

GIBRALTAR

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

8TH MARCH, 2000

No. 1 to No. 278

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

8th March 2000

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ORAL

NO. 1 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

NUMBER OF PERSONS IN RECEIPT OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Can Government state of the persons receiving Social Assistance as at 31st December 1999 how many were registered with the Employment Agency as seeking employment giving a breakdown by sex and age?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There were 475 persons receiving Social Assistance as at 31st December 1999. Of these, 136 were registered at the Employment Service as seeking employment.

I now hand the hon Member a list giving the additional information requested.

Answer to Question 1 of 2000.

<u>SEX</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>N°</u>
FEMALE	19	
FEMALE	20	X2
FEMALE	22	X2
FEMALE	22	
FEMALE	23	X2
FEMALE	24	X2
FEMALE	25	
FEMALE	26	X2
FEMALE	27	X2
FEMALE	30	X2
FEMALE	31	
FEMALE	32	
FEMALE	33	X2
FEMALE	34	X2
FEMALE	36	
FEMALE	37	X2
FEMALE	38	
FEMALE	42	X2
FEMALE	43	X2
FEMALE	45	X2
FEMALE	47	
FEMALE	48	X2
FEMALE	50	X2
FEMALE	53	
FEMALE	54	
FEMALE	55	
TOTAL	42	

<u>SEX</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>N°</u>
MALE	18	X2
MALE	19	X4
MALE	20	X4
MALE	21	X5
MALE	22	X3
MALE	23	X7
MALE	24	X2
MALE	25	X3
MALE	26	
MALE	27	X3
MALE	28	X3
MALE	29	X2
MALE	30	X4
MALE	31	X2
MALE	33	X2
MALE	35	X5
MALE	36	
MALE	37	
MALE	38	X5
MALE	39	X3
MALE	40	X3
MALE	41	
MALE	42	X3
MALE	43	X3
MALE	44	X2
MALE	45	X4
MALE	47	X2
MALE	48	X4
MALE	49	
MALE	51	X2
MALE	52	
MALE	54	X2
MALE	56	
MALE	57	
MALE	59	
MALE	94	
TOTAL	94	

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 1 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

The difference between the 136 and the 475, is it that there are people who are deemed not to be able to take up employment?

HON MRS Y DEL AGUA:

Amongst that number there are some elderly people, 105 who are obviously not seeking employment, they are receiving an Old Age Pension or the pension has to be topped up. There are as well five persons who are receiving pocket money allowance who are currently residing at the KGV and others. Within this category there are single parents with young children, persons who are ill or incapacitated and therefore unable to take up employment and also persons on a very low income in need of financial assistance.

ORAL

NO. 2 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

SOCIAL INSURANCE CREDITS

Can Government state how many men aged 60 years or over were receiving social insurance credits at 31st December 1999 and of these how many were registered as unemployed with the Employment Agency?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There were 407 men aged 60 years and over receiving social insurance credits as at 31st December 1999. Four of them were registered as unemployed at the Employment Services as actively seeking employment.

ORAL

NO. 3 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

SOCIAL SECURITY - SOCIAL INSURANCE CARDS

Can Government state how many social insurance cards in issue in 1999 have been renewed since the 1st January 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

There have been a total of 12,551 cards renewed since 1st January 2000.

ORAL

NO. 4 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

DR GIRALDI HOME

Can Government explain what caused the outbreak of scabies at Dr Giraldi Home several months ago?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 5 and 6 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 5 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

DR GIRALDI HOME

Can Government confirm that records of income and spending by Dr Giraldi Home residents is available for their relatives to see?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 4 and 6 of 2000.

NO. 6 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

DR GIRALDI HOME

Can Government confirm that no home-made meals are provided to residents of Dr Giraldi Home?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The introduction of scabies at the Dr Giraldi Home, just before Christmas, was by one of the residents being in contact with the infection and bringing it back to their Home.

Records of the residents' income and expenditure are kept at the Home and are available for relatives to see.

All meals are cooked on the premises except when the residents choose to either eat out or have a take-away.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 4, 5 AND 6 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

When cooked, does that mean that it is home-made or it is frozen food in a microwave?

HON MRS Y DEL AGUA:

The information I have, Mr Speaker, is that all food is prepared on site, whether some of it is frozen or home-made I am afraid I do not know.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The Government Members may laugh, I suppose it is funny. This is something that has been brought up by the residents themselves, that they are not provided with home cooking.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The opposite of home cooking is not frozen. My wife often cooks at home things that she buys frozen. The hon Member is not making a sensible distinction.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

If the Chief Minister reads the question properly it says home-made.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Home-made and defrozen are not the opposite to each other. One can start with frozen food which is then cooked at home.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is the Chief Minister then accepting that it might be that it is not actually cooked from fresh, it is not packets opened and put in a microwave?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know, Mr Speaker. My wife gets a steak frozen that she has bought in Safeways and then she cooks it. She cooks it in a microwave or she cooks it in the grill..... is all the food that the hon Member eats at home fresh, some of it is frozen. We do not know. If the hon Member wants to know what items of food in the Dr Giraldi Home are fresh and which are frozen, he can ask that question and we will try to get him the answer, but it is not the answer which is prepared, whether they are home-made meals. The hon Member is asking whether they are home-made meals. Home-made meals can be made either from fresh produce or from frozen produce.

HON DR B A LINARES:

It is interesting that I also have complaints from the residents in the opposite direction. At one stage management thought that fresh vegetables were a very healthy menu for the residents and they said, "no, we are fed up with vegetables, we want frozen food, calamares, et cetera".

HON DR R G VALARINO:

How many residents were infected by the scabies outbreak?

HON MRS Y DEL AGUA:

When the scabies was first identified we immediately contacted Dr Kumar, the Director of Public Health, who advised us with the relevant information which was subsequently passed on to the relatives. In an establishment like the Dr Giraldi Home it is very likely that it would have spread around very quickly but as a result of the prompt action of the manager and staff the infection was kept to three people only.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Has any action been taken because of the outbreak of scabies, especially to furniture as there is new furniture that was bought?

HON MRS Y DEL AGUA:

Mr Speaker, it was actually proven that the scabies did not derive from the Home itself. I have already said that it came from outside. I do not know what the furniture has to do with it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As a result of the unitisation of the Home, new furniture is being brought in. The hon Member, I suspect, was asking whether as a result of the scabies outbreak furniture was being changed, I think that is what he was asking.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

As I understand that this infection can be passed on, that is in clothing or furniture. What measures had to be introduced.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member will forgive us because we are not fortunate enough to have a medical doctor on our side of the House, Government have taken the steps the Director of Public Health has advised should be taken. If the hon Member wants to know what those are he can give us notice of that question and we will find out. The hon Member asserts it can be transmitted through furniture, I am not agreeing or disagreeing, he may be right, I do not know.

ORAL

NO. 7 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

DR GIRALDI HOME

Can Government state if there is any work scheduled for the pathway that leads to the entrance of Dr Giraldi Home?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question No. 8 of 2000.

NO. 8 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

DR GIRALDI HOME

Can Government explain why there is a need to carry out internal structural alterations to the Dr Giraldi Home to separate some residents from others?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The ramp to the Home has been repaired and is now awaiting the report of the structural engineer.

The internal alterations are designed to create three separate apartments to enable a more homely atmosphere for the people who live there. This improvement will also enable one apartment to be used for respite care and increase the number of beds available for this purpose.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 7 AND 8 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Mr Speaker, I am asking about the pathway not the ramp. The pathway is mostly gravel and if the Minister cares to ask she will see that there are holes which people are having difficulties with wheelchairs to move up to the ramp. I am talking about the entrance, where there is a school.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Dr Giraldi Home is on the top floor. The ground floor is the St Bernadette's Occupational Therapy Centre. The pathway that leads to the entrance of Dr Giraldi Home is the ramp which is a ramped pathway.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Mr Speaker, one cannot fly to the ramp, one has to walk on the pathway that leads to the ramp. It is only a short distance between the entrance into the School and it is a longer distance between the entrance to the ramp where vehicles park. If they both lead I suppose they both lead to the school and to the Dr Giraldi Home. All I am asking and bringing to their attention is that it is gravel and therefore it is difficult for people with wheelchairs.

HON J C PEREZ:

Have I understood the hon Lady right when she has said that there is no intention to separate the permanent residence from the Home?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the hon Member has not understood her correctly.

HON MRS Y DEL AGUA:

What I said was that the internal alterations are designed to create three separate apartments to enable a more homely atmosphere for the people who live there. The unitisation of the Home was the subject of a major report to Government and it will enable residents with similar needs to be cared for with the appropriate levels of staff.

HON J C PEREZ:

And this is the desire of the inmates themselves?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, it responds to two things. One of them is the one that the hon Member was raising before when we were discussing Housing and that is that it is all very well to take the view that Dr Giraldi was a very loving place before, that is the phrase I most hear from the critics to this policy but the reality of it is that as he well knows there are many degrees of mental handicap and there are many degrees of quality of life and there are many degrees of capacity to live an independent life. The unitisation of the Home, which costs quite a lot of money and the Government do it not because we want to waste money but because we are trying to improve the quality of life for such people. The advice that the Government have had is that one institution like the Dr Giraldi Home in which everybody lives in the same areas, share the same Common Room, share the same common areas, corridors, live in the same big house with very different degrees of handicap and capacity for independence, as well as different ages and different sexes, which is another thing as there is no segregation of sexes or ages. One can have a young male living with a much older female in the House and vice versa. The advice that we have had is that it is modern European residential care provision technique to create smaller units rather than large houses so that people can live in a more homely environment with people who are more similar to them and to their capacities rather than a great home. One way to have done it would have been to have a small Home here, a small Home there. Another way to do it was to unitise the existing building so that instead of the top floor all being one flat, which is what the hon Member knows in effect, one long flat, the whole length of the building, that it will be four flats, divided into four separate houses so that the people that are allocated to each live in a more homely environment, less institutionalised and they can be separated by reference to factors and criteria which the experts say improves the quality of their lives.

To answer the question as to who is behind this, this has also been a long-standing aspiration of the Handicapped Society in Gibraltar. We are aware, which I suspect is where the hon Member's question originates, that there are some people, mainly those who are the parents of respite children, rather than residents, there are some people who do not appear to appreciate or who do not think it is a good idea. We think it is because they have not quite understood..... it is a superficial opinion.

HON J C PEREZ:

Then I take it that what will happen is that these four units will take in a number of people. There will be nobody living on his own as a result of the units being built. Is the extension of the Home as a result of this, does this not leave very small spaces for respite?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am sorry we do not have the information here but we are told the opposite is the case. We are told that it actually increases the Home's ability to provide respite care because one of the flats is dedicated exclusively to respite.

HON J C PEREZ:

One of the four areas will be dedicated exclusively for respite care?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, without diminishing the capacity for the permanent residents.

HON J C PEREZ:

And will the capacity of the three units be greater as a result of the works given that my understanding is that the Dr Giraldi Home is now full in terms of the space that was available then?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, it is marginally bigger. I think that there is capacity for an extra two or three permanent residents on the basis of the reconfiguration. In addition to allowing space, one of the flats, exclusively for respite, in what is left there is one or two or three but not much more than that. I can get the hon Member the exact figure if he wants to.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Have any of these changes been explained to the residents or is it just happening?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am satisfied that it was done by consultation with the parents, with the relatives of the residents. The residents have had their own level of receptivity in these matters and the Society for the Handicapped which represents the parents as well. The configuration has been put before them on paper and there appears to be general satisfaction as to resident space.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Will the alteration satisfy what the Chief Minister said that it was not desirable to have adults with children, will that also be provided seeing that they are now carrying out alterations?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, within the space constraints the unitisation is being done in accordance with the advice of Millbury who are experts on this matter. They have assessed the actual residence and they say, given the space available and given the particular characteristics of the current group of residents, this is the most desirable method of unitisation. It is not something that has been made on a political decision. We have been very much guided by Millbury's advice on that issue. Whether it would result in that whole degree of separation and segregation which might be achievable if there was no limit to the space and no limit to the financial resources that were available, neither of which is the case, I cannot tell the hon Member that.

ORAL

NO. 9 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

SOCIAL SECURITY

Can Government state what transfers have been made from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund to the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving the amounts and the month of each transfer since September 1999?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 10 and 11 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 10 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

SOCIAL SECURITY

Can Government state what was the balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund since September 1999 for each month showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 9 and 11 of 2000.

NO. 11 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

SOCIAL SECURITY

Can Government state what was the number of pensioners being paid, or with entitlement to payment since September 1999 broken down for each month from the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund giving a breakdown of pre-1969 Spanish pensioners and local funded pensioners showing the number of Gibraltarians/UK nationals, Moroccans and other nationalities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The information sought by these questions is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore now hand the hon Member tables giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 9 of 2000

The transfers made from the Open Long-Term Benefits Fund to the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund by month since September 1999 are as follows:

SEPTEMBER 1999	£ 900,000
OCTOBER 1999	£ 900,000
NOVEMBER 1999	£ 810,000
DECEMBER 1999	£1,000,000
JANUARY 2000	<u>£ 750,000</u>
	<u>£4,360,000</u>

Answer to Question 10 of 2000

The balance of the Closed Long-Term Benefits Fund since September 1999 for each month showing the amount from UK and local funds and the expenditure to former Spanish workers and to pensioners from local funds is as follows:

	<u>30 Sep 99</u>	<u>31 Oct 99</u>	<u>30 Nov 99</u>	<u>31 Dec 99</u>	<u>31 Jan 00</u>	<u>Total</u>
Opening Balance	£3,193,095	£3,209,844	£3,341,785	£1,002,286	£ 607,891	
Receipts from DFID	£1,020,000	£ 440,000	£ 510,000	£1,220,000	£ 510,000	£3,700,000
Other Receipts	£ 10,631	£ 5,808	£ 4,161	£ 3,636	£ 4,055	£ 28,292
Spanish Pensions	(£1,050,842)	(£ 359,172)	(£2,811,755)	(£1,647,538)	(£ 405,073)	(£6,274,381)
Local Pensions	(£ 863,040)	(£ 854,695)	(£ 851,905)	(£ 970,494)	(£ 770,178)	(£4,310,312)
Transfers from The Open Long-Term Benefits Fund	£ 900,000	£ 900,000	£ 810,000	£1,000,000	£ 750,000	£4,360,000
Closing Balance	<u>£3,209,844</u>	<u>£3,341,785</u>	<u>£1,002,286</u>	<u>£ 607,891</u>	<u>£ 696,694</u>	

Answer to Question 11 of 2000

	<u>Sept 99</u>	<u>Oct 99</u>	<u>Nov 99</u>	<u>Dec 99</u>	<u>Jan 00</u>	<u>Feb 00</u>
Pre-1969 Spanish Pensioners	8973	8963	8971	9050	9056	9056
British Pensioners (Gibraltar/UK Nat)	4822	4825	4824	4819	4814	4809
Moroccan Pensioners	1053	1054	1059	1060	1076	1087
Other Nationalities	298	303	303	304	306	305
	<u>15146</u>	<u>15145</u>	<u>15157</u>	<u>15233</u>	<u>15252</u>	<u>15257</u>

ORAL

NO. 12 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

MACMILLAN HOUSE

What payments were made to the contractor undertaking work at MacMillan House before its contract was terminated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

No contractor was engaged to carry out any works at MacMillan House, consequently no payments were made nor was any contract terminated.

ORAL

NO. 13 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

GOVERNMENT HOUSING

Will Government confirm that they will not increase the cost of Government housing over their current term in office?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Answered together with Question No. 14 of 2000.

NO. 14 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

GOVERNMENT HOUSING

Is it Government's intention to introduce tenancy agreements in other Government estates on the lines introduced at Edinburgh House?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

The Government cannot confirm what the hon Member says.

As regards the tenancy agreements, the Government will review this should new housing estates become available for allocation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 13 AND 14 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is the Minister saying that when new estates come into play or does he mean when new tenancies are issued in different estates?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, I would have thought that the answer I gave was clear. Issued as new housing estates become available for allocation.

HON J J BOSSANO

Can the Government explain why they found it necessary to introduce a different tenancy agreement in Edinburgh House from those of other estates, from those existing already?

HON J J NETTO:

I will have to find out and give an answer to the hon Member in due course.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government, I have not asked the Minister, surely somebody in the Government must know, whoever was there then must know why he put in the new contract. The question is directed to the Government not necessarily to the Minister, I accept the Minister having just taken over may himself not be aware of how it came about, but surely the Government must know.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not think there are that many changes in the tenancy agreement frankly, there may be changes that relate to the new process for reporting given that the maintenance of this estate is contractorised. There may also be changes relating to the fact that the houses are allocated with the use of a parking space but I do not think that there are any changes that go to the tenants' rights as tenants.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that the only tenancy agreement that talks about a supplementary rent is the one for Edinburgh House? There is not any other one in any other estate.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I cannot say what might be the case in other estates.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that the Government do not know that it has a provision to be able to charge a supplementary rent in Edinburgh House and that it does not have such a provision in any other estate because the agreements in the other estates are as they were in 1996 and, indeed, as they were in 1988 and they have never been changed? This has never existed in any housing estate.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Where is the provision for supplementary rents in the Edinburgh House agreement?

HON J J BOSSANO:

The provision is in the tenancy agreement and it says that they may charge a supplementary rent and it is listed in the contract. This is a copy of the contract that will be given to tenants and tenants have signed of which I have seen a copy.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Indeed relating to the provision of ancillary services in respect of the cleaning and keeping of refuse in chutes, passages, staircases, yards, patios or other common areas parts swept and cleaned and also where the landlord provides services in respect of the electrical lighting of common parts, the tenants will pay to the landlord a weekly contribution, the amount of which shall be determined by the landlord towards the cost of such services which amounts shall be payable in the manner aforesaid. That is additional rent, which I suppose is what the hon Member referred to as a supplementary rent. That is what the tenancy agreement says.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, I know that is what the tenancy agreement says and I have not just discovered that. What I would like to know is why it has been felt necessary to do this in the case of Edinburgh House when in fact it is not the case in any other Government estate?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Things change, many things indeed changed under his term of office. Whoever agreed this, which is presumably the Minister for Housing at the time, thought it was an appropriate development given the amount of money that the Government had spent on the refurbishment of the estate and the relatively low, whatever the hon Members might have wanted to say during the recent election campaign to the contrary, rent being charged to the tenants. It is just a matter of Government policy, the fact that it has not been done before is not a reason for not doing things in the future.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not questioning that it should not have been done because it has not been done before and I understand that it is Government policy, that is precisely what I am trying to find out, why the policy decision was taken when in fact the things that have been mentioned are things that the Government do provide in other estates, most of which pay lower rents than Edinburgh House. We got a rent which is higher than most not perhaps higher than all, but higher than most, and a provision for an additional rent which does not exist elsewhere for services which are provided elsewhere. If it is a new policy then the Government are perfectly entitled to have a new policy but I would have thought that there had to be a reason for saying, "This policy is going to be applied to Edinburgh House and not elsewhere" if they think it is a good thing.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member has got to look at this provision with the other provision which is also new in the tenancy agreement and which he has chosen not to highlight, which is the provision for the setting up of a management company by the tenants and to give the tenants a greater role and greater autonomy in the running of their own estate. This is a halfway house between the old fashioned type of Government housing tenancies and what the hon Members did in Gib V which was the infamous Option C where the whole cost of home ownership was transferred to people who would otherwise have been council tenants. What we have said is, no the Government keep our responsibility as landlord in respect of repairs and maintenance but we would like tenants to take increasing responsibility for the upkeep of their estates, one has only to look around private housing estates in Gibraltar to see just what a difference there is in the condition in which estates are kept when they are run by tenants themselves through a management company and when they are run by the Government and these are preparatory steps to enable that the management company, when formed, to collect not all the costs of repairs and maintenance but just the cleansing and lighting of public areas of the new costs. The hon Member may not view that as a positive development, we thought actually it was a fair half-way house between the very punitive development that they introduced in Gib V and this, which is a much milder version of transferring costs to council tenants. Given that these measures are much less harsh on the tenant than what they introduced in Gib V, whatever criticism they level at us they are levelling with even greater intensity at their own policy in respect of Gib V.

MR SPEAKER:

One more question, one more answer because we have moved, it is no longer a supplementary on the answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, with due respect, if you will allow me. I am trying to find out about the difference in the contract between Edinburgh House and elsewhere and I would have thought I am seeking information.

MR SPEAKER:

No, if you seek information it is a new question. This is to elucidate the answer that is what supplementaries are for and the answer is that they might introduce the Edinburgh House scheme to other housing estates but now we are moving from the original question and the original answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, if you will allow me.

MR SPEAKER:

I will allow you to ask one more question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I regret that you should limit the ability of the Members of the Opposition to obtain information, Mr Speaker, because this is the beginning of this session of the House and we have been told it is not being extended to other estates and I would have thought it is a perfectly legitimate sequence to find why in this one and not in others, and I am being given answers and I regret that you should say one more question. *[MR SPEAKER: And one more answer.]* Mr Speaker, if you will allow me to finish, I cannot use that question to be able to rebut all the insinuations of our Option C because that would be my one question gone. So the Chief Minister has got

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If he answers the question about Option C, I will weave the answer to the other question in my answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then, Mr Speaker, given that the Chief Minister has made references to the punitive nature of our Option C, can he confirm (a) whether that means that in the case of Edinburgh House the tenants which have got, according to him, better terms than in Option C as a result of this contract, will in fact become owners of the property after 40 years as is the case in Option C in order to justify the inferiority of Option C option and, (b) given that the explanation that is given for the additional rent is the freedom and the extra role that is going to be given to the tenants by forming an association, is he not aware that the conditions in the contract that have been introduced by his Government say that the Chairman of the housing association has to be the Housing Manager which must run as unique in the annals of landlord/tenant relationship that the landlord insists that the representative of the tenants is the landlord's manager? And furthermore is he not aware that the provision is that at the sole discretion of the Government and the Housing Manager the tenants association can be abolished even though there is no freedom on the tenants whether they want to have one or not, that it is compulsory on the tenants, discretionary on the Government and the Chairman is imposed on them by the Government, is he aware of all those things?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It all responds to the fact that this is new territory and that one thing is to try things on an experimental basis and another thing is to try things on an experimental basis without an exit strategy. We are not willing to make Government housing estates unmanageable and therefore one thing is to break this new ground and leave them to the wolves and if they cannot sort themselves out between themselves that is too bad, the Government washed their hands, that is not what we are doing. We are taking the responsible way forward which is to feed it through in a controllable measure so that if it goes well we can back out and if it does not go well we have the ability to claw it back in so that the housing estates do not become unmanageable. Just before I forget let me weave into the answer the question that he did not ask. Why for Edinburgh House and not for other estates? The Government could impose this on all other housing estates, the view that we have taken is that there is a difference between tenants in other housing estates that have vested rights, that have been living under a given regime for many, many years, there is a qualitative difference between changing an existing regime which already gives people certain rights and starting a new regime for new tenants that have not got those rights in that house. I would have thought it is not the same thing to say, "From now on any tenant in this estate have to live by this regime" and to say, "All tenants that have lived under other regimes in other housing estates are now going to have this new regime imposed upon them". One is considerably more draconian in affecting people's vested rights than the other.

I know that the hon Members considered the Option C to be a milder form home ownership but the reality has been that however sensible the idea might have been in its origin, in its application it has caused great injustice because the effect of Option C without having any more new housing for rental is that people were forced into Option C which, let us call, a middle of the road, a sort of hybrid, a sort of half-way house form of home ownership but a lot of people were funnelled into that half-way house form of home ownership who could not afford even that and it is no consolation to people who are on such low incomes that they cannot afford the Option C management charges at Gib V, it is no consolation to say to them, "But chum you do get ownership of the flat in 40 years time". This is a somewhat academic concept to people who are simply receiving threats of legal proceedings from the management company, as it has happened to some. There are Option C tenants who because they have not been able to afford their management charges have had legal action taken against them by the management company and the bailiffs have gone in to remove television sets from their flats. I do not blame the management company for that because if they do not take such steps against defaulting Option C tenants the rest of the tenants who do pay say, "Well look if he is getting the same services as me and I pay and he does not, well I am going to stop paying as well" and there are a number of people who, unfortunately, are growing who somehow need to be dealt with somehow. In other words, that number of people who were put into Option C, whether it was the Government's fault or their fault or whoever, will now find that they cannot afford it and there has to be a process (a) of genuinely assessing who really cannot afford it and who would simply rather spend their money on other things and not on paying their housing commitments and what, if anything, the Government can do - there are things in our manifesto about it the hon Members must have read that, that for such people it is no consolation to say, "Well you are getting home ownership in Option C". These were classical council tenant type people who should never have been allowed to acquire home owner type liabilities because their incomes are simply too fixed and too low for them to discharge them.

ORAL

NO.15 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING WAITING LIST

Can Government state at what intervals the publication of the housing waiting list takes place and when was it last published?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Answered together with Question Nos. 16 and 17 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 16 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING WAITING LIST

Can Government state how many applicants there are in the Housing Waiting List who have met the two years qualifying period, giving a breakdown of each list?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Answered together with Question Nos. 15 and 17 of 2000.

NO.17 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING WAITING LIST

Can Government state how many applicants there are in the pre-housing waiting list broken down by room requirements?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

The Housing Waiting Lists are usually published on a quarterly basis. The last time that they were published was on 20 September 1999. There has been a delay in the publication of the waiting lists as a result of the allocation of Edinburgh House and a new waiting list will be published shortly.

As regards applicants that have met the two-year qualifying period, the total is 285 broken down by room composition as follows:

1RKB	139
2RKB	52
3RKB	54
4RKB	21
5RKB	17
6RKB	2

The number of applicants that are on the pre-list is 241 broken down by room composition as follows:

1RKB	98
2RKB	26
3RKB	68
4RKB	43
5RKB	5
6RKB	1

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 15 TO 17 OF 2000

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Prior to the publication of the housing waiting lists which was early last year on 20th September, can the Minister state when was the previous time before this?

HON J J NETTO:

I understand it was the quarter before that date.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is the Minister saying that on the pre-housing waiting list were he has 241, if that figure is lower than before because there are people who have now qualified and moved into the other list?

HON J J NETTO:

From the information I have available in terms of different dates in different years, I think that is more in line what the hon Member is seeking. I can tell him that in August 1998 there were 207, in February 1998 there were 229, in 1995 it was 116, in October 1994 it was 292, so it obviously has been oscillating at a higher and a lower band than the figure I have just given now.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

It could also be true that even though it could be just very few people that there might have been allocation on people that are under the pre-list, is that correct? Because the Housing Allocation Committee has powers to decide that some people might be allocated even though they do not meet the qualification period, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

From what I understand it is that people in the pre-list could have moved up to the proper housing waiting list and if they have been, as the hon Member knows, on social conditions or medical conditions that there might be reason for the statement that the hon Member made.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

On Question No. 16, are the Government able to gauge when members who have met the two years qualifying period would be given a house?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes I understand it would depend on the circumstances on the case of the person as already explained to the Hon Mr Baldachino.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is there not a sort of average period that people can expect to be on the list after the two years on the basis of the present supply and demand situation, obviously?

HON J J NETTO:

From what I understand in some categories it moves very slowly so I will not be able to give that kind of answer to the hon Gentleman.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

On Question No. 16 where the Minister said that in the 6RKB there are two, if my memory is correct, there were three, does it mean that in Edinburgh House no 6RKB have been allocated?

HON J J NETTO:

It is possible it could have been allocated yes. One yes.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In the light of the previous answer that different categories move at different speeds, does the Minister have the information, for example, in respect of the breakdown he has given of 285, if there are 139 1RKBs, does he know how long the longest person has been there?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That information can be obtained because it is available in a print out, but what the answer was intended to be was that there are, for example, the 2RKB and 5RKB list move very slowly because it is quite rare that flats of that size should stay empty and one of the things that the Government are going to consider during this term of office is whether houses should be constructed targeted at particular waiting list, in other words, if the 2RKB list moves very slowly should we build the block of flats with just 2RKB houses in it and the other very problematic one is the 5RKB list. We are hoping that the movement of elderly tenants down to the Bishop Canilla House will free quite a lot of 5RKBs, they come on to the market, so to speak, very infrequently as I am sure his hon Colleague sitting next to him knows, but the Bishop Canilla House allocation will throw up quite a few 5RKBs. So that what was intended by some lists move more slowly than others but if he is interested in knowing how long the longest tenant has been waiting on any of the lists, it is information that would be obtained for him.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I think if it can be provided after the House I would be grateful.

HON J J NETTO

Yes, it will be provided to the hon Member.

ORAL

NO. 18 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING – APPLICANTS MEDICALLY RECOMMENDED

Can Government state how many housing applicants are medically recommended to date, giving a breakdown of their room requirements and their medical category recommendation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Answered together with Question No. 19 of 2000.

NO.19 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING – APPLICANTS SOCIALLY RECOMMENDED

Can Government state how many housing applicants are socially recommended and how many of these are classified as homeless?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

There are currently 12 housing applicants who are medically categorised as well. Their medical category and room requirement is as follows:

Medical A	1 applicant requires a 4RKB and another a 5RKB
Medical B	2 applicants require a 2RKB and one requires a 3RKB
Medical C	5 applicants require a 2RKB, one requires a 3RKB and another requires a 6RKB.

In respect of housing applicants who are socially recommended, there are 16 who are socially recommended of which two are homeless and 10 are under offer.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 18 AND 19 OF 2000

HON DR R G VALARINO:

On Question No. 18 the previous Minister gave exactly the same figure for those on medical category A, I just wonder whether they are the same people and if so, have they been waiting since September last year and whether or not this is the case, how long is somebody of medical category A waiting to be re-housed, will be re-housed in this category?

HON J J NETTO:

I can not without notice know whether we are talking about the same number of people now as the last time, I would need notice in order to know whether we are talking about the same people. But I understand that in the allocation of Edinburgh House of some medical cases, there are some who have already moved to that area. In terms of the first part of his question I would need notice to be able to know whether we are talking about the same people.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I thank the Minister for his answer. Could he have a look into this and provide me with details whenever he can?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Minister state that the 12 are actually people on the housing waiting list, they are not tenants who are waiting to be recommended?

HON J J NETTO:

On both, yes.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

On Question No. 19 where he says there are 16 homeless.....

HON J J NETTO:

No, two homeless.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

In any case, is he classifying people who are homeless, how many of those are actually in the hostel at Devil's Tower Road?

HON J J NETTO:

The understanding that I have from my department is that they are not in the hostel and furthermore whilst they are classified as homeless, we understand they are living with relatives and friends.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Is the Minister saying that the people who are in the hostels that some of them are not classified as homeless?

HON J J NETTO:

No, I have not said that. What I am referring to is that these two are not in the hostel.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

So therefore the people who are in the hostel are not classified as homeless?

HON J J NETTO:

Not necessarily.

NO. 20 OF 2000THE HON DR R G VALARINO**BISHOP CANILLA HOUSE**

Can Government state why there has been a delay in the allocation of Bishop Canilla House?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

There are several reasons for the delay in the allocation of Bishop Canilla House. The contractors have not yet handed the building to the Government. This slippage has come about as a result of delays that have been encountered by the contractor as well as the Government extending the programme to include the embellishment and landscaping of the surrounding area plus the carrying out of additional infrastructure works that did not form part of the original contract.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 20 OF 2000

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Since there has been extra expenditure for Bishop Canilla House will the Minister state that there has been no vandalism in this area or water ingress and/or dampness?

HON J J NETTO:

On the question of vandalism I am not in a position to tell the hon Member that there has been or there has not been but by way perhaps of giving him further information generally speaking, I can tell him that the date of the original completion of this project was to have been in July 1999. However, this was extended by the Support Services Department to take account of certain infrastructure works and changes to the interior of the flats. The changes to the interior included the provision of 11 flats especially adapted for handicapped persons. The infrastructure works, including the construction, widening and opening of the road surrounding the estate to link up with the existing road system, the revised provision of the bin store to accommodate the overflow of Edinburgh House and the landscaping of the garden area. Additionally the contractor experienced delay in the completion of the project mainly because of the limited labour pool available in Gibraltar, workers left to work with other companies. Additionally, during the Christmas period, the heavy rainfall led to water penetration. Apart from this, after Christmas, the plumbing was tested which resulted in leaking pipes. This, together with the water penetration, left a number of flats with damp problems. The Support Services Department refused to give the contractor a certificate of practical completion until the problem was solved. I am informed by Support Services that this is now nearly sorted. The contractor claimed that they would finish the project with the maximum of three weeks, however Support Services architect in charge of the project estimates completion in six weeks time. In terms of cost, but not cost through vandalism, the original cost of the project was £2,385,000 but has now been revised to £2.5 million.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

So the Minister can guarantee this House that the water penetration and the leaking pipes have now been dealt with or they are in the process of being dealt with?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What the Minister cannot do is to guarantee the effectiveness of the repair. What the Minister can do is that on this occasion the Government machinery has worked and that new construction has not been accepted until it has been properly checked and until it has gone through the proper procedures and that certificates of completion have not been handed out before they should be handed out. It is not unusual for building works to suffer difficulties but they have got to be corrected by the contractor before he is given a certificate of completion and is allowed to walk off taking the profit with him to wherever he has come from. That is what the Government can guarantee the hon Member will happen in this case.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Will the Government, due to the delay and seeing that part of it is the contractor's fault, be retaining the retention money that is normally in contracts?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The retention monies are always retained and as the hon Member presumably knows, they are retained to hold against defects that might arise later on. We are not at that stage yet. We are not even at the stage yet of having entered the defects liability period because there has not yet been issued a certificate of practical completion so the defects liability period for which the retention is withheld usually for a year does not stop to run until the certificate of practical completion is issued and we are not yet at that stage. There are in these things penalties, the cost of putting the building in the condition that would attract the issue of a certificate of practical completion is entirely for the account of the contractor. What is not for the account of the contractor and explains the increase in the total cost of the project by £100,000-odd is the extra works that the Government have incorporated, mainly outside garden areas and things of that sort and the re-provision for refuse disposal bins, things that we have added to the specifications after the original contract.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Obviously the whole idea of Bishop Canilla House was to give to elderly people and the Minister in his answer said that 11 had been adapted for disabled people. What I am asking is, have the 11 persons been identified and will they be allocated those flats or is it on a general term that the flats have been adapted?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the latter.

HON J C PEREZ:

Following my hon Colleague's question, is it also the intention of the Government to provide some of these houses for mentally disabled who might be deemed fit to live alone?

MR SPEAKER:

I know I am being difficult but that is not a supplementary on the answer but if the Minister wants to answer it he can answer it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, if a person is mentally disabled and is not committed to the KGV Hospital he is just an elderly person. The Government do not examine elderly people to measure their degree of mental disability before deciding whether to give them houses. They are either elderly citizens at large in which case they will get treated the same way so the answer, I suppose to the hon Member is there is no specific provision but they will be taken into account when medical disabilities are taken into account, it is one of the factors that will be applied generally not just in respect of mental disability.

HON J C PEREZ:

I might be able to raise it under the Doctor Giraldi Home but I was actually talking about people who today find themselves in the Doctor Giraldi Home and who might be deemed by the people who are taking care of them of being able to live alone.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course there are no elderly people in the Doctor Giraldi Home, we do not want to have a debate now on the Doctor Giraldi Home but we are trying to make different provision for the people that he has in mind. In other words, there are disabled people who notwithstanding their disability, have a capacity to live independently which is being squandered that capacity by them living in a place like Doctor Giraldi Home and there is thought being given to how provision could be made to allow such people to live in the community. That thinking has not so far at least, the hon Member may have given us an idea, but it has not so far taken place in relation to the Bishop Canilla House.

NO. 21 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING – PENSIONER EXCHANGE LIST

Can Government state how many applicants are in the Housing Pensioner Exchange List?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

There are a total of 387 on the Pensioners Exchange List.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 21 OF 2000

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Has the Minister any knowledge of how many live in private accommodation and how many in Government accommodation?

HON J J NETTO:

There are at the moment 81 persons who live in private accommodation who happen to be in the Pensioners Exchange List.

ORAL

NO. 22 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING – POST-WAR FLATS

Can Government state how many post-war housing units have been allocated since 1st October 1999 broken down by month to date and of these, how many were allocated on a do-it-yourself basis?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Answered together with Question Nos. 23 and 24 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 23 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING – POST-WAR FLATS

Can Government state how many post-war flats are vacant, giving the room composition and their location?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Answered together with Question Nos. 22 and 24 of 2000.

NO. 24 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING – PRE-WAR FLATS

Can Government state how many pre-war flats are vacant, giving their room composition and their location?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Since 1st October 1999, 299 post-war flats have been allocated of which 210 were on the basis of an allocation of materials to the tenant. There are 87 post-war flats currently vacant of which 32 are under offer.

There are 44 pre-war flats currently vacant.

As to the detailed breakdown of these figures requested by the hon Member, these are contained in tables which I now hand to him.

For the period 1st October 1999 to date, the number of post-war flats allocated broken down by month is as follows:

	Allocated	With Materials
October	181	175
November	9	6
December	24	19
January	12	8
February	3	2

There are 87 vacant post-war flats broken down by room composition and location as follows:

	North	South	West	Town	Upper Town
1RKB	3	1	7	1	0
2RKB	3	3	6	2	3
3RKB	18	8	2	0	17
4RKB	0	1	1	1	9
5RKB	1	0	0	0	0
6RKB	6	0	0	0	0

It should be noted that there are presently 32 flats under offer.

With regards to vacant pre-war flats, the total number of vacant pre-wars is 44. The details are as follows:

	Town	Upper Town
1RKB	1	2
2RKB	10	12
3RKB	3	9
4RKB	2	5
5RKB	0	0
6RKB	0	0

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 22 TO 24 OF 2000

HON DR R G VALARINO:

On Question No. 23, when this question was last answered there were a far smaller number of post-war flats vacant. Could the Minister state why the large increase in vacant flats?

HON J J NETTO:

We are in the realms of speculation but it could be that given that some people have moved to Edinburgh House there has been a sudden surge of empty flats and as well perhaps other people in the Government housing stock who may have purchased their own house in the private sector so that perhaps is indicative of why there are more vacant post-war flats.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I am sure that the Opposition would like some details on this if the Minister is able to provide this and since he has mentioned Edinburgh House, could he say how many people have moved to Edinburgh House?

HON J J NETTO:

There are still three more blocks in Edinburgh House to be allocated. If I remember rightly the total number, inclusive of these three blocks, was around 208. So if we subtract the remaining three blocks a substantial number have already been allocated. I can give him further information with due notice.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The supplementary related to how many people had moved into occupation of flats that had been allocated to them. That is how I understood the supplementary. The answer is that whilst there are still some people – I cannot give him the exact number although I am sure the Housing Department can obtain it – but I went down there recently after the election and it looked to me as if the majority of the flats were now occupied. What my hon Colleague was trying to explain is the fact that there are still three blocks that have not been handed over, Phase 2 the ones that were handed over much later by the MOD, the keys have not yet been handed over to the people to whom they have already been allocated. In other words, they have been drawn for and all those of course are still empty but only because they have not yet been handed over by the contractor to the Government and by Government to the tenants. But of the first phase, which was all the blocks towards the Queensway side of the estate rather than towards the rowing clubs side of the estate, most of those are already in occupation.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

On Question No. 22, Mr Speaker, where the Minister said that out of the 249 that had been allocated, 210 had taken it upon themselves to do it on a do-it-yourself basis. Have the materials that have been provided to those persons exactly the same as those that were provided to the persons who took up Edinburgh House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The people in Edinburgh House were not given materials, they were given a cash decoration allowance.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

They were given vouchers which they could exchange for materials which is exactly the same as could have happened here. When somebody is allocated a house on a do-it-yourself basis are some materials given to the tenant through LPOs or not?

HON J J NETTO:

It is according to materials pursuant to the estimate provided by Buildings and Works.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

So no persons allocated somewhere else other than in Edinburgh House have been given an LPO where they can go and withdraw materials from whoever has the tender, is the material physically given by Buildings and Works, is that what he is saying?

HON J J NETTO:

The material is not physically given by Buildings and Works but yes, it is specified in the LPO or the materials within the tender system.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

But what I am asking is whether the materials are given physically or through an LPO, is it that people who have been allocated a house where it is not in Edinburgh House have been given the same provisions as people in Edinburgh House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In the non-Edinburgh House situation people are not given materials physically, they are given an LPO but an LPO that says, 'three tins of paint and one brush' whereas in Edinburgh House they were given vouchers for cash without specification of what they had to spend it on. There was no specification of the quantities of material.

MR SPEAKER:

One more question and one more answer. We have now deviated from the original question and the original answer.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The £1,100 was available for general refurbishment to be spent on whatever refurbishment materials the tenants preferred.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

If I remember correctly, the LPOs specified that they had to have a bath, a wash hand basin and in other LPOs they had so much paint et cetera, it was specified what they had but that is not the question. The question I am asking is that if people who are allocated a house somewhere other than in Edinburgh House, whether they are given the same materials as they were given there, whether it is physically or by LPO? Are they allocated a bath, for example? I presume that a bath and toilet is normally given but is it to the same level of amount of money given to one as to the other?

HON J J NETTO:

It depends on the house. In the non-Edinburgh House will be specified by the estimators in Buildings and Works and on the do-it-yourself basis they will say, "These are the materials and you can purchase them from the tender system according to the suppliers".

ORAL

NO. 25 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING ALLOCATION COMMITTEE

Can Government state since 1st September 1999, on how many occasions each month has the Housing Allocation Committee met to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Answered together with Question Nos. 26 and 27 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 26 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Can Government state since 1st September 1999, on how many occasions each month has the Housing Advisory Committee met to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Answered together with Question Nos. 25 and 27 of 2000.

NO. 27 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

HOUSING MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Can Government state since 1st September 1999, on how many occasions each month has the Housing Medical Advisory Committee met to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING

For the period 1st September 1999 to date, the Housing Allocation Committee has met every month. The Housing Advisory Committee has met every month with the exception of December. The Medical Advisory Board has met twice in November, once in December, twice in January and once in February.

