



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE GIBRALTAR PARLIAMENT

**MORNING SESSION: 9.20 a.m. – 12.44 p.m.**

**Gibraltar, Thursday, 23rd January 2014**

## **Business transacted**

Prayer .....	3
Confirmation of Minutes .....	3
Questions for Oral Answer .....	3
Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.....	3
Q1/2014 – Government rental homes – Arrears of unpaid rents.....	3
Q2-3/2014 – Mid-Harbour Estate – Works to counteract anti-social behaviour .....	4
Q4/2014 – Reallocating empty homes – Expenditure on repair works .....	5
Q4/2014 – Government rental homes – Repair works .....	6
Q6/2014 – Government rental homes – Urgent decanting of tenants .....	7
Q7/2014 – Government residential homes – Allocations and assignments .....	7
Q8/2014 – Housing Works Agency employees – Numbers retired, transferred and seconded.....	8
Q9/2014 – Housing Works Agency employees – Details of secondments .....	8
Q10/2014 – Housing Works Agency and Ministry for Housing – Comprehensive review .....	8
Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.....	9
Q11/2014 – Gibraltar National Week fair – Venue .....	9
Q12/2014 – Medical Priority Dispatch System – Date to go live .....	9
Q13/2014 – C3 Committee bunker – Updating and fitting out .....	10
Q14/2014 – Command Centre – Purchase of mobile control vehicle .....	10
Q15/2014 – City Fire Brigade and Defence Fire Service – Training to co-ordinate.....	11
Q16/2014 – Upper Rock water hydrants – Water pressure .....	11
Q17/2014 – Ship firefighting – Training for City Fire Brigade .....	11
Q18/2014 – Tercentenary Hall – Hire cost for private Christmas functions .....	12
Q19-20/2014 – John Mackintosh Hall – Recruitment of caretaker and night receptionist .....	12
Q21/2014 – Cricket and rugby – Alternative facilities .....	12
Q22/2014 – Heritage sites – Works and costs.....	13

Q23/2014 – Power station and gas storage facility – Separate construction tenders.....	15
Q24/2014 – Power station and gas storage facility – Dovetailing the construction tenders.....	15
Health and the Environment .....	16
Q25/2014 – New Mental Health Unit – Recruitment of staff .....	16
Q26/2014 – Dementia Strategy – Details and publication .....	17
Q27/2014 – GHA locally qualified and eligible staff – Clarification of answer to Q812/2013 .....	17
Q28/2014 – Contract workers in answer to WQ167/2013 – Nationality .....	18
Q29/2014 – New Born Hearing screening – Commencement .....	18
Q30/2014 – New Prostate Clinic – Opening .....	18
Q31/2014 – New emergency ambulances – Fitting under A&E canopy.....	19
Q32/2014 – Sponsored patients mechanism – Review .....	19
Q33/2014 – Primary Care Clinic for children – Relocation to St Bernard’s Hospital .....	20
Q34/2014 – Repeat prescriptions – Issuing without seeing a GP.....	20
Q35/2014 – GHA employees on contracts – Eligibility for joining Superannuation Fund.....	21
Q36/2014 – GHA employees – Increasing nursing assistants.....	22
Q37-45/2014 – St Bernard’s and KGV Hospitals and Primary Care Centre – Fire drills, alarms and smoke detectors.....	22
Q46-53/2014 – Macaques – Combating illegal feeding and spread of disease .....	25
Q54/2014 – Wildlife wardens – Extra employees to be taken on .....	28
Q55/2014 – Sewage treatment plant – Plans for construction.....	30
Q56/2014 – Cigarette stubs – Litter Committee discussions .....	31
Q57-59/2014 – Detached Mole – New bunkering arrangement.....	32
Equality, Social Services and the Elderly .....	35
Q60/2014 – Equal Opportunities Commission – Establishing.....	35
Q61-66/2014 – Social Services’ homes and buildings – Fire alarm systems and smoke detectors .....	36
Q67-69/2014 – Social Services’ homes and buildings – Fire evacuation drills .....	37
Financial Services and Gaming .....	38
Q70-75/2014 – Gibraltar International Bank – Plans for establishment and running .....	38
<i>The House recessed at 12.44 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.00 p.m. ....</i>	<i>47</i>

