets	29-37	48-56
ETB – Wage Subsidy	24-25	33-34
ETB – Work Permits	27	40
ETB – Work Permits	48	68
EU Finding – Applications	108	158
Financial Services Commission – Licences	107	156
Fire Brigade – Development Plan	100	146
GBC – Second TV Channel	104	151
GHA – Cost of Treating a Pensioner in UK	11	12
GHA – Cost to UK for Treatment to Referred Patients	10	11
GHA – Cost to UK for Treatment to Temporary Visitors	9	10
GHA – Estimated Expenditure	4	4
GHA – Gibraltar Social Security Pensioners	8	9
GHA – Government Contribution	1	1
GHA – GPMS Prescriptions	3	3
GHA – In-Patient Admissions, St Bernard's Hospital	12	13
GHA – Medical Review 1996 – Recommendations	16	17
GHA – Nursing Qualifications	17	19
GHA – Nursing Review Report	15	16
GHA – Out-Patient Attendances, Health Centre	14	15

SUBJECT	NO(S)	PAGE(S)
GHA – Out-Patient Attendances, St Bernard’s Hospital	13	14
GHA – Referrals to UK	5	5
GHA – Relocation of Health Centre	18	23
GHA – Sponsored Patients	2	2
GHA – Sponsored Patients	6	7
GHA – UK Social Security Pensioners	7	8
GHA/MOD – Secondary Health Care	19	24
Gibraltar Airport – Proposals	115	171
Gibraltar Banks – Deposits	112	165
Gibraltar Heritage Ordinance	21	28
Gibraltar Hockey Association – Water-Based Synthetic Turf	98	142
Gibraltar Identity Cards – Infraction Proceedings	146	219
Gibraltar Savings Bank – Deposits	127-128	189-190
Gold Bullion – Imports	131	197
Head 7, Subhead 5 – Expenditure	109	160
Hotel Industry – Import Duty Concessions	56	85
Housing – Applications	71	105
Housing – Pensioners	72	106
Housing – Post-War Flats	64-66	97-99
Housing – Post-War Flats Vacant	70	103
Housing – Pre-War Flats	67-69	100-102
I&D Fund – Expenditure	132	198
I&D Fund – Head 101, Subhead 1	39-41	58-60
I&D Fund – Head 103(5), Transport – Roads	57	88
I&D Fund 104 – Subhead 13	103	149
Income Tax – Corporation Tax	137-140	204-208
Income Tax – Corporation Tax	142	210
Income Tax – Corporation Tax	144	212
Income Tax – Qualifying Companies	141	209
Income Tax – Spanish Frontier Workers	143	211
Income Tax –PAYE	136	202
King’s Bastion – Consulting Report	99	143
Lathbury Barracks – Proposed Development	113	166
MOD – Redundancies	49	71
MOD – Water Storage Tanks – Dudley Ward Tunnel	101	147
Moroccan Hostel – Buena Vista Stone Block	83	120
Moroccan Workers – Resettlement Scheme	96	138
MOT Test – Private Vehicles	63	95
Motor Vehicles – Imports	133-134	199-200
Non-Industrial Employees – Extension of Service	125	184
Nynex / Gibtel – Possible Merger	105	152
Nynex-Gibtel – Complaints	106	153
Official Bathing Season	60	91
On the Spot Fines	123	180
Pedestrianisation – Phase I	61	92
Personal Emoluments – Projected Expenditure	121	178
Planning of Rads – Contract	124	182
Prison – Number of Inmates	73	107
Prison – Number of Inmates – 1997	74	109
Prison – Relocation	84	122
Public Debt – Issues	130	194
Public Debt – Redemptions	129	191
Question Withdrawn	118	175
Rock Car Draw	119	176
Social Insurance – Number of Insurance Cards	75-79	110-114
Social Security – Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund	80	115

SUBJECT	NO(S)	PAGE(S)
Social Security – Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund	82	119
Social Security – Incomplete Payment Records	81	116
Spanish Pensioners	120	177
Sports Development – Consultancy Report	97	140
Telecoms Licence – Call Back Services	114	168
Tourism – Advertising	117	174
Tourism – Coach / Passenger Arrivals	51	76
Tourism – Head 6A, Subhead 8	50	74
Tourism – Madrid Office	55	82
Tourism – Yacht Arrivals	111	164
Tourism and Transport – Head 6C	58	89
Traffic Flow – Third Phase	62	93
Wellington Front – Refurbishment	20	25

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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998THE HON J J GABAY**WELLINGTON FRONT - REFURBISHMENT**

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

ANSWERTHE 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 1998THE HON J J GABAY**GIBRALTAR HERITAGE ORDINANCE**

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

ANSWERTHE 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 1998THE 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 1998THE 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 1998

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

ETB - VACANCIES AT CAMMELL LAIRD

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

ANSWER

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 1998THE 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 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 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 1998THE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

TOURISM - MADRID OFFICE

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

ANSWER

THE 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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/Glakis:	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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998

THE HON R MOR

SOCIAL SECURITY - NUMBER OF INSURANCE CARDS

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

ANSWER

THE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 reprovisioning 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 more so 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 1998THE 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 leveraging 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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	£ 7,576.50
	<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	<u>£ 8,400</u>
	<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 1998

THE HON A J ISOLA

TOURISM - YACHT ARRIVALS

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

ANSWER

THE 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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>
------------------------------	--------------

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 1998THE 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?

ANSWERTHE 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 1998

THE 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?

ANSWER

THE 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.