ORAL

NO. 28 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT - CONTRACTS

Can Government give a breakdown by nationality/industry of the employment contracts terminated in 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question No. 29 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 29 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT - CONTRACTS

Can Government give a breakdown by nationality/industry for each quarter of 1999 in respect of employment contracts terminated?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The information sought in this question is too voluminous and I would like to hand over to the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 29 of 2000

Terminations Breakdown by Nationalities/Industry Group Table

Date Range : 01/01/98 to 31/12/98

Industry Groups	NATIONALITY GROUP CODES							TOTAL
	GIB	BRI	SPA	POR	MOR	EEC	OTH	
Electricity Supply	4				1			5
Water Supply	12							12
Shipbuilding etc.	111	11	17	9	8	2		158
Other Manufacture	21	6	1		2	2		32
Construction	279	229	399	39	35	14	3	998
Wholesale Trade	90	21	20	1	5	4	10	151
Retail Trade	384	128	103	6	17	16	25	679
Hotel Trade	20	13	4		7	1	1	46
Restaurant, Bars, etc	80	119	51	2	22	11	3	288
Repairs of Consumer Goods	20	20	7		6	1		54
Sea Transport & Related Services	64	6	3	2	8	3	1	87
Air Transport & Related Services	5							5
Road Transport & Related Services	29	7	2		5	1		44
Post & Telecommunications	28	2	1					31
Banking, Finance & Insurance	375	146	16	11	8	24	10	590
Public Admin. & National Defence	88	19	3		16			126
Police & Fire Services	22	7		1				30
Sanitary Services	8	2			7		1	18
Education	15	5				4	1	25
Medical & Health Services	9	15	1				1	26
Other Services	413	96	35	5	22	9	10	590
Any Group								
TOTALS	2077	852	663	76	169	92	66	3995

Cont.... Q29/2000

Terminations Breakdown by Nationalities/Industry Group Table

Date Range : 01/01/99 to 31/03/99

Industry Groups	NATIONALITY GROUP CODES							TOTAL
	GIB	BRI	SPA	POR	MOR	EEC	OTH	
Electricity Supply	1							1
Water Supply	1				2			3
Shipbuilding etc.	11	2		1				14
Other Manufacture	7	2	1		1		1	12
Construction	53	41	70	2	18	3		187
Wholesale Trade	34	2	3	1	4		1	45
Retail Trade	102	24	21	1	5	3	4	160
Hotel Trade	5	1			1			7
Restaurant, Bars, etc	27	28	13	2	9	1	1	81
Repairs of Consumer Goods	11	4	4			3		22
Sea Transport & Related Services	7	2			1	1		11
Air Transport & Related Services								
Road Transport & Related Services	3		1		1			5
Post & Telecommunications	4							4
Banking, Finance & Insurance	165	35	9	1	22	6	3	241
Public Admin. & National Defence	57	6	1		17			81
Police & Fire Services	8	1		2				11
Sanitary Services								
Education	1							1
Medical & Health Services	4	1						5
Other Services	79	18	14	1	13	1	1	127
Any Group								
TOTALS	580	167	137	11	94	18	11	1018

Terminations Nationalities/Industry Group Table

Date Range : 01/04/99 to 30/06/99

Industry Groups	NATIONALITY GROUP CODES							TOTAL
	GIB	BRI	SPA	POR	MOR	EEC	OTH	
Electricity Supply								
Water Supply								
Shipbuilding etc.	14	2	2	5				23
Other Manufacture	7	1	2		2	1	3	16
Construction	37	38	48		11	4	1	139
Wholesale Trade	18	2	2		2			24
Retail Trade	70	20	45		6	1	6	148
Hotel Trade	12	4	5		6	1		28
Restaurant, Bars, etc	47	33	19	1	12	8	2	122
Repairs of Consumer Goods	9	4	1		1			15
Sea Transport & Related Services	3						1	4
Air Transport & Related Services	1							1
Road Transport & Related Services					1			1
Post & Telecommunications	11							11
Banking, Finance & Insurance	87	35	5		10	6	8	151
Public Admin. & National Defence	18	7			7			32
Police & Fire Services	10	1						11
Sanitary Services								
Education								
Medical & Health Services	5	2	1					8
Other Services	87	26	17		6	1		137
Any Group								
TOTALS	436	175	147	6	64	22	21	871

Cont.. Q29/2000

Terminations Breakdown Nationalities/Industry Group Table

Date Range : 01/07/1999 to 30/09/1999

Industry Groups	NATIONALITY GROUP CODES							TOTAL
	GIB	BRI	SPA	POR	MOR	EEC	OTH	
Electricity Supply		1						1
Water Supply	8							8
Shipbuilding etc.	17	1	1	5				24
Other Manufacture	5	2	1		1			9
Construction	68	68	98	2	16	2	1	255
Wholesale Trade	25	2	4		4		2	37
Retail Trade	102	20	51	1	9	4	5	192
Hotel Trade	17	3	3		2	2		27
Restaurant, Bars, etc	75	59	49	1	10	5	1	200
Repairs of Consumer Goods	11	2						13
Sea Transport & Related Services	15	2	1					18
Air Transport & Related Services	2							2
Road Transport & Related Services	3	1						4
Post & Telecommunications	29					1		30
Banking, Finance & Insurance	137	31	9		3	8	1	189
Public Admin. & National Defence	27	8			4			39
Police & Fire Services	11	3		1				15
Sanitary Services								
Education	9	2				1		12
Medical & Health Services	23	4						27
Other Services	122	35	19	3	9	4	3	195
Any Group								
TOTALS	706	244	236	13	58	27	13	1297

Cont.. Q29/2000

Terminations Breakdown by Nationalities/Industry Group Table

Date Range : 01/10/99 to 31/12/99

Industry Groups	NATIONALITY GROUP CODES							TOTAL
	GIB	BRI	SPA	POR	MOR	EEC	OTH	
Electricity Supply					1			1
Water Supply	1							1
Shipbuilding etc.	35	3	7	3	9			57
Other Manufacture	4	1	3		1			9
Construction	71	67	118	2	37	5		300
Wholesale Trade	25	2	2		4			33
Retail Trade	66	18	44		10		5	143
Hotel Trade	11	5	1		5			22
Restaurant, Bars, etc	28	45	29		13	4	5	124
Repairs of Consumer Goods	9	4	1	1				15
Sea Transport & Related Services	13	1	2			1		17
Air Transport & Related Services	1					1		2
Road Transport & Related Services			2		1			3
Post & Telecommunications	4							4
Banking, Finance & Insurance	76	33	10	1	1	4	3	128
Public Admin. & National Defence	17		1		1			19
Police & Fire Services	6	5						11
Sanitary Services	1		1					2
Education	1							1
Medical & Health Services	5		1		1			7
Other Services	68	47	21		9	1	3	149
Any Group								
TOTALS	442	231	243	7	93	16	16	1048

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 28 AND 29 OF 1999

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I just seek confirmation that as happened on other occasions when the information has been provided it will be passed so that it is recorded in Hansard?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This raises much wider issues about whether some of these questions are suitable to be asked in oral as opposed to written form. For example, the papers that my hon Colleague has handed over in answer to this question runs into five pages. I am not going to be doing the typing and the Government are not trying to skimp on the paper used by the House of Assembly in producing Hansard but it is a massive logistic effort which simply clutters up Hansard. How does one print that in Hansard? Perhaps we could agree a procedure whereby what is said orally in answer to these questions is recorded in Hansard and what is handed over has the status of a written answer which has parliamentary value. I am in Mr Speaker's hands.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Obviously, Mr Speaker, we do not want to create problems for the logistics of the work of the House but if it does not cause great difficulty I think it is useful to refer back.

MR SPEAKER:

With staff there is no difficulty in the world.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, Mr Speaker, depending on the questions that they ask, if everything that we give over is going to be actually recorded in Hansard, Government may have to reconsider our attitude. The Government are happy to give information if we have it, we do not take the view that if it is voluminous we do not give it but some of these answers that are being given during this meeting of the House are completely inappropriate to be recorded in Hansard and would not find their way into Hansard in any normal parliamentary system. That is why the Standing Orders of this House make provision for written questions, so that when hon Members want information of a purely statistical nature which runs into five pages of printout it can be sent under cover of a letter. If it is not read out in this House then theoretically it is not part of Hansard.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Well, Mr Speaker, in the past it has not been read in the House and it has been recorded in other Hansards and all I am asking is if it is possible to do it we would prefer it. If it creates a problem for the administration of the House then obviously we understand that.

MR SPEAKER:

It does create a problem but maybe there is a way out and that is when you get this sort of question and you are going to give information like that send the information before.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is not possible, the Government have five days in which to do a lot of statistical research and it is simply not possible. I think it is entirely inappropriate for this information to go in Hansard. What is happening is that the hon Members' practice of asking for statistical information at Question Time is becoming more and more prolific, it is now systematic. Indeed, there are some Opposition Members who ask the same questions at every Question Time and simply generates an enormous amount of statistics. That is a change of practice. If the hon Members are going to insist that all of this goes into Hansard the Government may start saying, "We will not answer the question but we will send you the information".

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, we cannot stop the Government doing whatever the Government want to do. All I am saying is that until now that has been what has been happening and I am simply trying to establish whether it is going to continue happening.

MR SPEAKER:

As far as I am concerned on this occasion of this meeting the answers will go into Hansard. Maybe you can get together and find a better solution or the Select Committee can think of even a better solution.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What will happen, Mr Speaker, is that Hansard will necessarily take much, much longer to produce and that is at the expense of the workings of this House because it will take us much longer to obtain Hansard. I think hon Members will appreciate because when hon Members ask for information we do not skimp, we give as much of what is being asked for as we can reasonably lay our hands on. The hon Members will see as we go further into this Question session just the amount that would be involved in transposing into Hansard. I think, frankly, it would be a complete distortion of the purposes of Hansard.

NO. 30 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT REGULATION (OFFENCES) ORDINANCE

Can Government state how many fixed penalties have been imposed on employers in respect of how many employees in each month since the commencement of the Employment Regulation (Offences) Ordinance and under which section of the Ordinance? Furthermore, whether the penalties have been paid or the matter is being pursued through the courts?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

I would like to hand the hon Member a list giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 30 of 2000

Since Commencement (12th August 1999) to the end of September 1999

5 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in respect of 5 employees on 4 employers.
5 Fixed Penalty Notices were paid.

October 1999

4 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in respect of 4 employees on 3 employers.
4 Fixed Penalty Notices were paid.

November 1999

No Fixed Penalty Notices were issued.

December 1999

No Fixed Penalty Notices were issued.

January 2000

3 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in respect of 3 employees on 3 employers.
3 Fixed Penalty Notices were paid.

February 2000

2 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in respect of 2 employees on 1 employer.
2 Fixed Penalty Notices were paid.

The provisions are as follows:

- 1) Regulation 8(2a) of the Income Tax (PAYE) Regulations 1989 (Duty to Register).
- 2) Regulation 3 of the Employment Injuries (Contributions) Regulations (Duty to Register).
- 3) Regulation 3 of the Employment Injuries (Contributions) Regulations as applied by Regulation 3(1) of the Social Security (Open Long Term Benefits) (Contributions) Regulations 1997 (Duty to Register).
- 4) Regulation 4 of the Employment Regulations 1994 (Duty to notify Director of vacancy).
- 5) Regulation 6 of the Employment Regulations 1994 (Duty to notify Director of intention to engage an entitled worker).
- 6) Regulation 7 of the Employment Regulations 1994 (Duty to apply to the Director for a permit in relation to a non-entitled worker).
- 7) Regulation 13 of the Employment Regulation 1994 (Duty to notify Director of termination).

NO. 31 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – “PROFILE 2000”

Can Government state if the database “Profile 2000” installed at the Employment Agency is now fully operational?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The database “Profile 2000” is not yet installed at the Employment Services and is not therefore operational.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 31 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I was asking this question precisely because previously I was told that it had been installed but it was not in operation. Is it that it will be installed at the Employment Agency or is that they are still thinking whether they are going to have it or not?

HON H CORBY:

We will have the “Profile 2000”, at the moment it is being tested in the system and when this is done it will be installed late in the summer.

ORAL

NO. 32 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

Can Government state how many of the 1,755 employment survey questionnaires sent to private sector employers on 12th December 1998 have now been returned?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 33 of 2000.

NO. 33 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT SURVEY REPORT

When do Government expect to publish the Employment Survey Report for October 1997 and April 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

One thousand four hundred and seventy-nine of the 1,755 questionnaires sent out have been returned. The Employment Survey Report for October 1997 and April 1998 will be published soon during this meeting of the House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 32 AND 33 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

The Employment Survey Report of 1997/1998 I take it will be based on the PAYE returns as was the case previously?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes. The first occasion on which it is on the new basis is at October 1998.

HON J J BOSSANO:

How close is the publication of the October 1998 information?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I asked the same question a week ago and was told that it will be ready by the time of the Budget meeting of the House.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Can the Chief Minister state if they had any difficulties or they had to remind employers about the questionnaire and that is why there was a short delay?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The delay in the Report for October 1997 and April 1998 has got nothing to do with the questionnaire. It is not based on the questionnaire. The delay in that, such as it has been, ironically has been that because of Government Pay Review complications the Treasury did not send to the Income Tax Office the Government's own Employer's Return. I think the hon Members will find that as a result of the new system these surveys will now be filed much more quickly and at a much more relevant time, I am assured that doing it by questionnaire is quicker than doing it through PAYE Returns because of the time it takes for employers to submit PAYE Returns.

NO. 34 OF 2000THE HON J L BALDACHINO**EMPLOYMENT – WORK PERMITS**

Can Government state the number of work permits issued from 1st July 1999 to the 31st December 1999, giving a breakdown for each month?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The total number of work permits issued was 148. The monthly breakdown requested is as follows:

July	12
August	19
September	26
October	19
November	59
December	13

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 34 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I suppose some of them are renewals not all have been issued to new entrants, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

Yes, that is correct.

NO. 35 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – CONTRACTS

What was the number of employment contracts registered with the Employment Agency in respect of private employers excluding Government-owned and joint venture companies as at 1st October 1998, 1st October 1999, 1st January 1999 and 1st January 2000 giving a breakdown by nationality of employees?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The reply to the question is as follows:

October 1998 8111
January 1999 8136
October 1999 9039
January 2000 9191

Unfortunately, and at this moment in time, our reporting system does not allow us to provide the information as requested broken down by nationality. This information, however, will be made available to the hon Member as soon as it can be retrieved from the reporting system.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 35 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The information I am seeking has been provided before. It could be provided at a later date is that what the Minister is saying?

HON H CORBY:

Yes, I will provide the hon Member with the information at a later date.

NO. 36 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – SELF-EMPLOYED

Can Government state how many persons were registered as self-employed with the Employment Agency on 1st January 2000 and of these, how many commenced registration after 1st January 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Employment Service has not been able to retrieve this information from its computer system. The information will be provided to the hon Member as soon as the technical problems that have been encountered have been overcome. So I will give it in due course.

NO. 37 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED

Can Government give a breakdown of male and female unemployed Gibraltarians aged 18 years and over from 1st July 1999 to the 31st December 1999 receiving:

- (a) unemployment benefits
- (b) social assistance
- (c) no payments?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The information sought in these question is too voluminous to be read out in the House nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I will therefore now hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested in the question.

Answer to question 37/2000

	MALE			FEMALE		
	U/B	S/A	NO PAYMENT	U/B	S/A	NO PAYMENT
JULY	24	60	87	9	27	68
AUGUST	25	54	91	5	28	65
SEPTEMBER	26	60	114	13	25	80
OCTOBER	33	60	98	13	24	60
NOVEMBER	30	57	76	9	28	59
DECEMBER	31	65	72	12	27	38

ORAL

NO. 38 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED

Can Government state what criteria they use to determine who is and who is not a “genuine job seeker”?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 39, 40 and 41 of 2000.

NO. 39 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED

Can Government say in respect of which month in which year did the published unemployment figures first reflect only job seekers deemed to be genuine by the Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 38, 40 and 41 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 40 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED

Can Government state how many persons giving a breakdown by age and sex, were removed from the register in the month the concept of genuine job seekers was first introduced?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 38, 39 and 41 of 2000.

NO. 41 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED

Can Government say whether unemployment benefit is now paid only to genuine job seekers and, if so, since when?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Government have never had any criteria whatsoever to determine who is and who is not a genuine job seeker.

As has always been the case, any person registering as unemployed is required to demonstrate that he or she remains actively seeking employment in order to continue being registered as unemployed. In this respect, the registered unemployed person is required to 'sign on' regularly and attend suitable job interviews as directed by the Employment Service. It is the registered unemployed person's own doing in this connection that will determine his or her continued unemployment registration and hence the lapsing system in place since 1989.

In reference to unemployment benefit entitlement conditions, these have not changed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 38 TO 41 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government then explain why it was that it is only recently that they have introduced the word "genuine" job seekers in the press releases when describing the unemployment level which was never done previously? The word "genuine" job seekers was being introduced as the definition only from a few months ago, what was the reason for doing that if there was no change?

HON J J NETTO:

Clearly because obviously not all those people registered as unemployed are genuine job seekers as being actively seeking employment and available for employment and hence the reason for bringing about that definition.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then if that is a new definition because not everybody that is registered is genuine, then the explanation we have just been given by the Minister for Employment that the system has not changed, has it changed or has it not changed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The system has not yet changed. The system, as our manifesto makes clear, is going to change in that entitlement to certain social security payments will become conditional on complying with the job seekers agreement which has not yet come into effect. The question asks whether it is now paid only to genuine job seekers. The system has not yet changed. When the job seekers agreement is introduced, which has not happened yet, there will be a link between genuine availability for work, between genuine efforts to seek work, between genuine submission to the counselling of the Employment Service staff – attending interviews, submitting proper training opportunities made available, there will be a linkage between all of that and entitlement to the dole. In other words, people who are not genuinely looking for work and who do not genuinely submit to attempt to better prepare them and qualify them for work will no longer be allowed to live indefinitely at taxpayers expense. That is what the job seekers will introduce when it is introduced. It has not yet been introduced and therefore it is not now only paid to genuine job seekers as the question asks.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But that is Question No. 41 and I was asking a supplementary on Question No. 38, the Government chose to answer all of them together. My question was not whether they are being paid unemployment benefit or not because it would not have arisen since we are being told that there is no such thing as a genuine job seeker.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Absolutely, in respect of a genuine job seeker they will always be able to register as unemployed, there is no criteria of genuineness but there are consequences, in other words, there are a number of people, as the hon Member knows, who register as unemployed not because they are seeking work but because it is a pre-condition to obtaining certain social security payments. The consequence of not being a genuine job seeker is not that one cannot register as unemployed and swell the unemployment figures, the consequences are in social security not in whether one can get on to the unemployment register. In other words, we are not expunging from the unemployment statistics people that we judge to be not genuine jobs seekers, if that is the concern that the hon Member has.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, that is the concern and then my question is, if that is the case why is it that when the figure was published for December 1999, the last published figure which was 273, the ETB said, "These are 273 genuine job seekers" which by definition of the explanation that I have just been given would lead one to the conclusion that unlike previous statistics which did not describe the number as genuine job seekers, it included the genuine job seekers and those who were registering for the sake of obtaining benefit. The question arises out of a Government Press Release which says, "There are now 273 genuine job seekers".

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I accept that the hon Member can draw the inference that he has drawn linguistically from the sudden introduction of the adjective "genuine" into a Government Press Release but the position is not as the inference would suggest. In other words, there has been no change in December to the method of calculating the unemployed population for the purposes of the statistics that are published.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In fact then the change that was suggested might happen some two years ago in the House when it was said that, for example, part-time women registering for part-time employment because there was suddenly the possibility of a new shop opening and that has not happened then?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member says that this adjective "genuine" first arose in December. The change to which the hon Member is referring relating to the way part-time workers are treated occurred in June of last year, there has been no change in December in the way the figures are calculated. He has linked the question of change to the sudden appearance of the word "genuine" in a December Press Release. They are two completely different issues. The answer is that there has been no change in December that would justify the sudden appearance of the word "genuine" in a Government Press Release but if he talks about part-time workers about which there is a separate question on the Order Paper, yes there were changes back in June on that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I see, so in fact, it is not true then that the unemployment figures have been calculated as they have always been because there had been a change then that took place earlier.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is a question on the Order Paper.

MR SPEAKER:

These have all been genuine supplementaries.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am glad that you think so, Mr Speaker.

ORAL

NO. 42 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – VACANCIES

Can Government give a breakdown by nationality/industry of vacancies filled for the third and fourth quarter of 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

I hand the hon Member a list giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 42 of 2000

Vacancies Breakdown by Nationalities/Industry Group Table

Date Range : 01/07/99 to 30/09/99

Industry Groups	NATIONALITY GROUP CODES							TOTAL
	GIB	BRI	SPA	POR	MOR	EEC	OTH	
Electricity Supply								
Water Supply	8							8
Shipbuilding etc.	20	5	7	4	1		1	38
Other Manufacture	6	4	3				1	14
Construction	55	79	80	1	11	3	3	229
Wholesale Trade	21	2	6		2	1	2	34
Retail Trade	100	30	66		9	3	1	209
Hotel Trade	10	9	6		3	2		30
Restaurant, Bars, etc	84	50	77	1	9	3	3	227
Repairs of Consumer Goods	10	4	2					16
Sea Transport & Related Services	18		3		1	1		23
Air Transport & Related Services								
Road Transport & Related Services	1		3					4
Post & Telecommunications	9							9
Banking, Finance & Insurance	129	37	25		2	5	3	201
Public Admin. & National Defence	40	4	1					45
Police & Fire Services	13	5		1				19
Sanitary Services			1					1
Education		5	1					6
Medical & Health Services	32	8	2				3	45
Other Services	178	84	37		6	4	7	316
Any Group								
TOTALS	739	322	319	7	44	22	21	1474

Cont.....

Contd Answer to Question 42 of 2000

Vacancies Breakdown by Nationalities/Industry Group Table

Date Range : 01/10/99 to 31/12/99

Industry Groups	NATIONALITY GROUP CODES							TOTAL
	GIB	BRI	SPA	POR	MOR	EEC	OTH	
Electricity Supply	1							1
Water Supply	1							1
Shipbuilding etc.	60	7	13	2	17			99
Other Manufacture	5	1	4		1		3	14
Construction	42	50	51		19	3		165
Wholesale Trade	31	1	7		3	1	1	44
Retail Trade	91	33	56		3		3	186
Hotel Trade	10	4	15		3	8		40
Restaurant, Bars, etc	44	51	60	4	9	5	5	178
Repairs of Consumer Goods	9	9	3					21
Sea Transport & Related Services	3	1			1	2		7
Air Transport & Related Services	3							3
Road Transport & Related Services	9				1			10
Post & Telecommunications	11							11
Banking, Finance & Insurance	63	47	13		1	4	4	132
Public Admin. & National Defence	71	8			1			79
Police & Fire Services	7	3						10
Sanitary Services								
Education	6	8	2					16
Medical & Health Services	8	5					1	14
Other Services	118	73	23	2	11	4	6	237
Any Group								
TOTALS	592	301	247	8	70	27	23	1268

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 42 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

The information on the vacancies compared to the one that has already been provided with the terminations, does this reflect an increase in the numbers employed or is it that the terminations still take longer to come through than the vacancies which obviously happen immediately?

HON J J NETTO:

Bear in mind, we have already mentioned this in the past, figures of terminations, particularly figures of terminations in 1999, not all of them reflect terminations that happened in 1999, they could have happened many years before in 1982 or 1983 or 1984 so therefore one has got to take it, as I have said before, as a result of the efforts of the employment service in the various exercises they have carried out in order to remove from the live data all those files, if one likes, of all those people in employment who had terminated previously.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it not the case that the explanation we were given previously is the opposite of the one we are being given now? That is to say, that when the figures came in late they were then taken back to the actual date when the termination took place because if the Minister will remember, when he gave the figures for 1998 he subsequently gave us corrected figures as a result of late notice of terminations?

HON J J NETTO:

No, let me remind the hon Member, in chasing the Employment Survey, the registration in chasing those terminations that happened in previous years, yes there would have been cases where employers would have said, "Yes, I can give you the specific date in which this termination happened" but in other cases it did not. The employer, if the employer was still there in the first place, may not have given the proper date of termination therefore if the proper date of termination had not been found the registration unit would have put that termination, even though it happened in the previous year, in that particular period he received it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So it means then that in some cases it is taken back where the information is available and not otherwise, is that correct?

HON J J NETTO:

That is correct.

ORAL

NO. 43 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – VACANCIES

Can Government state in respect of each month since 1st September 1999 to the 31st January 2000, how many vacancies were filled in the hotel industry giving nationality and job titles?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in this House nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 43/2000

Vacancies in the Hotel Industry by Nationality and Job Title – 1st September 1999 to 31st December 1999.

TRADE	GIB	BRI	MOR	SPA	ITA	FRE	FIN	TOTAL
WAITER/ESS	2	2	1		1	1		7
CHEF	1	1	1	1				4
BARPERSON		1			1		2	4
MANAGER					1			1
CHAMBERMAID			1	4				5
CREW MEMBER			1	5				6
CLEANER	2		1					3
PORTER	2			2				4
RECEPTIONIST	6							6
LABOURER				3				3
TOTAL	13	4	5	15	3	1	2	43

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 43 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Of the Gibraltarians employed, were any of these employees youngsters who finished the School of Excellence for the hotel industry?

HON H CORBY:

I have not got the information with me but I will enquire and give it to the hon Member later.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I have not had an answer. The question was simply, of the Gibraltarians who have been employed in the hotel industry have any of them come from the School of Excellence?

HON DR B A LINARES:

There is a question from the Hon Mr Linares on the hotel industry to that effect and I have got the figures of how many who have gone through the course in the School of Tourism have obtained jobs in the hotel industry. I will answer that question later when I come across my figures.

ORAL

NO. 44 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – VACANCIES

Can Government state how many of the 513 vacancies registered with the Employment Agency as at the end of August 1999 by offshore betting shops have been filled giving a breakdown by nationalities and sex, in the case of Gibraltarians whether they were registered as unemployed at the time?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 45 to 48 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 45 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – VACANCIES

Can Government state how many of the 5,267 job vacancies filled during 1999 were filled by persons at the time registered unemployed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 44, and 46 to 48 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 46 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – VACANCIES

Can Government state of the 3,040 vacancies filled between January and July 1999, how many were the result of previously unregistered labour already in employment being registered for the first time?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 44, 45, 47 and 48 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 47 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT – VACANCIES

Can Government state of the 2,227 vacancies filled between August and December 1999, how many were the result of previously unregistered labour already in employment being registered for the first time?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 44, 45, 46 and 48 of 2000.

NO. 48 OF 2000THE HON J L BALDACHINO**EMPLOYMENT – NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED**

Can Government state how many of the Gibraltarians employed during the months of July, August, September, October, November and December 1999, were already registered as unemployed with the Employment Agency broken down for each month?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The information requested is not readily available since the Employment Service computer is not set up to report on the basis of the distinctions requested.

Obtaining the information would require a manual analysis of the papers relating to each vacancy. This requires disproportionate administrative effort and resources.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 44 TO 48 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

What is it, that the new computer in the Employment Agency is not able to provide that because this information has been provided before?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The position is this and it will become increasingly the case as the hon Members use Question Time to seek statistics which require, less onerous statistics to put together than this are only published once a year, for example in the Employment Survey. When the hon Member asks about 50 or 60 or 70, Government have in the past gone to the trouble of getting somebody to manually inspect 50, 60 or 70; we could have taken the view about disproportionate effort there as well but when it can be done with a reasonable deployment of resources the trouble has been gone to but when the hon Member asks for information relating to 5,267 vacancies it just is not reasonable to expect the Government, in five or any number of days for that matter, to get 5,000 files looked at to collate the information that the hon Member wants. What the Government are doing is taking note of the sort of information that interests Opposition Members and are trying to adapt our computer programmes so that we are capable of spitting out the information in the form that the hon Members like to receive it. I have no doubt that when we have done that the hon Members will ask a different set of questions with a different set of distinctions that will render our computer programme obsolete. But at the moment we are trying to accommodate it but it cannot be done

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it then that the Government for their own purposes of analysing the effect of jobs do not think that it is useful for their own use, never mind the fact that we are seeking the information, to see how many of the vacancies are resulting in people becoming employed as opposed to people moving from one job to another? That is what the question is about.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government do not think it anymore or less relevant and important than they used to when they were in office because the information requested by these questions is not produced for them when they were in Government. So no, I do not attach any more or less important to that issue than he did.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then given that before it was not the practice to issue Government press releases saying, "The Minister for Employment has commented that the number of jobs that are being created have reduced unemployment" and now it is the practice, how do they know that the number of jobs have reduced unemployment if they do not know how many of the jobs have gone to people who were unemployed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Because we measure unemployment.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, but is it not possible that they may be measuring unemployment because people may have given up registering and not because people have got jobs since they do not know whether they have got jobs?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Unemployment has always been measured, that is the measure of unemployment. When one reads in the newspapers in England that there are 2.5 million unemployed, that is not that there are only 2.5 million people who are out of work, it means that there are 2.5 million who bother to go down to the Labour Office and register with the frequency that the English rules require and that is the system here, it is the system in England, it is the system in Spain, it is the system throughout Europe.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But then one does not go and say, "Because last year 5,000 people got jobs unemployment is down" because they do not know where the 5,000 people who got jobs last year came from.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, we do not say that unemployment is down because last year 5,000 people got jobs. We say that unemployment is down because the system for registering unemployed says that there are fewer people unemployed. This is not something that is deduced from the number of vacancies that get filled, it is deduced as it is deduced everywhere in the world from the fact that the system that exists which is whatever

perfections or imperfections it is consistent and therefore gives a trend, the system that exists for measuring unemployment says that there are fewer people unemployed which is not to say that there are not other people out there who have not got jobs who fall out with the definition in that system but that is true here, in England and throughout the whole of the European Union.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am not questioning that, Mr Speaker. I accept that it is true here and everywhere else and has always been true. All I am saying is that if Chief Minister cares to read the press release issued in respect of the last unemployment figures, the quote that I am quoting is the quote that is there and this is why we have put a question because we have gone back and read the press release.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The more job vacancies that are being registered the more likely it is that, I mean job vacancies are only created for one of two reasons – either suddenly a lot of people are being booted out of their job to be replaced by others in the same job which accounts for some of the figures we have debated but if there is an increase in the number of vacancies being registered and filled, that is likely to mean that it is because there is more economic activity and more jobs being generated in the economy. These are not scientific measures but they are reasonably safe deductions. What one does not know is how many exactly are left, that is why there is a separate measure of unemployment.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Government not accept the fact that the information that was provided before in answer to the same question was for a lower number of people because it covered a shorter period of time? In fact, this question is not asking for more information, it is asking for the same information over more months.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, possibly, when deciding whether the information is too voluminous that might be the explanation. If the hon Member asks for the information in respect of one day I suppose there would be 20 or 30 cases and certainly the Government are willing to have a clerk looking at 20 or 30 files. But if the hon Member asks for it over a very long period of time, necessarily it involves much bigger numbers and therefore much bigger work. I do not want to repeat myself but we hope that at some time in the future we will be able to extract this sort of information by the press of a computer button and then we will all be the wiser.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Mr Speaker, is it correct that the information provided for people who are getting employed who are unemployed is available on a daily basis? Is that correct or not for the employment agency?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, all this information is available. All the information that the hon Members are asking for is contained in several aisles full of files and therefore this is why we do not say the Government do not have the information. It is there, in the files, in a Government Department. What we are saying is that to extract that information from the manual records is a massive exercise and if the hon Member knows what the rules are in relation to answering questions in the House when they require disproportionate resources and administrative effort.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I accept that Mr Speaker, that the Government Members or any Government will not provide things which are voluminous and labour-intensive to provide information but if the information is provided on a daily basis on the computer and the computer has the information then obviously the information can be brought out in any shape or form.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This could easily become the conversation of the deaf and the dumb because I suspect that we are as uncomputerate as one another. My knowledge of computers is very limited but not all the information that one puts into a computer can be extrapolated. Computers report back information depending upon how they have been programmed, not depending on whether the information is in its memory chip or in its databank. One has got to programme a computer, one can put in a computer every number plate in Gibraltar, one can put into a computer the colour of every car in Gibraltar but if one wants the computer to tell at some future date what the colour of the car is that has a particular number plate which in fact the Police computer is so programmed, one has to programme it. One has to set up the programme initially so that when the computer receives the raw material it stores it in a way which enables it to retrieve it in that form in the future. That requires computer programming. These computers are not programmed in that way. We are trying to programme them in that way so that this information will be readily available when the hon Member asks it in the future.

ORAL

NO.49 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT - NEW ENTRANTS

Can Government state how many of the British nationals employed in the months of July, August, September, October, November and December 1999 were new entrants to the local labour market broken down by each month?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 50 and 51 of 2000.

ORAL

NO.50 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT - NEW ENTRANTS

Can Government state of the 224 Moroccan nationals employed between January 1999 to December 1999 how many were new entrants to the local labour market?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Answered together with Question Nos. 49 and 51 of 2000.

NO.51 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

EMPLOYMENT - NEW ENTRANTS

Can Government state how many of the 118 Spanish Nationals employed in the month of July, of the 82 in August, the 109 in September, the 101 in October, 105 in November and the 42 in December 1999 were new entrants to the local labour market broken down for each month?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The information sought by these questions is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore now hand the hon Member tables giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 51 of 2000

QUESTION 49

British Nationals employed who were new entrants in the local labour market are as follows:

July	93
August	80
September	78
October	91
November	87
December	38

QUESTION 50

14 Moroccan Nationals were new entrants to the local labour market.

QUESTION 51

Spanish nationals employed who were new entrants to the labour market are as follows :

July 1999	101
August 1999	75
September 1999	96
October 1999	84
November 1999	87
December 1999	39

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS.49, 50 AND 51 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

In Question No. 50, where it asks about Moroccan nationals, I know that the Government had a programme or an agreement where people would have been paid to leave Gibraltar. How is it that 14 new ones have been allowed to enter? I suppose these nationals were not the ones that were already here? These are 14 new ones that have come in. Are there any special circumstances why?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There are two reasons for that. One is that I am aware of one or two exceptional cases where for particular skills new Moroccans have been allowed to come to Gibraltar physically. It may not fall into this period but the main source, there are not that many that fall into that category, the main source is likely to be people that have been in Gibraltar for some years but have never formed part, their new entrance into the labour market in terms of official records but not necessarily new entrants into Gibraltar because there has been an element of regularisation of the status of people that were in Gibraltar illegally but for many years. As far as the administration is concerned they are new entrants into the labour market but not new entrants into Gibraltar.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I do not know if the Minister has got the information, but it has been brought to my notice that some of the Moroccan nationals that are employed are having problems in getting their Civilian Registration Card by the Immigration Office, could this have been the people that are actually affected by that? They have been given a Work Permit but they are having problems in getting their Civilian Registration Card which does not seem logical in a sense.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, the Civilian Registration Card has nothing to do with the Immigration. The Civilian Registration Cards are issued by the head of the Civil Status and Registration Office. What there is, is a delay which the Government have resolved but I recognise the issue that the hon Member has touched on which is that obviously the view that this Government take and I suppose it is the same view that the previous Government used to take that residence is a Defined Domestic Matter and that when the local Government see fit to give an Employment Permit or indeed decide that a Moroccan should have a Residence Permit, that is a matter decided by the Government and the papers go up to the Principal Immigration Officer who is the man who has got to sign off the Residence Permit but that he is doing that as an official. Being a Defined Domestic Matter it is axiomatic that if the Government gives an Employment Permit that a residence permit must issue automatically. There has been a short period of time during which that contention was being resisted but it is not longer being resisted.

NO. 52 OF 2000THE HON J L BALDACHINO**EMPLOYMENT - NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED**

Can Government state if the unemployment figure of 273 Gibraltarians for December 1999 includes persons looking for part-time jobs?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The unemployment figure for December 1999 includes a total of 18 people who were seeking part-time work only.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 52 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that the previous comment in June last year that part-timers were removed means that it was discontinued in December?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker. The Government believe that people who are not seeking full-time employment should not be treated and recorded in the same way as people who are seeking full time employment. Therefore, back in May and June the Government took the decision that people who were seeking part-time work only were not, since they are not seeking full-time employment under the definitions in the Ordinance, they should not be included in the unemployment figure. But the wretched computer, the one that we have been lamenting for the last dozen questions is incapable of implementing that Government decision because of the way information and things are recorded. What actually happens is that people who go to the ETB saying, "I am looking for work but I am only interested in working in the mornings or some form of part time" are put into the computer. They are carried in the computer for a month and a half or two and then the computer lapses them whether they carry on registering or not. That is the actual situation. So, at any given month there will be a number of people who are looking for part-time work only included in the unemployment figure but only because the computer has not yet had an opportunity to spit them off for reasons that have nothing to do with that they have actually found part-time work. Therefore, there is an element of part-time in the unemployment figure but the hon Member should not interpret from the answers that he has had to this Question that there are only 18 people at the moment who have gone to the ETB in search of part-time work. There are 18 people who have fallen into that category over the last one and a half or two months and whom the computer has not yet spat out. When they spit this lot out they will carry some people who may register for the first time seeking part-time work this month and next month. It is a computer problem. The underlying policy is that the full time unemployment figure should relate to people who are seeking full-time employment. That is the definition.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So then if that was the policy that was taken in June but not announced, it means that the figures post-June are not strictly comparable with those before June 1999 because before June 1999 that policy was not in effect?

HON J J NETTO:

It is true to an extent, that is right. I think that the original answer by the Minister said there had never been a criteria. All these issues have been very subjective to the person in the front line of the job centre in terms that on some occasions, even when the hon Members were in Government, the person on the front line at the job centre would say, "I do not deem this particular person..." In his own subjective interpretation or definition, "I do not interpret this person to be available..." "available" meaning available for 39 hours, as it is defined not by us, by the ILO and European policy, and may have included him or not included him. The truth of the matter is that as the employment service has been developing, as it has been consolidating, as people have been further trained, as people have been seconded to UK and vice versa, we have realised that we are not here re-inventing the wheel so to speak when we talk about what is available for work and what is actively seeking employment.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, this is a very interesting philosophical discussion but it is not the information that we are seeking. Would the Minister not agree that in fact when we questioned if there was a change in the way the figure was calculated the Government's response was that no change had taken place. In fact a change had taken place from June. Is it possible to know therefore how many people were removed after June as a result of what happened for the first time in June?

HON J J NETTO:

The Minister can find out and let the hon Member know.

HON J J BOSSANO;

Because in fact it would seem that many of the issues raised in the relation to the genuine job seeker in Question Nos. 39 to 47 would apply to this change as opposed to the one that we have thought had taken place in January. Perhaps, in the light of that the Minister can look at those Questions and see if he can provide us with that information in relation to what happened in June as opposed to what we thought had happened in January.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

If somebody goes to the Employment Agency and says, "I want to put my name down for a part-time job", what happens then? Is it fed into the computer?

HON J J NETTO:

Nothing happens at all. That is to say, the employer may decide that he needs someone to do part-time work. That vacancy is registered in the Employment Service. That vacancy is in the knowledge of the Employment Officer. That vacancy is displayed in the Display Room of the Employment Services. People are free to

walk in regardless of the fact that they may chose to sign or not sign the unemployment card. People are free to go and seek information so nothing happens in relation to that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

When the people are lapsed after one and a half months because of the computer, does the service keep a distinction between those who are lapsed because they really are lapsed and those who are lapsed because they have sort of fallen out at the end of the two months?

HON J J NETTO:

I understand that they do.

NO.53 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

KING'S BASTION

Can Government give an indication as to when they expect works to commence at the site of the old King's Bastion Generating Station for its conversion to a Leisure Centre?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.53 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Will the Government give a commitment that it will be done during this term of office? Within four years?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

The intentions of the Government are to start the Leisure Centre as soon as it is practical and to finish it as soon as it is possible. That should be within this term of office.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Am I correct in assuming that the Minister is saying that they expect the Leisure Centre to be finished within the first term of office?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, it means exactly what I said.

HON J C PEREZ:

We can take it then that what the Minister is indicating is that in not being able to give an indication of when that work is going to commence, it is because it is not a priority of the Government in its list of priorities for the four year term of office?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

No, Mr Speaker. It does not mean that at all. It is very much a priority and it is very much something that the Government are actively working on but at the moment the Government have not made a policy decision on how the conversion of the Bastion is going to be carried out, whether it is going to be on the lines of the Casemates project or some variation of the Casemates project, that is the first decision that needs to be taken. There is a fair amount of consultation and study that needs to be done on the Heritage aspects of it and there is a fair amount of consultation with

private sector interested parties, the combination of all of which have to come together into a form that the Government can then make a decision on and follow. I reiterate what I said at the beginning, it is very much a priority for the Government.

HON J C PEREZ:

Given all the consultations that need to take place, it could be possible that the Government decide not to have the Leisure Centre there after the consultation process takes place? Are we still at that stage, that it might be that the Leisure Centre is not built there because of the consultation process and the things that need to be studied and the people that need to be consulted?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, to a certain extent it is a hypothetical question. At the moment it is a manifesto commitment. It has been announced that it is going to be there and there is nothing signalling that it will not be there but if tomorrow there was an earthquake and the Bastion collapsed then it might be necessary to change one's lines. By the same token, everything can change but at the moment there is no indication or intent or plans to depart from the manifesto commitment.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it intended to carry out any work in clearing up part of that area even in anticipation of this or is it just going to stay as it is?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

There are plans to carry out demolition inside the Bastion, of the old buildings. I am not sure whether it is about to start or will start in the next financial year. There was provision in this financial year but there was a problem because asbestos was found and this delayed the demolition. But that can go ahead without the final decision being made, it is really the clearing of the area.

HON J C PEREZ:

That will go ahead once the few people that still operate from there are moved to the new premises by the Piccadilly Gardens, no?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

The demolition I was referring to does not affect anybody who is working there. At the moment there are very few people working there. Off the top of my head it is less than five. The Electricity Department people that were working in the offices there moved into the Power Station almost a year ago and it is only the blacksmiths and one or two of the stores in the vaults that are occupied. I am talking about the demolition of other areas within the Bastion.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Am I correct in assuming that because of what the Minister has said that the Leisure Centre will not be Government run?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

I do not see anything that I have said that gives such indication, neither does it give an indication to the contrary. I have said nothing on that subject at all.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm whether it will be Government run or not?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

No, Mr Speaker.

NO. 54 OF 2000THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GIFSA - PREMISES**

Can Government state whether they are willing to provide alternative premises to local fishermen close to the Waterport?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

Government have held meetings with the Gibraltar Federation of Sea Anglers (GIFSA), the governing body of the sport in Gibraltar, and with the Gibraltar Branch of the European Federation of Sea Anglers (EFSA) at the request of the Fishing Associations to discuss their needs for premises in relation to the use by both associations of the EFSA premises at Queensway close to the Waterfront. Further discussion is required before Government are able to take a decision to change the existing arrangements.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 54 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm whether an area has indeed been identified?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

A decision has not been made. An area cannot be identified. The position is very clear, EFSA and GIFSA as I have said in answer to the question came to see me and they said "premises that we hold we think are small and we think we need larger premises, preferably near the waterfront but not necessarily". I have asked them for further information and I have asked them to justify the claim that they have made and looking at what they have asked for eventually a decision will be made. We have not made a decision so we cannot possibly identify an area.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Have GIFSA and EFSA requested that the site should be near the sports city that will be built at the Victoria Stadium area?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

That was discussed as a possibility, Mr Speaker, but I repeat we have still not made a decision so therefore we are nowhere near designating an area.