## The Gibraltar Parliament

*The Parliament met at 9.20 a.m.*

[MR SPEAKER: Hon. A J Canepa GMH OBE *in the Chair*]

[ACTING CLERK TO THE PARLIAMENT: P E Martinez Esq *in attendance*]

**PRAYER**  
*Mr Speaker*

### Order Of The Day

**Acting Clerk:** (i) Oath Of Allegiance;

#### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

**Acting Clerk:** (ii) Confirmation of Minutes – the Minutes of the last Meeting of Parliament which was held on 19th and 23rd December 2013.

**Mr Speaker:** May I sign the minutes as correct? (**Members:** Aye.)

*Mr Speaker signed the Minutes.*

**Acting Clerk:** (iii) Communications from the Chair; (iv) Petitions; (v) Announcements; (vi) Papers to be laid; (vii) Reports of Committees; (viii) Answers to Oral Questions.

## Questions for Oral Answer

#### TRAFFIC, HOUSING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

**Q1/2014**  
**Government rental homes –**  
**Arrears of unpaid rents**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 1/2014, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Housing provide updated details of arrears in respect of unpaid rents pertaining to Government rental homes, since the answer provided to Question 780/2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the total amount of arrears in respect of unpaid rents as at the end of December 2013, was £4,893,633.26.

**Q2-3/2014**  
**Mid-Harbour Estate –**  
**Works to counteract anti-social behaviour**

25 **Acting Clerk:** Question 2/2014, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing confirm if the works ordered for Mid-Harbour Estate as stated in the answer to Questions 774/2013 and 775/2013, have all now been fully completed?

30 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Question 3.

35 **Acting Clerk:** Question 3, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Housing provide details of any further actions planned to be undertaken, other than those already mentioned in answer to Question 774/2013 and 775/2013 in order to curtail non-compliance of house rules at Mid-Harbour Estate?

40 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, in respect of CCTV the following works have now been completed: the installation of cameras on the car park level; connection to the main fibre ring; procuring and installation of CCTV signs within the car park level.

In respect of CCTV ongoing works include: the integration of cameras installed within the car park level to the existing Public CCTV System and RGP Control Room at New Mole House; infrastructure works to allow installation of cameras on the podium and promenade levels; integration of podium and promenade level cameras to the existing Public CCTV Systems and RGP Control Room at new Mole House.

50 In respect of the barriers, these have already been installed and will be operational shortly.

It is expected that with the measures being taken, the incidence of anti-social behaviour will be much contained. Once the CCTV system and entry barrier are operational, a decision will need to be taken as to whether further action is necessary. In the meantime, we will continue liaising with the RGP on the issue of anti-social behaviour.

55 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for that answer.

May I ask him, in the things that are still to be considered – obviously it makes a bit of sense after the barriers and the cameras and so on are fully operational – the question of litter disposal and so on, I hear from some tenants it is starting to be cropping up to be a problem. Can the Minister confirm that he also intends to have that item as one to be reviewed in the future with other considerations?

65 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, the Ministry meets with the Tenants' Association on a regular basis. The Tenants' Association also meets with other members of the Department more frequently, so that any concerns that the Tenants' Association may have are addressed by the civil servants present and staff. Anything that I need to know about will also be relayed down the line. So if there are issues with litter, then obviously these issues have no doubt been passed on to the relevant members of my Department then to act upon.

70 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, I am grateful, but then do I take it from that, the Minister is not particularly aware of any specific concern in respect of litter? An accumulation of, I believe, some unwanted household items are now even being simply deposited at the podium. Is he aware or is this something that he just simply wants to take forward and consider?