NO.55 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GFA

Can Government state whether they are prepared to provide the Gibraltar Football Association with a football pitch?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 55 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Why not, Mr Speaker?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

The Government assessed the needs of all sports associations on the advice received from the Sports Advisory Council. On that advice the reclamation that is being done at the Stadium has been earmarked in a certain way based on that advice and that advice does not include another football pitch.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Have the Gibraltar Football Association made representations to the Government that they would like to be provided with a football pitch?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

No, as a matter of fact they have not. Individual members may have expressed that wish and I have no doubt that the GFA as a whole would love to get another football pitch but the reality is that by providing a hockey pitch on the newly-reclaimed land at the Stadium the hockey fraternity will move out of the Victoria Stadium main pitch as it stands now and the allocations that they give up will in effect mean that the GFA by and large will be doubling their allocations. Secondly, on the newly-reclaimed facilities there will be general purpose facilities built which will allow for football training and for the playing of football. On an overall basis this plan was decided by the Sports Advisory Council to be the best solution available in that it created a new hockey pitch to international standards which is not available now on the main pitch. It increased virtually doubled, the football allocation possibilities and slots on the existing pitch and as and when the Government are able to pull through the hand-over of the Europa pitches, it will enable the Cricket Association to permanently take up Europa as a home for cricket. That in itself will also improve football's position on the main pitch. That is Government's policy, based on the advice received from the Sports Advisory Council on which there are members of the GFA and that is the policy that we are following.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I believe that the GFA will not be able to use the new hockey pitch that will be built at the new sports city?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

That is like asking whether the aerobic dancers be able to use an ice skating rink. The answer is no, but not because we do not allow them to use them but because the surface is not suitable for football.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Why have the Government deemed it necessary then to provide the hockey association with a new hockey pitch when there are in fact more people playing football than there are playing hockey?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

Mr Speaker, it goes back to what I said at the beginning. The position was studied and this is the advice of the Sports Advisory Council and to nit-pick on the supplementary question of the hon Member, the Government are not supplying the hockey association, we are supplying Gibraltar with a standard of hockey pitch that is not available now, that will enable hockey in Gibraltar to be played at a standard and at a level which is European and international which will enable Gibraltar to host events at that level which it is not able to do now. It will enable Gibraltar to bring hockey teams to Gibraltar at a standard and at a level to play tournaments and host those tournaments that we cannot do now because we do not have the facility. That is the Government's policy.

NO. 56 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

VICTORIA STADIUM - ARTIFICIAL SURFACES

Can Government confirm what life-span the artificial surfaces now have at the Victoria Stadium in relation to its main pitch?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

It is estimated that the artificial turf and the athletics track in the entirety of the Stadium's main pitch has a minimum life-span of three to four years, to good playing standards.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 56 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

There are quite a number of worn areas around the pitch, can the Minister confirm that these will be replaced as soon as possible?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

Routine and special maintenance is carried out at the Stadium as and when it is necessary. At the moment the conditions of the pitches and the track are to good playing standards. If they deteriorate they will be improved to keep it at that standard.

ORAL

NO. 57 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

ELECTRICITY ARREARS

Can Government state what was the level of electricity arrears as at 31st January 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

The level of electricity arrears as at 31st January 2000 was £6,142,253.24.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 57 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister aware whether this is an increase over the same figure last year?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

No, Mr Speaker, I am afraid I do not have that information available here.

ORAL

NO. 58 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

ELECTRICITY BILLINGS

Can Government state what has been the value of electricity billings in the current financial year up to 31st January 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

Bills for electricity issued for the current financial year and up to the 31st January 2000 amounted to £7,962,764.12.

NO. 59 OF 2000THE HON J C PEREZ**ELECTRICITY ARREARS**

Can Government state how much electricity arrears has been collected in the period 1st September 1999 to the 31st January 2000, and of the total, how much was collected by Land Property Services, by the Central Arrears Unit and by Lyonnaise Des Eaux?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

The total amount collected in electricity charges during the period 1st September 1999 to 31st January 2000 was £3.57 million. Of this, £12,000 was collected by Land Property Services Ltd and £113,000 was collected by the Central Arrears Unit. The remaining £3.45 million was collected by Lyonnaise Des Eaux Ltd.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 59 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

But the question does not refer to electricity charges, it refers to electricity arrears.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly the figures relating to the amounts collected by the Central Arrears Unit and by LPS obviously relate only to arrears. It would seem that the question has been misunderstood by whoever drafted the answer.

HON J C PEREZ:

It would seem by the information available that there is no improvement from the figures given to us over the last year on the effort that the Minister mentioned on the collection of arrears in electricity. Is that correct, is it a new initiative or is the situation as stalemate as it was a year ago?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I suppose there is two things that I can say. One is that the Central Arrears Unit is gradually spreading its wings and is dedicating increasing amounts of time to the collection of arrears of electricity and things of the sort. There is an improvement in the amount of arrears that are being collected generally. Whether that improvement is more or less or exists or not in respect of electricity specifically but I think hon Members will find that the Principal Auditor will recognise that there are now serious and, to an extent, successful efforts being made in relation to arrears.

On the other aspects, which we sometimes debate when we debate this issue and that is LPS's role in this matter, we are engaged with LPS in a very broad-ranging discussion about how the whole contractual arrangement between LPS and Government might be changed to the mutual advantage obviously by negotiation and

by agreement of both parties. In those discussions it has been taken for granted by both sides, in other words, it is already agreed that LPS will be surrendering any involvement in the collection of electricity arrears in exchange for other things that they want.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can I ask whether LPS and the Central Arrears Unit are only collecting arrears prior to the coming into being of the Lyonnaise Des Eaux or at what stage does Lyonnaise Des Eaux deem the bill to be an arrear and pass it on to the Central Arrears Unit?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

A year I think is the rule of thumb. Usually, the Central Arrears Unit comes across electricity arrears in one or two ways, either because Lyonnaise passes it on on the basis of one year or otherwise because a particular company comes to the attention of the Central Arrears Unit perhaps in relation to income tax or PAYE arrears.

NO. 60 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

IRISH TOWN - PEDESTRIANISATION

What parts, if any, of the Irish Town pedestrianisation works, including Tuckey's Lane, Market Lane and Parliament Lane, have now been passed on to the Government by the Contractor?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

The following streets on or bounding Irish Town, have now been completed and accepted back by the Government:

- i. Tuckey's Lane;
- ii. Market Lane;
- iii. Irish Town south, from its junction with Market Lane to its junction with Parliament Lane;
- iv. Parliament Lane from its junction with Main Street to its junction with Irish Town, including Parliament Lane cul-de-sac but excluding the Junction between Irish Town and Parliament Lane.

The contractor is currently working in the following areas:

- i. Irish Town north from its junction with Parliament Lane up to Fish Market;
- ii. Irish Steps.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 60 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

So I take it then that the problems associated with the neighbours at Tuckey's Lane has now been resolved and what the Government termed as the furnishings which was the plants and the benches have now been erected and the places mentioned by the Minister are now finished and accepted back by the Government as complete?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

My understanding is that the flooding problems that the hon Member has identified have been addressed. However, there are still a few minor details that have to be put in place in the area of Tuckey's Lane. I believe those are the actual lighting itself. Although everything is up there are still some fittings to be concluded and I think in the case of Irish Town there is still some street furniture which are awaiting arrival. It is a matter of putting them in place, so subject to those details the project will have been completed.

HON J C PEREZ:

When the Minister says, "now they have taken over", has he got a particular date? Or is it different dates for different parts of it?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

The works at Irish Town north are about 25 per cent complete and the programme completion date.....

HON J C PEREZ:

What has been already accepted by the Government?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

No, not really. As my Colleague has said there are a few minor details. In principle, the pedestrianisation works as far as the ground is concerned have been accepted and it is just a question of adding a bench here or there. It is imminent, I think it is probably the best answer I can give the hon Member.

HON J C PEREZ:

The hon Member has said that the Government have now accepted back the works. I ask him whether he has got a date for the acceptance, or whether it all comes back together or at different intervals?

MR SPEAKER:

No one knows.

NO.61 OF 2000THE HON J C PEREZ**NYNEX/LYONNAISE**

Have Gibraltar Nynex and Lyonnaise des Eaux concluded their discussions on the possibility of each other's Customer Services Centres being able to collect payments for both services?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

Lyonnaise des Eaux and Nynex have concluded their discussions on the possibility of using each other's customer services counters to collect payments for both services. There are problems with compatibility of IT systems which would not enable the provision of acceptable customer services and therefore it is not possible to proceed with this further at present.

It continues to be part of company policy to continuously improve the payment facilities offered to customers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 61 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Am I right in saying that at one stage another possibility for Nynex which seems to be the one that people keep complaining about was to have a Nynex employee at the Gibtel office in Main Street collecting there, has that been looked at? I presume that the problem of the computers will be the serious impediment to such an arrangement?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

A number of points arise out of that supplementary. First of all I have never accepted in this House, and the hon Member and I have disagreed on this, that there is large scale public complaints or concerns about there not being a Nynex collection facility in the centre of town. The second point is that the incompatibility of the computer systems is as between Lyonnaise and Nynex. I am not aware whether there is, there may or may not be, I am not aware whether there is one between Gibtel and Nynex. What I can tell the hon Member is that even if there have been some feedback compliance about one of the companies that we are talking about, it has been on Nynex since Nynex moved from Leanse House to Europort. With Lyonnaise there has never been any indication of any problems so Lyonnaise are happy to stay the way they are.

Nynex, not having succeeded in coming to an arrangement with Lyonnaise which would have been reciprocal because Lyonnaise would have been able to put facilities in Europort as well, what Nynex is putting into place for a trial period of three months and in anticipation of the hon Member's question I do not know as from when, but again, it is imminent, within the next month or six weeks, what it is putting into place is a trial arrangement for three months of collection facilities for Old Age Pensioners

from the Post Office in Main Street. That would be a trial facility but it will, unfortunately, coincide with the move out of the Post Office counters during the refurbishment of the Post Office so we may have to alter the timing to make sure that it is a trial the effects of which or the results of which can be properly evaluated and not stopped half way because of the transfer of the facilities elsewhere.

HON J C PEREZ:

Although most of the people that complain are indeed Old Age Pensioners, would the Minister consider that if this trial is actually put into effect at the Main Street Post Office not to limit it to Old Age Pensioners only? Usually the big customers and the business community would do so by post anyway and it would only be facilitating it to other people who are not Old Age Pensioners and it might be easier for them to pay at the Post Office than at the office at Europort.

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

I think that we can lose sight of the fact that this is essentially a commercial company and it is not directly the Government whom is running this facility. At the end of the day it is a commercial decision by the company of where it puts its collection facilities. The position of the company has been throughout that it does not accept, because it has no evidence and neither has it had the feedback, either verbal, by telephone or in writing, of any degree of large scale or even medium scale feedback from the public as to this facility. I think we would have to leave it to Gibraltar Nynex to make the assessment and then make its own decision at management board level within the company. What the hon Member is saying is wishful thinking. If we could provide a collection office for every single collection service, be it telephone, water, rates, electricity in every housing estate in the south district and in the north district, yes of course, people would be delighted because they would have to walk ten metres instead of walking 200 or 500 metres or even a kilometre. The realities of life are that one cannot have offices everywhere.

HON J C PEREZ:

I think it is generally understood by the Minister that I am not asking what he is suggesting. But, if indeed what the trial period is, is to open the office in Main Street for Old Age Pensioners only there seems to be a recognition by the company which the Minister does not want to accept that there is indeed a real problem since if there was not a real problem people would not use the Post Office alternative when it is opened and there would not be a need to restrict it to Old Age Pensioners only. I accept that it is a commercial decision by the company but it is a public service that they are giving. I am here telling the Minister that the public is complaining about that which the Minister does not accept. I wish the Minister to pass on my remarks to the company in their deliberations. I think that if they are going to put a person in the middle of town collecting bills for a particular sector of the community, there is nothing wrong for other sectors of the community to take advantage of that situation in order to be able to use the facility nearer and more practical than the ones that they have now.

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

We could debate this ad nauseam. I have asked the hon Member before and I will say it again. If the hon Member has tangible evidence of large scale complaints, let him produce names and addresses and I will pass them over to the company and tell them where those complaints are. If the company itself does not have more, and I

say it again, more than a handful of people who have indicated concern because the collection facilities are now not in Leanse House and in Europort. If there is evidence to the contrary in the hands of the hon Member which is I say again not in the hands of myself, and not in the hands of the company, then I will urge him to produce it, to give it to me or to give it to the company direct.

Secondly, the point is that the facility that is going to be extended in the Post Office is aimed at Old Age Pensioners because whenever we have talked about this and it is there and the pressure from me and not because the company want to do it because they do not feel the need for it. What the company is saying is if anybody needs this facility it is the Old Age Pensioners who would have to walk the further distance if they do not have the transport. Therefore, that is why they are going to provide the service, as an extension of its policy of providing good service, making it available for people who need it. The company I understand does not see the need to extend it further than that. Maybe in the light of a test trial period they may think otherwise, but I say again what I said at the beginning essentially it is a commercial matter and for the company to decide.

HON J C PEREZ:

I receive complaints about this very regularly. If the Minister wants evidence then I will probably draw up a petition and sit down in the Piazza and tell people who would like to see an office in the centre of town to sign up. It is incredible that one raises the issue here and then the Minister says that he wants tangible evidence of the complaints one gets that one honestly puts here. The Minister is being unreasonable. There is a recognition already that what I am saying is true by the fact that there is going to be a provision in the Post Office for Old Age Pensioners so I do not see what the Minister is trying to say by "tangible evidence".

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the hon Member raised a petition I do not think he would have any difficulty getting many signatures but it would not reflect concern. It would reflect preference, because I may not be concerned about having to go and pay my bills at Europort but if somebody else prefers to have to go all the way down to Europort that would not be an expression of concern, it would be an expression of preference. Certainly, the hon Member is not being rational in that respect. Providing this service in the Post Office has a resource and cost implication to the Government and certainly what the Government are not going to do is relieve our 50 per cent shareholder partner from sharing in the cost of collecting his revenue. The suggestion that we should renationalise at taxpayers' expense the revenue collection service of Nynex is not acceptable. That would be the effect of doing it in the Post Office because these are costs that the Government..... unless we could charge them a fee, but if one pays the Government a fee to collect on their behalf they might as well open their own office in the centre of town.

Despite what the hon Member has said, he will not mind in bringing his suggestion to the attention of the Board again. What the Government are not going to do is provide a general collection service in the Post Office at taxpayers' expense.

HON J C PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I have not asked the Government to provide an office. What I am saying is that there are complaints from Nynex customers about the accessibility of their office and what I am asking is for Nynex to make the alternative arrangements where

the two shareholders are the same ones. I took it to be that the alternative being looked at at the Post Office was going to be provided by Nynex and not by the Government, frankly. I am not asking the Government to spend money to provide it. I am asking Nynex who is the one earning the revenue from those customers, to provide a facility to allow people to pay. I would expect them to be eager to do that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member must know that there are problems of a different sort about private companies operating side by side with civil servants in the Post Office. I do not know how successfully these discussions are going but certainly there is not in the Post Office, even if it could be agreed with Post Office staff, sufficient space capacity to enable Nynex to replicate in the Post Office all the collection facilities and working space for all their collection staff to deploy in the Post Office the collection service that they are now deploying elsewhere.

HON J C PEREZ:

That means that what the Minister said that they were going to provide it for Old Age Pensioners is now not going to happen because of those problems? He is the one that has told me that there is going to be a Post Office counter and the Chief Minister has just told me that it is not possible.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

One needs less facilities to provide the service for a limited number of people than for everybody. The hon Member must understand that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it the case that there is going to be a Nynex employee in the Post Office doing the collecting or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There are no proposals, there is nothing that can be discussed in public. There is a discussion taking place to explore the possibility of doing it this way. This is what is going on. There is no agreement. It is not going to necessarily happen. It is being considered and discussed.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then in fact the original answer was incorrect because the original answer was that it had been decided and that the only thing was that the commencement date of the trial period was in doubt because of changes taking place in the Post Office. That is the answer we have been given. The last answer is in conflict with the first answer.

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

What I said and I have got it written here in front of me is Nynex is presently arranging for the collection of telephone bills to be made from the Post Office for a trial period of six months.

HON J J BOSSANO:

So it is being decided and it is going ahead and we do not know when it is going to start?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

No, Mr Speaker. "At present arranging" means as the Chief Minister has just said, talking to the Post Office and trying to see whether the arrangements can be made. There is a difference between doing it and presently arranging it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

What we are being told is it might not happen after all?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer is that the Government have not yet approved it and then it could not possibly happen until the Government approves it.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But it is not as originally indicated that the problem was not one of whether the policy was that it should happen or that it should not but that there might be a problem of logistics because of changes in the refurbishment of the Post Office. That is the only reason we have been given so far.

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

I think I have given all the information I can give and we are going over old ground. Let me just define it once and for all. The company does not accept that there is a need to do this and the pressure from me within the Board and despite what the hon Member said because he keeps bringing it up and I take it up with the Board, they have said "we will try and find ways of doing it". They tried with Lyonnaise, it has not been possible. They are now trying to do it within the Post Office. They tried to do it in other places but they are trying it as a trial basis in trying to make the arrangements. But they do not agree that it is necessary but they are trying to have a trial period. If it succeeds there will be a trial period if they do not succeed there will not be a trial period. It is as simple as that.

ORAL

NO.62 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

POTABLE WATER

What was the supply and billing of potable water, in cubic metres, during 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

1999 figures are as follows:

Total supply from reservoirs	1,115,587 cubic metres
Total billed	992,521 cubic metres

NO.63 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

NYNEX/GIBTEL/LYONNAISE - ACCOUNTS

Can Government state when the accounts of Nynex, Gibtel and Lyonnaise des Eaux will be published?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

Gibraltar Nynex Communications Ltd, Gibraltar Telecommunications Ltd and Lyonnaise Des Eaux will comply with the Companies (Accounts) Ordinance 1999, which transports into law the European Union Fourth and Seventh directives dealing with the preparation and filing of company accounts.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.63 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Does that mean that the compliance is during the coming year, or have they got options?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

If I quote from the law it says "for a public company 10 months after the end of that year, for a private company 13 months after the end of the relevant financial year".

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say which is going to be the first financial year in respect of which this will happen?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

In terms of Gibtel and Lyonnaise the financial year is the 31st March 2001 and in the case of GNC it is the financial year ending the 31st December 2001. That is the first year for which accounts are publishable.

ORAL

NO. 64 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

NYNEX - TELEPHONE NUMBERS

How many of the 2,330 telephone numbers available to Nynex in May 1999 have now been used up and how many are left?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

Answered together with Question Nos. 65, 66 and 67 of 2000.

ORAL

NO.65 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

GIBTEL/NYNEX - TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Can Government state whether Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex have sufficient telephone numbers to meet customer demand over the current calendar year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

Answered together with Question Nos. 64, 66 and 67 of 2000.

ORAL

NO.66 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

GIBTEL/NYNEX - MERGER

Will Government say what the state of play is between the shareholders of Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex over the proposed merger of the two companies?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

Answered together with Question Nos. 64, 65 and 67 of 2000.

NO.67 OF 2000THE HON J C PEREZ**GIBTEL/NYNEX**

Can Government state whether there have been any new developments since February last year over the cases put to the EU Commission by Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex respectively?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

There have been new developments since February last year over the cases put to the EU Commission by Gibtel and Gibraltar Nynex, but it would not be either in the commercial interests of these companies or in Gibraltar's national interest for these developments to be publicly disclosed at this moment in time.

Of the 2,330 numbers available to Gibraltar Nynex in May 1999, a total of 1,080 numbers have been allocated as at the end of February 2000, leaving a total of 1,250 numbers unallocated. It is estimated that it will take GNC some 14 months to completely exhaust this supply. In order to delay as much as possible the date by which Gibtel would run out of numbers, it was decided to shorten from five to three months the period allowed before recycling churned numbers. Since the 22nd February 2000, Gibtel has been able to offer service to new customers only by using churned numbers and the situation currently is that 40 new numbers will be available to be recycled with effect from 1st April and 50 new numbers with effect from 1st May.

The state of play as between the shareholders of the two companies is that discussions continue to explore the possibility of a combination of the businesses.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 64, 65, 66 AND 67 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Would the Minister bear with me and explain to me what is the numbers that have been used by Gibtel?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

The period allowed before recycling churned numbers..... [*HON J C PEREZ: Churned?*] Churned numbers are numbers that have been used before and are going to be used again. Since 22nd February Gibtel has been using churned numbers only and with effect from 1st April it will have 40 new numbers available and from 1st May 50 new numbers available.

HON J C PEREZ:

Would those new numbers come from the present allocation to Nynex or will they come from the MOD?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

I think the hon Member has not appreciated what I mean by churned. Gibtel has run out of numbers as at 22nd February. Obviously numbers become available as people stop their accounts or give up their telephones. One has to allow a period of time which up to recently was five months and that has been shortened to three months so that if one gets a new telephone number one does not start getting wrong numbers to whoever had the telephone numbers before. Using that predicted churn, Gibtel has available with effect from the end of this month 40 new numbers and with effect from 1st April another 50 new numbers.

HON J C PEREZ:

But those churned numbers would not involve Nynex and they are now going to Gibtel, or they are direct Gibtel customers that are terminating their number and getting another one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

These are Gibtel numbers that would normally be churned for a longer period of time. Numbers are normally reused but only four or five months after they were surrendered by the previous users to create a period during which the friends of the previous users stop ringing them on it. What is happening now is that the numbers are being used with a much shorter sanitisation period.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can one take it that the developments that are taking place in Europe have a bearing on the question of whether there are sufficient numbers?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

The developments have a bearing on the resolution of the cases in the long term and on the next stage of the cases in the short term. The cases aim at having more numbers on a more permanent basis.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister satisfied that the resolution of the cases will be found before one has to take steps to overcome the problems with the numbers which are already becoming a problem, the shortage of numbers?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, we are not. An enormous amount of pressure is being placed, both legally and politically directly and through the United Kingdom, but at the end of the day the interim solution is entirely on the hands of the Commission. There is nothing that we can do to accelerate the imposition by the Commission of an interim solution on Telefonica. Therefore, it may well be that numbers run out here before those interim measures impact in order to relieve the number shortage. The situation is potentially very serious and it may be necessary to take alternative measures before the interim solutions are imposed that impact to alleviate the problem.

HON J C PEREZ:

Will the Minister commit himself to do what he did the last time I raised the matter and update me on a confidential basis of the position with these two cases in the EU?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

Yes, Mr Speaker. I am quite prepared to do that and advise the hon Member on a confidential basis.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the position is then in answer to Question 65, that Gibtel no longer has sufficient numbers to meet demand, I take it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, that is not strictly the case today. It is currently meeting demand but by using numbers that it would not normally be using. It is meeting demand by using numbers that it would normally place to one side until they were cleansed, so to speak, from the sphere of influence of the previous subscriber that had that number. For example, if the hon Member has a mobile telephone and he changes his mind and decides to hand it in to Gibtel, that is a number that is available to Gibtel to allocate to another subscriber, to the next chap that comes in. But normally that number is not given to the next chap that walks in through the door. It is put to one side, left for a few months to one side and when it is given to a new customer, the 'phone is not constantly ringing with somebody saying "hola, Joe" at the other end. Those are the numbers that they are now using, much sooner than they would normally use them. They are meeting demand but by using numbers which they would not normally be using so quickly after being surrendered by their previous user.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I have understood all that, Mr Speaker. I know that he sometimes begins to put it in words of one syllable for my simple mind but my point is the relationship between supply and demand. Is this sufficient to meet the demand? Is there a backlog of people waiting for this to happen? Are the churned numbers enough to meet the demand?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is for the time being but it may not be for very much longer because the churn rate may fall. At the moment it is touch and go. At the moment there is nobody who wants a mobile 'phone and not getting one, albeit that they are having to use a number which has not been cleansed and which gets all these calls which results in complaints from the new customers to Gibtel. What there is, is some delay because if there was an application today Gibtel may not have a number today. They may have one at the end of the month when somebody has given notice that he is going to hand the telephone in at the end of the month. There is delay but not denial of service. The situation is now becoming critical, there is no doubt about that and we are not very far from Gibtel's growth prospects being very severely affected and indeed the availability of the service in Gibraltar regardless of Gibtel.

ORAL

NO.68 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

GIBTEL - NUMBER OF MOBILE TELEPHONES

What was the number of Gibtel mobile telephones in use on 31st December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

Answered together with Question No. 69 of 2000.

NO.69 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

GIBTEL - NUMBER OF TELEPHONE STATIONS

What was the number of telephone stations and the number of exchange lines at the end of 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

At the end of 1999 the number of exchange lines was 21,916 and the number of stations was 29,762.

As at close of business on 31st December 1999, Gibtel was offering service to 3,648 customers on its GSM network.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 68 AND 69 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

So an increase in Gibtel numbers of about 50 per cent, if I am not mistaken, in a year?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

Yes, that sounds about right. I do not have the comparative figures in front of me.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In the context of the answers that were given previously about the availability of telephones to Gibtel, how close is the 3,648 of December to the allocation that they have of numbers?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

Speaking purely from memory I think the total allocation is of the order of 4,000 but I am subject to correction on that figure.

NO.70 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

PAYMENTS TO BUILDING CONTRACTORS

Can Government state how much has been paid to building contractors (including road works) in the current financial year giving a breakdown showing the amount paid to each contractor and in respect of which project?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore now hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to question 70/2000

PROJECT	CONTRACTOR	AMOUNT PAID
Casemates Beautification	Sharrock Shand	£1,790,526
St Anne's School Extension	Profield	£ 536,872
Re-Roofing Nazareth House	Profield	£ 59,547
Refurbishment Edinburgh House	Mackley Tricon/Cubiertas	£ 729,414
Residential for the Elderly	Profield	£ 455,385
Ferry Terminal	H L Wilkie	£ 250,186
Eastside Road widening Phase 1B	Sharrock Shand	£1,234,194
Eastside Road widening Phase 1A	Profield	£ 122,498
Health Centre, ICC	Fitzpatrick	£ 288,803
Botanic Garden	Budget Tradesmen	£ 59,098
Coach Park Phase 2	Blacktop	£ 399,808
Camp Bay stabilisation	Costain	£1,239,274
Line Wall Road (Lovers' Lane)	Sharrock Shand	£ 152,952
North Mole widening	AMCO	£ 314,455
Alteration works at Dr Giraldi Home	Shelly Co. Ltd	£ 61,511
Extension MOT Centre	Shelly Co. Ltd	£ 16,651
Coach Park Terminus	Whatley and Fosdike	£ 166,160
New balconies and refurbishment Works at Macfarlane House	Chiara Ltd	£ 149,914
New balconies and refurbishment Works at Willis's House	Chiara Ltd	£ 128,834
Beautification of Western Arm	Fitzpatrick	£ 259,305
Upper Rock resurfacing	Blacktop	£ 41,108

Contd...

Cont. Answer to question 70/2000

Pre War Flats Phase 1	Chiara Ltd	30,000
Godley Mansions (Tejas Verdes)	Chiara Ltd	85,338
Glacis Estate Beautification	Amco Gib Ltd	123,334
Sandpits	Haymills Cont. Ltd	118,537
Belvedere House Retaining Wall	Budget Tradesman	19,800
302 Main Street	Balfour Beatty	28,127
Refurbishment of Cemeteries	CIAP Construction Ltd	124,273

In respect of the following three contracts, the contractors involved in executing these projects went into liquidation and the works were taken over by GJBS with the following amounts having been paid, to date, to GJBS in respect of each of these projects:

New balconies and refurbishment Works at Macfarlane House	£ 98,650
New balconies and refurbishment Works at Willis's House	£104,191
Coach Park Terminus	£138,011

NO. 71 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

HARBOUR VIEWS PROMENADE

Is there any further work required to complete the recreational area in the Harbour Views Promenade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND LEISURE

Practical completion of the contracted works at the Harbour Views Promenade was achieved on 23rd March 1999. There is still one item of work pending, the energising of the sea-front lights, which is programmed to commence later this month.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 71 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Was it not the intention of the Government to put out an area to tender to offer cafeteria services in the area?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, such a tender was put out. It was awarded after some modifications being asked of the successful tenderer but apart from that I am not at this moment in time not certain at what stage the thing is. As far as I know the tender was awarded and it is in the hands of the successful tenderer but I am not aware at what stage it is.

HON J C PEREZ:

And the upkeep of the area has nothing to do with that tender, it is a separate thing?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

By the tender the hon Member I presume means the tender for the cafeteria which is a self-contained tender which is for the provision of services within the boundaries of the leased area. Over and above that there will be a provision for services and maintenance and locking up which is a separate thing altogether and that will be provided by Government.

HON J C PEREZ:

Would the Minister renew its policy not to allow swimming in the area as long as it demarcates the area or does the Minister intend to have the steps leading to the sea still this summer but with a notice saying that people are not allowed to swim with the result being that people do use the steps to go and swim?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, we cannot have this debate every time we mention the words "Harbour Views Promenade". There are lots of steps in Gibraltar leading down to the water in which Government do not provide lifeguards and demarcation buoys. All over the harbour there are steps going down to the water which does not mean that the Government are encouraging swimming. There are other purposes. We go through the argument every time the hon Member raises the question. There are other purposes of steps other than for swimming, access by boats, people going down to the water's edge to fish from. The hon Member's argument is based on the false premise that the presence of steps there is necessarily an invitation for people to swim and that the hon Member appears to think that there is some contradiction between the existence of the steps and the existence of the sign saying "Swimming is not allowed". We always argue about this. We do not believe that that is a rational premise that the hon Member is asking. If the hon Member were to ask "would not the Government think that it would be a good idea, given that they have built this splendid and very welcome and enlightened promenade in Harbour Views, that it would be great to go one step further and provide proper swimming facilities off it"

.....

HON J C PEREZ:

..... the answer would still be "no".

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer may not still be no. The answer may well be that the Government will consider it but we would not consider it because it follows from the existence of the steps.... We would have to consider it from the point of view of the resources and all the costs that comes with an official Government bathing facility, if the hon Member knows what they are. I am not saying that the Government will not consider that. It is not something that we are actually considering at the moment but I promise the hon Member that if as a result of his persistent raking of decision in this House the Government should at any stage come to the view that sea bathing should be facilitated from the Harbour Views Promenade I promise to give him due public recognition as the source of the idea.

HON J C PEREZ:

I thank the Chief Minister for the magnanimity and I do hope that before the summer, given his good nature today, he will go back to the drawing board and look at it again. Seriously, a lot of people have used those steps and if there is no demarcation buoys it is a very dangerous area in which to swim. Since the steps have been built people are actually being encouraged to do swimming in the area. That is the point I am making and I am worried for the safety of those people that do because they are told that it is prohibited but they nonetheless go and do it.

ORAL

NO. 72 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

UNSOLD LOTTERY TICKETS

Can Government state what is the percentage of unsold lottery tickets in 1998/99 and 1999/2000 to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES, THE ENVIRONMENT, SPORT
AND LEISURE

The percentage of unsold lottery tickets in 1998/99 was 34.3 per cent and 1999/2000 (up to Draw 4/00) is 33.5 per cent..

NO. 73 OF 2000THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**CORMORANT CAMBER BOAT OWNERS' CLUB**

Can Government confirm when the boats at Westside Beach can expect to be resited to the area of Coaling Island?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government are unable at present to give an exact indication of when the boats will be resited. However, this is something which the Government wish should happen at the earliest opportunity. The Cormorant Camber Boat Owners' Club are aware of this.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 73 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister say what has been the cause of the delay in resiting them?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The reality is that the MOD have yet not released the Cormorant Basin in order to enable the Government to be able to resite the Boat Owners from Western Beach. Originally, there were certain specifications agreed which the MOD expected and agreed with the Government that we would reprovide an extension to Berth 41 which is by The Tower, in order to be able to berth vessels like the CAPABLE who are at the moment berthed within the basin. The MOD's requirements have changed and therefore Government at the moment are in negotiations with the MOD as to who will pay the additional expense of actually reproviding a much more sophisticated berth because they now expect the berth to be able to allow an aircraft carrier to be able to be berthed there. Therefore, their specifications are completely different.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

So really what the Minister is saying is that the MOD are seeking extra conditions to what they originally did?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, there was agreement originally for a type of berth that would be capable to berth the CAPABLE, for example, and further down the line they have changed their specifications and said that they need the extension of Berth 41 to allow the HMS INVINCIBLE, for example, to be berthed there. Therefore, the actual quality and finish of the berth itself is completely different and we are now in negotiations as to what the final requirements are going to be and obviously who is going to cover the cost of the berth. We are doing our own costing at the moment to actually identify what the differences are so that we can actually go to the negotiating table again. But I have been in contact with the Cormorant Camber Boat Owners' Club on a regular basis and they are fully aware of our position. In fact, that is a Manifesto commitment itself.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Minister able to tell the House or give an indication of what these new extra costs will be?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am afraid not. I cannot give the hon Member an idea of these. I have had meetings early last week with the technical personnel within the Government and they are now doing the research work to come up with estimates for me to consider.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Did the MOD change their mind during what was being discussed or after the Government had agreed to the previous proposals?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The dispute extends to whether or not the MOD had changed their minds. Our people say that they have changed their minds, that they have raised the specifications half way through the match, so to speak. The MOD dispute that. I have not been listening to my hon Colleague, I do not know what extent of details he has put to the hon Member but basically our position is that given that all that they can park within the basin is a small boat, that the pier that we provide is a pier suitable for the tying up of small boats given that what we have got to do is reprovide the facility that they are giving up to us. The facility that they are giving up to us is to moor boats that are moorable on the inside of Coaling Island. Because the reprovisioning is an extension of Berth 41 which as some hon Members may know is the berth which is right in front of the Dockyard Tower on which they berth aircraft carriers, they now want us to build that extension suitable for the parking of aircraft carriers which is a much stronger berth and therefore much more expensive because a pier on which to tie a tug is much cheaper to build than a pier on which to tie the INVINCIBLE safely. We argue that what we must do is reprovide the facility that we are depriving them of and not at taxpayers' expense to provide a much more enhanced and therefore expensive facility for purposes for which they can not put the facility that they are giving up to us.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Chief Minister in a position to tell the House, in view that I understand that the matter is still under negotiation, at this stage whether the Government are amenable to this request from the MOD?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it follows that we are not amenable. Were we amenable we would have done it already. Before deciding exactly how unamenable we are we are having the MOD's desired specifications costed. If it is not a lot of money we might take a view. If it is a lot of money it is highly unlikely that we will take a view and we will simply not agree to do it. Our own experts have hitherto told us that in fact the difference is quite expensive but they have never actually gone to the trouble of doing the necessary costings and saying "look, Chief Minister, the extra cost is..... so much" and therefore that is the stage that we are at now. As my hon Colleague has said we are having the MOD specification costed against our costings of the specifications that we were

proposing to build and when we know the difference we will be able to take the view that the hon Member is asking.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

If there is no agreement reached, are the Government already looking at an alternative area for the Boat Owners?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, we are not in that realm. I am not sure that such areas exist but if this thing with the MOD on Coaling Island fell through we would then see if there were alternatives. None spring to mind. If the hon Lady has any ideas in that respect no doubt she will be willing to share them with us.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The discussions involved, are they a question of having transferred land and water or is it just the water around Coaling Island?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Both. At the moment they have got the CAPABLE, which is a tug, parked on the inside of Coaling Island and I think occasionally they tie up other smaller boats, barges, and harbour launch type boats and we provide that facility. That facility includes land on which to tie the boats and water on which the tied boats can float. Really what we need to provide is wharf side facilities.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Do the Government have an idea of the cost as at present and the estimated cost of the additional operation if it goes ahead?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

On a very broad brush basis it was the view of one of the tenderers for the Gun Wharf project, so it is as nebulous as that, that the cost of providing the breakwater to the original specifications was £1.2 million.

ORAL

NO.74 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF VISITORS

What were the total number of visitors to Gibraltar in 1999 on a monthly basis, giving the total by land, by sea and by air?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 75 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF CRUISE SHIPS

What were the number of cruise ships calling at Gibraltar on a monthly basis during 1996 and 1997 and the total for each year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore now hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 75/2000

CRUISE SHIP CALLS, 1996-7

Month	1996 Cruise Calls	Month	1997 Cruise Calls
January	5	January	2
February	5	February	3
March	5	March	3
April	16	April	9
May	20	May	15
June	11	June	7
July	10	July	7
August	14	August	10
September	15	September	18
October	19	October	11
November	14	November	9
December	5	December	5
TOTAL	139	TOTAL	99

NO. 76 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF CRUISE CALLS

What were the number of cruise calls and the number of cruise visitor arrivals for January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

In keeping with a commitment I made in this House to the hon Member, I provide him with full details of cruise calls and cruise passenger arrivals on a quarterly basis. The return for the period ending 31st March 2000 will be sent to him in due course.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 76 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Are these figures not available or is the Minister not providing them?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, it is not a question of the information not being available. If the hon Member enters into an agreement with his parliamentary opposite to accept information from him on a voluntary quarterly basis, it then seems odd that the hon Member presses the Minister in public in the House for the information on a different basis. This is the point. That information is probably available and if the hon Member wanted the information monthly rather than quarterly that is the arrangement that he should make with the Minister who presumably would then agree to give it to him on that basis. If the hon Member is going to enter into an agreement with the Minister about the basis upon which the information is provided, then we would expect not to be pressed on a different basis at question time.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

We do not want to waive our rights to ask questions in the House as an Opposition. If the figures are available and the Minister would be able to provide them then I would be very grateful for that.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The information is available because it is something that is only in reference to specific months which are very recent and I can pick those out from my normal report. The number of cruise calls in January was six and in February there were eight. The number of passengers in January were 3,189 and in February 4,765.

NO. 77 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF YACHTS

What were the number of actual yachts calling at Gibraltar for each month of 1996, 1997 and 1998 and the total for each year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore now hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 77/2000

NUMBER OF YACHTS

	1996	1997	1998
January	91	93	118
February	97	96	86
March	149	144	175
April	301	253	174
May	351	387	395
June	423	455	489
July	522	590	631
August	839	681	691
September	473	482	401
October	448	416	498
November	370	273	299
December	171	128	122
TOTAL	4,235	3,998	4,079

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 77 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Are the Spanish fishing boats that come in for petrol and for other products listed or included as yachts or are they simply not counted anywhere?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Chief Minister was having an aside. I happen to know what an actual yacht is since he asks for what were the number of actual yachts. Is that actual yachts as opposed to virtual yachts? The answer to his serious supplementary is that it does not include fishing vessels, no.

ORAL

NO.78 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF YACHT VISITORS

What were the number of yacht visitor arrivals for January 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO.79 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF YACHT VISITORS

What was the number of yacht visitors to Gibraltar each month in September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO.80 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF VISITORS

What was the number of other visitors by sea for each month of 1999 and for January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO.81 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

SUN COSTA LINE

When did Sun Costa Line repay the loan of £300,000 to the Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 82 and 83 of 2000.

ORAL

NO.82 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

SUN COSTA LINE

Has Sun Costa Line repaid the start-up grant of £25,000 to the Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 81 and 83 of 2000.

NO.83 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

SUN COSTA LINE

Can Government confirm the exact dates when the ferry to Morocco provided by Sun Costa Line has not sailed since 3rd September 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

On 17th January 2000, Sun Costa Line repaid the loan of £300,000 to the Government.

Sun Costa Line never received the £25,000 start-up grant originally requested.

It is assumed the information is not required on the dates on which the mv. MONS CALPE did not sail, when no service was scheduled. The dates on which scheduled sailings did not take place are the following:

14 September - 11 November 1999
24 November 1999
26 November 1999
28 November 1999
15 December 1999
19 December 1999
26 December 1999
26 January 2000
30 January 2000
4 February 2000
25 February 2000

The dates on which sailings were postponed were the following:

8 January 2000
16 January 2000
27 February 2000

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 81, 82 AND 83 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

It is obviously regrettable to have to stand up as an Opposition Member and to say "we told you so". But I remember at the time this issue came up in the House in September, we made a number of points regarding the suitability of the vessel for sailing across the Straits and the wisdom of putting in the loan and offering the grant. Since then, the Moroccan Workers' Association have also voiced similar concerns, so has the TGWU and indeed, since then, Blands has taken over the operation entirely from Sun Costa Line. Really, are the Government now in a position to accept the criticisms that were made at the time given that we have been proved right by Blands?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, the Government do not accept the criticisms because the Government are still of the same view as to what was behind those criticisms and who was behind those criticisms. The fact of the matter is that this is an entirely commercial matter. The running of a ferry service across the Straits is a commercial matter. It is not a Government matter, it is not a Government business, it is not a Government function, it is not something that the Government provide or would ever provide. If there were no operator willing to provide a service across the Straits the Government would not provide one, simply because the Spanish Government are too bloody minded to allow the Moroccans to travel to Algeciras to catch the ferry from there. Therefore, if there is somebody out there who makes a commercial judgement, who gets the proper certification, who persuades the classification society that this vessel is suitable, if there are people out there that make those commercial judgements, those are commercial judgements, nothing to do with the Government. The Government provided a soft loan facility on the basis of a commercial venture. We were supporting the commercial venture. We were not making a statement about the boat, although the Government did take the trouble to ensure through the Port Authorities, that the vessel had all the necessary international sailing certificates to provide the service across the Straits of Gibraltar. That is the extent of our governmental obligations and responsibilities in this matter. To ensure that the vessel is in class for the proposed service. The Government's technical maritime people did precisely that. Having said all that, all vessels have operating parameters. In the days of the old Mons Calpe sailings used to be postponed as well because of bad weather. Every different type of vessel has maximum weather operating capacity and each different vessel produces a different figure. The fact that this vessel has not been able to sail on 10 days and that a different vessel might not have been able to sail on seven days or a worse vessel might have not been able to sail on 20 days, does not prove and does not sustain and does not render criticism that we are obliged to accept any of the things that the hon Member was saying.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If it is all such a commercial judgement, is it not the case that in fact the investors initially did not put any money up?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, the Government subsidise because they recognise there is a public interest in access to Gibraltar. The Government of Gibraltar subsidise lots of things. We subsidise the airlines for example. In this case there was shareholder capital and there were bank loans as well, this is not the total cost of buying, fitting out, bringing the boat to Gibraltar. £300,000 would not go that far. There were other sources of financing.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The actual proposal had a total investment in excess of £550,000. There were shareholders capital and there were parts of bank loans as well and obviously Government loans to be able to facilitate the whole venture to make it feasible.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But, surely the loan was not supposed to be repaid so quickly. So is the repayment of the loan not an indication that the company felt that it was not delivering what it should have done?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not quite. The hon Member is on the right track but that is not the point. The company has repaid the loan because it did not wish to be bound to the Government for the things upon which the Government made the loan conditional. The Government made giving of the loan conditional on a certain regularity and frequency of service which the new commercial operator, or rather the minor shareholder that bought out all the others, Bland Ltd, did not wish to be bound by. As it did not wish to be bound by the conditions which the Government imposed on the giving of the loan in the first place, they chose to repay the loan.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

First of all the security for the loan was the vessel itself and, secondly, I think it is the first time I have heard in this House that the Government actually laid down conditions as to the frequency of the sailings. Certainly it was not something which we were aware of before. There is also another vessel which I understand is interested in sailing this route to Tangier which we believe is stopped, can the Government say why it is, do they have any information on this?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, at the moment the situation is one where the operators of Southern Ferries decided to charter a vessel and bring it to Gibraltar. The Government confirmed in the same way as we have done to all the other proposals at the time that assuming that the licences were obtained in Morocco to operate the route, the Government subject to meeting its relevant safety requirements to a minimum standard would be willing to issue a licence. Apparently the Moroccan authorities have basically turned round to these operators and have told them "you have not used your licence...." because they originally had a licence that used to operate a vessel before for X amount of months over a year and therefore we are not in a position to be able to re-issue the licence. I have now taken the matter up, as from last Friday. I went to see the vessel myself before ringing up, and spoke to the Moroccan authorities and I had a meeting in Gibraltar and the matter is now being given consideration. The indications I have as of yesterday afternoon is that they would be issuing a licence to this operator. I think their concern is one that there is a Moroccan operator who was interested in coming on the route and they wanted reciprocity for us to..... and that has been confirmed too, that we would. If the Moroccan operator wished to operate the route we would be more than happy to grant them a licence. But as I stand on my feet the situation is one in which I am now awaiting confirmation and the operators are fully aware of the situation as at this morning.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can the Minister confirm that the position of the Government now is that they will grant licences to vessels to sail this route provided it meets the necessary criteria and certificates?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As the hon Member well knows from answers that he has had before, he cannot formulate that question in that way. The hon Member cannot say "is it now the Government's position". It has always been the Government's position. What the hon Member has just described has always been the Government's position. The hon Member has been told on numerous occasions that it has always been the Government's position and everybody in the industry that has received a letter, including the people that chat to him about it, have been told that in writing. As far as we are concerned, if six people want to operate that route, six people can operate the route. We will licence any operator that can operate the service in accordance with the maritime safety standards applicable under the Laws of Gibraltar as assessed by the Port Surveyors. That has always been the Government's position and everybody has been told that. The only precondition that the Government impose and has ever imposed is that they bring us an indication that the Moroccan Government would issue a licence and also that they can operate within the safety standards required.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Mr Speaker, I do not know who the Chief Minister thinks we are chatting to, which we are not, but even if we were it is our role as Opposition to come to the House and bring forward the complaints of other people which all of us have been doing. There were four clients interested in providing the service back in August/September and the only one that managed to obtain the licensing from the Moroccan side was this particular one. Would it not surely be better to, as long as the vessels are adequate for the route, as long as they have the necessary documentation and certificates of safety and all the rest of it, for the Gibraltar side to be able to offer that to whoever might be interested and then to allow the Moroccan side to do it to whoever they want?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

These operators have actually been issued letters from the Ministry of Tourism and Transport saying "you will not have a problem in obtaining a licence in Gibraltar so long as you go to the Moroccan authorities and obtain the licence to operate". They have had complete support from us and we have supported them and actually I would love to have four or five operators operating the route. Whether they are commercially possible or viable I do not know but at the end of the day we have to support any particular operator who shows an interest in that and that is precisely why we have supported Southern Ferries this week.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

But the point I am trying to make is that when they go to Morocco they are told the same thing.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, no, that is not true. What the hon Member cannot do is pick up everything that he reads in the newspapers and base his questions and his political positions in this House accordingly. If the hon Member is asking "will the Government of Gibraltar issue a licence to anyone that meets its criteria regardless of whether it is going to be able to use the licence because he cannot get one at the other end" the answer is "no". Licences issued by the Government of Gibraltar to operate cross Straits ferry services are not bits of confetti that one hands out to anyone that asks for them

regardless of whether they are actually going to be used. If that is what the hon Member is getting at the answer is absolutely not. But let me say here and now and I am grateful to the hon Member for the opportunity to say this, that the Government refute the statements that have been made publicly by one particular operator who says that he is being messed around because the Gibraltar Government is saying "I will give you one if the Moroccan Government gives you one" and the Moroccan Government is saying "I will give you one if the Gibraltar Government gives you one". That is absolute nonsense because even the successful licences are issued on the basis of the Government indicating that a licence is available..... the Moroccan Government do not ask for the licence to be produced from Gibraltar. The Moroccan Government asks for a letter from the Maritime Authority indicating that a licence is available from Gibraltar if one is available from the Moroccans. That is the agreed modus operandi. That is how these things operate internationally in all aspects and this is how it operates. There are many people making public statements for motives and for reasons that I would certainly enjoy cross-examining them about, but which it is simply not true, that any act or omission of the Gibraltar authorities, of the Gibraltar Government, has prejudiced in any way the ability of anyone who has wanted to operate that route from obtaining the permission in Morocco. Absolutely untrue. Anyone who says that publicly is telling an untruth.

NO.84 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

FERRY SERVICE - GIBRALTAR/MOROCCO

Can Government say whether, since 3rd September 1999, any other operator has expressed an interest in providing a ferry service between Gibraltar and Morocco?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Yes, Mr Speaker, other operators have expressed interest.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.84 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Is the Minister in a position to say who the operators are and how many there are of them?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

One of them is obviously Southern Ferries which the hon Member is aware about. The other one I think should remain nameless in the interests of confidentiality.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Is the offer of a subsidy or a loan open to these other operators also?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, not necessarily. The Government would view it on a case by case basis. For example, one of the operators that showed interest at the time of the Mons Calpe II that he so criticises was I think it was the operators of the Estrella del Mar, they came with a proposal to the Government, asking for the Government to put up \$3 million to subsidise the purchase by them of a boat. The Government said, "no, the Government would very much like to see you operating a ferry but the Government are not willing to invest \$3 million of public funds to enable you to buy this boat". No, the facilities are not available to everybody. The facilities were made available to Sun Costa at the time. There was pressure in Gibraltar for a service to be provided. The hon Member who now concentrates on this aspect of the matter presumably has not forgotten the pressure that he used to generate at the time for a service to be in place because of the poor Moroccans, and it was in response to those circumstances prevailing at that time that the Government did whatever it thought was justifiable and necessary and reasonable to facilitate the early commencement of a service. This is not to say that the Government would not consider support for another operator but the circumstances are now different. The circumstances are now that there is a service and therefore the public subsidy to generate a service that was not there before, those circumstances are no longer present.

ORAL

NO.85 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF ARRIVALS BY AIR

What was the total arrivals by air for January 1999, showing those staying in Gibraltar and those in transit?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

NO.86 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF FLIGHTS

What was the total number of flights per airline and destination to and from Gibraltar on a monthly basis in 1998, 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore now hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

GB AIRWAYS ARRIVALS

MONTH	GATWICK	HEATHROW	MANCHESTER	MARRAKESH	CASABLANC
Jan 98	25	30	3	1	26
Feb 98	24	28	4	2	25
Mar 98	31	28	4	1	25
Apr 98	57	3	4	-	13
May 98	61	1	5	-	13
Jun 98	60	-	4	-	13
Jul 98	60	-	4	-	12
Aug 98	62	-	5	-	13
Sep 98	59	-	4	-	11
Oct 98	62	-	4	-	17
Nov 98	48	-	2	-	9
Dec 98	43	-	4	-	10
Total 98	592	90	47	4	187

Cont...

Contd.

Answer to Question 86 of 2000

GB AIRWAYS ARRIVALS

MONTH	GATWICK	HEATHROW	MANCHESTER	MARRAKESH	CASABLANCA
Jan 98	24	31	3	1	24
Feb 98	24	27	4	-	21
Mar 98	31	28	5	-	23
Apr 98	62	-	4	-	11
May 98	61	-	5	-	13
Jun 98	60	-	4	-	13
Jul 98	57	-	4	-	15
Aug 98	63	-	5	-	12
Sep 98	59	-	3	-	11
Oct 98	98	-	4	-	17
Nov 98	47	-	2	-	10
Dec 98	41	-	4	-	10
Total 98	593	86	47	1	180

Cont....

Contd.

Answer to Question 86 of 2000

MONARCH AIRLINES CROWN SERVICE

	ARRIVAL	DEPARTURE
MONTH	LUTON	LUTON
Jan 98	14	14
Feb 98	12	12
Mar 98	13	13
Apr 98	13	13
May 98	18	18
Jun 98	17	17
Jul 98	17	17
Aug 98	17	17
Sep 98	17	17
Oct 98	18	18
Nov 98	12	12
Dec 98	12	12
Total 98	180	180

Cont....

Contd.

Answer to Question 86 of 2000

GB AIRWAYS ARRIVALS

MONTH	GATWICK	MANCHESTER	CASABLANCA
Jan 99	46	5	8
Feb 99	41	4	7
Mar 99	48	4	5
Apr 99	51	4	-
May 99	54	5	-
Jun 99	50	4	-
Jul 99	53	4	-
Aug 99	48	5	-
Sep 99	50	3	-
Oct 99	49	4	-
Nov 99	43	-	-
Dec 99	47	1	-
Total 99	580	43	20

Cont...

Contd.

Answer to Question 86 of 2000

GB AIRWAYS DEPARTURES

MONTH	GATWICK	MANCHESTER	CASABLANCA
Jan 99	46	5	8
Feb 99	40	4	8
Mar 99	45	4	5
Apr 99	51	4	-
May 99	54	5	-
Jun 99	50	4	-
Jul 99	53	4	-
Aug 99	48	5	-
Sep 99	50	3	-
Oct 99	49	4	-
Nov 99	43	-	-
Dec 99	47	1	-
Total 99	576	43	21

Cont...

Contd.

Answer to Question 86 of 2000

GB AIRWAYS

ARRIVALS

DEPARTURES

MONTH	GATWICK	MANCHESTER	GATWICK	MANCHESTER
Jan 2000	50	1	50	1
Feb 2000	44	-	44	-
Total	94	1	94	1

MONARCH AIRLINES CROWN SERVICES

ARRIVALS

DEPARTURES

MONTH	LUTON	LUTON
Jan 2000	23	23
Feb 2000	21	21
Total	44	44

Cont...

Contd.

Answer to Question 86 of 2000

REGIONAL AIR LINES

ARRIVALS DEPARTURES

MONTH	CASABLANCA	CASABLANCA
Jan 2000	24	24
Feb 2000	24	24
Total	48	48

Cont.

Contd.

Answer to Question 86 of 2000

MONARCH AIRLINES CROWN SERVICES

MONTH	ARRIVALS	DEPARTURES
	LUTON	LUTON
Jan 99	13	13
Feb 99	12	12
Mar 99	13	13
Apr 99	13	13
May 99	26	26
Jun 99	26	26
Jul 99	27	27
Aug 99	26	26
Sep 99	26	26
Oct 99	26	26
Nov 99	22	22
Dec 99	22	22
Total	252	252

Cont...

Cont...

Answer to Question 86 of 2000

REGIONAL AIRLINES

ARRIVALS

DEPARTURES

MONTH	CASABLANCA	CASABLANCA
Nov 99	23	23
Dec 99	25	25
Total	48	48

NO.87 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF VISITORS BY AIR

What was the number of visitors to Gibraltar by air from Morocco on a monthly basis since flights re-commenced?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The figures which are kept do not distinguish between visitors and non-visitors. I cannot therefore answer this question.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 87 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can the Minister say how many people actually sat on seats on the aeroplanes that landed at Gibraltar and how many did the reverse?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, from Casablanca to Gibraltar in November 82; December 45, January 38 and February 68. From Gibraltar to Casablanca in November 59; December 38; January 66 and in February 84.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

My own rough calculations indicate that the capacity on a 19 seats aircraft flying six days which is what they originally said would be something like 456 a month and obviously we have not go anywhere near that, given that there is a level of public interest and public subsidies involved in this case also, can the Minister say what the position of the Government is?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The Government obviously are not pleased with the performance of the route in the first four months of operation. I think that there is a question further on in the Order Paper about the review but let me say in anticipation of that that obviously I have had meetings with the Chief Executive of Regional Airlines in order to review the route. We are looking at possible new developments of that route in order to increase not just frequency but other points as well in Morocco. There are negotiations at the moment about this. I would not like to go into too much details so as not to undermine my own position. I think the whole of the Regional Airline issue is something which we need to look in terms of a medium to long term basis because I think that there are a lot of opportunities which can be looked at and which can currently be considered which I think will make the investment in this particular route worthwhile in the medium to long term. That, I think, is Government's position today.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it the case that the airline provides the service irrespective of the number of bookings they have or not? If they only have one person do they still come?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Absolutely, that is the case. I believe there has been one cancellation but this was due to weather conditions. In fact I think the airline has flown in to Gibraltar with no passengers and has left empty.

NO. 88 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - CANCELLATION OF FLIGHTS

How many flights to and from Gibraltar were cancelled during 1998 and 1999, in chronological order, giving the dates and reasons for each such cancellation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government do not have this information available today.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 88 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Will it be available at some other time?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Mr Speaker, yes. I think that the information will probably be made available to us and I will let the hon Member have the information. The question asks for cancellation of flights and not diverted flights and although we are aware of cancelled flights we want to know the reasons behind those cancelled flights. We have been in touch with the airlines in order to give us an explanation.

ORAL

NO.89 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NEW AIRLINES

Can Government say whether any new airlines have expressed an interest in flying to Gibraltar since September 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question No. 90 of 2000.

NO. 90 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NEW AIRLINES

What is the state of discussions with the two airlines that were interested in flying to Gibraltar in September 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

One of these airlines, Regional Airlines, has since commenced operating to Gibraltar. Discussions continue with the other airline. As the hon Member knows by now, given the number of times that similar questions have been asked on this matter, it is not possible to give confidential commercial information in the House on discussions that are in progress with airlines.

However, I note that the Opposition Members claimed recently that they had made contact with an airline that was interested in commencing operations to Gibraltar. If they provide me with the name of the airline on a confidential basis without making it public in the House, I will approach them and enter into discussions with them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 89 AND 90 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Mr Speaker, we will be happy to provide the Minister with that information on a confidential basis. Just to clarify one point, these two are the ones that were interested up to September 1999. Do we take that there were no new ones after September 1999?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, I have to say that there is a new one that has come on board since September 1999 but all there has been is exchange of correspondence. I am hoping that on my next trip to the UK I will have my first initial meeting with them.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The conference may not have taken place but normally the Minister attends the air routes conference which takes place every year around September. I think the Minister went to Oslo and also to London and obviously there were several airlines that were interested at that time. The Opposition notes that the Government have not attended this year or perhaps the Conference has not taken place. Can the Minister clarify that situation?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, I took the view that when we actually had the list of airlines that were exhibiting at this particular conference, we had either made contact with them or were in communication with them so we were no new player in it. I felt that the cost was not justified in actually attending the Conference because we were already in communication with them. The situation may change in September because the list of participants has a completely new flavour to it and it may be worthwhile participating. The decision has not yet been made in respect of this for this year.

NO. 91 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF COACHES

What were the number of coaches that came to Gibraltar in September, October, November and December 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information that has been requested by the hon Member is available on Table 10 published on the Tourist Survey Report of 1997 but if the hon Member wishes, I am very happy to read out what I have here.

September 1996	1,193
October 1996	1,316
November 1996	919
December 1996	594

The hon Member can find that in the Report that is already published.

NO. 92 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF VISITORS BY COACH

What was the number of visitors by coach in Gibraltar by month in September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of visitors by coach in Gibraltar by month in September, October, November and December in 1999 and in January and February 2000 is as follows:

SEPTEMBER 1999	53,460
OCTOBER 1999	55,569
NOVEMBER 1999	34,559
DECEMBER 1999	22,617
JANUARY 2000	17,487
FEBRUARY 2000	32,621

ORAL

NO. 93 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF VISITORS

What was the total number of visitor arrivals by land for September, October, November and December 1999 and January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 94 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF VISITORS

What were the number of pedestrian visitors to Gibraltar in September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information requested is as follows:-

SEPTEMBER 1999	210,915
OCTOBER 1999	199,644
NOVEMBER 1999	180,635
DECEMBER 1999	186,905
JANUARY 2000	147,265
FEBRUARY 2000	161,517

ORAL

NO. 95 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - HOTEL GUEST NIGHTS SOLD

What were the hotel guest nights sold in respect of tourist arrivals for each month of 1999 and the total for the year, and for January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 96 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF TOURISTS

What were the number of tourist arrivals in hotels for each month of 1999 and the total for the year and for January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 97 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF TOURISTS

What was the average length of stay in hotels of tourist arrivals in each month of 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 98 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF TOURISTS

What was the percentage occupancy of hotels in respect of tourist arrivals for each months of 1999 and for January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

NO. 99 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES

What was the number of private motor vehicles and the number of persons in such vehicles entering Gibraltar in September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 99/2000

NUMBER OF PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES AND NUMBER OF PERSONS IN VEHICLES ENTERING GIBRALTAR

MONTH	MOTOR VEHICLES	PERSONS IN VEHICLES
September 1999	150,448	378,771
October 1999	135,419	381,852
November 1999	147,753	374,182
December 1999	154,258	382,896
January 2000	152,176	381,428
February 2000	153,897	375,976

ORAL

NO. 100 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS

Can Government state how many interviews with persons who said that they have stayed at a hotel have been carried out since August 1999, giving the number of persons interviewed each month?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question No. 101 of 2000.

NO. 101 OF 2000THE HON DR J J GARCIA**TOURISM - NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS**

Can Government state, of the number of persons who have been interviewed since August 1999, who said that they had stayed in a hotel, how many were interviewed at the airport and how many were interviewed at the land frontier and in each case what was the average length of stay in hotels?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of interviews with persons staying at Hotels are as follows:-

August 1999	27
September 1999	25
October 1999	28
November 1999	27
December 1999	27
TOTAL since August	134

The number of persons interviewed at the airport was 96 with an average length of stay of 6.8 days and the number of persons interviewed at the land frontier was 11 with an average length of stay of 3.2 days.

The interview questionnaires in respect of January and February 2000 have not yet been processed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 100 AND 101 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

If countless more people come in through the frontier than the airport, why were more people interviewed at the airport than at the frontier?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

This is a matter for the Statistics Office who do their own survey. I am personally not satisfied with the whole exercise and I have made my position known but that is the way it is reported to me by the Statistics Office and I like not to interfere in how the statistics are collated. This is how it has always been done and in fact I am told that now the frequency of actually surveying and interviewing people is done on a more frequent basis than it was done in the past but it is still not adequate, anyway.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The last time we had this discussion I remember there were plans to change the system, how are those plans progressing?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct and my views have been made known to the Statistician on this matter. Let me say that I do have a meeting lined up with the Statistics Office in the next 10 days to look at the whole area of tourism statistics and how they are collating it and I want to take a much more hands-on view as to the formulation of all these statistics so that we all find that we have more meaningful data in order to be able to determine our own strategy and policy. As I have said, I am not happy as to what has happened until now but I am hopeful that as a result of that there will be changes.

NO. 102 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

COALING ISLAND COACH PARK

What was the purpose of cordoning off the west side of the Coaling Island coach park on and around 1 March 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT.

The new Government Marine Section building which will accommodate Police, Customs, and possibly Port Department boats and associated facilities are to be located on the Coaling Island reclamation in the area to the west of the recently cordoned off area at the temporary Coach Park. The reason for cordoning off the site is to demarcate the area which has been handed over to the contractor for the execution of the contract and to permit him to erect the site hoarding.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 102 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The only reason for tabling the question was because we have received a number of complaints that the area had been cordoned off for approximately two weeks and that no work had actually started on site. There was considerable amount of traffic chaos with coaches coming and going and not having enough space to manoeuvre and I do not know whether work has actually started or when the Government intend to commence?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

When a project is about to start there are a number of things that need to be done both by the contractor in mobilising and by people like the Technical Services of the Government in getting the site ready. Government deal with the successful tenderer, we issue the relevant documents and we hand over the site. Then the contractor has a period of time in which to complete the contract. If that period is a year and he decides to work for the last month only and completes in time, fine. If he works in the last months only and then exceeds his time then he is subject to penalties. What we do not do and cannot do is say we give it to him on day one and on day one and five minutes one expects the whole thing to be a bustle of activity.

ORAL

NO. 103 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF GUEST ARRIVALS

Can Government give the total number of guest arrivals in hotels for 1999 since July on a monthly basis?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 104 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - HOTEL BED NIGHTS SOLD

Can Government give the hotel bed nights sold by month in August, September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 105 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - LENGTH OF STAY IN HOTELS

Can Government state the average length of stay in hotels of all arrivals by month in August, September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 106, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 106 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - HOTEL OCCUPANCY

Can Government give the overall percentage occupancy of hotels by month in August, September, October, November, December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 107 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF TOURIST ARRIVALS

What was the number of tourist arrivals by air in transit for September, October, November, December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 108 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - SCHEDULED FLIGHTS

What was the number of seats used by arrivals in scheduled flights from the UK in August, September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109 and 110 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 109 of 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - SCHEDULED FLIGHTS

What was the number of seats used by departures in scheduled flights from the UK in August, September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108 and 110 of 2000.

NO. 110 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF TOURISTS

What was the number of tourists arriving by air and staying in Gibraltar for September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information sought in Question Nos. 74, 78 to 80, 85, 93, 95 to 98 and 103 to 110 of 2000 is contained within the annual Hotel Occupancy Survey, the Air Traffic Survey and the Tourist Survey Reports which are published by the Government. The information will therefore be made available in due course in the next Reports to be published.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 74, 78, 79, 80, 85, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109 AND 110 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then the Government are not prepared to provide that information as they have done in the past, before the reports come out, even though the last report is from 1997?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The reports are to be tabled shortly, within this meeting of the House. But yes, the position of the Government now is that we cannot submit to the burden of producing monthly or quarterly information which the administration is geared up to produce by statutory obligation on an annual basis. The hon Member uses these questions, in effect, to make these reports be published on whatever basis he chooses to ask his questions on. The burden is simply too onerous within the time scale that is available. Whether arrangements can be put in hand between the Hon Dr Garcia and the Minister whereby the information will be made available to him as soon as it is available within Government without having to be compiled specifically in answer to questions, as far as the Government are concerned that would be perfectly okay.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that it is no longer the case then that the Minister gets regular reports on this information flowing in, because that is how it used to be before? Before, without the question being asked, the information was regularly supplied.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I think that what must be understood is that the Ministry keeps its own statistical information but in fact what actually happens is that the returns, for example, hotels, we have the product managers that can obtain monthly reports from the hotels on

occupancy which is a guideline for us in the Ministry as to how the industry is performing. Definitely, when the reports are then sent to the Statistics Office so that they are compiled into the normal annual reporting basis we find that there are discrepancies between what we have in the Ministry and what reports are actually submitted to the Statistics Office. This happens as well in points of entry, for example, through the information that is kept by Terminal Management. That is fed through to the Ministry on a monthly basis and reports are sent through to the Ministry but then the Statistics Office verifies and actually audits the information and the figures and I find that there are discrepancies. I have found, for example, that there are discrepancies in between the figures that I have given in this House before which I have done from my own internal ministerial figures and then when the annual report actually comes to be published. Therefore, I think there is an element of uneasiness on my part to feed this information in the House which may not necessarily be 100 per cent correct and may not be the actual statistical figures that are then published by the Statistics Office. In the case of, for example, cruising we are sending the hon Member quarterly reports with all the details that were agreed and I assume that he is getting those on a regular basis. I could agree to submit a similar report in a number of areas which could be submitted from my own ministerial reports which could then be subject to possible changes if the Statistics Office then finds that there are discrepancies for whatever reason.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In other words, we are very happy to share with the hon Members the information that we have as Ministers but it may not be in the precise form that he asks the question but he will know as much as we know. That does not require us to compile, on a quarterly basis, the annual survey report upon which we rely on the Statistics Office that says it does not have the resources and then provides the material, but with the information that we have as Ministers we are willing to share with him the moment that we have it.

HON J. J. BOSSANO:

That has always been understood. We are not trying to get the Statistics Office to produce the stuff quicker for the Opposition that it produces it for the Government. When we have been given the information before it has been with the caveat that these are not the final figures, whether it is this or income tax..... every time we have got an answer before the information has been sent the final figures may be different and we accept that, but at least it gives us an indication of what is happening, knowing the time it takes for the final figures to be produced.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The point is in five days, depending on the question that the hon Member asks and how many months he asks it in respect of and how many such questions there are, and given that there are only two statisticians and an AO it is just not possible in five days to collate the information, calculate it, type it up. It is just not possible. What I suggest that we do is that the hon Member meets with the Minister and they agree upon a basis for the provision of statistics on a regular basis which may be more regular than question times so that information flows to him in a fashion which does not generate these enormous administrative blocks and which may actually be more useful to the hon Members.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

If I can just add to that, I normally get monthly reports sent to me by the second week of the following month. If we agree to meet I can actually show the hon Member what has been produced for me which I think is fairly adequate, at least the hon Member will know how the industry is performing and how the different sectors are performing. I am quite happy for that information to be made available to the hon Member, always with the proviso that the end product may be slightly different.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can I just clarify just one point, why cannot the information be provided now with the caveat mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition that those might not be the final figures, provided through the House, because we have not had an opportunity to ask questions since September which is why obviously there are quite a few months involved.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer to that supplementary is that the problem now is not just the caveat. We are not saying that the information can be made available but we will not because it might be proved to be wrong later on. That is one of the reasons which makes us uncomfortable with giving any information on this basis. The real reason why the information is not being given is that it is simply too much collation of information to be put in the form that the hon Member asks these questions in a five day period. It may be that all the raw information which is used to put the information in the form that he asks for it, can be provided to him on a regular basis regardless of question time and then the hon Member can come to this House and press the Government in a more political fashion on the basis of information that he already has. I would have thought that that was a much more useful political tool for him than to ask for information upon which the hon Member then does not get up to ask supplementaries.

NO. 111 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - NUMBER OF COACHES

What was the number of coaches entering Gibraltar by month in September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of coaches entering Gibraltar by month in September, October, November, December 1999 and January and February 2000 are as follows:

SEPTEMBER 1999	1,395
OCTOBER 1999	1,519
NOVEMBER 1999	933
DECEMBER 1999	614
JANUARY 2000	587
FEBRUARY 2000	850
TOTAL	5,898

NO. 112 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - HOTEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME

How much money have Government paid to hotels since 1st April 1999 in loans and grants from the Hotel Assistance Scheme in chronological order with a breakdown giving the name of the hotels and the amounts paid?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information sought in these questions is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore now hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 112 of 2000

HOTEL ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The amount paid in respect of Grants was as follows:

HOTEL	DATE OF PAYMENT	AMOUNT PAID
Bristol Hotel	30 December 1999	£6,885

The amounts paid in respect of Soft Loans were as follows:

HOTEL	DATE OF PAYMENT	AMOUNT PAID
Rock Hotel	15 April 1999	£ 41,666
Caleta Hotel	27 April 1999	£119,517
Caleta Hotel	17 May 1999	£104,272
Rock Hotel	26 May 1999	£ 97,557
Caleta Hotel	28 July 1999	£ 91,149
Caleta Hotel	13 August 1999	£ 36,710
Caleta Hotel	27 August 1999	£ 65,100
Caleta Hotel	30 September 1999	£ 57,601
Rock Hotel	31 January 2000	£ 25,416
Caleta Hotel	31 January 2000	£143,284
Caleta Hotel	31 January 2000	£ 85,250
Caleta Hotel	28 February 2000	£ 43,157

NO. 113 OF 2000THE HON DR J J GARCIA**TOURISM - HOTELS, ARREARS**

What amounts are due and owing to Government by hotels broken down by item and in respect of which periods these monies become due as at the end of December 1999 and the end of February 2000?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The arrears due by hotels stood at £902,000 as at December 1999 and £864,000 as at February 2000. These arrears are in respect of amounts due over a number of years dating as far back as 1991. The breakdowns rounded off to the nearest £1,000 are as follows:-

DECEMBER 1999:

Social Insurance	£329,000
PAYE Tax	£181,000
Electricity	£347,000
Rates	<u>£ 45,000</u>
	<u>£902,000</u>

FEBRUARY 2000:

Social Insurance	£320,000
PAYE Tax	£174,000
Electricity	£336,000
Rates	<u>£ 34,000</u>
	<u>£864,000</u>

NO. 114 OF 2000THE HON DR J J GARCIA**TOURISM - COMMERCIAL FREIGHT**

What was the value and amount of commercial freight set down and picked up by air in September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The figures in respect of the amount of commercial freight set down and picked up by air is published in the Air Traffic Survey and this information will be published in due course.

The value of commercial freight is as follows:

a. September to December 1999

Incoming freight (excluding bank notes)	£6,168,082
Incoming freight in transit	£1,110,760
Exports (which require Customs declaration)	£4,054,056

b. January 2000

Incoming freight (excluding bank notes)	£389,701
Incoming freight in transit	£202,979
Exports (which require Customs declaration)	£19,874

The figures for February 2000 are not yet available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 114 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

When is the Air Traffic Survey due to be published or released?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That report should be tabled shortly during this meeting of the House.

ORAL

NO. 115 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

MEDCRUISE

What was the cost of the support given by the Government to holding the General Assembly of Medcruise at the Royal Automobile Club?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Mr Speaker, nothing.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 115 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Where any other cost to the Government involved in relation to that particular function or event?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, Mr Speaker, the answer is that there was no cost at all.

ORAL

NO. 116 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

MEDCRUISE

What was the cost of the support given by the Government to the reception for Medcruise which took place at Trinity House?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 117 to 124 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 117 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

DIVE SHOW

What was the cost of attending the Dive Show in Birmingham in October 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 116 and 118 to 124 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 118 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

WORLD TRAVEL MARKET

What was the cost of attending the World Travel Market in London in November 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 116, 117 and 119 to 124 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 119 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

MEDCRUISE CONFERENCE

What was the cost of attending the Medcruise Conference in London in November 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 116 to 118 and 120 to 124 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 120 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

BRITISH GUILD OF TRAVEL WRITERS

What was the cost of sponsoring the dinner for 450 persons in the Savoy for the British Guild of Travel Writers awards on Sunday 14th November 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 116 to 119 and 121 to 124 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 121 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

LONDON BOAT SHOW

What was the cost of attending the London Boat Show in January this year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 116 to 120 and 122 to 124 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 122 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

GIBRALTAR DAY IN CASABLANCA

What was the cost to Government of the Gibraltar Day organised in Casablanca on 3rd February?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 116 to 121, 123 and 124 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 123 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

SPANISH TRAVEL MEDIA

What was the cost of hosting a dinner in Madrid for the Spanish Travel media on or about 21st February 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 116 to 122 and 124 of 2000.

NO. 124 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

FITUR

What was the cost of attending FITUR?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The cost to Government of marketing the events were as follows:

MEDCRUISE RECEPTION, TRINITY HOUSE	£8,248.22
DIVE SHOW, BIRMINGHAM	£2,236.72
WORLD TRAVEL MARKET	£40,620.00
MEDCRUISE CONFERENCE	£670.71
SPONSORSHIP OF GUILD OF TRAVEL WRITERS AWARDS DINNER	£15,019.00
LONDON BOAT SHOW	£13,415.53
CASABLANCA PROMOTION, 3 RD FEB 2000	£865.63
MEDIA DINNER, MADRID, 21 ST FEB 2000	£2,312.07
FITUR, MADRID	£12,475.00

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTIONS NOS. 116 TO 124 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can the Minister repeat the answer to Question No. 123?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The media dinner in Madrid on 21st February was £2,312.07.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The dinner in the Savoy for the Guild of Travel Writers Awards on 14th November, Question No. 120, seems to be disproportionately high in relation to some of the others. Is the prominence given to Gibraltar in these events linked to the sponsorship of the events?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The history of this event is that I was approached by some of the operators in the private sector who felt that Gibraltar ought to consider sponsoring such a high profile event. I gave consideration to the proposal bearing in mind that it took part at the time of the World Travel Market when, for example, I would already be in London and some of my officials would have been there and therefore the cost element was far less than that. We prepared a budget as to what the whole event would cost and we estimated that would be in the region of about £30,000. To my conviction of wanting me to sponsor the event I said "if the private sector is willing to put in £15,000 we will budget £15,000 for that". In actual fact we had 10 companies associated within the

tourism industry who each put then £1,500 making a total of £15,000. We covered the balance of £15,020. I think it was a very good exercise for Gibraltar and I think it has been well appreciated. We had people like the Stakis Casino and the Taxi Association, the Federation of Small Businesses, all sponsoring and in fact they were the ones who were pushing that the Government ought to sponsor the event. I was not too convinced before the event but certainly after the event I thought it had been totally worthwhile.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

I will ask the same question of the World Travel Market which is the most expensive of the events which the Minister has just answered, £40,620. Can I ask the same question in relation to that event?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The reality is that if one wants to be considered a serious player in the tourism world one has to be present at the World Travel Market. That is a must and I think every destination who wants to play a part in tourism attends this. I know that it is expensive but if one considers the element of expense, there is actually the space of the stand which is nearly £15,000 and the actual construction of the stand is £23,600. In that one is talking of almost the whole budget dedicated towards that because when one gets to these World Travel Market events, air fares are sponsored by the airlines, hotels, so we do travel almost free of charge. So there is an element of private sector involvement in all this and in exchange for them using our stand on a free basis we join forces in a number of expenses to try and bring down the cost as much as possible. Obviously, as I have said, the space of the stand was £14,952. The construction of the stand was £23,605. We have a relatively modest stand compared to some of the huge exposures that are put up by other destinations.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can the stand be used again or is this a one-off thing?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, obviously there is a booking of the space that we have to pay every year. This year we actually did quite a substantial amount of changes on previous years. We felt that we needed to highlight some of the improvements that are taking place in Gibraltar in some of the visuals that are available on the stand and therefore we had to uplift a lot of what we had previously done. The cost of the construction of the stand in previous years has probably been much less but I think if we were to sell our product with an up to date flavour we needed to upgrade that accordingly.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Coming now to the Gibraltar Day which was organised in Casablanca on 3rd February, is the Minister in a position to say how many representatives from the Moroccan travel trade actually attended?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

It was never my intention to attend this presentation because I felt it was more at operator level than to have a Minister turning up. It was never planned that I would be there. I can recall that about 65 operators, travel agents, tour operators, from

Morocco turned up to this presentation and my understanding is that quite a number of useful contacts were established. Up till now there have not been any contacts between local operators and hoteliers and tour operators in Morocco to be able to offer packages which at the end of the day is what is going to try and bring the people on to the airline. I think that useful contacts were made and I know for a fact that Regional will be offering towards the end of March a number of special packages to Gibraltar including hotels in Gibraltar and that is being promoted as a result of this particular promotion. Yet again, the cost of that £865, Regional Airlines took the people over free of charge. All we had to pay was subsistence. It was a very useful promotion for £865.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

This is really the same question, the dinner in Madrid, where the representatives of the Spanish travel trade were invited to attend, can the Minister say how many representatives attended this particular function?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

This was meant to be a part of our own marketing strategy in Spain. This dinner was meant to have been held prior to FITUR because my strategy was that if I went over and did that exercise before FITUR we would probably get quite a lot of coverage in the actual publications around them. Unfortunately because of the General Election I felt it was not adequate for me to go because of the Spanish press and how that could be played around with and I felt that I would do it after the election. We had 22 journalists attending and it was quite a high profile number of editors of particular magazines and tourism newspapers because what we wanted to do was to actually influence the editor to allow the journalists to be able to feel slightly more free in exposing Gibraltar as a tourist destination in a favourable way. I have already seen three of the interviews that are coming out at the end of March and they are quite positive towards Gibraltar.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Is that the total result of that dinner or will there be more articles coming out?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, not at all. There will be others that will come out. I have just pointed out three that I have seen and there will be a Spanish press trip to Gibraltar in early May which will cover most of the tourist publications that there are in Spain. The idea is to bring some of these people now and some of the journalists and photographers.

ORAL

NO. 125 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TRANSPORT - PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES IMPORTED

What was the value and number of private motor vehicles imported by licensed dealers in the period July, August, September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000 on a monthly basis, and the comparable figures for the same period in July, August, September, October, November and December 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question No. 126 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 126 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TRANSPORT - PRIVATE MOTOR VEHICLES IMPORTED

What was the value and number of private motor vehicles imported by individuals in September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February 2000, on a monthly basis, and the comparable figures for September, October, November and December 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in the House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out.

I therefore now hand the hon member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 126/2000

Motor Vehicles Imported by Licensed Dealers

	<u>1999</u>		<u>1998</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Value</u> £(thousand)	<u>Number</u>	<u>Value</u> £(thousand)
July	566	4,490	243	1,740
August	499	4,270	518	5,410
September	503	4,520	442	3,180
October	666	5,450	456	5,560
November	682	6,020	371	2,840
December	310	3,370	316	2,570
TOTAL	3,226	28,120	2,346	21,300

Motor Vehicles Imported by Individuals

	<u>1999</u>		<u>1998</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Value</u> £(thousand)	<u>Number</u>	<u>Value</u> £(thousand)
July	19	60.89	19	76.78
August	15	47.50	19	89.85
September	25	128.23	13	31.96
October	11	63.15	15	104.98
November	13	45.15	18	77.93
December	9	25.35	11	57.29
TOTAL	92	370.27	95	438.79

NO. 127 OF 2000THE HON DR J J GARCIA**AIRLINE ASSISTANCE SCHEME**

How much was paid from the airline assistance scheme and to what airlines in the calendar year ending 31st December 1999 giving the amounts and the dates when these payments were made?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The Airline Assistance payments made in 1999 were as follows:

MONARCH AIRLINES	12 TH JANUARY 1999	£17,613
	30 TH APRIL 1999	£24,594
	30 TH JUNE 1999	£24,057
	30 TH SEPTEMBER 1999	£33,200
	31 ST DECEMBER 1999	£33,200

GB AIRWAYS	19 TH JANUARY 1999	£17,613
	30 TH APRIL 1999	£24,594
	30 TH JUNE 1999	£24,057
	31 ST OCTOBER 1999	£15,000
	30 TH NOVEMBER 1999	£15,000

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 127 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Is there any reason for both airlines having the same payments in June?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

They have the same payments on the 12th January, 30th April and 30th June. The agreement that I have with GB Airways is that they get exactly the same subsidy as Monarch does. That subsequently changed when the new Memorandum of Understanding was entered into with Monarch in that subsidies would only be given to them for additional flights on their existing one. Therefore, they have a base of £60,000 and then the additional subsidy for additional flights. GB Airways have not put in additional flights so they are just getting the £15,000 a quarter which adds up to £60,000 a year. No additional flights, no additional subsidy.

NO.128 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

IMPRESSIONS OF GIBRALTAR

Was the book "Impressions of Gibraltar" produced at any cost to the Government?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.128 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

When reference is made to it being commissioned by the Gibraltar Tourist Board, what exactly does that mean?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

When the idea was conceived by the Tourist Board and the Ministry of Tourism the whole idea was to commission the publication of this book and that there would be a number of sponsors who would sign up to purchase a number of books. The first print was in the region of about 5,000 or 6,000 books but mainly by sponsors. The Gibraltar Tourist Board purchased 1,800 for its own promotional use at a cost of £4 because the more books are printed the lower the cost of having per book printed. We have subsequently sold 1,046 of these books as we speak today and we have made a small profit on it. So the income to the Government has been £15,600 although we are using it as part of our own literature for special occasions and presentations. In fact there are only 324 left and the likelihood is that within the next month or so there will be a reprint of the book because a number of sponsors are now asking for a reprint because originally their original requirements have now exhausted their stocks and they want another reprint of the book. We reckon we will probably go for another 6,000 print. There has actually not been any cost attached to it at all.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Was the actual purchase of the books by the Government conditional, that is how the book was subsidised by the sponsors?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

There was a package that we put together and we identified the sponsors. We got commitment from the sponsors. We actually had a deposit paid by all sponsors and then the Government decided that we thought we needed about 1,800 books for our own use. The 1,046 books have been sold to booksellers in Gibraltar. It has become a very popular publication.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

There was one area of concern expressed by local photographers who were not asked to contribute or participate in the project. Was there any particular reason for that?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

This project was agreed to by the Tourist Board on a proposal that was given to us by a gentleman called Peter Bond who has done similar publications and is recognised as being somebody who has produced very good work. He was the one who commissioned this photographer. We do not get involved in that. One very good benefit from all this is that all photographs that were not used by the photographer for the book are for our own use at the Tourist Board. Most of our new literature this year will have slightly better photography that we have had in the past because a photographer of that standard sees a particular spot and does not take just one photograph, he takes five or six of a particular event or particular spot. If I look at them, I cannot tell the difference between any of the five, they all seem the same ones to me but we are obviously in a very privileged position to be able to make use of them and we are going to be making use of them in posters and in pamphlets because there is very good photography in that book.

NO. 129 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

MEDCRUISE/WORLD TRAVEL MARKET

What Gibraltar media was represented at the Medcruise and World Travel Market, in what hotels were they lodged and can the Government provide a breakdown of the cost to the taxpayer?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

GBC, the Gibraltar Chronicle, Panorama and Vox were all invited to send representatives to the Gala Dinner of the Guild of Travel Writers at the Savoy Hotel, to the Medcruise General Assembly and the World Travel Market. The invitation was accepted by all except Panorama, the newspaper owned and edited by the hon Member's father.

Two employees of GBC were lodged at the Royal National Hotel, the Editor of Vox was lodged at the Strand Palace Hotel and an employee of the Gibraltar Chronicle was lodged at the Royal National Hotel.

The cost came to £2,037.83 as follows:-

Flights	£657.76
Hotel	£1,197.37
Transfers	£182.70

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 129 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Was there any specific purpose in taking the Gibraltar media to London to report on the event in Gibraltar. How many tourists has that attracted?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The purpose of inviting the media to London was not to bring tourists to Gibraltar. I think it is important that the people of Gibraltar should see what the Gibraltar Government are doing to promote Gibraltar outside its frontiers. I think it is an opportunity where there were a number of major events that were being staged in London over a three day period and I thought it was good for the local media also to learn what we are doing in Gibraltar to meet, for example, the Medcruise Conference, to speak to the President of Costa Cruises, who was there, to meet other Ministers that were at the same function and it was a good opportunity for a number of interviews to be done for information purposes locally as well. The cost of £2,000 is not I think something that we ought to be concerned about considering the mileage that then GBC had in terms of production of programmes and feeding information to the general public in Gibraltar.

ORAL

NO. 130 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

REGIONAL AIR LINES

What is the nature and level of the subsidy to Regional Air Lines?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question No. 137 of 2000.

NO. 131 OF 2000THE HON DR J J GARCIA**TOURISM - OFFICIAL BUSINESS**

Can the Minister for Tourism give the dates when he has been away from Gibraltar on Government business in chronological order from August 1999, giving the event or function attended, the venue, the city and the country visited?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The information requested is as follows:

ABSENCES OF HON J J HOLLIDAY FROM GIBRALTAR ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>CITY</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
21/23 September 1999	London	Maritime London Interview for Maritime Administrator
24/26 October 1999	Hamburg London	Inward Investment UKGTA
13/17 November 1999	London	Guild of Travel Writers Gala Dinner Medcruise General Assembly World Travel Market UK Launch "Impressions of Gibraltar" book
28/30 November 1999	Madrid	Madrid Office Marketing 2000
9/11 January 2000	London	London Boat Show British Airways Marketing 2000
27 January 2000	Madrid	FITUR
21/22 February 2000	Madrid	Travel Press Dinner

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 131 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The visit to London from 21st to 23rd September to interview the Maritime Administrator lasted for three days. Is that because of travelling arrangements?

HON. J. J. HOLLIDAY:

No, I went over on the 21st September and returned on the 23rd. I have not got the details whether I went on the evening flight on the 21st and came out on the 23rd on the morning flight. It could have been one day's work. If I do not recall incorrectly, I think I must have gone in the evening flight and come back on the evening flight on the 23rd. I remember having the Maritime Administrator interview in the afternoon and then in the morning again there were others. I had to interview five or six people, it was not just meeting one person.