75 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, as I said, if there are issues, housekeeping issues like sporadic accumulation of litter, these will be addressed directly by the Tenants' Association to the members of staff and they would be responsible to look after those things. If there are issues of a more important nature, then I would be informed and would then tackle them accordingly. So I would expect that the issues of litter accumulation, as you would probably expect would happen after Christmas, when after opening presents there are boxes galore to throw, and that you know is something which I expect would be seen to and  
80 addressed accordingly at a given time.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

85 May I as well ask the Minister, he may have given it in his answer and I could have missed it as I was making some notes. In the last session in respect of Question 775, the Minister informed us that some signage had been ordered and so on, it was part of the works needed to make the barrier and the cameras fully operational and so on. In conjunction with that, he had placed an order for signage. Can he confirm at what stage we are with the signage, is it now completed and fully up in the allocated positions?

90 **Minister for Education, Telecommunications and Justice (Hon. G H Licudi):** Mr Speaker, I am not sure whether the hon. Member is referring to the CCTV signage, because that is an area that I am dealing with and I am aware of, the question of the signage. But if he is not, then I would ask my colleague to deal with the matter.

95 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, it is both. The Minister did say last time it was signage. Part of it was concerned with the CCTV and I think the other part was because of the barriers, there had to be some signage in the – let us call it, underground parking so that people knew which way to come in and out, so it was better and clearly defined.

100 **Hon. G H Licudi:** Mr Speaker, with regard to the CCTV, signage was ordered and has been placed in the estate. I gave instructions that the signs which had been placed on the estate in respect of the CCTV should be covered until the system is operational. As my colleague has indicated in his original answer, we are now in the final stages of the CCTV project for that particular estate and that should be operational very, very soon with a signage displaying that CCTV is in fact operational.

105 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, and in respect of the traffic flow and so on. Is the Minister for Housing any the wiser on that one?

110 **Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I cannot recall a discussion last month on the signage specifically, but I will endeavour to find out. Obviously, there will be... if signage is appropriate, it will be placed, especially with the barriers.

But again, I will have to revert to him on that one.

**Q4/2014**  
**Reallocating empty homes –**  
**Expenditure on repair works**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 4, the Hon. E J Reyes.

115 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing provide updated details in respect of all expenditure incurred since the answer to Question 776/2013, in respect of contracts awarded for making empty homes suitable for re-allocation, stating to whom payments were made, how much has been paid, the number of residential homes pertaining to each payment, as well as indicating if the services contracted were for either repair works or cleaning services?

120 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, I will now hand the hon. Member a schedule containing the information requested.

125 **Answer to Question 4**

Contractors	No. of Properties	Cost
A & K GENERAL BUILDERS LTD	1	£16,517.60
CEPRAND LTD	1	£2,000.00

130 ALL SERVICES CONTRACTED WERE FOR REPAIRS  
NONE WERE FOR CLEANING

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, may I – something that has struck me here, there are only two companies involved. The second one in the schedule has the name of Ceprand Ltd, I think in the past I have come across the name of Ceprano. Could it be a typographical error or perhaps the Minister is aware that this is a company with a similar name but yet spelled correctly?

135

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, I would need to confirm but I think that just by looking at it, I do recall the name Ceprano Ltd too, it could well be a typographical error but I would need to confirm that. I doubt whether there are two companies with such similar names, but I need to check.

140

**Hon. E J Reyes:** I am content, Mr Speaker, for the Minister to have a chance to set it up and if it does require a correction or whatever, he can inform you and that way the Clerk for the record has it, so that in any future reference we have the correct name of the company written. Thank you.

145

**Q4/2014  
Government rental homes –  
Repair works**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 5, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Housing provide details in respect of rental homes assigned since the answer to Question 777/2013, indicating how many will be repaired by (a) the Housing Works Agency; (b) Sub-contractors and (c) the assigned tenants themselves?

150

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, since the answer given to Question 777/2013, five flats have been assigned.