NO. 132 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

GIBRALTAR TOURIST BOARD : BROCHURE

When did the Gibraltar Tourist Board conference and incentive brochure go out to tender?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Quotes were invited for all new Gibraltar Tourist Board Literature in March 1998. The quotes were received in April and May 1998. A detailed report was then submitted to the Financial and Development Secretary.

On the 27th July 1998, a letter was received from the Financial and Development secretary agreeing to dispense with normal Tender Board procedures in this particular case.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.132 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Was there any reason for waiving the normal tender procedures for this particular case?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

This has been explained in the House before. It was very difficult to be able to put out to tender which covered all the publications with the details, the presentation, the quality et cetera so instead of going through the normal tender procedure process there were actually submissions. There must have been nine or 10 different applicants who went through the procedure of being screened before a particular company was selected that carried out this range of publications.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

There was nothing specific to this particular publication?

HON J J HOLLIDAY;

No, absolutely. This is I think the last brochure that was included in that particular contract.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

What company was it that obtained this particular contract?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Copyrights obtained the tender. This publication had not been done before because basically the hotels who have conference facilities did not have their facilities ready and so we were waiting for places like the Caleta Palace to have those facilities available.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The tender was for producing it and that includes the printing of the brochure, does it not?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, I think it covers printing and production but I am not absolutely certain. This goes back to 1998, definitely printing and production as well.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Referring to the Government Official Notice which appeared recently, in February, how many companies have actually asked to be included in the brochure because they can offer those conference services in Gibraltar?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am afraid I cannot really answer that. There have been a number of companies that have..... but the brochure has not yet been put to bed and the submission has not yet been made to me for final overview and input. I am sure that it will be coming shortly.

NO. 133 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - QUESTIONNAIRE

What is the nature of the questionnaire for which the Government have invited tenders in Government Notice 1323 published in the Gibraltar Gazette on Thursday 16th December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The questionnaire is designed to provide a visitor profile and to obtain feedback from visitors with regard to what they liked and disliked about Gibraltar as a tourist destination.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.133 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

This is obviously unrelated to the collation of statistics which we were discussing earlier, is that the case?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Absolutely, this is something completely different and it is mainly as a result of the fact that I wished to have a system by which tourists can complain when they are not happy with the particular service or a particular site so that they are able to fill in a form which will give us a relevant amount of information about the specific tourist concerned and have the possibility of being able to feed back what they feel.

NO. 134 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - QUESTIONNAIRE

How many companies or individuals have expressed an interest in the design, printing and supply of questionnaires for the Gibraltar Tourist Board?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

There were nine.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.134 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Is the Minister in a position to say which company was successful in this award?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The tender is still with the Treasury Tender Board and has not been adjudicated.

NO. 135 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - STAR GRADING FOR HOTELS

When is the star grading system for hotels due to take effect?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

A provisional star grading for each hotel was arrived at towards the end of last year. The definitive star grading will be awarded during the latter half of this year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.135 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

In November of last year the Government signed an agreement with Associated Quality Services for the provision of this. What criteria are they actually using when they are going around grading hotels?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

They are basing their criteria on the UK hotel grading system, also using the same system that has been used in Wales and Ireland obviously adapting it to the local requirements in order to make sure that we have a reasonable approach to the grading.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Perhaps the Minister could explain exactly what exactly that involves. I understand they are also responsible for the grading of hotels in Ireland, Wales and in the Channel Islands also. How do they adapt standards to local circumstances in something like grading of hotels, rooms and facilities?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The standards that are being applied are international standards. It has something to do with the physical infrastructure of a particular hotel. For example, four star hotels must all have air conditioned rooms. This may not necessarily have to apply in Gibraltar. Also the width of the corridors have to be of certain measurements before they can meet three or four star hotels. We cannot get the Bristol Hotel, for example, throw it down and build it again because the corridors are six inches not wide enough. We are adapting the international standards to the local requirements but not making a sacrifice on actual standard of service and amenities which is important.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can the Minister confirm to the House that the contracts with AQS for this service is in the region of £5,000 a year for three years? Can the Minister confirm the exact figure which I think was made public?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The hon Member has mentioned the figure, I seem to recall that that is the correct figure.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The actual procedure they are using, I understand, are surprise visits by assessors who stay in the hotel and judge it accordingly. How many of those visits have already taken place and the provisional grading which the Minister mentioned?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, the first visit has already taken place. A report has been submitted to each individual hotel giving them a provisional rating and giving them a report of things that must be done in order for them to maintain that rating. There may be hotels that are four star but will not meet that criteria unless they actually change certain specifications that are currently in place. Then they will come to visit, that is why my answer says the latter part of the year because I am not privy to that information as to when they will come again. They will turn up at the individual hotels and assess them again based on criteria and the report and if they have upgraded to what has been required of them then obviously the rating will become a permanent feature subject to annual review. If that is not the case then obviously we stand the chance of them having to drop to a lower grade.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Just to confirm that this will be an on-going process of assessment, in the sense that once they stay they will come back.....

HON J J HOLLIDAY;

Absolutely, once that happens it will be a constant review of hotels and complaints will have to be entertained because if there are many complaints coming from a particular hotel then it will be subjected to penalties, that is, losing grade and credibility.

NO. 136 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

ROSIA BAY

How many companies, individuals or organisations have expressed an interest by submitting outline proposals, or otherwise, in the development of the Rosia Bay area?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

There were four outline proposals.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 136 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Is the Minister in a position to explain to the House the nature of the four proposals, what they entailed?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, I am not. At the moment the proposals are being assessed by the technical personnel within Government. Then, obviously, we will pass this on to tender awards and considerations. It is too early for me to be able to divulge the nature.

HON J C PEREZ:

We are talking about the area on top of Little Bay? Is that the area that is being looked at?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, we are talking of the area north of Parsons Lodge. The area of Rosia Bay where the old swimming pavilion used to be.

HON DR J J GARCIA;

Can the Minister say what criteria will they use in allocating this area. Do the developers have to bid and the highest bidder will receive it or does it depend on what they offer, whether it is mainly residential or touristic or commercial development?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, Mr Speaker, the tender that went out invited proposals and conceptional ideas. If there is an in principle agreement by the Government on any particular proposal or proposals then they will have to submit proper drawings and proper feasibility studies and proper plans as to what is going in. At the moment everybody that has submitted a proposal has basically sent an outline proposal with no real detail or in depth consideration.

NO. 137 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

REGIONAL AIR LINES

What has been the result of the Government's review of the arrangements with Regional Air Lines?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The one year agreement for a Casablanca/Gibraltar service, negotiated with Regional Airlines, provides for a £65,000 Government subsidy to cover 50 per cent of the start-up cost of the route, together with the payments by Government of handling charges and landing charges at Gibraltar for one year, less any discounts afforded by MOD.

The review has not yet been concluded and is currently being negotiated.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 130 AND 137 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Do we take it that the £65,000 subsidy, the other cost which the Minister has mentioned, are included in the £65,000?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, Mr Speaker.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Does the Minister have an estimate of what that cost is?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The landing fees will probably come up to approximately £18,000 for the first year. The handling fees will probably come up to about £35,000 but that is now going to be renegotiated on the strength of the changes that are bound to take place as a result of the negotiations that are currently taking place.

NO. 138 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURIST SURVEY REPORT

When was the Tourist Survey Report for 1998 completed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The draft Tourist Survey Report was completed in December 1999.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.138 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA;

Can the Minister confirm that this will also be made available at this session of the House?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

There is a meeting planned between the Statistics Office and myself because they claim to have upgraded the Report and the contents and subject to that being approved, obviously yes, it will be.

NO. 139 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - CONFERENCES

Can Government say how many conferences were attracted to Gibraltar in chronological order during 1999, giving the dates, the number of participants, the venue and the subject matter of each conference?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question No.140 of 2000.

NO. 140 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURISM - CONFERENCES

Can Government say how many conferences were attracted to Gibraltar in chronological order during 2000 to date, giving the number of participants, the venue and the subject matter of each conference?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The question may reveal a misunderstanding of the role of the Gibraltar Tourist Board in respect of conference business for Gibraltar. The Board is not a commercial operator, who attracts specific conferences and derives particular business from this activity. The role of the Board is to act as a catalyst and to promote Gibraltar as a conference destination. It is then up to conference facility providers to secure the physical business. The Government do not therefore have the information requested.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.140 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The answer is very surprising because when the same question was asked in September the answer was indeed provided by his then hon Colleague Mr Montegriffo.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That was a very different question in relation to certain conferences that had been organised under the auspices of the Finance Centre which was very different. It was not a question of annual conferences in Gibraltar.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

I have the other question here and it is an identical question. I remember specifically asking a supplementary and the Hon Mr Montegriffo then replied whether this included all conferences and not just the Finance Centre conferences and that was what they had assumed, that it included all of them and he gave me the answer. Here it is, it was Question Nos. 744 and 745 of 1999 and the questions were phrased in identical terms to this one, so the Chief Minister is wrong. The answer was two for one and three for the other.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The answer the hon Member was given was in respect of two Conferences that had been organised by the Finance Centre.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

But the question was identical and what I am disputing is whether the question was identical or not. I thought the object of Question Time was for the Opposition to question the Government, not for the Government to question the Opposition. Be that as it may, because I am right and they are wrong, I will read the question.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

And the answer.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The answer is a number. The question was, "Can Government say how many conferences were attracted to Gibraltar in chronological order in the current financial year, giving the number of participants, events, venue and the subject matter of each conference?" It is identical to this except this is asking for it during the whole of 1999 because that one only asked for it in the financial year. So the two questions were identical. The answer was two and then the answer to the other one was two, obviously there must have been more but this is all I have in my notes.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The point remains the same. The fact is that the Government only give that information in respect of conferences that they have organised, not in respect of conferences that take place in Gibraltar.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

All I can say is what I said earlier, that the question is identical and that they were answered. We were not given the answer that we are given now. Secondly, in relation to the role of the Tourist Board attracting conferences and the answer presumes that there is some sort of hidden agenda or motive behind the question there is none. It is simply that the Government made it one of their policy statements in attracting conferences to Gibraltar, they kept on talking about the idea, we have had so few that now they are trying to cloud the issue by going on about different things.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Mr Speaker, the hon Member is totally confused. If I was to ask any of the local hotels who have conference facilities to give me details of what conferences they have held in Gibraltar during the last year and what the venue and the subject and how many people came they would not give me that information. That information is confidential to them. As the hon Members can well imagine giving information away to me, make it public, it means that some other hotel could trap in to that particular sector and try and gain conferences from each other. This has happened. The Elliott Hotel and the Rock Hotel were the only two conference providers up to recently and where at each other trying to see whether next year's conference on the particular areas they held could be tapped, they are in competition. That information is not available and is not made available to the Government. I have tried to seek, because I want to know as well, but they will not divulge that information.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think the hon Member is right in one of the points that he is making and that is that the questions have been interpreted differently, on this occasion and on the previous occasion. The previous occasion it was interpreted as meaning organised by Government and therefore passed on to the only Government Department that actually organises conferences to answer, that is why he got the answer from the previous Minister for Trade and Industry. On this occasion it has been interpreted widely and given the wide answer. The hon Member is right as obviously the questions have been differently interpreted and therefore given different answers on the two occasions.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

I am grateful to the Chief Minister for the admission. That is simply the point that I was trying to make, that the two questions are identical and therefore what we have been saying from this side of the House is right, what they have been saying is wrong and the only person who is confused is the Hon Mr Holliday.

NO. 141 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

PORT AUTHORITY

Have Government concluded their discussions with the staff associations concerned over the restructure of the Port Department into the new Port Authority?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.141 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister confident that things are going well, or is there a stumbling block somewhere along the way?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

No, I think the initial misunderstandings have been clarified. I have had meetings with the Transport and General Workers Union and with the Staff Representatives and I have another meeting set with them on the 17th March when hopefully we will bring the negotiations to at least a stage where progress will have been achieved.

NO. 142 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

CAMP BAY

Will Camp Bay be open without restrictions to the general public this year during the summer season?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

It is Government's intention that Camp Bay should be open without restrictions to the general public for this year's official bathing season.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.142 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Does that mean that the works on the rock face have now been finalised?

HON LT COL E M BRITTO:

If I remember rightly I answered this question at the last Question Time in the House when I gave a practical finished state for the works. The answer is yes, it was finished a long time ago.

NO. 143 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

TOURISM - LIFEGUARDS

Do Government still consider that the provision of lifeguards that our beaches should coincide with the commencement of the official bathing season in June and not before?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government do not presently intend to extend lifeguard cover at beaches outside the official bathing season other than during the Easter break. The possibility of having lifeguards on duty over the school holiday at Easter is being studied.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.143 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

One can understand that policy with regard to the use made of the beaches by the local population other than on weekends where the weather is such that people start using the beaches well before the summer season during the weekend, but was it not the view of Government Members when they were in Opposition that in order to attract more tourists before the official summer season came through which is an off peak area, that it would be important to have our beaches in condition and with lifeguards before the official summer season which is basically dictated by the school hours?

MR SPEAKER:

No reply, next question.

NO. 144 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

ST MICHAEL'S CAVE

Can Government say why the toilets at St Michael's Cave are closed more often than not?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government do not agree that the toilets at St Michael's Cave are closed more often than not.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.144 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

I must admit I am not one that goes there very often other than on occasions but it is complaints that I have received from people in public transport that say that the tourists complain. I think that the last occasion when this happened was when there was an event in the Cave and people were having to use the ones at St Michael's Cabin because that one was closed. I would like the hon Member to look into it, if nothing else.....

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

There has been a portacabin being used for toilet facilities in recent weeks as a result of the fact that the toilets are being refurbished, both the gents and the ladies toilets are being refurbished and a toilet for the disabled has actually been built. A baby's changing room station has also been installed during the works that are due to be completed towards the end of this month. There may have been a need to actually close the facilities. We have had problems with the toilets but not to the extent that they have been closed more often than not.

ORAL

NO. 145 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

TRANSPORT - MOT

Will Government state how many private motor vehicles are required to take an MOT test before June this year, how many have already passed the test, how many have failed and how many have yet to take the test?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question No. 146 of 2000.

NO. 146 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

TRANSPORT - MOT

Will Government state how many of the 4,517 private motor vehicles that should have taken an MOT test by June 1999 but did not do so, have now taken the test?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The number of private motor vehicles required to have taken a road worthiness test by June 2000 is 12,790. The number of private motor vehicles which passed a road worthiness test between 1st June 1999 and 31st January 2000 were 4,924. The number of private motor vehicles which failed a road worthiness test between 1st June 1999 and 31st January 2000 were 1,466 and the number of private motor vehicles which are required to take a road worthiness test by 30th June 2000 are 7,429.

The information sought in Question No. 146 is not readily available, as it requires checking manually through all 4,517 vehicle records to see whether or not they have now taken the MOT test.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.146 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister satisfied that between now and June the 7,429 that need to take the test have enough time to comply with the requirements of the law?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am told by the Chief Motor Vehicle Examiner, who I have questioned on this particular matter, that there is sufficient time available to have all these vehicles passed. At the moment there is hardly a waiting list. There may be an element of overtime work that may need to be put in place nearer the time in order to cater for the last minute rush because people tend to leave everything till the last moment. Let me say that Road Tax will not be available to cars who have not passed their MOT test this year. People will need to have their MOT Certificates in place by then.

HON J C PEREZ:

Does that mean that the Minister has changed his policy from the previous year where an appointment with the MOT was sufficient for the road tax to be released?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

The reality was that last year we put in place a system which specifically dealt with the matter the hon Member has correctly described, basically due to the fact that it was the first year and that a lot of people were still in preparation and were new to

the system. Now everybody should have had an opportunity to be able to have gone through their test. I think it also helps the Police to be able to monitor cars that have not gone through the MOT by the issuing of the road tax. If one has a road tax disk it means one has a valid MOT at the same time. That applies in other jurisdictions as well.

HON J C PEREZ:

Given that there were 4,517 vehicles that have not complied with the requirements of the test last year, and that last year what they required was an appointment with the MOT Test Centre, would it be true to say that most of those vehicles exchanged their licences during the year?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I cannot confirm or otherwise on that particular matter. The exercise that the hon Member asked us to do if it would have been undertaken I would have been able to reply to the hon Member's question. The reality is that the records down there would show the answer but it meant going through the records of every individual vehicle which would take a long time to do and this would be unnecessary.

HON J C PEREZ:

I know it is hard work but it is the only way to monitor whether people are actually complying with the law passed by the Minister. If they have not complied with the law by the new date, a year later or nine months later, have they now complied with the law? I personally do not see the difficulty if the system is computerised as I know it is of the ones that we identified last year, these have now passed the test because there must be a record kept of the vehicle registrations that actually pass the test and the dates. That is why I cannot see that the task is as arduous unless we might be able to find out the total for the year.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

On 1st June we will know.

NO. 147 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

GREEN LANE

Can Government state whether they have arrived at any agreement on the use of Green Lane by vehicular traffic as a result of their discussions with the owners of the Rock Hotel?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

No agreement has been reached.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 147 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Are the discussions still on-going or have they closed or have they broken down?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

Yes, the discussions are on-going. I last raised the issue with the owners of the Rock Hotel weeks ago. I have asked them for a formal consideration now by the end of March and I hope it is forthcoming but the matter is being considering in a serious way.

HON J C PEREZ:

But we are talking about the use of the road by those who live on the Upper Rock which is basically the problem or are we talking about a greater use?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

We are talking of a greater use. I would like to be able to see much greater use of the lane itself. I have had LPS valuing the actual value of that lease that is held by the Rock Hotel – do not ask me for the value because obviously I would then be giving away information which I am not willing to give the owners of the Rock Hotel – and then obviously I await to hear from them on the discussions that we have had and which they have undertaken to give me a reply before the end of March.

NO. 148 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

PUBLIC TRANSPORT - REPORT

When do Government intend to make known their position with respect to public transport following the recommendations of the Committee that looked into aspects of the bus service?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Government do not yet know when it will be able to make known their position.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.148 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

I am sorry if I sound repetitious but it is an issue which I have been raising for four years and if I were given a particular date or an order of a date I could then come back and say "well, I asked about it at such and such a time", before it was "we are studying the problem" then "we are setting up a committee" now that we have got the report "we are still studying the problem". The urgency that has been given to the conditions of the bus service has been given to it by the Chief Minister himself not by me and I know that the Minister is including other aspects of public transport in it because he said so in this House but the last time I raised it he said he was going to give it some priority, could the Minister explain when he expects to be in a position to make something public?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I do not think I can give the hon Member a commitment of a complete time-scale but let me tell him that the improvement of our bus service is part of our integrated transport policy and improving transport generally. I can tell the hon Member that since the Elections I have had discussions with the two current bus operators, or their representatives, and I am awaiting to hear from them in respect of some ideas that I floated across to them. It has now become a priority for the Government to deal with this matter. In fact, if the hon Member read our Manifesto we actually highlighted the fact that we wished to put in place.....

HON J C PEREZ:

But you did that last year as well, four years ago the Minister also did it.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I was not so involved in 1996 as I was in this one, but let me say that it is now a matter of priority that this matter is sorted out. I know that the hon Member had many years of handling this particular issue and it is not an easy matter to solve. The matter is being dealt with and it is very much at the top of my priorities.

NO. 149 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

QUEENSWAY

Do Government have any plans to improve the traffic flow at Queensway between the Waterport roundabout and the junction with Europort Avenue?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

There is only traffic congestion at peak hours. The question of improving traffic flows is presently being considered, as a continuation of the works being carried out at Devil's Tongue Road.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.149 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

I would imagine that the idea would be to look at a different traffic flow in and out of the Europort area using the Waterport Road in a different way, is that what is being looked at?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

There are various options being considered at the moment. The stem of the problem rises from the fact that when the land reclamation was developed many years ago, account was not taken of the traffic requirements to and from the area considering the amount of people that would actually live in that area and which now seems to be increasing. We are looking at various areas. The possible relocation of the tennis courts are being considered, roundabouts in that particular area, the changing of the traffic flow through Waterport, and the matter is now being considered because it is one particular area that I would like to see solved, particularly at peak hours.

HON J C PEREZ:

Let me tell the Minister that it is not only peak hours. I live in the area and at any time one comes out, other than at night there is always a problem in the area, the whole day.

NO. 150 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

WINSTON CHURCHILL AVENUE

Are Government in a position to explain how the removal of traffic lights at Winston Churchill Avenue will improve traffic flow without compromising safety?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The existing traffic arrangements at Winston Churchill Avenue junction with Corral Road, Glacis Road and Smith Dorrien Avenue have been in operation for several months. The hon Member can therefore judge their impact for himself. The Government are highly satisfied with these arrangements, which have improved traffic flow enormously. It is not Government's intention to remove any further traffic lights at Winston Churchill Avenue.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.150 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister should have told us that when drafting their manifesto. According to the manifesto they were going to remove traffic lights at Winston Churchill Avenue to improve the traffic flow.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I cannot recall this particular point. I stand to be corrected and I have not got a copy of our manifesto here.

HON J C PEREZ:

I have and I shall show the Minister later.

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

I am glad the hon Member is reading it.

NO. 151 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

ARENGO'S PALACE

Can Government state whether the wall that collapsed at Arengo's Palace injuring seven school children had previously been inspected by the Health and Safety authorities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

A Health and Safety Inspector reported to the Highways Section Works Manager on 8th February 2000 that a section of the wall at Arengo's Palace was defective. A site meeting was held within an hour of the report having been received, between the Health and Safety Inspector and Officers of the Highways Section. The section of wall that was considered to be unsafe was demolished immediately and the area cordoned off with barriers.

The remaining length of the parapet wall was inspected and it was not deemed to be in danger. Subsequently, a section of that remaining length of wall did in fact collapse.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 151 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

So the Health and Safety authorities actually considered that the wall that collapsed was not in danger?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

That is correct.

ORAL

NO. 152 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

SIR HERBERT MILES ROAD

Will Government state what is now the delay on the completion date of the works at Sir Herbert Miles Road?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 153 and 154 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 153 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

SIR HERBERT MILES ROAD

Are Government satisfied that the balustrade along Sir Herbert Miles Road, from the Caleta Palace to Sandy Bay is safe for people to lean on?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Answered together with Question Nos. 152 and 154 of 2000.

NO. 154 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

SIR HERBERT MILES ROAD

Can Government state by how much has Sir Herbert Miles Road been widened as a result of the on-going works and whether it is longer than before or it is still 1.2 kilometres?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

The delays in completing the works at Sir Herbert Miles Road can be attributed to a combination of factors. There was an increase in the scope of the temporary stabilisation works to support the sand slopes as a result of variable ground conditions. Excavations to lay new services in the road met with considerable difficulties due to the presence of major rock outcrops along most of the route. Difficulties were also experienced in the vicinity of the electrical sub-station due to the high concentration of services in the area.

The Government are satisfied that the balustrading along Sir Herbert Miles Road is perfectly suited for the purpose for which it has been built. It is a matter of deep regret to the Government that the balustrading is the subject of systematic and wanton vandalism.

The road has been widened from an average of four metres to an average of 6.5 metres, but its length has not changed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 152, 153 AND 154 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

I asked the Minister about the balustrade because although I have read in the newspaper about supposed vandalism to the wall, there are some people who use the area who seem to think that the vandalism is possible because the materials are not suitable. Although the Minister is saying that it is satisfactory, my question was whether it was safe to lean on it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER;

The hon Member is right in what he says.

HON J C PEREZ:

But I have not finished. It would seem that the materials being used might not be satisfactory for the kind of wall that has been built there.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This is factory made balustrading material used throughout Spain. It is certainly true that if it were made of sterner stuff it would be less prone to vandalism. If it was solid steel and welded to the ground and had an electric current running through it, then

vandals would not vandalise it. Incidentally, Mr Speaker, it is not supposed vandalism, people have been convicted of this in court so there is nothing supposed about it. It is actual, proven vandalism. The hon Members I remember used to complain about similar things about some of their projects when they were in Government. I can still remember the previous Minister for Transport complaining about much the same thing. I have to say that it will probably result in the Government installing CCTV cameras in this area.

HON J C PEREZ:

When is it now expected that Sir Herbert Miles Road would be opened? In September I was told that there was already a 10-week delay and it was expected that at the beginning of the year it would be ready and although the delays seem to have continued, I would like the Minister to say when the road is now expected to be opened. The other supplementary I have got is, I would like to know whether the widening of the road has actually meant that new retaining walls have had to be built along most of the road in order to do this and, if so, why has it not been made wider given that the cost of the retaining wall would have been the same if it had gone a couple of metres more in than that? I think a lot of space has been used for a pathway and we have a situation where in many areas the road is as wide as it was before because of the big use that has been made for the pedestrian walkway?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

If I can just deal with the two issues that have been raised. The road is now expected to be opened on 16th April, which represents a delay of 22 weeks from its original contract completion date. The points the hon Member made about the retaining wall, to be honest I am not a technical person to be able to answer that. I assume that it is not just the cost of the retaining wall but there has to be an element of excavation and cutting down of the slope which I am sure is quite an expensive affair.

HON J C PEREZ:

Some good work has been done but when we have widened the road, we have used so much space for the pavement that in some areas the road is as wide or just a little bit wider as it was when we started the work which defeats the exercise when one has to use the road as a two-way road.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think the road is as wide as a two-way road should be. It is wide enough for two ways. The principal cost of that project actually was not the cost of the retaining wall itself, the cost of propping up the sand slope whilst the retaining wall was removed and rebuilt. I cannot say why the road was designed in that way. If the hon Member wants an answer to that question I think it can be obtained and it will certainly be interesting. Certainly, there were cost factors, this was a partly EU funded project and I suppose roads cost by the square metre like everything else and making it wider along its whole length presumably meant making it more expensive. That is as far as the retaining wall side is concerned. Why the pavements were not made a little bit narrower so that the road could be a little bit wider at relatively little extra expense is a matter of the design of the road by the engineers, I could not begin to answer that. We will find out if there is a reason for that and I shall pass it on to the hon Member. Certainly, the pavements are very wide.

ORAL

NO. 155 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

BUS SHELTERS

Can Government state whether the specifications for new bus shelters recently put out to tender contain provision for seats?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

Yes, sir.

NO. 156 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

CULLING OF APES

Will Government state how many apes have been culled in the last four months and in what manner?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND TRANSPORT

No culling of apes has taken place during the period November 1999 and February 2000.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.156 OF 2000

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I thank the Minister for his answer. Is any culling expected in the near future?

HON J J HOLLIDAY:

It is not Government policy to cull apes unless it is absolutely necessary but let me say that last year in September and October we did a cull up at Moorish Castle, where 25 apes were culled and the problem is coming back. There are a number of apes that are now finding their way into Moorish Castle again, obviously not the ones that were culled, but unfortunately part of the problem is that the amount of feeding that is being given to these animals in the area. The vet and GONHS who actually take responsibility for the management of the apes have been round Moorish Castle advising people not to feed the apes but there are those who obviously want the apes out of Moorish Castle and there are others that feed them in order to attract them back into Moorish Castle. We do have a problem and obviously we cannot rule out the fact that we may have to go down the same route again if necessary.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Could I just add to that, whilst it is not Government policy to cull, nor do the Government have the same apparent reluctance to cull that the Opposition Members have. Culling in itself is not inhumane, what may be inhumane is how the culling is done. Animals are culled for good reasons everywhere and in respect of many species. Whilst the Government have demonstrated in the past that they have been willing to incur expenditure to avoid culling, if circumstances nevertheless require it, and there is no other solution, the Government do not have any difficulty with culling, that I know that the Leader of the Opposition has and the chap that used to sit in the seat that he now occupies has. I do not know if he is asking this question on behalf of Mr Gabay or whether he has just found this question template on the seat there. It is something that we seek to avoid but it is one of the things that divides us across this floor of the House, we think that culling is justifiable if the circumstances require it. The hon Members do not and certainly asking this sort of question ought not to be allowed to generate the view that culling is wrong. Culling is not wrong and when the Government do it, they do it on expert advice.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The fact that Government seek expert advice is no consolation to the ape being killed.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In the first place, culling and killing have the same result. It is not people and I have just come in from next door and have had a jolly nice hamburger which presumably required something to be slaughtered and I think people need to be consistent and consequential. I do not know if the fact that the hon Member feels so strongly against killing animals means that he is a vegetarian. Is he a vegetarian?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 157 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

TRAINING SCHEME

Will the Minister state how many of the 17 participants in the Training Scheme for the unemployed have subsequently found employment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Of the 17 participants taking part in the training scheme for the unemployed, six have found employment, three are continuing training with the Department of Education and Training and eight are still unemployed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.157 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

Is the Minister satisfied with the outcome of this training scheme?

HON DR B A LINARES:

As an employment strategy I would not like to comment in that respect. My Department is responsible for putting into effect a relevant training scheme. In that sense I am satisfied that all the people participating in it are developing their potential and thereby prospects for employment.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say whether there is any evidence that the nature of the employment found by the six is in any way attributable to the nature of the skills imparted by the training schemes?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, I have to admit that it is very difficult to assess and analyse to what extent the fact that these six have obtained employment is due to their developed potential. I would say that at least they have been offered an improvement and a development in their own possibility and prospects.

NO. 158 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

CULTURAL GRANTS

Will the Minister for Education give a breakdown of how the cultural grants have been distributed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

A total of £26,000 was budgeted in the 1999/2000 Estimates of Expenditure for cultural grants; £25,923 have been distributed to a total of 29 cultural groups and individuals. The breakdown of these is provided in a list which I now hand over to the hon Member.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.158 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

Can the Minister say what criteria is used when giving out these monies?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Since the institution of the Arts Advisory Council one of the main criteria is that the group or individual should be registered with the Arts Advisory Council as a bona fide artistic entity. Apart from that they are required to provide statement of accounts, to show exactly how their funds are being used and what funds they can count on in their own rights. Also they have to give very clear details of what their fees are intended for and that is assessed by an independent board made up of relevant parties.

Answer to Question 158 of 2000

The breakdown of awards is as follows:-

Fine Arts Association	£1444
Elie Massias and the Jimmy Weinstein Group	£250
Just in Time Band	£1000
Gibraltar Model Soldiers Society	£400
Melon Diesel	£400
Rooke Volunteer Band	£400
Tito Vallejo (publication of book)	£1000
Gibraltar National Dance Organisation	£3000
Andrea Martin & Nicholas Martin concert	£40
Gibraltar Arts and Crafts Association	£1000
Fine Arts Studio	£365
J M Memorial Foundation	£320
Gibraltar Academy of Dance	£650
Tarik Dance Group	£650
Gibraltar Photographic Society	£1000
Gibraltar Caving Group	£500
Danza Academy	£650
The Arts Centre	£1000
Mario Finlayson (Retrospective Exhibition)	£1000
DSA Old Tyme & Modern Sequence Dance Club	£1502
Gibraltar Music Centre	£1352
Gibraltar Dance Association	£2250
Leit Motif	£750
Gibraltar Horticultural Society	£300
Calpe Singers	£750
Gibraltar Scout Association bands	£600
Adrian Pisarello (recording expenses)	£350
Catholic Community Centre Sequence Dance Club	£1000
Gibraltar Philharmonic Society	<u>£2000</u>
	<u>£25923</u>

NO. 159 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

DRAMA FESTIVAL

Are Government actively pursuing the revival of the Drama Festival?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Yes, Sir. The 55th Annual Amateur Drama Festival is scheduled to take place from 27th November to 5th December 2000. The Ministry of Culture is already liaising with the Gibraltar Amateur Drama Association on the matter and in due course a press release will be issued inviting prospective drama groups and individuals to participate in the Drama Festival.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.159 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

Can the Minister state why they had a problem last year and not this year?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Mr Speaker, it is a complex situation. The groups themselves found it difficult to rally enough support from their own members to put in the effort and training and the practice that is required to put on a performance during that particular week. As is well known publicly now there were not enough groups to make up a festival as such.

NO. 160 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

ASSOCIATED QUALITY SERVICE LTD

Can the Minister provide a breakdown of payments made to Associated Quality Service Ltd indicating the nature of the services provided?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The breakdown of payments to Associated Quality Service Ltd is as follows:-

£5,000	Hotel Grading Scheme
£2,500	Welcome Host Trainer Training Scheme
£2,500	Trainer Reviews and Trainer Evaluation
£500	One Day Trainer Training
£9,940	Cost of Developing Welcome Host Programme

ORAL

NO. 161 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

SCHOOL OF TOURISM

Can the Minister provide a breakdown of the annual budget of the School of Tourism?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 162 and 163 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 162 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

SCHOOL OF TOURISM

Will the Minister for Education state how many lecturers, teachers or staff are currently employed in the School of Tourism?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 161 and 163 of 2000.

NO. 163 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES**SCHOOL OF TOURISM**

Will the Minister for Education state how many students are currently registered in the School of Tourism?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The information requested is as follows:-

ANNUAL BUDGET: £46,000 as follows:

General Expenses	£1,850
Training Courses	£44,150

STAFF: Contract lecturers on a part-time basis have been used as and when required

REGISTERED STUDENTS: There are currently (as from 6th March 2000) 40 trainees registered. The breakdown is as follows:-

Intake 1	completed
Intake 2	5
Intake 3	7
Intake 4	15
Intake 5	<u>13</u>
	<u>40</u>

I may actually add here some information that was required earlier on and that I generously offered to provide in the context of the hon Member's question. Thirteen trainees from Intakes 1 and 2 have found employment in the hospitality industry as it is called. Two have found employment in other industries and four are continuing their studies in UK Colleges of Further Education.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 161, 162 AND 163 OF 2000

HON J L BALDACHINO:

Arising from the answer that the Minister has just given. He said there are four now currently studying in the UK. Could they have done that without going through the course of the hotel industry? Could they have applied and gone without going through that course?

HON DR B A LINARES:

To be absolutely honest, it may be so. It is difficult to know on what criteria Colleges in UK accept entries and what qualifications they require. But certainly the fact that they had undergone this course, I am absolutely sure served them in good purpose when applying for entry and for acceptance in the College of Further Education.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The 13 that have found employment is in relation to the 42 shown in the table provided of Gibraltarians employed in the four months of the year that were the subject matter of the question, September to December? Is that correct?

HON DR B A LINARES

All I know is that 13 trainees who have gone through the College from the School of Tourism have now found employment in precisely the hospitality industry.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But the question before, Mr Speaker, if I may remind the House was that when the table was provided my Colleague asked of the Gibraltarians that have found employment, how many have undergone training in the School? We were told "you will be told that when the later question comes" and now we are at the later question and of course if the 13 form part of the 42, then the original question is not being answered because the question originally was of the 42 how many have found employment having been in the training scheme.

HON DR B A LINARES:

Surely, 13 is the answer.

HON J J BOSSANO:

That is what I am asking, are the 13 part of the 42 and does that mean they have found employment between September and December 1999, is that correct?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, it is a question of the timing of the completion dates of the different intakes and I am not too sure but we will have to look at that in greater detail to see how the completion dates coincide with that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer is that the hon Member cannot deduce that from that question. I think it can be safely deduced that some of the people listed on the first column on the right hand side in the earlier question as having been employed in the hospitality industry came from this course but on the basis of the information that he has just been given there is no way of knowing what the hon Member is now asking.

HON S E LINARES:

From the six part-time lecturers, can the Minister state if they are local lecturers, teachers, or are they just contracted to fulfil this course?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Some are lecturers who are contracted from abroad by the Julia Sibley Associates but many of the lecturers are actually on site lecturers and those are people in the hotels who are local employees in the different hotels in managerial posts. I think it is pretty well three and three, more specialists are brought from abroad for the more

theoretical aspects like, for instance, the customer care aspect which is run by Welcome Hosts but then of course a great part of the training is done in the hotels, in restaurants, and there the assessors and the trainers are local people who work in those places.

HON S E LINARES:

Does the School of Tourism itself monitor qualifications and the adequacy of the local on site training and how do they do it?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Absolutely, this is an essential part of the course. We have one of the members of the training unit who is a local employee, a monitor, who actually visits continually the places of work, sets out structured programmes in liaison with the assessors and the trainers in the hotels and then verifies and monitors that the course is being followed with logs and portfolios that have to be then presented and checked. It is a highly structured course, actually.

HON S E LINARES:

Can the Minister state, because he has mentioned lecturers, and I asked specifically for teachers, I know lecturers and teachers are very much together, but I also spoke about administrative staff, can the Minister state who is actually administering the administrative staff?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, I use the word "lecturers" because that is the word used in the hon Member's question. The hon Member will have gathered by now that my answer is a bit wider than that, particularly the assessors in the hotels are not quite lecturers, they are really instructors in a more practical way. In terms of administration, yes administration is provided by the Training Unit in Bleak House.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If I can go back to the 13, the information was that the 13 had been employed in the hospitality industry whereas the original question that gave us 42 was in the hotel industry. Is it that the hospitality industry is a wider definition than just hotels, so in fact the 13 may not all be people in hotels, is that right?

HON DR B A LINARES:

That is correct. Hospitality covers a very wide range of activities, restaurants, receptionists, different places attending to tourists and the hotel industry is one element in that wider scope.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister have information on the nature of the work that the 13 obtained?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The Ministry have obviously and the Training Unit. I have not got it at hand. I do not watch them and chase them up to see exactly what they are doing, but I am satisfied that the monitors in the Training Unit do keep a very close attention to the structure.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am still pursuing the original point. If there was one waiter employed and one chef, and one bar person in the original question I am trying to find out whether in fact the 13 that have got jobs in the hospitality industry, whether we know whether they were employed in the kind of job labels that have been given in the original answer? Like waiters, or chef or bar persons or chambermaid or whatever, of the 13 that have been employed?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have not got that information with me.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But it is possible to obtain it, is it not?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes.

NO. 164 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

CAMMELL LAIRD

Will the Minister for Education state how many applicants have registered at Cammell Laird for the second intake in October/November 1999 which is to include electrical and mechanical trades?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Up to 23 trainees registered in intake 2 at the Cammell Laird/Government of Gibraltar Training Centre. This is inclusive of electrical, mechanical, fabrication and welding trades.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.164 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

How much money do Government pay to Cammell Laird for each student?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I would need notice of that question.

NO. 165 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

CUSTOMER CARE TRAINING COURSES

Will the Minister for Education state how many trainees have completed the customer care training courses in the years 1998 and 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, 165 trainees have completed different courses in customer care run by the Department of Tourism.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.165 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

Can the Minister give us a breakdown of what difference there is?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I have not got the details or breakdown, Mr Speaker, but I can tell the hon Member that all these trainees are recruited from areas of employment connected with customer services, like, for instance, shop assistants, in the hotel industry, receptionists, taxi drivers have been engaged in some of these courses. I cannot give the hon Member a detailed breakdown here but I know the type of people engaged in customer services that are normally interested and can be recruited to take part in these short courses which are part of the Welcome Host programme.

HON S E LINARES;

Since the Minister has stated short courses, approximately how long do these courses last?

HON DR B A LINARES:

One or two days, in basic skills of service and customer care.

ORAL

NO. 166 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTRE

Will the Minister for Education state what initial information is given to students when applying for courses in the Construction Training Centre?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 167 and 168 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 167 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTRE

Will the Minister for Education state how many trainees have qualified for enrolment at the Construction Training Centre for the September 1999 intake, giving a breakdown by trade?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 166 and 168 of 2000.

NO. 168 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

CONSTRUCTION TRAINING CENTRE

Will the Minister for Education state how many trainees from the Construction Training Centre have dropped out from the 1997 intake and 1998 intake?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

All applicants are provided with an induction package which includes details of the course available. They are also addressed by the Training Manager as an introduction.

A total of 23 have qualified for enrolment at the Construction Training Centre in October 1999:

- 3 plumbers
- 4 carpenters
- 3 painters and decorators
- 4 plasterers
- 4 bricklayers
- 5 wall and floor tilers

In 1997, nine left of their own accord out of 28. In 1998, six left of their own accord out of 20.

NO. 169 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

NON-GCSE COURSE

Can the Minister for Education give us a rundown of what children in the one year non-GCSE course do?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Westside Comprehensive School does not have a one year non-GCSE course.

In Bayside School this course is offered for those students who have decided that they will be leaving school at age 15 or at the end of Year 10. The students opting for it will spend periods of time at different intervals in the Our Lady of Europa Training Centre or the main Construction and Training Centre. Normally, students would alternate between two weeks spent in school and two weeks in the Training Centre. At the Training Centre the students would be introduced to different trades in the Built Environment, and follow a basic training course in each of them.

The emphasis during the school based sessions will be on small groups (usually no larger than 12 students) undertaking tasks which will develop basic communication, numeracy and social skills as follows:

Core subjects: English, Mathematics, Spanish

Pastoral Guidance: Pastoral, Social and Health Education, Religious Education

Vocational Studies: Computer Awareness, Design and Technology, Life and Vocational Skills, Science

Leisure and

Interest Activities: Art, Music, Games, Local Studies

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 166, 167, 168 AND 169 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

So what the Minister is actually stating is that they have a full time table within the school with other children? Are they together with all the other children who actually are doing all the subjects that the Minister has just mentioned?

HON DR B A LINARES:

They have a full timetable which is made up, as I explained, 50/50 in normal school sessions in classrooms, in groups led by teachers and then 50 per cent of their time is spent under the instruction of instructors in either the Construction Training Centre or the Our Lady of Europa Training Centre. There again, I am told the Education Advisers will also monitor their progress even within the Training Centres.

HON S E LINARES:

When they go to the Construction Training Centre that the hon Member has just mentioned, do they also join in with the other trainees going in with the intake?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, obviously they join in in a social sense. They are there in the same community, but of course the skills and the tutoring that they will receive because of the nature of their basic skills training will be very different from those more specialised, say, the wall tilers, the floor tilers or the plumbers. If the hon Member wants to know if they are socially integrated, they certainly are but differentiated in the provision that is given to them as would happen in normal school settings. There is differentiation in the provision that different needs of children require.

HON S E LINARES:

Do teachers go to the Training Centre with these children?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, careers teachers and the Education Advisers in the Department of Education and Training will visit them there and monitor exactly, in liaison with the instructors there, exactly what they are doing, keeping a log and keeping a little portfolio.

HON S E LINARES:

So then extra staff in the Construction and Training Centre actually deal with this. There is employment of extra staff in the Construction and Training Centre to deal with 14 who turn up every two weeks to do whatever they have to do in the Training Centre?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, Mr Speaker, there is no extra staff. There is the complement of staff at the Construction Training Centre who deploy themselves, they have an organised time table and a schedule of work to be able to cater for these children.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The Minister said about three years ago that he was looking at providing GNVQs for these children. Why has not that been possible? Why could not that be achieved for them?

HON DR B A LINARES:

That is an aim. I know it is established by the school management to aim at that qualification, the General National Vocation Qualification. It may be that what they are doing now will eventually be able to be presented as a portfolio which will warrant a General National Vocation Qualification, but I am not too sure how far they have gone in that respect.

HON S E LINARES:

We have been speaking here for the past 10 minutes about Bayside and boys. What provisions has the Minister got for the girls?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I did say that the Westside Comprehensive School does not have a one year non-GCSE course. They have a two year course for all the girls. It is offered to them. Some, of course, leave of their own accord at 15 or at the end of Year 10. But all girls are entered at the beginning of Year 10 for a course which offers GCSEs in some subjects like Computer Literacy and Information Technology which gains them an RSA qualification. Then GCSEs in subjects such as child development, Spanish. They also have a non-examination course which spans over two years in integrated studies which is also an element of social education, health education, religious education. They are offered a full-time two-year course, spanning over two years, reaching examination levels in some areas and non-examination courses in others. They are well provided in Westside School. The only thing it is a different approach, whereas in Bayside they invite and assess pupils who may, from the start, in consultation with parents, wish to leave at 15 or at the end of Year 10 and then they tailor a one-year course very vocationally orientated as I have described, the girls offer a two-year course and which actually can afford them some GCSE and RSA qualifications at the end.

HON S E LINARES:

Is the Minister satisfied that there are equal opportunities in this case, of boys and girls?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, absolutely. They have equal opportunities to develop themselves academically and socially in every sense. They have different provisions, different menus, different curricula, does not in any way diminish the fact that they are being given equal opportunities to develop themselves academically and socially.

HON S E LINARES:

There would not be any problem in any girl going to the Construction Training Centre during that year?

HON DR B A LINARES:

There would be no problem at all. In fact, it is explicitly stated in the brochure and in the prospectus of the Construction Training Centre and I think they do now have one or two girls already engaged in training in one of the industrial construction trades in the Construction Training Centre.

HON S E LINARES:

I meant the actual one-year, the children who are going to leave at the age of 15 are the ones who are actually going to be going to the Construction Training Centre to do a course of tiler, carpenter, I did not mean those. What I meant are, the Minister

stated that the boys in Bayside go for that year before they either leave school, they stay in Bayside for two weeks, then they go to the Construction and Training Centre for another two weeks, alternately.

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, that is not open to the girls. They have a different programme.

HON S E LINARES:

Then there are no equal opportunities in that sense?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Equal opportunities is a very wide, almost philosophical, moral, principle which means that all the children are differentiated each according to his or her needs are offered the same opportunities and the same possibilities of developing as persons as developing socially, academically and vocationally but, of course, in different ways. One might as well say that because the boys in Bayside, who follow the one-year course are not doing the GCSE course that the other peers are doing then it is lack of equal opportunities there. Surely the hon Member knows that differentiation is one of the key elements in good education.

HON S E LINARES:

Yes, differentiation between ability and not sexes.

HON DR B A LINARES:

This is not a question of sexes.

HON S E LINARES:

The Minister has stated that he is satisfied with the equal opportunities that there are which I know there are within Bayside in itself and in Westside in itself but then there are differentiations between sexes because the Minister has stated that one is allowed to go to the Construction Training Centre to do that year whilst the girls are not.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I just have to say that this is a very simplistic view of things.

ORAL

NO. 170 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - SCHOOL TRIPS

Can Government state whether the Education Department advises schools as to which Travel Agent they should organise school trips with?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The Department does not advise schools on this matter. School trips are funded either privately or by Government. In both cases, schools have always done their own arrangements. Trips funded by Government are to meet examination requirements, for example, Biology, Geography. Trips funded privately are for social and leisure reasons, for example, Aquapark.

NO. 171 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - STUDENT GRANTS

Will the Minister for Education state how many parents were investigated in relation to parental contribution for student grants?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, 44 parental declarations were investigated by the Department during the current academic year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 171 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

What percentage is that in relation to the total of parental contributions?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I would have to work out what percentage 44 is of about 180 to 200. The point is that it is not a question of what percentage it is, it is a question of what merits or what intrinsic aspects of the declaration prompt the investigation by the Department.

HON J J BOSSANO:

In fact have the investigations resulted in any changes?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, indeed. The investigations have resulted in the fact that a number of parents, out of the 44, are now on minimum grants provided despite the initial income tax declarations which in some cases were, on face value, blatantly suspicious. The process of investigations, these self-employed persons are asked to provide as the Ordinance requires the Educational Awards Regulations of 1990 require that the Minister has to be satisfied that the declared income represents the total income from all sources. In that sense they are asked to provide even audited accounts of their company accounts and also declaration of assets, company flats, company vehicles, et cetera and on the basis of that, very often, the Department has decided that they are not entitled to anything above the minimum grant.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does the Minister have figures? Of the 44, what does "in some cases" mean?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I said in some cases because I have not got the figures with me but I will provide the hon Member with the figures.

ORAL

NO. 172 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - CATERING FACILITIES IN SCHOOLS

Can Government confirm that they will be making provisions to invest in necessary structural changes to provide for catering facilities in schools?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 173 and 174 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 173 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - CATERING FACILITIES IN SCHOOLS

Is it the intention of Government to provide catering facilities in connection with the introduction of the changes of school hours?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 172 and 174 of 2000.

NO. 174 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - SUPERVISION DURING LUNCH BREAKS

Will the Minister for Education state what provisions will be made to supervise the lunch breaks once the change of school hours have started?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The Department is currently undertaking a detailed costing of the works necessary to provide safe and comfortable places for all children whose parents may wish them to have their packed lunches in school premises. Government will not be providing meals, just a place for all children who stay for lunch to have their packed lunch in a safe and healthy environment. Suitable supervision will be provided during the lunch hour. Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers will be responsible for the children's well-being during that time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 172, 173 AND 174 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

When the Minister states that Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers will be responsible for the supervision at the lunch breaks, does that mean that the teachers will also have to do so because usually it is the headteachers who tell the teachers what they have to do?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, the Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers will remain responsible for the welfare and the safety and the discipline of the children while they are in the school premises. What supervision arrangements will be made is under consideration. Whether teachers will be involved voluntarily, if they are offered remuneration, whether we will contract out to an agency and recruit special supervisors, those are options which are now under consideration. What I have just said is something very fundamental, that while the children are in schools Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers will remain responsible. Obviously in this case they will have to watch over the supervision but mainly and essentially and fundamentally what they are responsible for is the safety and the good order and discipline of the children within the school premises.

HON S E LINARES:

I have no doubt that that is exactly what does happen with the schools. The point I am trying to make is teachers, the Minister said voluntarily or remunerated, and the Minister must know when it becomes a voluntary thing most of us tend to jump into it but then later on complain about it. I know that in my field, in the Middle Schools, teachers then say "I do not want to do it" and then they are sort of ostracised in a way by either other members of staff because they say "oh, so and so, does not want to do it". What I want is a categorical assurance from Government that they are not expecting teachers to supervise these lunch breaks.

HON DR B A LINARES;

The hon Member is generalising a bit in his description of how teachers react or do not react but certainly obviously we will not be demanding or expecting teachers to do the supervision outside their prescribed working hours.

ORAL

NO. 175 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - NUMBER OF TEACHERS

Will the Minister for Education state how many teachers are in each school as at the beginning of the year 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No.176 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 176 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - NUMBER OF PUPILS

Will the Minister for Education state how many children are in the school roll, school by school as at the beginning of the year 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in the House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out. I therefore hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

Answer to Question 176 of 2000

SCHOOL	NO. OF PUPILS	NO. OF STAFF
Bayside	892	65.5
Westside	876	64.5
St Anne's	405	21.5
Bishop Fitzgerald	432 (includes special unit)	23.5
St Joseph's Middle	294	16
Sacred Heart	280	15.5
Governor's Meadow	341	18
Notre Dame	291 (includes nursery and special unit)	16 + 1 nursery nurse
St Paul's	301 (includes nursery)	16 + 1 nursery nurse
St Bernard's	151	11
St Mary's	187	14
St Joseph's First	309	17
Hebrew	79	5 (2 morning supply for music)
St Martin's	17	6

NO. 177 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - INDUCTION PERIOD

Will the Minister for Education state what the outcome was of the discussions that took place between officers in the Department of Education and Training and their counterpart in the Department of Education and Employment in the UK and the meeting with Keith Johnson, Senior Officer of the Department of Education in UK, in relation to the introduction of the Statutory Induction Year for Newly Qualified Teachers on a basis of mutual acceptance?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

As a result of my meeting with Baroness Blackstone, Minister for Education and Employment, the DofEE now recognises our own Induction Period in Gibraltar to the effect that should any of our teachers wish to take up employment in an English State School they will not be required to undertake an Induction Period in UK if they have successfully completed this in a Gibraltar school. The discussions between our own officers and Keith Johnson are intended to implement and to work out the particular arrangements but the principle has been established at ministerial level.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 177 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

Does the Minister envisage the Department of Education in UK coming over to assess the probationary period that we do here?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Not at all. There is no sign of that. They have absolute total confidence in what our officers and advisers have put in before.

ORAL

NO. 178 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Will the Minister for Education state how many referrals the Principal Education Psychologist has as at the beginning of the year 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 179 and 180 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 179 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Will the Minister for Education state how many children are currently being seen by the Peripatetic Teacher in charge of the children's behavioural programme?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 178 and 180 of 2000.

NO. 180 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Will the Minister for Education be putting in the public domain the audit report on Special Educational Needs in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, 2,417 referrals have been made to the Principal Educational Psychologist from September 1999 to the end of that year. Sixty-two children are currently being supported by the Behaviour Support Teacher. The audit report on Special Educational Needs is already in the public domain.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS .178,179 AND 180 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

Does the Minister think that for one Peripatetic Teacher, 62 children is not too many?

HON DR B A LINARES:

That is the provision at the moment. I would not like to comment on a matter of judgement. The feedback that I have from the Peripatetic Teacher is that she is managing to cope quite adequately. Mrs Licudi, a highly qualified teacher, sees the children some individually, some in small groups. On an average week she supports about 40 children and most get support on a weekly basis but some children are scheduled for support every other week, depending on need. She appears and there has been no report from her that she is not able to cope.

NO. 181 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - TRANSFERS OF CHILDREN

Will the Minister for Education state how many transfers of children to different schools were entertained by the Department of Education as at the beginning of the year 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Since the 1st January 2000, 12 transfers have been requested, 10 at First School level and two at Middle School level. Eleven of these 12 transfers have been approved and one not approved.

NO. 182 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - TEACHER PROMOTIONS

Is the Minister for Education satisfied at the way teachers are promoted and are selected for promotion at both allowance level and managerial level?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 182 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

Can the Minister state whether there is any sort of shortlisting?

HON DR B A LINARES:

There is no shortlisting, all applicants for posts which are open by the vacancies which are opened by the Education Department are given a selection interview.

HON S E LINARES;

Can the Minister state whether the teachers who are not successful get any feedback as to why they are not successful?

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, Mr Speaker. It is part of the procedural regulations of the Civil Service.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not that there is something in the regulations that prohibit it. It is just not the practice throughout the public service for there to be feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

HON S E LINARES:

I asked this question just because I know it is the PSC who does these appointments, that is why I asked specifically as in allowances and managerial level because in allowance level usually the PSC has like a sub-committee and I think the Minister is aware of this, which is usually of Heads, personnel and other people and they decide on the allowance level and I thought there could have been feedback on at least the allowance level more than at the managerial level.

HON DR B A LINARES:

The Selection Board that the hon Member is referring to, as opposed to allowance level he means the responsibility posts, these Selection Boards are an integral part of the Public Service Commission process. In fact they report and recommend to the Public Service Commission for final appointment. Therefore they have to abide precisely to what the Chief Minister is saying, the practices and procedural traditions of the civil service.

HON S E LINARES:

Would the Minister prefer it to be changed to have a feedback and would the Minister prefer to have shortlistings as well?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The rules that apply to recruitment procedures in the teaching profession are the same ones as apply throughout the civil service. It is not that the Regulations prohibit there being feedback, it is that there is no tradition, there is no practice anywhere in the public service for there to be feedback to unsuccessful candidates including teachers. There is a school of thought that believes that there ought to be more transparency in favour of unsuccessful candidates and from time to time the Government do receive complaints, especially from people who feel that they are never successful in applications for jobs and for promotions and who end up thinking that they are on some black book or other. Such people often say "well, why cannot I be given a reason? It is the twenty-seventh time I have applied for a job as a supply cleaner in the Government and I never get accepted?" It could be looked at. It would require a lot of administrative effort. It would require a system to be set up, but it is not our tradition. It is not the tradition of the public administration in Gibraltar as it is in the case of private sector employers who do send a short letter to unsuccessful candidates saying why they have not been successful on those occasions, to help them improve their prospects for future applications. In saying that it does not happen it is not that there is not any virtue in the notion, it is just that systems do not exist.

HON S E LINARES:

I never questioned the transparency, I was thinking more on a managerial level, where it is good practice to let the teacher, or the cleaner, or whoever applies and never gets it, if they apply once and they do not get it that once, then they should know why they have not got it in order to improve themselves for later applications. I think it is good managerial skills or good management to have a feedback to all candidates. That is all I wanted to say.

HON DR B A LINARES:

It is a matter of judgement and as the Chief Minister has said it is a matter that would warrant much fuller debate and discussions. There are different views that would have to be contrasted and analysed within a wider context than a question and answer session.

ORAL

NO. 183 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

THEATRE ROYAL

Have Government now obtained a lease from the owners of the Theatre Royal?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question No. 184 of 2000.

NO. 184 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

THEATRE ROYAL

Is it Government's intention to conserve the façade of the Theatre Royal in its restoration plans?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The Government are currently negotiating the terms of the lease from the owners of the Theatre Royal. The detailed plans for the conservation and restoration of different features in the Theatre Royal will be the subject of course of wide consultation with experts and other relevant parties.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 183 AND 184 OF 2000

HON S E LINARES:

Can the Government state who they are negotiating this lease with?

HON DR B A LINARES:

With the owners.

HON S E LINARES:

Can the Government state who the owners are?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am not sure that I would like to. I think that when one is engaged in negotiations perhaps I would want the permission of the other party for a public notice to that effect.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Minister will recall that the last time this was raised I did ask the Minister to check whether in fact it was a lease from the MOD. Since then I have been able to ascertain and I would like the Minister to confirm whether he is aware that 35 per cent of the property is still in the hands of the Ministry of Defence and that the use of that 35 per cent to the present owners is subject to the theatre being used as a theatre and nothing else. Is the Minister aware of this? And is he engaged also with the MOD for the transfer of the 35 per cent to the Gibraltar Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, there is some truth in that and some aspects of it are not true. It is true that the owner's title to part of the theatre premises is challengeable, I would put it no more strongly than that, but the fact is that they have been in possession for so long that the Government are dealing with them on the basis that they are the despondent

owners of the whole. The Government do not share the hon Member's interpretation that a third of it is still MOD land and I am happy to say that, to date, the MOD have not taken that view either.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

As far as Question No. 184 is concerned, will the Government take on board getting rid of those awful looking steps which were put there when the Theatre Royal became a cinema?

HON DR B A LINARES:

It is one of those features that I said in my original answer is being considered. There are differences of opinion and when it is a matter of aesthetics people differ greatly. It is something which is still not determined.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In any case the hon Member should be aware, he indirectly raises an issue which is one of the factors in the remodelling as it were, that fire regulations and safety regulations have come a long way even since that was last used as a theatre. Precisely the whole question of the exits that exist is one of the big issues in the refurbishment and restoration of the theatre. What effect the removal of that external staircase to the top floor would have on the application of exit rules and fire rules is itself a very big issue. All I am really saying perhaps in a too longwinded fashion is that removal of the stairs is not necessarily just a matter of aesthetics. It also raises issues of whether the building is viable as a theatre without a staircase of that sort.

NO. 185 OF 2000

THE HON S E LINARES

EDUCATION - LIBRARY BOOKS

Will the Minister for Education indicate how much has been spent in the provision of Library Books at the College of Further Education, Bleak House and the Construction Training Centre in the academic years 1997/1998, 1998/1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The following provision has been made for library books:

	1997/1998	1998/1999
Gibraltar College of FE	£1,500	£3,518
Gibraltar Training Centre	£1,498	£755
Bleak House	-	-

Bleak House opened in September 1998. No request was made at that stage for library books during 1998/1999. The Administrator of Bleak House was appointed in autumn 1999 and she has been assessing needs. Funds have been requested which will be included in the Estimates for 2000/2001. These will be shown in the Estimates of Expenditure for this financial year.

ORAL

NO. 186 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - QUOTA PATIENTS

Have the costs for quota patients treated between 1st April 1999 and August 1999 now been received from the UK?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 187, 188, 189, 190 and 191 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 187 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - NON-QUOTA PATIENTS

Are the costs of non-quota patients treated in the UK between May and August 1999 now available?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 186, 188, 189, 190 and 191 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 188 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS

Can Government state the number of sponsored patients treated in the UK from April 1999 to the end of December 1999 with the fees being met by the Gibraltar Health Authority and the cost of such fees?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 186, 187, 189, 190 and 191 of 2000.

NO. 189 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - SPONSORED PATIENTS

Can Government state what was the total number of sponsored patients treated in the UK for the period 1st September 1999 to the end of December 1999 with the costs being met by the UK Government and what was this cost?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 186, 187, 188, 190 and 191 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 190 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - PATIENT REFERRALS

Are the costs of the number of patient referrals between 1st April 1999 and August 1999 now available?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 186, 187, 188, 189 and 191 of 2000.

NO. 191 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - PATIENT REFERRALS

Can Government state since the 1st September 1999 to the end of December 1999 what was the total number of patient referrals to the UK and the cost of these referrals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The costs for the quota patients treated between April 1999 and December 1999 have not been received from the UK. The total number of patient referrals to the UK between September and December 1999 was 290. The medical costs of these referrals was £399,135.90. The costs of non-quota patients treated in the UK between May 1999 and August 1999 are £573,100.50. The number of sponsored patients treated in the UK from April 1999 to December 1999 with the fees being met by the Gibraltar Health Authority was 366. The cost of these referrals was £976,518.60. Forty-five patients were treated in the UK between 1st September 1999 to the end of December 1999 with the cost being met by the UK Government. The cost of patient referrals between April 1999 and August 1999 was £573,872.50. The figures of costs may vary as additional accounts are submitted and adjustments made.

ORAL

NO. 192 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - IN-PATIENT ADMISSIONS

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 from September to the end of December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 193, 194 and 195 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 193 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - OUT-PATIENT ATTENDANCES

Can Government state what was the total number of out-patient attendances at St Bernard's Hospital from 1st September 1999 to the end of December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 192, 194 and 195 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 194 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - HEALTH CENTRE, HOUSECALLS

Can Government state how many housecalls were attended to by Health Centre doctors from September 1999 to the end of December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 192, 193 and 195 of 2000.

NO. 195 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - HEALTH CENTRE, OUT PATIENT ATTENDANCES

Can Government state what was the total number of out-patient attendances at the Health Centre from 1st September 1999 to the end of December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Mr Speaker, 1,812 house visits were made by General Practitioners from September 1999 to December 1999. As the hon Member may know they do not seem to log these visits. This number does not include the visits made by GPs in respect of calls made between 4pm and 9am. The total number of out-patient attendances at the Health Centre from September 1999 to December 1999 was 39,326. This figure includes attendances at weekends and public holidays. The total number of out-patient attendances at St Bernard's Hospital from 1st September 1999 to 31st December 1999 was 10,864. The total number of in-patient admissions and the average number of patients per day over the same period was 1,723 and 130 respectively.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 192, 193, 194 AND 195 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

In relation to the in-patient admissions and the average number of patients per day at St Bernard's Hospital, looking at the figures from the statistics for the year 1995, the figures do not seem to have increased dramatically. Therefore, can the Minister explain why it is that the Gibraltar Health Authority have recently had acute shortages of beds at St Bernard's Hospital?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I do not have the benefit of the 1995 statistics in front of me. I wonder if the hon Member would be kind enough to read them so we can make that assessment?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, for 1995 there were 4,891 in-patient admissions.

HON K AZOPARDI:

The number I was interested in was the daily number, if the hon Member had that?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, 101.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Before 1997/1998, if I remember rightly, I think the average bed occupancy on a daily basis was about 55 per cent of the total number of beds in St Bernard's. This rose drastically and the relevant figure, the 130 figure, which of course does create bed space problems.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

We are talking only about a difference of about 101 to 120? We are talking about the number of beds at St Bernard's being a total of 190.

HON K AZOPARDI:

The hon Member must remember that we closed Private Corridor and that is only an average number. From time to time of course we do have bed space problems.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Private Corridor was closed when we were in office, ever since we started refurbishing the wards in 1989.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it that people are being kept longer in hospital? The tendency was in fact to get patients to go home quite quickly.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There has been an increase in the number of elderly people.

NO. 196 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS

Can Government state how much revenue the Gibraltar Health Authority has raised from 1st April 1999 to the end of December 1999 as a result of their policy to increase prescription charges by 100 per cent?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINIBER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 197, 198 and 199 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 197 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS

Can Government state the number of items covered by the GPMS prescriptions in the months of August, September, October, November and December 1999, in respect of which £2.50 was paid by patients to dispensing pharmacists and the total value of the medicines so dispensed and the comparable figures for 1998?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 196, 198 and 199 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 198 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS

Can Government give a breakdown of the prescriptions issued and the number of items covered by such prescriptions under the GPMS in the months of September, October, November and December 1999 and the previous year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Answered together with Question Nos. 196, 197 and 199 of 2000.

NO. 199 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO**GHA - GPMS PRESCRIPTIONS**

Can Government state how many prescriptions have been issued since 13th December 1999 with more than three items and paying a total of £7.50 for such prescriptions?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The number of prescriptions issued since 13th December 1999 with more than three items I will let the hon Member know as soon as the figures are available. The revenue raised for the period 1 to 8 is estimated to be in the region of just under £79,000. The information for Question Nos. 197 and 198 is presented in a table as follows:

1998

Period	Week ending	Items @£2.50	Total Prescriptions	Total items	Cost
6	23/8/98-13/9/98	8,671	10,274	24,591	£82,779.26
7	20/9/98-11/10/98	9,663	10,189	28,541	£98,197.71
8	18/10/98-8/11/98	8,469	9,350	27,211	£90,025.33

1999

Period	Week ending	Items @£2.50	Total Prescriptions	Total items	Cost
6	23/8/98-12/9/98	8,277	9,146	25,467	£67,806.26
7	19/9/98-10/10/98	10,757	11,295	32,758	£87,016.25
8	17/10/98-7/11/98	10,668	10,891	32,003	£92,890.13

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 196, 197, 198 AND 199 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

In relation to Question No. 199 when the Minister said that he did not have the figures, is he not in possession of any figures in relation to at least one month, for example, or two months?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I am not, whether the Department is I will find out.

NO. 200 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - BRANDED MEDICINAL PRODUCTS

Can Government confirm whether Medical Practitioners employed by the Gibraltar Health Authority are able to dispense branded medicinal products if they feel that certain circumstances in relation to patients warrant this?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

There are many branded medicinal products in the Gibraltar Formulary which practitioners are always free to prescribe. Indeed, in respect of some medications the formulary contains only branded products. GPMS practitioners employed by the GHA may seek authorisation from the Gibraltar Formulary Committee to prescribe branded products that are not in the formulary if they feel that the circumstances of a particular patient may warrant it.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 200 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Does this apply also in relation to the black list?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, black listed products are by their very nature black listed and cannot be prescribed.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

The procedure is that if a patient goes to see a medical practitioner and for psychological or other reasons the medical practitioner feels that the patient should warrant the dispensing of a branded medicinal product then it is not up to the doctor to decide? Does it have to go to a board or a committee, I think that the Minister mentioned?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Branded products are not on the black list and the answer is as my hon Colleague has given.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I am not referring to the black list now, I am referring to the original answer that I got from the Minister.

HON DR B A LINARES:

The information I have is that if the branded product is not in the formulary it has to be referred to the Formulary Committee.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

But surely in the last session of the House of Assembly when I questioned the Minister at that time, it was the Chief Minister who actually in supplementaries gave a commitment to the House saying that it would be up to the doctor and it was only the doctor who could decide whether the patient should be dispensed with a branded medicine or product. Is that not the case then? Was the Chief Minister wrong?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The impression I have is that in practice that is correct but there has to be a process of referral to the Formulary Committee.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

The patient will need to await the decision of the Formulary Committee before the doctor decides?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

In practice how it works is that although it is known as the Formulary Committee and indeed there is a committee that sets the policy, that on individual referrals it is done on a one to one basis between the doctor that wants to do the prescribing and the officer in charge, Mr Guillem. It does not take as long as the hon Member has suggested in her question.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it then that the doctor has got to persuade Mr Guillem before he can then proceed to prescribe what he considers the patient needs?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is a process which is a hybrid of information and clearance. Remember that the difference between what he can prescribe and what he cannot prescribe lies in the brand, not in the formula of the medication. For example, Paracetamol may be on the formulary as what can be prescribed. The doctor may want to prescribe Panadol which is just a proprietary version of the drug Paracetamol. In order to prescribe Panadol, for example, the doctor cannot just write out the prescription. This is all a protocol which has been agreed to between the doctors and the health management in the Health Authority and is actually working very well and we have succeeded.....

HON J J BOSSANO:

It is not working very well.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member may not think it is working very well. The Government think it is working very well.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But do the Government not care what the patients think who are, after all, the people who are paying for these things. Is the Chief Minister not aware that there are people who are suffering great distress, who have been on a particular product for 20 years and are being told by the doctor that they would like to keep them on the product but that because of this new policy it cannot be done. If the Government are not aware, will they look into it if we bring those cases to their attention, because we are concerned about the welfare of those people?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, the Government will not look into those cases because it is not the job of politicians to make medical decisions of this sort. There is a procedure which we have been trying to explain to the hon Members of how to deal with cases where medical practitioners would like to prescribe a branded product and rather than allow that patient to fester in this great state of distress that the hon Member says is the case, it is certainly quicker to refer the case to the Formulary Committee. If the Formulary Committee who are doctors and pharmacists come to the conclusion that there is no sufficient case to be made for this, there is no reason why the taxpayer should be paying excessive sums of money unnecessarily simply to feed the completely unscientific preferences of individual patients.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I would not dare set myself up as judge in the way that the answer suggests. Are the Government not aware that the impression the Chief Minister gave in the House before was that if the doctor wrote up a prescription he would not get overruled. In fact, if there is, what recourse do they have? Is this one of the issues that the people concerned can take up with the Ombudsman as maladministration? They are coming to us now and we do not know how best to advise them other than to raise the question here and get some guidance.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is a system. The system is not that patients put pressure on their doctors to be prescribed a drug that they would like to have prescribed. The principles of the system, and it is neither maladministration nor anything that the Opposition can be expected to do anything about, the system is that a doctor has a long list of medicines that he is free to prescribe all by himself. If he wants to prescribe not a drug that is not on that list but a branded version of that drug as opposed to the scientifically usually equivalent generic version of the drug then he cannot do it by himself but then it is not the Minister or some accountant that makes the decision of whether the doctor is right or wrong, it is another group of doctors, more than one doctor. So, for the patient to be prejudiced, the one doctor, the original prescribing doctor's view would have to be correct and the view of a greater number of doctors who make the decision would have to be wrong. It is highly unlikely to happen. It could happen where the judgement of one man is sounder than the judgement of three or four. I have to say this to the hon Member who appears to believe that this problem is very widespread, the number of cases that go through the system are not great. There is a handful of cases.

HON J J BOSSANO:

All I can tell the Chief Minister is that I know the people who come to see me and how distressed they are and they are people who have been on a particular medication for 20 years. The point that I am making in any case, in seeking further clarification of the information that has been provided, it is not the case that it is a question of a one to one with Mr Guillem, there is actually a committee and the doctor can insist on that committee looking at it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Absolutely.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then we will follow that one up.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Perhaps the hon Member would like to indicate to Government how many cases he is aware of and whether he would agree with me that these are medical judgements that need to be made by doctors. The fact that a patient feels distressed because he would rather have his medicine in a blue box as opposed to the same pill in a red box, is not a reason why the taxpayer should pay 50 per cent more for the supply of that medicine.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I do not think it is as simple as that and since I am not qualified medically I would not pass judgement on whether the distress is simply that they like the blue colour as opposed to the red. I prefer red myself as it happens but that is neither here nor there. The issue is that if there are citizens who have been given a particular medicine for 20 years, who are, in the main, elderly people and who come to see Members of the Opposition, concerned about this and seeking help and advice, the thing we do is we take the opportunity of raising it in the House and that is what we are doing.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is perfectly okay for the hon Member to raise it in the House. I am not suggesting that the hon Member should not raise it, all I am saying is that what the hon Members should say to these distressed persons is firstly, "I am very sorry but there is nothing I can do about it because it is a matter of the policy of that terrible Government" and, secondly, the hon Member should say, "notwithstanding the fact that this Government are so terrible, there is a procedure, get your GP who appears not to already have done so", so it cannot be that desperately urgent or that desperately distressing for the patient, "to refer the case to the Formulary Committee who will decide whether the patient's anxiety has medical justification" because if the patient's anxiety does not have medical justification then the taxpayer should not pay the price for people's unjustifiable anxiety.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Government say that if a medical practitioner actually prescribes something to a patient then the pharmacy has to accept that prescription by the medical practitioner, no? We also get complaints of medical practitioners prescribing for patients and then the patients going to the pharmacy and the pharmacy having different instructions from Mr Guillem as to what the doctor is doing of quantity and on certain drugs where the pharmacist is saying "now you have got to go to get a letter from the dietician". Well, if the letter from the dietician is needed, the doctor should be referring the patient to the dietician not the pharmacists when he goes with a prescription signed by a doctor who is telling them "yes, I am prescribing you this medicine". This is happening on a daily basis, Mr Speaker.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not quite sure what the dietician has to do with this. The fact of the matter is that the procedure is quite simple. Doctors are free to prescribe what they like. Pharmacists know that if they dispense drugs which are not on the formulary without the consent of Mr Guillem they will only be paid the formulary version price. The doctor can scribble out whatever prescription he likes. Indeed, it often does happen when the medicine is worth less than the £2.50 and the patient is therefore going to pay for the medicine himself, it happens and therefore the doctor can prescribe what he likes. The pharmacist can give the proprietary brand if he wants to but he will only be paid for the generic version unless he has cover from the Formulary Committee. That is what we were discussing before. The hon Member is raising something quite different, nothing to do with the black list or the formulary.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Chief Minister in previous questions said, "Well, if the doctor prescribes it, that prescription has to be respected" but they have got a check on the doctor by telling the pharmacists to keep to a certain rule. Inevitably if the doctor does not keep to those rules then the pharmacist sends the patient back and inconveniences the patient further, who has to go back to the doctor to get a different medicine or quarrel with the pharmacists and so on. On top of that there are particular medicines where on this occasion the pharmacist has instructions to say "even though the doctor has prescribed that medicine and he is the man responsible for prescribing it and the one who should know what he is prescribing to you, before I can give you this medicine prescribed by the doctor, you have got to go to see the dietician". On this occasion it has been the dietician, it could be referred to other people on different medicines. It does not make sense. If the doctor decides that that.....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We do not recognise the factual situation that the hon Member is describing. We are not aware of what he is describing. There is nobody in Government, the present Minister for Health, past Minister for Health or the Chief Minister, that can understand pursuant to what procedure somebody is being referred to the dietician before a drug can be dispensed. If this happened to the hon Member's father perhaps he ought to write to the Minister with the facts of the case so that he can have the satisfaction of finding out why he was submitted to this inconvenience.

HON J C PEREZ:

I am raising it as one more complaint from the general public that the system is certainly not working as Government Members have explained it should be working in the past and it is inconveniencing unnecessarily patients and patients are suffering as a result of Government policy and we are bringing it to the attention of the Government to see if something can be done to remedy this situation, not to score political points.

HON DR B A LINARES:

What I wanted to say is that I do intend to make sure that all parties involved, the chemist, the pharmacist, the doctors and the patients know that there is a definite procedure there that can easily and quickly resolve their problems and that they are clear. I have one complaint in which the patient was complaining that the prescribed branded product by the doctor was not being dispensed by the pharmacist. It turned out that neither the doctor nor the pharmacist knew that there is a procedure whereby this can be represented to the Formulary Committee and I will make it clear the administration is now ensuring that doctors, pharmacists and patients know that there is a definite procedure that can easily resolve their problems.

NO. 201 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - LONG-STAY ELDERLY CARE PATIENTS

Can Government state how many long-stay elderly care patients there were at St Bernard's Hospital in September, October, November and December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The average number of long-stay elderly patients in St Bernard's Hospital during the period in question was as follows:-

September 52; October 53; November 55; December 55.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 201 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I am glad to see that the numbers have not increased and therefore this is not the reason either for the shortages of beds.

NO. 202 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - ESTIMATES 1999/2000

Can Government state what is the latest estimates for the receipts and payments by the Gibraltar Health Authority in the current financial year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in this House, nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out. I therefore hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested with a caveat that the figures on this table are projections at this stage which may not be those which will finally be in the official Estimates to be published at the end of the financial year.

GIBRALTAR HEALTH AUTHORITY

FORECAST OUTTURN
1999/2000
£

RECEIPTS

Contribution from the Social Assistance Fund	3,100,000
Group Practice Medical Scheme	17,000,000
Contribution from Ministry of Defence A39	0
Contribution from Consolidated Fund	5,184,000
Contribution from Improvement & Development Fund	1,292,000
Other Receipts	195,000
	<u>26,771,000</u>

PAYMENTS**Personal Emoluments:**

(a) Salaries	9,300,000	
(b) Overtime	1,340,000	
(c) Allowances	1,700,000	
(d) Gratuities	<u>275,000</u>	
		12,615,000

Industrial Wages:

(a) Basic	840,000	
(b) Overtime	389,000	
(c) Allowances	<u>5,000</u>	
		1,234,000

Other Personnel:

(a) Relief Cover		374,000
<i>Staff on Secondment</i>		
<i>Pay Settlements</i>		
Employer's Share of Social Insurance Contributions		780,000

Recurrent Expenditure:

(a) Prescribed Drugs and Pharmaceuticals:		
GPMS Prescriptions	4,300,000	
Drugs and Pharmaceuticals	<u>725,000</u>	
		5,025,000
(b) Equipment and Related Expenses:		
Medical and Surgical Equipment	225,000	
Medical and Surgical Appliances	295,000	
Hardware, Uniforms and Linen	118,000	
Patients Appliances	<u>40,000</u>	
		678,000
(c) Dressings and Medical Gases		575,500
(d) Provisions		230,000
(e) Laundry Cleaning:		
Laundry Expenses	285,000	
Cleaning Expenses	<u>48,000</u>	
		333,000

Carried forward: 21,844,500

Contd Answer to Q202/2000

FORECAST OUTTURN	
1999/2000	
£	
<i>Brought forward:</i> 21,844,500	
(f) ICC (Health Centre)	265,000
(g) Visiting Consultant Expenses and Fees	50,000
(h) Recruitment Contractual Expenses/Rented Accommodation	398,800
(i) Motor Vehicle and Fuel Expenses	35,000
(j) Offices Expenses:	
General Expenses	41,000
Electricity and Water	303,000
Telephone Service	200,000
Printing & Stationery	50,000
	594,000
(k) Legal Fees	10,000
(l) Official Travel Abroad	7,000
(m) Training and Study:	
Library & Info Services	8,000
Training Courses	132,000
Professional Study Leave	17,000
	157,000
(n) Sponsored Patients	2,400,000
(o) Miscellaneous Expenses:	
General	12,000
Contingencies	50,000
	62,000
Ex gratia payments	6,500
Cash Losses	0
(p) Ambulance Services	400,000
(q) Registration Board	7,000
Total Recurrent:	26,236,800
Capital Expenditure:	
(t) New Equipment	425,000
(u) Major Works	325,000
(t) Computerisation	42,000
(u) Health Centre Works	500,000
Total Capital:	1,292,000
<hr/>	
<u>SUMMARY</u>	
Recurrent Expenditure	26,236,800
Capital Expenditure	1,292,000
	27,528,800

NO. 203 OF 2000THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - GPMS

Are Government still estimating an increase of £1 million in revenue from the Group Practice Medical Scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Yes, the Treasury is projecting that the receipts from the GPMS will be about £17 million.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 203 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister give an explanation as to why they are going to collect an extra £1 million?

HON K AZOPARDI:

If I remember rightly, the hon Member actually asked that question last time. There was a debate on what basis they were projecting that. I cannot recall exactly what answer we gave but I am quite sure that in supplementaries we gave some answer as to projection. I remember that at the time I had a table in front of me broken down by months with a note from Treasury saying that on the basis of the revenue projection that they had, that is why they were saying that we were going to earn another £1 million but I cannot really say beyond that.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I asked the Minister the same question that I am asking now. I know that I did not get the answer. It is just that we have not got the Hansard published with the supplementaries, that is why I am asking the same question again. Can the Government look into it and give us the reason why?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The only reason we can think of as we speak here is the redistribution of social insurance contributions when last they were restructured and this is the first full year in which it bites but I would want to check that. That is the last major thing that I remember was done that could have this sort of impact. But we will check and perhaps when we come back for the resumed sitting of the House we can confirm given that it is a large sum of money.

NO. 204 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS

Can Government now give a breakdown of the £8,700,000 they have estimated in this year's budget under Personal Emoluments Salary, broken down by grade and numbers of the Administrative and Nursing posts of the Gibraltar Health Authority?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The information sought in this question is too voluminous to be read out in this House nor would the hon Member be able to note the information given for the purposes of formulating supplementaries if it were read out. I therefore hand the hon Member a table giving the information requested.

	APPROVED ESTIMATES		
NURSING GRADES			
Director of Nursing Services	1	31,480	
Deputy Director of Nursing Services	1	29,117	
Acute Services Manager	1	23,843	
Clinical Nurse Manager 7	4	98,456	
Tutor	2	52,312	
Clinical Tutor	1	23,843	
Charge Nurse/Sister	31	687,050	
Staff Nurse	89.5	1,549,876	
Senior Enrolled Nurse	10	158,210	
Enrolled Nurse	76	1,101,981	
Nursing Auxiliary	20.5	241,819	
Nursing Assistant	69.5	744,739	
Pupil Nurse (a)	10	82,940	
Student Nurse (a)	12	98,868	4,924,534
ADMINISTRATIVE GRADES			
Administrative Grade			
Management Grade	13	305,991	
Admin/Secretarial	35.5	449,647	
Totals	48.5	755,638	1,511,276
TOTAL			5,680,172

NO. 205 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - CHIEF EXECUTIVE POST

Can Government state whether they have now reached a decision on the new salary for the post of Chief Executive of the Gibraltar Health Authority?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

This matter is still being actively considered by Government but no conclusion has been reached as yet.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 205 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Could one of the problems be that the Union are demanding the creation of a new post for the Chief Executive?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We are not in receipt of any such demand. It is not in the style of modern trade unionism to make demands as such.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Could the Chief Minister then say what the problems are and what the demands are?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There are no demands by anybody. There is a claim submitted by the individual and the merits of the claim are being considered. Government are in receipt of lots of claims and some are acceded to, others are not and some are negotiated. There is no entitlement to this, it is a claim like any other.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister then explain why it is taking such a long time to be solved?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is taking time to resolve because it raises issues of policy in relation to the equal status of all senior officers within the Government, matters which the hon Members negotiated when they were in Government. Now there are a number of senior officers who believe that they should be on a higher grade than some of their other senior officer colleagues. Actually, my own personal view for what it is worth, is that that is probably true. There are some senior officers who by the size and responsibility and

nature of their job probably do deserve to be. But it raises complicated issues of standard gradings and all sorts of things. It is not unusual for there to be merit in a claim but for the resolution of it to be delayed by the fact that it raises lateral issues which makes it harder to agree to a claim with which we have some sympathy.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I take it that the present Chief Executive of the GHA is still receiving the pay of the original post on an acting basis, is that correct?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Is the hon Member asking whether he is getting the salary of Mr Jackson on an acting basis, is that the question?

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

That is correct.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Then the answer is no, he is not. He is getting a senior officer's salary.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

So the answer to a supplementary that I asked in the last session of the House was incorrect because the Minister confirmed that he was receiving the same salary on an acting basis.

HON K AZOPARDI:

The last time the hon Member asked me the question, he was receiving it, and I cannot remember exactly when, but one of the issues that he brings up on the claim is that having been made substantive in his post he has now reverted to a senior officer's salary.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm since when he has reverted to the salary of the senior grade?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I cannot recall exactly but I know that that is one of the points he used to make to me.

ORAL

NO. 206 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - PSYCHIATRIC UNIT

Do the Government intend to integrate the Psychiatric Unit within the new hospital?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

No, Sir.

NO. 207 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - A&E DEPARTMENT

Have Government now taken a decision as to whether a Senior House Officer should be based at the Accident and Emergency Department from 5pm to 9am the following day as recommended by the Nursing Review Team?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

There is casualty cover from 9am to 5pm and an on-call system operates after 5pm. A flat is provided in the hospital quarters for those on call. The overall complement of Senior House Officers was increased from eight to 10 in August 1999 and the number of SHOs on call was increased from one to two.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 207 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I have not really understood the answer but is the Minister saying yes to the question?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The answer to the question which the hon Member asks is whether the Senior House Officer is based in the Accident and Emergency Department during those times, not quite physically located in the actual Accident and Emergency Department but in a flat which is within the precincts of St Bernard's Hospital while he is on call. In fact two Senior House Officers are on call.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

So the answer is no, Mr Speaker.

HON DR B A LINARES:

No, in the Accident and Emergency Department but the hon Member will understand that next door in the flat, the old Nursing Quarters, is very much in proximity to the needs of the Department.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

But I am only asking the question because this is one of the recommendations of the Nursing Review Team. So the Minister is confirming that they are not implementing or have not implemented this recommendation, is that correct?

HON DR B A LINARES:

Yes, the recommendation becomes somewhat obsolete and irrelevant because of the increase in the number of Senior House Officers and the increase from one to two on call and in any case I would think that the spirit of the recommendation is that they be available and accessible precisely to attend to any emergencies that take place and I know that it is just a short walk from the Quarters to the Department.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

I do not want to sound repetitive but the recommendation says he should be based at the A&E Department, not up at the flats, that is why I have put the question.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

By definition an Accident and Emergency Department is a Department that has absolutely nothing to do until an accident and emergency arises. There are two choices here, the Senior House Officer can sit in the Accident and Emergency Department doing crossword puzzles and watching television in an uncomfortable hard back chair waiting for the ambulance to arrive up the hill or he can be sitting in the comfort of his easy chair, watching his own television set in the comfort of on called down the corridor to be in the Accident and Emergency ward before the ambulance has discharged the patient out of the back of the ambulance and has arrived in the ward. I think by any standards that is the equivalent of having a Senior House Officer based at the Accident and Emergency Department.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Perhaps the Chief Minister should be telling that to the Nursing Review Team because I did not make that recommendation.

HON J C PEREZ:

Why does the Chief Minister think that the Nursing Review Team makes that recommendation, because they are not sitting on a chair watching television and there is sufficient work to warrant it, I presume. The Chief Minister has this simplistic view of things to try and defend his policy without giving weight to the arguments put by professionals.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is the Opposition Members who do not listen to the answers. The recommendations of the Review Committee have in effect been implemented by the recruitment of an additional Senior House Officer who did not exist before and his placing on call yards away from the Accident and Emergency ward. Before the duty Senior House Officer could have been anywhere in the hospital because there was only one of them.

HON J C PEREZ:

The Chief Minister does not know what he is talking about.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Chief Minister does know what he is talking about.