155

The repairs are to be undertaken by the following: the Housing Works Agency, nil, zero; sub-contractors, four; the assigned tenants themselves, one.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, I see from these figures provided today and comparing them as well to those provided previously to the answer to Question 777/2013, it seems that the Housing Works Agency as such undertake very little repair work and the majority tends to go to sub-contractors. Is this something that is because the Agency does not have the workforce or either the expertise to undertake it, or is it Government policy to contract out rather than give it to the Agency itself?

160

**Minister for Enterprise, Training, Employment and Health & Safety (Hon. J J Bossano):** Mr Speaker, one of the things that is the result of the exit package is that the skills mix in some areas is very low and therefore there are jobs that cannot be done, because there are no people in that trade. That is to say that the right to take up the exit package is not constrained by trade or anything else. You could have a situation where everybody who is a carpenter decides to go and everybody who is a painter decides to stay.

165

So there are jobs that are then passed on to sub-contractors and there are three quotes given and the policy, as I think I have explained before, is that of the approved contractor list, all of which are relatively small companies employing maybe between half a dozen and ten people, who then take on one job or one house or whatever. It is given to the lowest bid or if the bids are within a few pounds of each other, to the one that is running out of work, in order to avoid people being laid off.

175

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, thanks for that clarification, but then what is actually happening is that the Housing Works Agency in some areas simply does not have the manpower to carry out the tasks, and it prompts me on to lead, well why aren't...? If there is a shortage of, for example, carpenters, like the Minister for Employment was saying, is the Government going to address that issue so that we are not short of any particular skill?

180

**Hon. J J Bossano:** Well, the issue that has to be addressed, Mr Speaker, is that the houses should be repaired, which is what the purpose of the Housing Works Agency is. At the end of the day, there is not a reason for the Housing Works Agency to exist, other than to get the houses repaired. What they cannot repair, somebody else does, so the tenant does not suffer and the cost is not higher.

185

So at the end of the day, the mechanics of the Housing Works Agency, as both sides of the House know, is that it is destined to reach sometime in the future a situation where there are only two guys left and when

190 the two go, only one is recruited and then when the one goes, presumably a part-timer is recruited, since it  
is one coming in for two going out.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes, so then, Mr Speaker, it is a question of, is the Minister for Employment  
confirming that despite there being an identification of a particular shortage of skills in a particular area,  
that those are simply not going to be replaced because the long-term objective is actually to phase it out?  
195 *(Laughter and interjections)* Yes? I didn't know. I am asking because perhaps I have not understood it  
clearly. That is why I am asking for clarification, rather than leaving doubt, Mr Speaker.

**Hon. J J Bossano:** Mr Speaker, the long-term objective has not changed on 9th December 2011. The  
long-term objective was the inevitable arithmetical consequences that if two people go and one comes in,  
the time will come when there is nobody left.

200

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Which they agreed. *(Interjections)*

**Hon. J J Bossano:** Right. The answer is that what we are doing is making sure that, notwithstanding  
that inevitable process, the houses still get repaired and that they get repaired at a cost which at the very  
205 least, is no higher than what it would have been, had it been done by direct labour.

What we are doing, in fact, is effectively as the Housing Works Agency does less with direct labour, the  
more is done with sub-contracts for small contractors, and the staff in the Housing Works Agency are  
involved in that process. That is to say, the people who are involved in the scoping of the work and in the  
estimating of the work, and in approving the final acceptance of the invoice on the basis that the work has  
210 been done, are the people who are initially from the Housing Works Agency, some of whom are seconded,  
which is the issue, In another of the questions that the hon. Member has asked before and is asking again.

So effectively, they are involved in doing the work, but rather than being involved in actually going to  
the house and doing the repair themselves, a number of them are involved in actually supervising the work  
being done by somebody else and that is how we are ensuring that, notwithstanding the shrinkage, the  
215 tenants still receive the service they expect to receive.