HON J C PEREZ:

No, he does not.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Why?

HON J C PEREZ:

Because I know that that is not the case. The Senior House Officer has always been in the area that the Chief Minister has described. What has happened now is that they have been increased to two and what the Nursing Review Team is actually saying "you need to have one permanently there because there is work to warrant one permanently there". There have been delays in getting the Senior House Officer from the nursing quarters to the Emergency on several occasions and I presume that that is why the Nursing Review Team have said that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am not going to debate. If the hon Member is only interested in the question not because she thinks it is necessary but because she is just wondering why we have not applied one of the recommendations of the Medical Review Committee, there are many recommendations the Medical Review Committee that are not being implemented and some are being implemented differently.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

That is precisely the information I have been seeking in the House since the Minister decided that the Nursing Review Report should be made public. I have been asking ad nauseam what the recommendations are that they will implement and those that they would not implement and I never got a straight answer.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I can tell the hon Member that certainly in the short time I have been there the advice and information I have from the management of the Hospital and from the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive is that this arrangement is perfectly satisfactory, especially since the number of House Call Officers was raised from one to two.

NO. 208 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

GHA - WARD CLERKS

Can Government now confirm whether an appropriate number of Ward Clerks will be allocated to the different specialists as recommended by the Nursing Review Team?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

This will be considered by the Government in the light of other priorities.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 208 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

So again after years of the Nursing Report having been made public the Government are still not certain whether they will be implementing the recommendations.

NO. 209 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - NURSING REVIEW REPORT

Can Government confirm whether discussions have now been finalised to introduce a system of summer hours so as to provide more adequate cover which was recommended in the Nursing Review Report?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

The working hours of all the professions allied to medicine have been reviewed and the changes in working hours have already been introduced. The working hours of the managerial, administrative and secretarial grades at the Primary Care Centre have also been changed. Discussions are now taking place between management and the administrative and secretarial staff at St Bernard's Hospital to introduce changes wherever necessary.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 209 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is all that in relation to the recommendation made in the Nursing Review Report for a system of summer hours, the question is only asking about that. Is that answer all in relation to that question?

HON DR B A LINARES:

The recommendation is not just about the question of summer hours. The recommendation is aimed at providing more adequate cover and we feel that we have moved a long way in improving in this respect by providing much more adequate cover and in any case the question of the summer hours is still in discussion. The question is whether the discussions have now been finalised and I am saying it is not finalised.

NO. 210 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - HEALTH SERVICE PRIMARY CARE CENTRE

Are Government now in a position to confirm that all the complaints received from the users of the Health Service Primary Care Centre have been adequately tackled?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

All complaints about medical services provided by the Primary Care Centre are dealt with in accordance with the GHA's complaints procedure. If the hon Member is referring to the technical problems that arose at the initial stages following the Primary Care Centre's move to larger premises at ICC, I can confirm that:

- a. the telephone system is now in full operation; and
- b. the tender for the installation of the air conditioning system has already been awarded and works are about to commence.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 210 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Is the Minister aware that with the recent heavy rains there has been water penetration getting through the Centre?

HON DR B A LINARES:

I thought that recently we had not been getting any heavy rains.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

The last time when they had to put buckets out.

HON DR B A LINARES:

I was not aware of this.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

If the Minister is not aware will he find out and will he confirm to me whether the problems of the water penetration have been solved as well?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Mr Speaker, the Government have not conceived that there are problems of water penetration. The Government hear that the hon Member is asserting that there are problems of water penetration which is different.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

It is not a question of hearing it is a question that I was there and I saw the buckets myself. The Minister responsible at the time was not aware because I was there personally when it was happening and I did not hear it, I saw it with my own eyes, I was there and I saw the buckets collecting the water.

NO. 211 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

GHA - PRIVATE PRACTICE

Can Government state what has been the effect of regulating private practice in the Gibraltar Health Authority?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING, CULTURE AND HEALTH

Consultant staff are declaring in-patient private patients. Administrative arrangements are currently being put in place to administer and centralise waiting lists for in-patients, appointments for surgical and other procedures, centralised billing and collection of hospital fees. Two additional Administrative Officers have been recruited in order to facilitate this process. The committee tasked with monitoring the processes has already met and submitted recommendations to the Government on action to be taken in cases of non-compliance.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 211 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Minister confirm that whereas it used to be the practice before that someone that wanted to really jump the queue and go to see a consultant used to pay the consultant's fee but now they have to pay not only the X-ray but there is a cost for the X-ray and there is a cost for the release of the X-ray to the patient? Is the Minister aware of this and could he check whether this is the case because some people have indeed complained about it now being more expensive for them to use the consultants on a private basis than what it was before? And, the double cost of paying for the work of the X-ray and for the release of it as well? That is something that two or three people have raised with me at the moment. Could the Minister check whether this might be a double cost which might not be necessarily justified?

HON K AZOPARDI:

In the first place, of course there are some additional costs now. If people want to go private the intention is to charge them the fees that are annexed to the Medical and Health Ordinance and perhaps previously they were not being charged those fees because it was all under the closet.

HON J C PEREZ:

Yes, they used to go private for the consultant and public for the rest.

HON K AZOPARDI:

In relation to the issue that the hon Member mentions, I know that there is an issue with the Radiologist who takes the view that he is supposed to report on every single X-ray because he says that his job as radiologist requires him to do so and he insists on reporting and charging a fee on a private X-ray and not "releasing" the report until obviously his fee has been paid. I have to say that the Authority does not share that

view. The view of the Authority is that people have the right to request whatever private service they want. If they request an X-ray they can also request the service of a radiologist to provide an expert opinion on it but they can choose not to request that expert opinion. If they choose not to request the expert opinion the property rights in the X-ray and the contract is between the Authority and the person who has requested the X-ray and the particular specialist has no right to interfere in that context. That is the opinion of the Authority and that view has been put to the Radiologist, but it is a live issue when I left my job as Health Minister, I know that is the case.

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister for Health confirm whether there have been any consultations or meetings with the BMA and whether they are fully satisfied with the arrangements that have been put in place?

HON K AZOPARDI:

In relation to the arrangements generally they were a result of long discussions with a group of consultants who were discussing the matter with me in representation of all their colleagues. The only one who takes the view that he has not been consulted is the radiologist who does not have the support of his colleagues and that issue and the other issue were the subject of some clear talking that the Authority was having with the Radiologist.

NO. 212 OF 2000

THE HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO

EUROPA POINT - SPORTING AREA

Can Government state when they can expect the sporting area at Europa Point to be handed over to them by the MOD?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The transfer of the sporting area at Europa Point is currently under discussion with the MOD. At present it is impossible to state when or whether this will be effected.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 212 OF 2000

HON MISS M I MONTEGRIFFO:

Can the Minister confirm whether in this case the MOD are asking for this sporting pitch to be reprovisioned?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I think what they are asking for is for an area of land to be reserved for the use of St Christopher's. That is a condition that the Government consider unacceptable. We have put to them before that we are willing to accommodate the educational and sporting needs of the school as we do with all other schools but not on a priority basis and not certainly on the basis which would imply any proprietary rights to the MOD.

NO. 213 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

GIBRALTAR MUSEUM

When do Government intend to move the Gibraltar Museum to Casemates?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Government intend to move the Museum to Casemates when the Casemates Barrack block is ready.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 213 OF 2000

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Has the Minister got any idea as to the length of time it is likely to take?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I understand that the Casemates Barrack block is due to be completed in the first week of May.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the area bigger in the new location than it is at present?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, it is and quite regardless of the area it is much better configuration. It is vault after vault of pure exhibition space as opposed to the rabbit warren that the present Museum is. It really is a very substantial improvement in the facilities for a Museum.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Will the Moorish Baths be left at the old Museum?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes. The Moorish Baths of course are a valuable asset of our heritage and we would want to turn it into a more dedicated site. Indeed, there are plans to restore the interior of the Moorish Baths and the Museum Director is in discussion with Government in relation to that. Certainly it will be left there as a dedicated site.

ORAL

NO. 214 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

EU FUNDING

What decision, if any, have Government taken on the two applications for EU funding which were listed as pending in September 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 215 and 216 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 215 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

GIBRALTAR ENTERPRISE SCHEME

Can Government list the companies that have applied for Gibraltar Government funding, from the Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme or from any other source since the information published in answer to Question 751 of 1999, indicating the amount of funding requested and the purposes for which it was intended, listing those that have been successful, those that have been unsuccessful and those applications that are still pending?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 214 and 216 of 2000.

NO. 216 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

EU FUNDING

Can Government list the companies that have applied for EU funding since the information provided in answer to Question No. 750 of 1999, indicating the amount of funding requested and the purposes for which it was intended, listing those that have been successful, those that have been unsuccessful and those applications that are still pending?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The two applications for EU funding which were listed as pending in September 1999 have since been approved. Six applications for Gibraltar Government funding under the Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme have been submitted since the information published in answer to Question No. 751 of 1999. These applications are currently under consideration. Twenty companies have applied for EU funding since the information provided in answer to Question No. 750 of 1999. Nineteen have been successful. The remainder of the details sought in the questions is too voluminous to read out in this House and is therefore contained in tables which I hand over to the hon Member and sets out all of that detail.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 214, 215 AND 216 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

There seems to be some general concern which has been voiced in surveys conducted by the Gibraltar Federation of Small Businesses as to the information which is available in terms of EU funding, the procedure, what they have to do to apply, et cetera. Do the Government have any plans to increase the awareness amongst the trading community in this respect?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government are aware that the GFSB say what the hon Member has just said. The Government have informed the GFSB that they feel that its remarks are unjustified and unwarranted. I told them this at the pre-electoral meeting that all the political parties have had with them. The Ministry of Trade and Industry in our previous term of office has taken very considerable steps to ensure that the EU funding regime and availability and procedures are available. We have actually set up a Small Business Unit to sit there and entertain queries and enquiries and to provide oral guidelines to any small businessman that walks in through the door. There is a dedicated facility precisely to service the small business requirements in this respect. There is literature. We have told the GFSB that there is very little more that the Government can do apart from placing an advertisement in the Chronicle every day reminding small businesses that EU funding is available and that there is a dedicated unit and anyone who is interested and wants to know can go and find out. There is really little more that we can do but if anyone can come up with an idea of what more we could do and this is what we have said to the GFSB, we are willing to consider doing it. We have not yet had a response so this is a question of how far does one try to reach and remind people of things that are already in the public domain.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

It is not just the Federation itself that is complaining as an entity. I am aware of the pre-election meeting that took place with the committee et cetera. I am actually referring to a survey which was conducted of the traders in Gibraltar which was published in January and for instance to quote one statistic 64 per cent of respondents were not aware of what the Government Training Schemes are or how they work. Ninety per cent of them had not applied for either Gibraltar Government or EU funding but the link up seems to be that people are not taking advantage of it because precisely they are not quite sure how it works. It could be there is an element of being afraid of bureaucracy but certainly whatever steps the Government have taken to increase awareness do not seem to have worked and that is why I was asking whether there were any plans to do anything else?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It really is a matter of surprise that 68 per cent of businessmen in Gibraltar claim that they are not aware that there is EU funding available. The hon Member has got to distinguish between what is reasonable and what is not reasonable and what are Government's fault or not Government's fault. The extent to which governments can nursemaid people who are supposed to be sophisticated enough to be running their own businesses. I cannot believe, whatever that survey says and I acknowledge that the hon Member is reading from the survey, that 68 per cent of businessmen in Gibraltar do not know that there is EU funding available and that there is an EU Funding Unit in the DTI and that there is a Small Business Unit in the DTI. If the hon Member tells me that 99 per cent of small businessmen do not know what the rules are and do not know how to go about applying for it and do not know for what sort of businesses it is available, do not know how much money they can get and for what sort of things I could easily understand that, which is why the Government have provided facilities so that businessmen can have all that explained to them by business counsellors. But it presupposes that people know that the facility is available. One cannot bring people by the nose to the DTI for the purposes of explaining them to them. Having said all, organisations like the GFSB, if they have any reason to exist at all, is to inform their members about things of this nature, not to complain to the Government that their members do not know about it. Is this not the function of the GFSB and the function of the Chamber of Commerce? To keep their members informed about things and facilities that are available, to help them. This is not to say that the Government are not willing to do more, but the Government are at a loss. Short of placing more advertisements in the newspaper, the Government are at a loss to know what more. There has been quite a lot of investment in this Small Business Unit. Quite a lot of staff has been recruited and at the end of the day people have also got to help themselves. Government cannot just put everything on a silver salver for people.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

In relation to the same survey of the same traders conducted by the Federation, that is I believe in relation to EU funding, many of the retail and wholesale trade and obviously the Finance Centre were excluded from it, and 86 per cent welcomed whether schemes of that nature could be extended to them, are there any funds, either Gibraltar Government funds or European Union funding which could be used for those purposes? I wish to ask whether there is any EU funding available for retail or wholesale trade which are apparently excluded under the present schemes?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There are definitely no EU funds available. It is specifically excluded from the programme document. The Government of Gibraltar do have our enterprise scheme which we fund and the funding for which has never been fully exhausted, again because it has not been fully applied for. There is a procedure, a committee, that sits to decide the business proposal, whether it will result in more jobs or at least whether it is worthwhile investing public funds in preserving existing jobs and also if it is a legitimate use of these funds. I think it would be dangerous. I would ask the hon Member to take the view that it would be dangerous to extend the facility across the board to retailing, although there may be sectors of the retail trade which generate a particular public interest which may warrant it. Otherwise what will happen is that the Government will end up subsidising every shop in Main Street and I think the hon Member I am sure would agree with me if he were in Government that there are more socially pressing priorities for the application of public funds than subsidising retail outlets along the whole length of Main Street and elsewhere in Gibraltar where arguably retail outlets are suffering more from the strength of the pound and therefore the reduction in buying by visitors, than Main Street shops. The outlying Engineer Lane, for example, is having a much worse time of it than Main Street. There are one or two sectors in which the Government consider there is a strategic importance where Gibraltar would not wish to become dependent either on one supplier or on Spain, food retailing, for example, where the Government would consider applications for reasonably structured temporary supported by proper business plan approach for assistance. Government believe that it is in Gibraltar's interests that there should be several and not just one major food retailer in Gibraltar, not just to ensure that monopolies do not become a source of price increases in a basic commodity such as food but also to protect the wholesale trade which supports the food retail trade in Gibraltar.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Just to follow very briefly from what the Chief Minister has just said, are there any plans or anything in the pipeline in relation to what he has explained?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, we have received tentative approaches from two retailing operations in Gibraltar enquiring whether Government help might be available for certain particular things in relation to their operation. One is already with us, we hear that another is on the way and we will have to take a strategic policy decision on this issue.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Would it be prudent to ask who these companies are?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not imprudent for the hon Member to ask. It might be imprudent for me to answer. I am always a little bit reluctant to bandy about and to expose requests that Government receive from individual citizens and to mention them by name across the floor of the House. There are not that many major food retailers in Gibraltar and if I have given the hon Member an indication that there are two I think he can deduce it for himself for the time being and when we next meet in the Ante Room I will tell him the names of the companies.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Finally, just to emphasise a point once again that 90 per cent of these businesses according to the survey have not applied for EU funding or Gibraltar Government funding, that there must be a reason for that and simply to make the point which was made by the GFSB that some form of awareness needs to be made amongst the business community.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No attempt to even describe that as a question.

Answer to Question 216 of 2000

Gibraltar Enterprise Scheme

Project Number	Total Grant/ Loan	Sponsor	Purpose Of Grant
035	£15,770 (Loan)	Gerada's & Sons Ltd	Building/refurbishment works to the aluminium workshop and purchase of equipment
036	£11,000 (Loan)	Comdeck Ltd	Manufacture of interactive tourist information centres for Gibraltar
037	£15,000 (Grant)	Callaghan Insurance Brokers Ltd	The development of insurance marketing in South America
038	£3,000 (Grant)	International Health Clinic Ltd	Refurbishment of the existing clinic
039	£10,282 (Loan)	Signtalk Ltd	Purchase of specialised printing equipment
040	£835 (Grant)	Corporate Events	Purchase of equipment, advertising on the internet and the printing of publicity material

A total of nineteen applications for EU funding have been received and approved as follows:
Objective 2 1997-99

Project Number	Total EU Grant Requested	Total EU Grant Approved	Sponsor	Purpose Of Grant
054	£18,330	£10,000	S.K Beda Par Group Ltd T/A Omni	Purchase of equipment
059	£41,869	£31,798	Charles G Trico (Printers) Ltd	Purchase of equipment, building works and fitting-out
064	£65,430	£65,430	Amco (Gibraltar) Ltd	Purchase of plant and machinery and building works
065	£23,903	£23,903	Automotive Enterprises & Co Ltd	Purchase of equipment, building works, professional fees and marketing & promotion
068	£4,844	£4,844	Selina Limited	Purchase of equipment
069	£6,555	£6,555	Gerada & Sons T/A Window World	Purchase of equipment and building works
070	£6,250	£6,250	Rock Photos Limited	Purchase of equipment
071	£43,548	£3,375	Green Chip Limited	Purchase of equipment

Cont...

Cont. Answer to Question 216 of 2000

Gibraltar in Europe Business Development Scheme

Project Number	Total EU Grant	Sponsor	Purpose Of Grant
25	£456	Herald Travel Ltd	Promotional costs
26	£1,462	Mckay Partnership	Purchase of equipment
27	£2,416	P & H Private Consultants Ltd	Purchase of equipment
28	£1,089	123 Printers Ltd	Purchase of equipment and fit-out costs
29	£1,500	M J Hassan	Purchase of equipment
31	£1,551	CC Engineering	Purchase of equipment and rent assistance
32	£595	JAD & Son's	Purchase of equipment
33	£4,081	Comdeck Ltd	Manufacture of interactive tourist information centres for Gibraltar
34	£3,856	Signtalk Ltd	Purchase of specialised printing equipment
35	£1,500	Europe Axess Ltd	Purchase of equipment
36	£1,340	Soussi [Self Employed]	Purchase of equipment and advertising costs

Unsuccessful applications

Project Number	Total EU Grant	Sponsor	Purpose Of Grant
30	£573	Corporate Events	Purchase of equipment, advertising on the internet and the printing of publicity material

NO. 217 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

GUN WHARF

How many companies, individuals or organisations have expressed an interest in developing the old Gun Wharf area?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Five tenders were submitted for the development of this site.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 217 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Have the Government come to a view regarding the allocation of these tenders?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, the matter is still under consideration. Government are considering all the aspects of the tenders received and we are analysing the effect, both commercially and residentially, of the tenders so we can evaluate the process and we have not reached a final decision yet.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Given that tendering has already closed, is it possible to say what sort of development the Government would like to see in that area? Is it mainly residential, or touristic or commercial? What sort of things have the Government in mind?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Before my Colleague rises to answer that can I just remind the hon Member that in a previous exchange in the House on this issue I did tell him that the difficulty with this tender was that the Government did not like the whole of any one tender. We liked aspects of one tenderer and aspects of another tenderer and we were trying to encourage discussions between them to see if the bits of each tender could be lumped together which would provide the mix the Government wanted. This tender is getting into difficulty. It is not the ordinary straightforward tender of the Government choosing one project. We have already decided we do not want to choose one project from any of the ones being suggested. If we cannot salvage something from a combination of tenderers which obviously requires their agreement, it requires them to do a commercial joint venture, dare I use the words, then we may even have to start all over again with this tender.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Did not the original invitation then indicate to the tenderers what it was that the Government were interested in seeing done with the site?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, it did. It said "mixed", commercial, residential mix. What we want to see on the residential side is low rise and not high rise and, of course, what we want to see on the leisure side is open areas. People have submitted their ideas of maritime museums, an extension of the marina, a yacht facility to be used in connection with the new Cammell Laird yacht repairing facility. It is quite clear what is going to happen on the residential part but it is what happens with the historical slipway buildings that really is still up in the air and we are really not making great progress on that.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the nature of the tender that they are offering to buy the site?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the tender was for a premium which was to be used either in kind or in cash, depending on how it was offered, for the reprovisioning of the jetty that we discussed on Wednesday, the jetty for the tugs to vacate the Cormorant Basin.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the area within the basin being reclaimed? Are different proposals involving different amounts of reclamation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I have not seen any proposal that involves reclamation. It involves levelling the slipway, but the land part of the slipway. I have not seen any proposal that involves reclaiming from the sea as it now is, anything that is now sea.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Are the Government in a position to say who the five tenderers are?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think that the tender process is commercially confidential until it is resolved. Once it is resolved I think it is perfectly legitimate to disclose the winner and the losers but I think whilst the tender process is on-going..... again my hon Colleague will not have any difficulty in telling the hon Member the names of the tenderers in confidence but I do not think it is a matter for the floor of the House.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

The Chief Minister said that on the proposals they would prefer to have it mixed and therefore have invited two of the tenderers to discuss further. If they do not agree between themselves, would they be either not considering any of the tender or would they go for one of the tenderers even though it is not what the Government would like to see?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government have not decided that. It is not a question of not being what the Government would like to see because these are outline concept bids. It is all still subject to planning permission. In any event the successful tenderer would still have to agree with Government. It is only when there is conceptual differences, when somebody proposes that it is used as a marina and somebody else is proposing that it is used as a maritime museum and somebody else proposes that it is used as marina shops and things of that sort. If we come to that position, to which we might well come, the Government would then have to consider which of the two options described by the hon Member it pursues.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can the Government then confirm that there is direct link between the movement of the small boats to that area, the construction of the aircraft carrier berth and the award of this tender?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

With your leave, Mr Speaker, I will answer this question on condition that it does not generate further supplementaries. The answer to the hon Member's question is that there is unless the Government decide, which we may well do, if there is delay in the development of Gun Wharf for any reason, the Government may decide to proceed with funding the jetty itself and then simply collecting a cash premium for the development, advancing the finance. That is the way we are thinking at present.

ORAL

NO. 218 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

COMMERCIAL/DOMESTIC UNITS

How many businesses or individuals have applied for any of the commercial/domestic units advertised in the Official Notice published on 16th February 2000 and what criteria or mechanism is being used for their allocation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question No. 219 of 2000.

NO. 219 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

COMMERCIAL UNITS

How many businesses or individuals have applied for any of the four commercial units at Europa Business Centre and the two commercial units at Governor's Cottage Camp and what criteria or mechanism is being used for their allocation?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

There have been 39 applications for the units advertised on the 16th February 2000 and 22 applications for the units at Europa Business Centre and Governor's Cottage Camp. The criteria for allocation of the commercial/domestic units will be dependent on rents offered and the nature of proposed uses. In the case of the units at EBC and Governor's Cottage it will also be dependent on the type of business use proposed, its viability and employment opportunities created. Another important factor will be the creation of new business.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 218 AND 219 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The Opposition take it then that the units at the Europa Business Centre and those at the Governor's Cottage Camp will not be exclusively for new business. If there is an existing business that is interested in moving then they will also be allowed, is that the case?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, they will be considered.

ORAL

NO. 220 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

INTERNET BANDWIDTH

What is the nature of the investment that needs to be made to increase the internet bandwidth available in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question No. 221 of 2000.

NO. 221 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

TELECOMS LINK WITH MOROCCO

Will Government state when they intend to lay a cable across the Straits of Gibraltar in order to have a direct telecoms link with Morocco to ensure the provision of sufficient bandwidth?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Government are at present assessing the nature of the investment that needs to be made to increase capacity in this field but do not intend to lay any such cable itself.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 220 AND 221 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Are Government then proposing that a commercial operator should lay the cable instead given their misguided election manifesto where they said that the cable was being laid across the Straits to link with FLAG which actually has the landing stage in Estepona and not in Morocco?

HON K AZOPARDI:

All I can say is that there must have been a gremlin in the typing machine when that was inserted. I accept that the FLAG cable is not the one we are talking about. Obviously it is the SEMEWE cable which goes to Tetuan that I was talking about. Obviously it is a big investment. There is a manifesto commitment to connect Gibraltar as the hon Member says to the right cable in Morocco but we are assessing that. It is a major investment but our intention is not necessarily to go forward. Certainly the Government may want to form part of the group, but certainly the Government do not intend to lay the cable or arrange the laying of the cable.

HON J C PEREZ:

One could assume that what the Government are doing, given that certainly the two main telephone companies would derive benefit from such a link, one might assume that what Government are doing is perhaps trying to get other partners to invest in that particular project possibly including the two operators in Gibraltar?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I think we said what Government's intention is, which is to create the link. It is too early to say what the nature of the people who will make the investment will be. It may or may not be in the interests of the telephone company to make that link. I think it is in the interests of Gibraltar generally for there to be alternative telecoms routes and alternative sources of bandwidth and capacity for Gibraltar. I think that that is what is at the back of our decision-making process. But as I say I think it is a bit early to say who exactly will be putting forward the investment so that that link can be made.

HON J C PEREZ:

I am glad it has taken four years for the Government to accept the suggestion I made to them in the first meeting of the House in 1996. Can one take it then that although it is a manifesto commitment it is not something that will happen for sure, it is something that is being studied and there is a possibility that it might not happen?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I think our intention in the manifesto is really behind what the intention is to ensure that we have alternative telecoms routes and to ensure capacity in this field. We certainly intend to go forward with that initiative unless we are advised that technically there is an alternative to that which would be equally or a best solution to that. If we are not satisfied that that is the case our manifesto commitment is clear and we will go forward with it.

HON J C PEREZ:

So the commitment is to ensure the provision of a link but it might not necessarily be by laying a cable across the Straits?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, Mr Speaker. The commitment is to connect to that super highway now. Before the Election we were advised that the best way to connect to that to provide what everyone wants in Gibraltar and what lies at the route of the policy which is to ensure that Gibraltar's internet and e-commerce industry can prosper and develop, was by the physical link. It might still be so and if it is so it is a Government investment priority, not just whether it happens in four years or not, it is a priority within these four years to ensure that that telecommunication infrastructure upgrade takes place. If somebody comes to us and says "yes, of course it can be done by cable but it can also be done by microwave, for example, and it is just as reliable and it is just as technically effective and it might even be cheaper", it would be foolish for the Government to say no because we have written "cable under the ground" in the manifesto and we are going to go for the cable under the ground. We would like that degree of technical attitude but the fundamental political commitment to ensure that Gibraltar's telecommunication infrastructure is upgraded to ensure that Gibraltar can participate in the first wave of e-commerce development in Europe is absolutely solid and a matter of priority.

HON J C PEREZ:

So the commitment is really to link to the SEMEWE cable which passes through Tetuan? How that link will then take place is something that is under consideration? I presume not, but have Government considered whether they would need to use, if the cable is laid, the landing station of Fortress Headquarters or they will have to build a landing station?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, we have not yet considered that technical aspect.

HON DR J J GARCIA;

Would the provision of a laser link as recently in GibNet's case which was decided recently by the European Court would that be a way through which bandwidth could be increased?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I do not pretend to understand the technicalities of the issue. I understand and advised by the Telecoms Regulator that there are two alternatives which are talked about, that is the cable and the microwave link, whether it then extends to infrared I have to say that I am absolutely unclear about it. If the hon Member wants to enquire of me I will certainly find out.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

There is one other major point of concern because if the intention of the Government is that this should happen quickly so that we can catch up with the development of internet and telecommunications globally with European competitors, the renting of a line for people to be able to operate in real time is very expensive at present, there were I believe complaints in the region of £17,000 a month to rent a one megabyte line here and £450 a month to rent it in Spain, what I am saying is what sense of priority are the Government giving to this development in order that we can reduce prices and be able to compete?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is a very different issue but it falls into the same Government commitment. The Government's political commitment is to ensure that Gibraltar can participate in the first wave of e-commerce development in Europe. One factor of that is telecomms infrastructure. Another aspect of that is price competitiveness and the Government are committed to ensuring that all obstacles to Gibraltar successfully developing this business are eliminated and we are aware of what has been said about price. They are commercial issues. There are two sides to the story. I suspect the truth lies somewhere in between the two but certainly in the context of liberalisation one would expect the market to iron out those issues for itself.

ORAL

NO. 222 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

SATELLITE PROJECT - AFRO-ASIA SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS

Have the Government now agreed a building licence and lease with Afro-Asian Satellite Communications for the real estate they will require for their operations in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 223 and 224 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 223 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

ACTEL SATELLITE PROJECT

Do Government now have a firm date as to when the Actel Satellite Project is expected to commence operations in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 222 and 224 of 2000.

NO. 224 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

G E AMERICOM PROJECT

Has the G E Americom Project now commenced its operations in Gibraltar?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Government have not yet completed the real estate documentation with ASC. As the House is aware, ASC were sent a draft building licence and lease for a site at Lathbury Barracks which was being considered by their local legal representative and senior executives in India. Their in-house legal representative, who was leading on this matter, has left the company and this has delayed matters. However, the Government hope to finalise these arrangements within a short period of time. As far as the ACTEL project is concerned, the Government do not have a firm date for its commencement but is hopeful that the first phase of the project will commence during the first six months of this year. ACTEL is in discussion with British Telecom to enter into a relationship by which BT would become a strategic partner for the project to provide telecommunications to a number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The deal is due to be finalised this month. For its part, GE Americom has started recruiting staff in Gibraltar and in November last year employed a local manager for the operation. Other staff is expected to be recruited before the summer. GE has signed a lease for office accommodation in Leanse Place where the Satellite Control Centre will be built and work will start shortly. The first "Gibraltar" satellite for GE's project will be launched, probably in late autumn.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 222, 223 AND 224 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

As far as the Afro-Asian satellite telecommunications project is concerned, the Minister's predecessor said the last time I raised it in the House that we would like to see a commitment in Real Estate given that the operator had been hanging on for over four years now and that there was no real commitment in Gibraltar and that they had earmarked part of the Lathbury Barracks area which was then changed and it took a lesser part of it but that he would like to see a firm commitment through the signing of the real estate and the financing of the real estate even if it took longer. Is that the position of the Government and if this does not develop in the not too distant future would that mean that that area would not be earmarked for this project?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, it is still Government's position that it is a priority for the real estate documentation to be signed up. I think my predecessor said in the House that it was not really desirable for there to be tentative arrangements for the allocation of land and then the documentation never gets signed up. That is still our priority. For the reasons I have expressed there has been some delay. One of the vice presidents of ASC has written to the Government solicitors saying that they want to come to Gibraltar to make a presentation and I hope to take the occasion to make that direct point to them and emphasise the need for them to move quickly.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the Minister taking the same position with ACTEL in terms of the real estate?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes. There is little distinction to be made. I think it is across the board, if there are arrangements for the earmarking of land, we want those arrangements to be finalised soon so that we can derive an income and also out of fairness to other competitors who may want to have that particular land and it applies to all satellite operations.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can I ask whether Gibraltar has already acquired from the International Telecommunications Union the space slots for all these projects? In the event of one of these companies not continuing to use Gibraltar or to go ahead with the project can those space projects then be transferred to another company that might want them?

HON K AZOPARDI:

As the hon Member I think is aware there is a continuous process of discussion between the Gibraltar regulator and the International Telecommunications Union through the relevant agency in the UK. My understanding at the moment is that if all the projects proceed as planned there would be about 20 satellites, so there would have to be filings in relation to all of those. My understanding also is that there is, for example, in the letter to GE some constant discussion to examine the filings and substitute ones for others so that the projects can proceed. I certainly can give the hon Member an assurance that in the first place there is continuous discussion to make sure that the filings are there for the project to succeed and secondly that I am quite clear that there is an accepted filing in relation to the projects or the first satellite that will be launched some time this year.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is the cost of the application of those slots and the filing still being met in part by the proposed operators themselves?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I believe so.

NO. 225 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

LIBERALISATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Are Government in a position now to say when it expects to implement EU directives on the Liberalisation of Telecommunications?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

As the Chief Minister has said publicly recently the Government hope to take the necessary primary legislation as soon as practicable and if possible at this meeting of the House.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 225 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Will the effect of the legislation be that new operators will be able to apply for licences to run in competition with the ones we have got at the moment? Is that what liberalisation does?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The legislation transposes the directives. There are of course some physical constraints which cannot be corrected by passing laws to the full enjoyment of liberalisation rights, not least the shortage of numbering plan. But, yes, in principle the regime created by the directives and reflected in the legislation is to create a licensing regime as many other things, interconnectivity, rules, and all sorts of things but in terms of licensing, yes, it creates a licensing regime. People are entitled to apply for licences but in respect of services that view what the regime calls "scarce national resources" the number of licences can be limited. They can be auctioned. For example, the hon Member is aware that in the UK they are at this minute having a commercial tender process for the third generation mobile telephone licences. It creates a regime that allows people to apply. It is a fallacy, a common one, that it means a free for all. It is not a free for all. It does not mean that anyone who wants to operate a telephone service can operate a telephone service.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

I am thinking more in relation to telecommunications in the sense of internet, although it is linked because they use the same system and the same lines, will this directive allow for other smaller operators to be given a chance to catch up with the existing ones by renting lines at cost for example and having no competition in relation with the existing larger operator to new small ones that come into the market or existing small ones that want to catch up?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have understood the hon Member to be talking about telephone network infrastructure. Once the exclusivity enjoyed by one particular company for that function is pended by the liberalisation legislation it will be open to anyone who has a lot of money to waste unnecessarily to set up their own cable wire network, but they would be very unwise to wish to do so given that the regime created by the liberalisation is to give them rights of access, rights of use, connectivity rights to the existing network at rates set by or certainly agreed by the Telecoms Regulator. In other words, it is not even in the hands of the owner of the network. People will be able to apply to duplicate infrastructure in that way but it remains to be seen whether anyone thinks that there is a good commercial case for doing so. If there is, of course the application will be considered in the usual way.

HON J C PEREZ:

May I ask the Chief Minister whether the arrangement foreseen in the legislation is one which is as it is in the UK where although the main supplier of the infrastructure is one party there is a study and a control made by the regulator to ensure that the pricing is such so as not to give an unfair edge of competition to the provider of the network over other operators in the provision of those facilities?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the interconnectivity directive deals precisely with issues of that kind and is designed to ensure that where the owner of the network is also a service provider he does not use his ownership of the network to create an unlevel playing field with his competitors in the service provision aspects of his business. That is precisely what the interconnectivity directive achieves in the way that the hon Member describes.

ORAL

NO. 226 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

INTERREG GIBRALTAR/MOROCCO

Can Government state what is the balance of unused Interreg Gibraltar/Morocco 1997/1999 Programme Funds as at 31st January 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 227 and 228 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 227 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

OBJECTIVE 2 FUND

Can Government state what is the balance of unused Objective 2 1997/1999 Programme Funds as at 31st January 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 226 and 228 of 2000.

NO. 228 OF 2000THE HON J J BOSSANO**KONVER FUNDS**

Can Government state what is the balance of unused Konver 1995/1999 Programme Funds as at 31st January 2000?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The balance of unspent as opposed to uncommitted Interreg 2A Gibraltar/Morocco 1994/1999 Programme Funds as at 31st December 1999 stood at £219,112. The balance of unspent as opposed to uncommitted Objective 2 1997/1999 Programme Funds as at 31st December 1999 stood at £2,742,017 and the balance of unspent, as opposed to uncommitted, Konver 2 Funds as at 31st December 1999 stood at £1,675,616.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 226, 227 AND 228 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is it the case then that the information provided in answer to Question Nos. 772, 771 and 761 giving the amounts of unused funds as at 31st August were those unspent or uncommitted totals?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I do not have the benefit of having those questions in front of me. If the hon Member could just read out the answers?

HON J J BOSSANO:

For example, in the case of the Morocco/Interreg the figure given at the 31st August was £415,000; in the case of the Objective 2 it was £1,216,358 and in the case of Konver it was £873,000. Therefore, when looking at the answers on this occasion one is down and the other two are up which seems peculiar.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

What was the figure for Objective 2, for example, in August?

HON J J BOSSANO:

In Objective 2 in August the figure given was as at 31st August £1,216,358 which is about half of the total that has been given now.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am almost certain that the August figure is uncommitted, roughly judging by the figure that is involved after the sort of figures that we had to commit before December in order not to lose it. We will enquire why the figure is up for Konver now but there are one or two idiosyncrasies of the system that does mean that these figures can vary. I do not know what the extent is of the increase.

HON J J BOSSANO:

It is double.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Then it is not the explanation but one of the explanations that makes these figures vary is the exchange rate because these things are done euros. We are answering these questions in sterling but the EU entitlement is in euros.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government then provide the uncommitted figures if there are still uncommitted funds as at present.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There are no uncommitted funds. They had to be committed by 31st December if they were not to be forfeited.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I take it then that the implication is that they were all committed, that there was nothing left over by 31st December, is that correct?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

HON K AZOPARDI:

Everything under Objective 2 and Konver was committed to its totality. In Interreg there was a sum of about £55,000 that was not committed. That was due to the difficulty in finding projects to meet that but as the hon Member can see the total is about £4 million or £5 million so I think we did rather well.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Nor is the undercommitment of Interreg as serious as would have been the undercommitment of Objective 2 because the Interreg programme continues without changes so there is no reason why we should have any difficulty recovering that if the very difficult to find projects that can be done under those rules can be found.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can I ask in relation to the figures of unspent funds, is that a reflection of the amount that has been spent as compared to the amount that was budgeted for this year?

For example, in the case of Interreg we had in these year's Estimates £305,000, if there is an unspent £290,000 is that in relation to the £305,000 or was there an amount of the total that was not included in this year's budget which forms part of that?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I imagine that there is an aspect that does not form part of this year's budget for the reason that while most of the projects had to be committed by 31st December the expenditure could be to the end of 2001, so I imagine there is some overspill into other years in relation to some of the projects.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister say for example if we take the Objective 2 the amount that was put in this year's I&D Fund was £1.6 million has the £1.6 million been spent, or more or less?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think there we have got to distinguish between commitment and spending. The hon Member knows that in effect these monies are recovered after they had been spent and very often there is a lag between expenditure and receipt of the funds from the Commission. There will have been expenditure this year in the I&D Fund under Objective 2 equivalent to the amount that the hon Member has mentioned but I cannot now give him the details on what project that could have fallen but there has not been an underspend, in other words as far as I am aware we have met almost completely the estimated expenditure in the Improvement and Development Fund this year in respect of projects that were to be partly funded with EU funds.

HON J J BOSSANO:

First of all let me make clear I am not asking about receipts so when the money is received it is irrelevant because the answer is the amount unspent and since the answer that I have been given is the amount unspent is £2,742,000 and the amount it was intended to spend was £1,600,000, I think it is reasonable to say is the £2.7 million that is unspent, unspent because Government have not spent the £1.6 million?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think the answer is no, it is because there are projects that had been committed before the end of December deadline but the projects have not yet commenced. I cannot think of one right now in Objective 2 but under.....for example the Theatre Royal project is a project that is in the unspent balance but it is a project that we have committed to but has not actually started. Out of the £2.7 million the £1.6 million has been spent but I will have that detail checked for the hon Member if he is interested to know. As I understand his query out of that £2.7m. had we spent the £1.6 million which we had budgeted in the Estimates for the financial year just ending now, or is it that the £2.7 million is comprised of £1.6 million of projects in the Estimates and £1 million of projects newly committed. Is that what the hon Member is asking?

HON J J BOSSANO:

What I am asking is to what extent the unspent balance reflects underspending of what was budgeted? Can I ask in relation to Konver, the amount in the Estimates this

year was only £50,000 and the amount that is now being given as unspent is £1,670,616. Therefore, the amount put in the Estimates for the current financial year normally would have been an indication that there was not that much money left in this particular Head.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not have the Estimates in front of me but is the hon Member just looking at the DTI Vote?

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am looking at the I&D DTI vote.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

But remember that some of the EU funds and expenditure whereas in the hon Member's days appeared under the DTI, which I think is Head 105, the DTI Head under the Improvement and Development Fund, now where they have a more relevant Departmental head they are placed there, so, for example, there may be as I recall the Casemates Project is partly Konver funded, so one would have to extrapolate Konver funded projects from all the various Heads in the I&D, not just the £40,000 provided in Head 106. There has been much more than £40,000 expenditure as I recall Casemates, for example, is almost wholly Konver.

HON K AZOPARDI:

I think the additional point as well is that once those projects are dealt with the rest on the list will not be spent this year, it would be spent in the forthcoming years.

HON J J BOSSANO:

One final question, in terms of the Objective 2 where new rules have come in, what is the timetable for this? Is Gibraltar now putting forward proposals to be included in the next Objective 2 package. Presumably this will be for a three or four year period?

HON K AZOPARDI:

As far as I am aware there are discussions now between DTI here and DTI in the UK. What we have to compare first is what they call a Single Programming Document, I think the hon Member will be familiar with that concept and there are now discussions on the specific document. A draft has been prepared and we are looking at that at the moment before we submit that. There is also discussion on the specific amounts to be allocated to the territories, Gibraltar specifically. I would have hoped that we can go forward soon but I understand that against the background of all this process the Isle of Wight has made a legal challenge to the entire process. I think they are seeking funding and they have sought leave to apply for Judicial Review. I am not exactly sure of the complete aspects of that legal application but I am told that as a result of that there may be some delay but I would hope that we can, certainly in Gibraltar, proceed with the usual procedure of a programming document to finalise that, send it off and all that we would have to do is wait for formal notification assuming that the Isle of Wight issue does not blow up into a further problem. Certainly it is not a problem for us, it is only a problem in the sense of delay generally.

ORAL

NO. 229 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

COMMERCIAL BANKS

What was the level of total liability of commercial banks as at 31st December 1999 giving a breakdown of total deposits, balances due to other banks and other liabilities?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question No. 230 of 2000.

NO. 230 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

COMMERCIAL BANKS

What was the level of total assets of commercial banks as at 31st December 1999 giving a breakdown of cash, balances due by other banks, loans and advances, investments and other assets?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The total liability of commercial banks as at 31st December 1999 was as follows:-

	<u>£ billion</u>
Customer deposits	2.91
Balances due to other banks	2.76
Other liabilities *	<u>1.89</u>
Total liabilities	7.56
	=====

* of which £1.75 billion represents the capitalisation of the banks.

The total level of assets of commercial banks as at 31st December 1999 was as follows:-

	<u>£ billion</u>
Cash	0.01
Balances due by other banks	3.75
Loans and advances	1.19
Investments	2.44
Other assets	<u>0.17</u>
Total assets	7.56
	=====

ORAL

NO. 231 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

NUMBER OF COMPANIES

What was the total number of companies registered in Gibraltar as at 31st December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 232, 233 and 234 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 232 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

NUMBER OF EXEMPT COMPANIES

What was the number of exempt companies as at 31st December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 231, 233 and 234 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 233 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

NUMBER OF QUALIFYING COMPANIES

What was the number of qualifying companies as at 31st December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 231, 223 and 234 of 2000.

NO. 234 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

NUMBER OF QUALIFYING COMPANIES

How many qualifying companies have been registered in 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

It is estimated that there are currently between 26 to 29,000 active registered companies. There were 8,805 Exempt Companies at 29th February 2000. It is impossible, because of the current system, to inform the hon Member of figures for specific dates on a retrospective basis. Only approximate figures can therefore be given for the 31st December 1999. This is estimated to be about 8,300 but I have given the figures at a week's time. The number of Qualifying Companies registered at 31st December 1999 was 132. In 1999 there were 14 companies registered as Qualifying Companies.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 231, 232, 233 AND 234 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

The number of active companies does not seem to have changed all that much since the 31st August because the answer given to Question No. 778 was 28,000 and we are now being told that it is between 26 and 29 which suggests that if 28 was sort of average, we are still there?