#### Q6/2014

#### Government rental homes – Urgent decanting of tenants

**Acting Clerk:** Question 6, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing provide details of how many tenants required urgent  
220 decanting from their homes since the answer to Question 778/2013, indicating the reason why, the date  
when said decanting became necessary, and the date when the tenants were able to return to their home?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

225 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, since the  
answer to Question 778/2013, no further tenants have required urgent decanting.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, the Minister may or may not have the answer because I did not give due  
notice, but in Question 778/2013, he gave me some information that a tenant who had been decanted on  
230 11th November 2013 had still not returned to the flat because the works were ongoing.

Would he happen by chance to have any information whether those works have been completed and he  
is now able to return? I would appreciate it if he does happen to have it.

**Hon. P J Balban:** Mr Speaker, last month the actual question was regarding, I think it was, tenant  
235 number 2 and I can say that that tenant returned to the flat on 20th January this year.

#### Q7/2014

#### Government residential homes – Allocations and assignments

**Acting Clerk:** Question 7, the Hon. E J Reyes.

240 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Can the Minister for Housing say how many residential homes have, since the answer to Question 779/2013, been (a) allocated and (b) assigned, showing the room composition of the respective homes?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

245 **Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, since the answer to Question 779/2013, 14 flats have been allocated and assigned as follows.

Allocated: 1RKB, zero; 2RKB, three; 3RKB, three; 4RKB, three; 5RKB, zero; 6RKB, zero. A total of nine allocated.

Assigned: 1 RKB, zero; 2RKB, two; 3RKB, 3; 4RKB, 5RKB and 6RKB, zero. A total of five assigned.

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#### Q8/2014

##### Housing Works Agency employees – Numbers retired, transferred and seconded

**Acting Clerk:** Question 8, the Hon. E J Reyes.

255 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Housing provide updated information, inclusive of details of grades and dates, in respect of any further employees of the Housing Works Agency who have been (a) retired; (b) transferred and (c) seconded either from or into the Housing Works Agency, since the answer to Question 781/2013.

260 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, since the answer to Question 781/2013, no further employees have either been retired, transferred or seconded.

#### Q9/2014

##### Housing Works Agency employees – Details of secondments

265 **Acting Clerk:** Question 9, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, further to Question W146/2013, can the Minister for Housing inform this House to which Department or Departments the nine Housing Works Agency employees have been seconded and for how long these secondments are expected to last?

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**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, the nine Housing Works Agency employees were seconded to Gibraltar General Construction Company and they will remain there as long as their services are required.

275

#### Q10/2014

##### Housing Works Agency and Ministry for Housing – Comprehensive review

**Acting Clerk:** Question 10, the Hon. E J Reyes.

280 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 782/2013, is the Minister for Housing now in a position to furnish this House with any details of the comprehensive review pertaining to the Housing Works Agency and the Ministry for Housing, which he has previously answered, was now being considered by Cabinet?



**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services.

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**Minister for Traffic, Housing and Technical Services (Hon. P J Balban):** Mr Speaker, in fact further to Questions 886/2012, 331/2013, 616/2013, W147/2013 and 782/2013, the reply still remains the same.

290

## SPORTS, CULTURE, HERITAGE AND YOUTH

Q11/2014

### Gibraltar National Week fair – Venue

**Acting Clerk:** Question 11, the Hon. D J Bossino on behalf of the Hon. S M Figueras.

295

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, Mr Speaker, just to explain for the members of the public, Mr Figueras is on business in the United Kingdom and for that reason has not been able to attend the House today and he has asked me to deal with his oral questions. I think the House staff have been advised accordingly.

Mr Speaker, is the Government considering using the area of Grand Parade as the venue for Gibraltar National Week fair?

300

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, H M Government have not yet taken a decision as to where the Gibraltar National Week fair will take place this year.

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**Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister, although no final decision has been made in relation to the venue of the National Week fair, can I ask him whether the Grand Parade car park is being considered as one of the options?

310

**Hon. S E Linares:** Yes, sir.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** I am grateful. In that context, Mr Speaker, can he advise what issues are being considered by the Government as to whether that particular venue is an appropriate or an inappropriate venue? Can I ask him that?