HON K AZOPARDI:

There is an element of guesstimate first in the figure as to active in the sense that it is very difficult for Companies House to say. I did get a fax saying that they estimated it would be about 29,000. The truth is I have added the leeway because I think it is a guesstimate and having seen the figures I think it is too specific an estimate. All I would say to that is that I understand that incorporations last year were about 5,000. Of course, that is then set off, all these companies that are wound up or struck off or have ceased to pay et cetera that is what provides the guesstimate. The problem is that we cannot go, as the hon Member who I think had a debate with my predecessor on this issue before, we cannot go on the registration number. The registration numbers go back to the establishment of the Register in 1932 and I think it is completely misleading. Indeed, it is used by Spain to produce a misleading figure. All we can produce is that sort of guesstimate on the basis of comparing the established registered number and then reduce from that figure the struck off, the wound up companies, pending liquidations and those that have lapsed for many years which produces a sort of guesstimate figure. I am afraid we can do no better at the moment.

HON J J BOSSANO:

When the information was provided in answer to Question 778 the figure of the total was also given which was then 70,391. Can the Minister say what is the total as at 31st December?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I would not call it the total, I would call it the last registration number that has been allocated. For the reasons that I have said I think it is unhelpful for us to start calling it the total number of companies in Gibraltar because I think Spain uses it against us and I do not think it represents the true number of active companies. I can certainly tell the hon Member that the latest number allocated is 72,436 but I would start using that phrase rather than saying that that represents the companies registered. The hon Member will understand what I am saying.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I am simply following the terminology of the last answer that was given.

HON K AZOPARDI:

With respect to my predecessor I would rather use a different phraseology because I think it is more accurate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I have no problem with that as long as we know what we are talking about. Can I ask how is it that the figure does not go down when a company is struck off? What does striking off mean if it does not mean removing it from the Register?

HON K AZOPARDI:

That is precisely one of the questions that I asked when I was trying to answer the hon Member's question when it was submitted. When I first asked for statistics on this to answer the hon Member's question which is how many companies were registered at a certain date I got the figure that I have just cited with then a breakdown of..... this does not represent the true active number which is about 29,000 because all of these should not be counted in the 72,000 and include companies that have been struck off. My question therefore was how can we say that there were registered companies at a certain date which included a number of companies that are struck off the Register. There is a contradiction inherent in that. Having analysed the figure I do not think people mean when they were answering the question to me I do not think they mean that there were 70,000-odd registrations in Gibraltar. All they are saying is that the number since 1932, that is the last number allocated but in reality it does not. The number stays on the Register physically, when a company is struck off the Register they draw a line in the Register. The number physically stays there. I have no understanding of why anyone would think that they should still count it but that is the current procedure. I would have to sit down at Companies House to understand it further and would have to be persuaded that that is indeed a sensible procedure. It does not make sense to me that in fact that should be the case. It is certainly not helpful in the ultimate calculation but whether they physically remove it or not from the list of companies, the reality remains that they will not allocate that number to another company and in future there will still be a rising number whether or not everything previous to that number

has been struck off. In other words, if there were 79,000 companies that had been struck off and the next number on the list was 79,001 one would have that one company registered in Gibraltar with the number 79,001. That does not make sense to me either.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Then it ought to be possible to say more accurately how many companies there are because there may be a sound reason for not giving the number to another one. It seems to me that just like we give new numberplates to new cars and not old ones that have been scrapped it does not mean that the number of cars in the road is the last number plate that has been given. Does he have the numbers that have been struck off?

HON K AZOPARDI:

Yes, the problem is that having conducted an exercise and deducted the striking offs then there is still another bulk of companies that are inactive in a sense that they do not seem to have filed their annual returns for many, many years. I will give the hon Member the figures, about 3,723 of what they call dead companies which were prior to 1993 the terminology for striking off the Register or liquidated. Then there is 12,800 struck off; 725 pending striking off; 1,804 wound up; 85 wound up by the Courts; 589 pending liquidation; which is a total of 19,729 which leaves a total of about 29,000 companies unaccounted for. These are companies which are neither up to date with their filing requirements and so we do not count them as active and do not fit into the previous categories that I have listed. Companies House is quite clear that they are not active. They have been lying on the Register for years and years and eventually someone gets round to them and tries to strike them off, but they are not active. Because of all of that it is just not possible to give a precise figure, that is why we have presented a guesstimate.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If a company does not in fact file Returns and pay then is there not an automatic provision that says "if you do not file up to date Returns you lose your registration"?

HON K AZOPARDI:

No, it is not automatic. They have to start a process to strike them off and that may not happen in years. It lies on the Register, as it were, pending re-activation.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But presumably the Registrar has got the powers, to say "if you do not file your Returns as required by law we can remove you" and then he starts a legal proceeding to do so?

HON K AZOPARDI:

There is a procedure in the Ordinance. It is a complex procedure and in fact there are discussions with Companies House in trying to simplify the procedure, but there is a procedure. At the moment it is so complex that it does not get activated on an automatic basis.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Was there not in fact the intention and some money provided in the Estimates for an exercise to be done to clear up this backlog of non-active companies? I understood that the Government were looking at the possibility of entering into some agreement to clear up this backlog of inactive companies so that an exercise would be done to remove them, is that the case or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is no such process in hand. Ideas have, from time to time, been put up but it has been achieved through the non-compliance. Companies that are inactive tend not to comply with filing requirements and then they can be struck off. Really, what the Government were being invited to do was to authorise the striking off of these companies. It is a matter for the Registrar of Companies. As far as the Government are concerned if legislative help is required, it is often difficult to distinguish between activity and inactivity. As far as the Registrar is concerned, inactivity means non-payment of annual filing fees and non-submission of an Annual Return. But, of course, that does not necessarily mean that the company does not have an asset somewhere. It may not be trading but it may own a house here or investments. Mr Speaker, there is no on-going programme that the Government are involved with unless the Registrar is using his powers to strike companies off for non-filing of accounts which, when I was in legal practice, used to go up to for three or four years.

ORAL

NO. 235 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

CATEGORY 3 QUALIFYING INDIVIDUALS

Have Government received any further applications for Category 3 Qualifying Individual Status after the nine applications it had received by September last year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 236, 237 and 238 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 236 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

HINWI

How many High Net Worth Individuals have to date transferred under the new rules to now become Category 2 Qualifying Individuals?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 235, 237 and 238 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 237 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

CATEGORY 2 QUALIFYING INDIVIDUALS

How many applications have been received for the status of Category 2 Qualifying Individuals and, if so, how many of these have been approved or rejected?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Answered together with Question Nos. 235, 236 and 238 of 2000.

2

NO. 238 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

CATEGORY 4 QUALIFYING INDIVIDUALS

How many applications have Government received and approved or rejected for Category 4 Qualifying Individuals since the introduction of the status and in respect of which occupations have these applications been made?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Government have received a further 13 applications for Category 3 status since September last year.

To date four Qualifying High Net Worth Individuals have transferred under the new rules to become Category 2 Qualifying Individuals. Since the introduction of the Category 2 status we have received a total of 18 applications. Two applications were refused. Seven were successful and the remaining nine are being considered.

Government have received since the introduction of the Category 4 status a total of 10 applications. Out of these 10 applications two were approved, three were rejected and the remaining five applications are being considered. In all the Category 4 cases the occupations are related to the new gaming industry.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 235, 236, 237 AND 238 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Am I right in thinking that the Category 4 are the ones that are required to have a residence in Gibraltar as part of their conditions?

HON K AZOPARDI:

I think both Category 3 and 4 are required to reside in Gibraltar.

NO. 239 OF 2000

THE HON DR R G VALARINO

TERRITORIAL WATERS - INCURSIONS

Will Government list the number of occasions, giving dates and numbers of vessels, on which there have been incursions by Spanish fishing boats into Gibraltar waters since September 1999 up to the present date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

As already explained in the House before in answers to Questions No. 214 and 800 of 1999, the Government cannot know all the occasions on which Spanish fishing boats incur into Gibraltar waters.

I now hand the hon Member a list giving the incursions recorded by the Royal Gibraltar Police.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 239 OF 2000

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I see that there has been an increase since the last list given out by the Chief Minister. Have the Royal Gibraltar Police encountered any problems with these fishing vessels?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the Royal Gibraltar Police are satisfied that their instructions are obeyed immediately which is what they are interested in. The Government, for its part, is very happy that the Fishing Agreement is working as intended.

Answer to Question 239/2000

<u>Date</u>	<u>N° of Vessels</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>N° of Vessels</u>
01.09.99	4	23.11.99	2
02.09.99	3	24.11.99	4
03.09.99	2	25.11.99	5
04.09.99	2	27.11.99	2
07.09.99	2	29.11.99	2
13.09.99	1	02.12.99	2
22.09.99	1	03.12.99	1
23.09.99	2	07.12.99	2
25.09.99	1	13.12.99	1
27.09.99	1	14.12.99	4
29.09.99	1	21.12.99	1
02.10.99	2	03.01.00	1
04.10.99	1	04.01.00	1
06.10.99	2	07.01.00	1
08.10.99	1	12.01.00	1
11.10.99	2	18.01.00	2
12.10.99	1	19.01.00	11
13.10.99	4	20.01.00	2
14.10.99	5	21.01.00	5
15.10.99	6	22.01.00	1
18.10.99	2	23.01.00	1
21.10.99	1	24.01.00	1
26.10.99	1	28.01.00	3
03.11.99	1	31.01.00	2
04.11.99	1	01.02.00	1
05.11.99	2	06.02.00	1
06.11.99	1	07.02.00	1
15.11.99	1	09.02.00	4
16.11.99	4	11.02.00	2
17.11.99	3	13.02.00	4
18.11.99	16	14.02.00	8
20.11.99	3	17.02.00	1
21.11.99	3	18.02.00	3
22.11.99	1		

NO. 240 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS

Can Government state how many Administrative Officers were recruited into the Civil Service after 15th September 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

None have been recruited yet although a selection process has recently been completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 240 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

And the selection process proposes to employ how many?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The selection process does not employ anybody. The selection process chooses a list of people that are found suitable and they are waitlisted. Then they are inducted into the Service as and when vacancies are to be filled. If the hon Member wants to ask me how many vacancies there are to be filled, at the moment I think we are looking at about 14 or 15.

HON J C PEREZ:

But the list would continue to over and above 14 or 15 for a while?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

For a while, as a matter of policy it is three months so as not to treat unfairly people who arrive on the labour market after this process.

HON J L BALDACHINO:

I suppose, seeing that the recruitment was for A0s, that everybody in the Government Service has now been promoted from AA to A0?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member supposes correctly.

ORAL

NO. 241 OF 2000

THE HON J L BALDACHINO

ASSISTANT TOWN PLANNER

Can Government say how many persons have applied for the post of Assistant Town Planner?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

One person.

NO. 242 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

IMPORT DUTY

Have Government come to any conclusions in respect to a further restructure of import duty?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Government have no plans to further restructure import duty.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 242 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can we take it that the suggestion that the Government are going to reduce duty on different products is something which is not on the cards at the moment?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Government may from time to time decide to increase import duties on some products and reduce it on others. That is not a restructure.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Are there any plans to increase duty on some products and reduce it on others?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It would not occur before the Budget.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Is the Customs computer which was being reprogrammed in a way to be able to give the level of imports of the products on which duty had been reduced now able to perform that function?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I believe not but I will check to see how that job is going and let the hon Member know.

NO. 243 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

ISSUE OF VISAS AT CASABLANCA

Given the new arrangements put in place for a speedier issue of visas at Casablanca for non-EU nationals who wish to travel to Gibraltar, how many such visas have been issued on a monthly basis since 1st November 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

A total of 26 visas for Gibraltar have been issued by the Consulate General in Casablanca since November last year. Twenty were issued in November, one in December, two in January and three in February.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 243 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The original 20 would seem to be with the launch of the airline when the aeroplane arrives with 18 passengers on board. Do we take it then that the number of people that have been arriving here from Casablanca, which the Minister for Tourism supplied figures for earlier this week, are EU nationals and therefore do not need a visa to come to Gibraltar, other than these five or six people?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Not necessarily, they could be holders of multiple entry visas to the United Kingdom, in which case visas to Gibraltar are waived.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The director of a tourism company in Casablanca was said to complain at the fact that the reason why there are so few people flying to Gibraltar from there is precisely because there is a problem in the issue of visas, that people have to pay £25 and lose a deposit if they do not get a visa and that the system itself is very bureaucratic and that it is easier to get a visa for the UK for the EU than it is to get a visa to Gibraltar. Are Government aware of this and are any plans being made to rectify the situation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not a problem. There is a visa procedure but we are not applying a regime which is any more strict than the UK. We would like indeed to impose a very different and much less strict regime. We are in discussions with the UK on that. It is not a question of there being a problem in the operation of the system. The system itself is a disincentive because people have to go through the process of applying for a visa and that discourages many weekend visitors. We are in discussion with the UK as to how Gibraltar might considerably simplify the present visa regimes which are imposed on us, whilst at the same time continuing to comply with EU common visa list requirements.

NO. 244 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICE

Where is the Tourist Information Office offered by the Chief Minister to the Mayor of Los Barrios going to be located?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No decision has yet been taken in relation to any aspects of this matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 242 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can the Chief Minister confirm that such an office has indeed been offered to the Mayor of Los Barrios, as he has been telling all and sundry.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I have not been telling all and sundry, indeed I have not told anybody. What has happened is that the hon Member has read the press and based on what he has read in the press he has formulated questions in this House. If the hon Member wants to add unnecessary language to the end of his questions, I do not know who has been telling what and whether it is to all and sundry or not. I have had a routine lunch with the Mayor of Los Barrios, as I have many such routine lunches with the Mayor of Los Barrios, at which the possibility of them considering whether they wanted to set up an office, as we have in Madrid for example, was put to him. That is true and the Government of Gibraltar would be quite content for that to happen in pursuance of its policy of co-operation at a local level. The offer was not accepted, it was an idea floated for him to take away, consult with all the other Mayors of the Mancomunidad. That is what actually happened, I do not know if he has read anything different in the press, that is what has occurred. I have made it clear to the Mayor of Los Barrios that this is something that the Government of Gibraltar would consider.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

The only other additional request for information would be to do with the suggestion that this is linked to the Diputacion de Cadiz and to the talks on tourism and other areas which took place, can the Chief Minister confirm that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is not linked to anything in particular. It is bilateral between me and the Mayor of Los Barrios, whether it gets expanded and at what level they come back to me with their initial reaction I cannot tell. I made the suggestion to the Mayor of Los Barrios.

ORAL

NO. 245 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

CASEMATES PROJECT

How many tenders have been received for the commercial units at Casemates Square?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 246 of 2000.

NO. 246 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

CASEMATES PROJECT

What are Government's plans for the old Health Centre Building?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sixty-two tenders have been received for the commercial units at Casemates. These include the ground floor of the old Health Centre Building.

Space has been offered on the first floor to the Chamber of Commerce and it is envisaged that space will be offered to the Gibraltar Chronicle. No decision has been made as to the use of the top floor.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 245 AND 246 OF 2000

HON DR J J GARCIA:

Can the Government confirm on what basis has the space been offered to the Chamber or would be offered to the Gibraltar Chronicle?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, these are organisations to which the Government have commitments to assist with the reversion of their premises. The Government believe that the Editorial Offices of the Chronicle, being Gibraltar's leading written press institution, is an important public function and the Chamber of Commerce, likewise, and these are activities which are compatible with the Government's wish that the Square should become a hub of day-to-day activity. Because we had these relocation commitments and they were premises that the Government consider are suitable for those functions we have offered. The first and the second floor do not form part of the Casemates Project as such. The Government will dispose of them as it disposes of its empty rental properties generally.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

This is what the question was directed at finding out, whether these premises have been offered for free or what is the actual arrangement?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly, not offered for free. They are offered at a rent. It may not be a market rent. Neither of these two organisations are profit making in the ordinary sense of the word. None of them have shareholders that distribute profit and therefore it is an appropriate allocation on this basis. Normally, when the Government give out empty properties on a rental basis to ordinary commercial organisations it is done by tender as the hon Member knows from the questions that we dealt with on Wednesday.

These are not ordinary commercial organisations and therefore as we did with the Federation of Small Businesses it is appropriate to give allocation of property by direct allocation.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

They are not commercial in the sense that the Chief Minister has described, but they are not Government Departments either, so where does the commitment to relocate these two entities lie? How was it entered into? Why is there a commitment to move them somewhere else?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Because they asked and we agreed.

HON J J BOSSANO:

On the question of the allocation of premises to the Chronicle, is it intended that the Printing Works should move as well?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the Printing Works have in fact been offered a unit at New Harbours. This will be only for the editorial offices and the sales offices and things of that sort.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Does it mean then that the premises they occupy at the moment are likely to come to the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The whole question of the transfer of the Garrison Library to the Government is, as the hon Member knows, one that is in hand.

HON DR J J GARCIA:

What arrangement was made with the street market, which is something that we discussed the last time the opportunity arose in the House in September and which we have not..... the movement of the street market to the Casemates?

MR SPEAKER:

It is not really a supplementary.

HON J C PEREZ:

Can the Government confirm, just to refresh my memory, that the allocation of a vault for the street market does not form part of the tenders in Casemates?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The hon Member should not assume that a vault will be given to the street market.

HON J C PEREZ:

I am only saying what the information we got at the last meeting of the House. When my former colleague Mr Albert Isola asked the last time we were told that the allocation of the street market which would probably be in one of the vaults at Casemates would not form part of the tender. I would just like to confirm that that is still the position?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As I have said, the hon Member should not assume that the street market are going to be given a vault at Casemates by tender or otherwise. Therefore, to the extent that in the past we had signalled the contrary it is simply an example of the fact that Government, like everybody else, are free to change their minds.

HON J J BOSSANO:

If we do not ask a question we will not discover that they have changed their minds.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not come to this House to tell Opposition Members everything that I know. I come to this House to answer their questions. If they do not ask the questions they do not find out.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can the Government confirm that they have changed their minds about giving a vault to the street market?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That was implicit in the last answer I gave.

ORAL

NO. 247 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

INCOME TAX - LIMITED COMPANIES

How many businesses trading as limited companies were assessed as having taxable profits of:

- (a) above £35,000;
- (b) below £35,000;
- (c) declared no profit or made a loss

in the tax year 1998/99?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 248, 249 and 250 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 248 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

INCOME TAX - LIMITED COMPANIES

How many businesses trading as limited companies were assessed as having taxable profits of:

- (a) above £35,000;
- (b) below £35,000;
- (c) declared no profit or made a loss

in the tax year 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 247, 249 and 250 of 2000.

ORAL

NO. 249 OF 2000

THE HON DR J J GARCIA

INCOME TAX - NON-LIMITED COMPANIES

How many businesses not trading as limited companies were assessed as having taxable profits of:

- (a) above £35,000;
- (b) below £35,000;
- (c) declared no profit or made a loss

in the tax year 1998/99?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question Nos. 247, 248 and 250 of 2000.

NO. 250 OF 2000THE HON DR J J GARCIA**INCOME TAX - LIMITED COMPANIES**

How many businesses not trading as limited companies were assessed as having taxable profits of:

- (a) above £35,000;
- (b) below £35,000;
- (c) declared no profit or made a loss

in the tax year 1997/98?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I am advised by the Commissioner of Income Tax that it is not possible to provide the information the hon Member seeks by this question and by Question 249 of 2000. Profits from trade not carried out through a company is the income of the individual or individuals concerned. The business itself is not therefore a separate taxpayer and the profit from the business cannot be distinguished by the Tax Office's computer from other income of those individuals.

Nor is the information readily or accurately available in respect of companies. Given time, the Income Tax Office could establish the number of companies that paid more than £12,250 in tax, which at 35 per cent means that they probably had taxable profits in excess of £35,000. Companies paying between zero and £12,250 probably had taxable profits of below £35,000 and companies paying no tax probably made no profit or a loss. However, this method of deducing the information would not be correct in respect of those companies that had carried forward losses from previous trading years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 247, 248, 249 AND 250 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

In respect of which tax year is the provision for a lower rate of tax for small companies due to happen?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is in respect of the tax year commencing at the time that I announced it, which I think was in last year's Budget, so it would be tax year 1999/2000, but of course it applies to different companies differently because by reference to their reporting year ending in that tax year. Different companies will have different basis periods in respect of the first tax year.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Will the Income Tax Department then be able to say which companies are paying 20 per cent because they have less than £35,000 of profit?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Only if it doctors the computer or keeps the records manually. As their computer stands now they could not, although they could deduce it, but deduce it very unscientifically.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But however unscientifically, is there some assessment of how many companies are likely to fall into this category, out of the 1,500 that make tax returns?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, at the time that we introduced this measure I had in front of me numbers and assessments and calculations that enabled us to calculate the likely cost of this by reference to the amount of tax that companies had paid in previous years. The number of companies in each category by tax bill not by assessable profit.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would it be possible for an indication to be given because the purpose of the Question obviously is to try and establish what is the impact of the 20 per cent rate. That is, how many people are likely to be affected by it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will have somebody write or I shall write to the hon Member myself.

NO. 251 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

ELECTRICITY DEPARTMENT - STRATEGIC REVIEW

Have Government now informed the Union and Staff Associations concerned which parts of the strategic review into the Electricity Department it wants to implement and has it made available to the staff side the whole of the report?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 251 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Have the discussions began at all with the staff associations?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, the Government expect next week to send the whole of the report to the unions. That of course is not a statement of Government policy or even a statement of Government aspiration. It is simply what the consultants had to say and once the unions have had an opportunity to digest that we will then initiate discussions to see whether and to what extent the recommendations of the consultant provides a mutually acceptable basis for restructuring the department. As far as the Government are concerned, there are aspects of the report which provide a good way forward.

HON J C PEREZ:

Is it the intention of the Government to make it available to the union on a confidential basis?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, it is on a confidential basis. This is an in-house Government/Management study. This was commissioned by the Government for their own education. We are sharing it with the unions to try and convert it into a working document between us but it is not a public report.

HON J C PEREZ:

Will it then review its policy of not giving a copy to the Opposition, given his position the last time I raised the matter?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No we will not review that policy, but I have no doubt the Opposition will get a copy somehow.

NO. 252 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS - PROJECTED EXPENDITURE

Can Government state what is the projected expenditure in Personal Emoluments for the current financial year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

It is expected that the projected expenditure in Personal Emoluments for the current financial year will be broadly the same as shown in the Approved Estimates for 1999/2000, that is, £36,954,000.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO.252 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

One can presume from that question that the application of the current pay review being negotiated for most grades will not be ready before the end of the financial year and therefore we shall see the cost of that projected in the Estimates presented to the House?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We are proceeding on that basis. There will be provisions in supplementary funding for it but the Estimates will not reflect it in the separate votes.

HON J C PEREZ:

Given what seems to be the size of the increase we might have it reflected in the proportion of Supplementary Estimates made available in the Estimates?

HON J J BOSSANO:

Can Government say how much of the £1 million Pay Settlement under Head 14 is therefore likely to be used in the current financial year?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

So far of the £1 million Pay Settlement, only £20,285 has been reallocated. As regards the remainder, I suspect some will be for pay settlements but very little. So in fact that money will be reallocated to supplementary funding and used for other purposes.

ORAL

NO. 253 OF 2000

THE HON J C PEREZ

BREATHALYSER TESTS

Have Government now given up the idea of making legal provision for the introduction of breathalyser tests?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The question of the introduction of breathalyser tests continues under consideration.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 253 OF 2000

HON J C PEREZ:

Is it that there are new developments or is it that the Chief Minister has not been able yet to sit down and take a final decision on the matter?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There have not been new developments. The Government simply have not taken a final decision on the matter.

ORAL

NO. 254 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

TREASURY TENDER BOARD

Since May 1999 which of the tenders awarded by the Treasury Tender Board have not been given to the lowest bidder because of employment considerations?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

None.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 254 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is this in fact now being monitored to see whether there is a case for doing it, which I think was something that at the time the Government indicated it might be worth doing?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The question asks which have not been given to the lowest bidder because of employment considerations. The Treasury Tender Board has awarded a total of 16 works tenders; 39 services tenders; since May 1999. All 16 works tenders have been awarded to the lowest bidder. Only five service tenders have been awarded to companies whose bid was not the lowest but not because of any employment considerations.

NO. 255 OF 2000THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX

Can Government state for the tax year 1996/97 what was the amount assessed in respect of self-employed persons giving a breakdown of the amounts discharged and paid and the number of taxpayers involved?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

	£m
Assessed	7.5
Discharged	<u>3.9</u>
	3.6
Paid	<u>2.4</u>
Outstanding	1.2
	==

NO. 256 OF 2000THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX - PAYE

Can Government state what was the amount of PAYE payable in the tax year 1998/99 by area of employers as follows:

- (a) MOD
- (b) Gibraltar Government
- (c) Government-owned and Joint Venture Companies
- (d) Private Sector Employment?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

This information was initially sought in September 1999 by Question No. 818 of 1999 when I informed the House that the figures could not be supplied given that, at that time, a substantial number of Employers had not returned the 1998/99 PAYE Declaration and Certificate.

Although the majority of Employers have now returned the 1998/99 documentation the Tax Office is yet to receive the 1998/99 PAYE returns from the Treasury Department, accounting for approximately 3,000 taxpayers and the information requested is therefore not yet readily available.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 256 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

That, presumably, would only affect (b) the Gibraltar Government. They have had it from the MOD and they have had it from the Joint Venture Companies and they have had it from the private sector?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, the hon Member is absolutely right. I cannot see why this could not have been fed to me in the main question, it is available in supplementaries. I apologise to the hon Member. On the basis of the information available, it would be MOD £4.1 million, Government-owned and Joint Venture Companies £2.7 million, Private Sector £22.7 million and a guesstimate for the Gibraltar Government actually is £14.5 million.

NO. 257 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX - SELF-EMPLOYED INDIVIDUALS

Can Government say how many self-employed persons were covered by the £2.2 million tax assessment for the tax year 1995/96 and how much of the £2.2 million has now been paid?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Of the £2.2 million for the tax year 1995/96, £0.8 million had been paid and £1.4 million was outstanding as at 15th September 1999. This information was given in answer to Question No. 819 of 1999. Since then the amount assessed has risen to £3.3 million, the amount paid to £2.1million and the amount outstanding is £1.2 million.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 257 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

And the numbers of self-employed which was not provided either the last time or this one?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Did we not say that that was not available? I cannot remember what answer I gave the last time.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No answer the last time and no answer this time.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The Commissioner of Income Tax appears to have a resistance to providing the information either because he cannot get it or because it is not possible.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I would have thought if they know that there has been £3.3 million in the value of the assessments, it ought not to be too difficult to say whether we are talking about 100, 200 or 300 individuals.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will find out.

NO. 258 OF 2000THE HON J J BOSSANO**INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX**

Can Government state what is the amount collected in Corporation Tax in each month since August 1999?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Corporation Tax collected in each month since August 1999 (net of refunds) is:

	£m.
August 1999	0.3
September 1999	0.4
October 1999	0.5
November 1999	0.6
December 1999	0.2
January 2000	0.2

These figures are subject to reconciliation with the Treasury Books.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 258 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figures since August seem to be much lower than they were in the months of May, June and July. Is it that those three months are normally when the payments get batched or is there some other reason?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

These figures are always very erratic.

HON J J BOSSANO:

No, I would accept they were erratic if they were jumping up and down from one month to the other. But what we have is that they are all £0.5 million or less since August and they were running at over three times that level in May, June and July. It does not suggest an erratic pattern. It suggests a change in pattern from August on.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can tell the hon Member that there is no structural reduction in take from collection in Corporation Tax. I think if the hon Member looks at every year's analysis he will find that there are periods of the year where the take is twice as high as in other periods of the year.

HON J J BOSSANO:

That was my first supplementary. Is it that they tend to bank in May, June and July?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

ORAL

NO. 259 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX

Since 14 September 1999 have any further assessments of Corporation Tax in respect of the tax year 1996/97 been issued or discharged and have any further sums been paid?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The amount of the assessments has risen to £14.6 million and the amount paid has risen to £10 million.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 259 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

And the amount discharged has not changed, is that right, from the last figure?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Correct.

NO. 260 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX - PAYE

What was the average earnings per employee based on PAYE returns in respect of the tax years 1995/96, 1996/97 and 1997/98?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The average earnings per employee based on PAYE returns in respect of October 1995 and April 1996, both of which dates fall within the tax year 1995/96 and the average earnings as at October 1996 and April 1997, which fall in the tax year 1996/97 are already publicly available in the Employment Survey for October 1996 and April 1997 published in August 1998.

The corresponding figures for October 1997 and April 1998 (that is, tax year 1997/98) which are included in the Employment Survey for those months, which will be published very soon are £13,524.87 and £13,993.45 respectively.

Although the Income Tax Office does not extrapolate those figures, it may be possible to compute the information requested on a tax year basis. It has not been possible to do so in the time available. Whether it can be done, and if so how long it would take and the administrative resources required to do it, are all being looked into and I will revert to the hon Member.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 260 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

When that exercise is done could I ask that the possibility of saying how many individuals are involved in arriving at the average could also be looked at so that if it is possible to provide the information we would know not just what the average was but how it had been arrived at by the numbers involved.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It has not escaped the hon Member that he has it in respect of two months during the tax year but as at the end of the tax year.....

HON J J BOSSANO:

What I am trying to establish is whether in fact if the computation is done on the total earnings for the whole year it shows something different.

NO. 261 OF 2000THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX

Can Government state how many companies have now had assessments for the tax year 1997/98, the total amount of Corporation Tax assessed and the amount received to date?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

As at 31st March 2000:

	£m.
Assessed	14.9
Less Discharged	<u>4.3</u>
	10.6
Less Paid	<u>8.9</u>
Outstanding	1.7
	====

Number of companies assessed for the year of assessment 1997/98: 1,348.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 261 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is there some indication of whether there is likely to be many more companies that are pending?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is almost certainly bound to change. I cannot imagine that all companies finished reporting for that tax year. If the hon Member compares it to the figures I gave him at the last Question Time he will see that there is an increase of about 20 companies over the intervening period. There may be more.

NO. 262 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX - CORPORATION TAX

Can Government state how many companies have now had assessments for the tax year 1998/99, the total amount of Corporation Tax assessed and the amount received to date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

As at 31st March 2000:

	£m.
Assessed	18.2
Less Discharged	<u>6.4</u>
	11.8
Less Paid	<u>9.9</u>
Outstanding	1.9
	====

Number of companies assessed for the year of assessment 1998/99: 1,156.

NO. 263 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX - PAYE

Can Government state what is the number of employees in the public and private sectors as at October 1998 and April 1999, giving a breakdown by full time and part time employment, based on PAYE returns for the 1998/99 tax year received by 31st January 2000?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Income Tax Office can no longer extrapolate this information from its records because the information is no longer sought by them from employers following the readoption with effect from April 1998 of the questionnaire technique on the production of Employment Surveys.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 263 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

At the time that the questionnaire method was being brought to the House I asked the Government whether they would keep the other one because it might be worth having a comparable thing to judge it by for the same period. I think I was told that they would consider doing that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I remember the hon Member asking. I do not remember exactly the answer the hon Member got, although I am happy to take it from him. It has not happened. I do not know whether the Income Tax Office can revert to the old form of returns but they have gone ahead and simplified the Employers' Return on the basis that they no longer have an income tax requirement for the information. We have lost a source of statistics.

NO. 264 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

CIVILIAN POPULATION

What was the civilian population of Gibraltar as at 31st December 1999, giving a breakdown of the number of (a) Gibraltarians; (b) other British and (c) non-British?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The estimated civilian population of Gibraltar as at 31st December 1999 is 27,204. The breakdown is as follows:

Gibraltarian	21,010
Other British	3,792
Non-British	2,402

NO. 265 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

RESIDENT PENSIONER COUPLES

Can Government say what was the total number of pensioner couples in Gibraltar and how many of them had incomes below £110 per week in the tax year 1998/99?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

It is estimated that there are around 1,100 resident pensioner couples in Gibraltar. Based on a 15 per cent sample of DSS/Income Tax records, it is estimated that around 320 couples have total incomes below £110 per week.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 265 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

The figure of 320, having total income, means that it is not just taxable income? It means that it is income from all sources, does it?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes.

ORAL

NO. 266 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

PENSIONER BONDS

Can Government state, as at end of February, how many pensioners held 7 per cent Pensioner Bonds issued by the Savings Bank and the total value of such Bonds?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

There were 609 pensioners with a total value of £17,952,600 as at 29th February 2000 in the 7 per cent Pensioner Bonds issued by the Gibraltar Savings Bank.

NO. 267 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

SPANISH PENSIONERS' COURT ACTION

What is the current position in respect of the Spanish pensioners' court action which was pending in 1996?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Spanish pensioners' court action has been stayed since 1996 when the Court of Appeal ordered that the pensioners should put up security for costs. Such security was never provided.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 267 of 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Yes, I think that was the answer we were given at the time. What precisely does that mean? That it can simply remain there indefinitely?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, but I would rather give the hon Member the response to that privately.

NO. 268 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

RGF - COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

When do Government intend to open the vacancy for Commissioner of Police within the Royal Gibraltar Police Force in anticipation of the completion of the present contract officer?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

It will not surprise the hon Member to learn that I am departing from the prepared script. It is not the answer that I had drafted here earlier this week.

The hon Member now knows that His Excellency the Governor has seen fit to extend Mr Castree's contract. Although the Government intend hereby to make no comment on Mr Castree's qualities as a Police Officer, the Government are of the view that it would have been quite possible to adequately fill the office of Commissioner of Police without the need to extend Mr Castree's contract and had so informed the Convent and His Excellency before he made this decision.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 268 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that it is unusual, having been told the Government's view, that the Governor should then go ahead and do the opposite?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I believe there is no precedent for it because it has never occurred, in the sense that since we have become a little bit more constitutionally emancipated, if I could put it that way, there have not been that many Commissioner of Police appointments. At the time of Mr Morello and Mr Canepa's appointments, it was the appointment of a natural successor and they were local. This has always been in the realm of a Governor's decision. There has never been a case before where the Governor has been called upon to make this decision in circumstances where the Government, whose constitutional decision it is not, nevertheless had a contrary view. We agreed that it was right to bring Mr Castree as Deputy Commissioner to implement the Grundy Report. We believe that that task is done and therefore that that reason no longer holds good and therefore Mr Castree's contract should not have been extended and that the vacancy anticipated in the hon Member's question should indeed have been opened.

HON J J BOSSANO:

The press release from the Convent, which I know the Government are not responsible for, says that there is still additional work that requires Mr Castree as opposed to a local officer to be here. Has that been identified for the benefit of the Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It has not been identified for the benefit of the Government nor do the Government agree that there is any such work.

NO. 269 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

VALUE OF GOODS IMPORTED

What was the value of goods imported by land and sea, other than petroleum products, between 1st July 1999 and 31 December 1999?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The value of goods imported by land and sea, other than petroleum products, between 1st July 1999 and 31st December 1999 was £136.2million and £16.4 million respectively.

NO. 270 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

COMMERCIAL RATES

Can Government state what was the total amount of rates paid in the two quarters ending December 1999 in respect of commercial rates where the 20 per cent rebate was obtained by those paying the rates demanded within three months of the due date?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The total amount of rates paid in the two quarters ending December 1999 in respect of commercial rates where the 20 per cent rebate was obtained was £2,271,764.72.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 270 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

That is taking the whole of the six months period?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I am afraid that is how the answer has been prepared.

NO. 271 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

INCOME TAX - PAYE

Can Government state how much was collected in PAYE in September, October, November and December 1999 and in January and February this year?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The figures, net of refunds and subject to possible adjustments when reconciled with the Treasury Books are:

	£m.
September 1999	3.4
October 1999	3.6
November 1999	3.4
December 1999	3.3
January 2000	4.0

The February 2000 figures are not yet available.

NO. 272 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Can Government state when the accounts for the financial year 1997/98 were closed by the Accountant-General and passed over to the Principal Auditor?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Annual Accounts of the Government of Gibraltar for the financial year ended 31st March 1998 were signed by the Accountant General and passed to the Principal Auditor on 23rd December 1998.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 272 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is there a particular reason why it has taken so much longer on this occasion to complete the audit?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Two reasons. Of the two reasons, mainly the fact that this is the first Government financial year in respect of which the Treasury accounting system was completely computerised. But we do not mean what used to exist which was computer template which then had to be filled in manually. The accounts of the Treasury are now wholly computerised, produced by computer on the basis of information input during the course of the financial year so that the construction of the accounts and the production of the accounts are now entirely computerised. This is the first such set of accounts that the Principal Auditor was called upon to audit. That is the principal reason. The second reason is this business of the fact that it was the completion of the restructuring, the reorganisation of Government finances.

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is the fact that they are now computerised likely to mean that they will be done faster in future?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We hope so. Certainly we would not wish to see this 'delay reoccurring.

NO. 273 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

TAKE-OVERS DIRECTIVE

Can Government explain what was the formula allegedly offered to Spain by UK around September 1999 to overcome Spain's veto on the company Take-overs Directive?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The Take-overs Directive is one of a number of pieces of EC legislation still blocked by Spain on the question of the designation of Gibraltar competent authorities. As the hon Member knows, discussions have been continuing between UK and Spain on this issue for several months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 273 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

What was the formula that was proposed to Spain in September 1999 which presumably they turned down, otherwise they would not still be having discussions?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not recollect that. This has now been dealt with through the general solution being sought for competent authority issues generally, post-boxing and all these things that the hon Member is so suspicious of. There is not a separate formula being sought for this directive?

HON J J BOSSANO:

Not any longer. Is it possible to know what was offered then which was then reported on by the press but we never discovered what it was?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I do not know what it was. There may not have been one but I will check. I suspect it was just early press speculation on the whole post-boxing formula. But just in case there was a specific take-overs related formula I will check.

NO. 274 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

COMPETENT AUTHORITY

Can Government state the date when the UK requested the inclusion of the Collector of Customs as the competent authority in Gibraltar for the purpose of enforcing relevant EU Sanctions Regulations and its publication by the Commission?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Following the Resolution passed by this House on the 7th July last year to give effect to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Supply, Sale and Export of Petroleum and Petroleum Products) Regulations 1999, the Government wrote on the 8th July to Her Majesty's Government requesting that the Commission should be notified that the Collector of Customs was the competent authority for Gibraltar as required under Article 6 of the EC Regulation, 900/1999.

The UK formally notified the Commission on the 23rd November 1999. The listing of the Gibraltar competent authority has not yet been published by the Commission.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 274 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

Is there an indication of reluctance on the part of the Commission to publish this as required?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, even if there were it would not affect the legal effectiveness of the competence of the Collector of Customs which derives from his nomination, not from the publication thereof.

HON J J BOSSANO:

But is it not the case that any action that is taken is supposed to be cleared as between competent authorities and that that is done by reference to the published list?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The published list is a directory for Member States' convenience. It does not detract from the fact that if any Member State wished to deal with the Gibraltar authority he would take steps to find out who it was. They would be told that it was the Collector of Customs and could deal with nobody else, none of which is intended to suggest to the hon Member either that there is any difficulty with the listing. It just had not been done. I do not know whether these things are done periodically or only whenever there is an amendment to that Order. Certainly, if the Government did become aware of any such difficulty I would certainly tell the hon Member because the Government would then be interested in pressing to eliminate that reluctance on the part of the Commission. I have absolutely no inkling that there is any such reluctance at all.

NO. 275 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

GIBRALTAR ID CARDS

Will Government state what action, if any, is now being taken over Spain's refusal to accept Gibraltar ID Cards as valid EU travel documents and over the decision of the EU College of Commissioners to freeze any further action on the two test cases submitted to the Commission in March 1997 and March 1998 respectively?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

I refer the hon Member to my answer to Question No. 836 of 1999 that there are on-going discussions between the UK and Spain over the question of Gibraltar's competent authorities and the validity of the Gibraltar ID Card as an EU travel document.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 275 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

So in fact nothing is happening other than on-going discussions, is that the answer?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As far as the Government are aware nothing is happening in relation to the litigation by the Commission. Everyone is waiting to see if the problem can be resolved by the parties.

NO. 276 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

EC ACT ON DIRECT ELECTIONS

Can Government state whether there have been any new developments in relation to the amendment to the 1976 EC Act on Direct Elections, tabled by the United Kingdom on 16th March 1999 at the General Affairs Council?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Her Majesty's Government have brought the matter to the attention of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe which is the body responsible for the execution of the judgement. I am assured that Her Majesty's Government continue to press for amendment to the Direct Elections Act.

In the meantime an application has been lodged in the Matthews case before the European Court of Human Rights seeking the Court's declaration that its ruling binds all Member States of the European Union.

ORAL

NO. 277 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

EUROPORT

Can Government state what is the floor area of the Europort buildings the Government has purchased for use as a hospital?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Answered together with Question No. 278 of 2000.

NO. 278 OF 2000

THE HON J J BOSSANO

EUROPORT

Can Government state how the purchase price for the Europort buildings, it is proposed to use for a hospital, was arrived at and who conducted the negotiations?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

The floor area of the Europort buildings the Government intend to purchase as a hospital is 25000m². The price was arrived at by negotiation conducted initially by the then Minister for Health, now the Minister for Trade, Industry and Telecommunications, and subsequently by me.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NOS. 277 AND 278 OF 2000

HON J J BOSSANO:

How come that the professional property people that negotiate rents are not involved in this?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

There is no market price in Gibraltar for this sort of transaction. It was conducted through negotiation by the Minister in question. It would be completely inconceivable, frankly, as far as I am concerned, for the Government to leave negotiations on an acquisition of this magnitude to people in Land Property Services Ltd which is presumably the company that the hon Member is referring. It would not even have occurred to us to do it in that way.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I thought the Government believe that they should use experts to do these things, instead of lay Ministers. Can the Chief Minister say who the negotiation was with then?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This is not a matter of expertise. There is no expertise in LPS at the valuation of fully empty Europort buildings for which there is otherwise no market in Gibraltar. It is not a matter of expertise, it is a question of pure negotiation. Expertise only comes when one is trying to assess what something is worth by comparison to another transaction or on the basis of valuations of rental income, or on the basis of the several criteria that exists in an ordinary property market for the valuation of buildings. The negotiations were actually conducted directly with the Chairman of Gefion, the successor of Baltica, and it was conducted in parallel with and linked to and as part of the negotiations of the settlement also with Gefion of the incinerator dispute. If the hon Member has any doubt as to whether a good deal has been negotiated, let me tell him that the expert hospital consultants that are advising the Government have expressed the view that the Government have made the bargain of the century.

HON J J BOSSANO:

I dare say that if they had not expressed it they would have been invited to express it.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

They expressed it gratuitously when they heard the figure that we had been able to achieve. Indeed, the hon Member must be aware, given that the Opposition Members prefer a new building, that the cost of building this accommodation starting from scratch would be in excess of £20 million in addition to the lost opportunity cost of the site.