315

**Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, because where the venue of last year's is, there is a coach car park now, therefore we are looking at logistics – whether we move the coach car park or whether we leave it there and it is not only the Grand Parade venue. We are also looking at other venues for the future, so the fact that you have asked about, or Mr Figueras has asked about Grand Parade, yes that is one place that we are considering, but we have not taken a decision yet.

320

Q12/2014

### Medical Priority Dispatch System – Date to go live

**Acting Clerk:** Question 12, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

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**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Civil Contingencies say when the new Medical Priority Dispatch System will go live?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

330

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, proposals have been presented to the Interministerial Committee of Ministers with a view to see how and when the new Medical Priority Dispatch System can go live.

335 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister, in the May Parliament, said that it would be going live in July and in his Budget Speech he said that this dispatch system will be one that we will prioritise and implement within the next few months – this was six months ago. So, has the decision not yet been taken of how it will be implemented?

340 **Hon. S E Linares:** Well, Mr Speaker, as the answer states, proposals have been made, have been presented to the Interministerial Committee, with a view to see how and when. As I understand it, in the questions I answered last time, it was that we were awaiting proposals. I did give a date, but proposals have not been presented. They have now been presented and we are now in the position to see when and how we are going to implement them, and go live as it is stated.

345

**Q13/2014**  
**C3 Committee bunker –**  
**Updating and fitting out**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 13, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

350 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Civil Contingencies say what progress has been made in updating and fitting out the C3 Committee bunker as outlined in his Budget statement of 2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

355

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, works on the new bunker commenced last week, jointly with that of Convent Place. Facilities required have already been assessed and will incorporate the same advanced technology that will be provided by the mobile control vehicle, thus allowing an effective communication system during emergencies.

360

**Q14/2014**  
**Command Centre –**  
**Purchase of mobile control vehicle**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 14, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

365 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Civil Contingencies say when the mobile control vehicle, for moving and situating the Command Centre in time of emergency, will be purchased, as outlined in his Budget Speech of 2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

370

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, the mobile control vehicle was purchased in December 2013 and is expected to be delivered in April 2014. A three-day training package will take place on delivery, attended by selected officers from the City Fire Brigade, Royal Gibraltar Police and Emergency Ambulance Service.

375

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, I know I have not given notice of this question, but does the Minister know or have a round figure for how much it cost?

380 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, I think it was about £150,000 but I do not want to be held to that figure. But the ballpark figure is about £150,000.

**Q15/2014**

**City Fire Brigade and Defence Fire Service –  
Training to co-ordinate**

385 **Acting Clerk:** Question 15 the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Civil Contingencies state, since 9th December 2011, how many times the City Fire Brigade has conducted training exercises together with the Defence Fire Service in order to be in a position to co-ordinate for when the need arises?

390

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, all operational Watches from the City Fire Brigade and the Defence Fire and Rescue Service, have been involved on numerous occasions in training and familiarisation visits on high risk areas in the MOD and local jurisdictions. From information immediately available, this has been carried out on 35 occasions.

395

**Q16/2014**

**Upper Rock water hydrants –  
Water pressure**

400 **Acting Clerk:** Question 16, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister with responsibility for Civil Contingencies say what has been done in order to address the pressure of the water in the hydrants in the Upper Rock, in order for them to be sufficient to deal with any potential fires there?

405

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, all fire hydrants connected to pressured sea water mains in the Upper Rock are maintained by AquaGib, and are operating correctly and within optimum pressure parameters.

410

**Q17/2014**

**Ship firefighting –  
Training for City Fire Brigade**

415 **Acting Clerk:** Question 17, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Civil Contingencies state what ship firefighting training has taken place in the last two years, giving details of the exercises conducted?

420

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, the City Fire Brigade has conducted a total of 388 hours ship firefighting training during the past two years.

In the year 2012, a total of 144 hours were completed by three Watches locally; in 2013, 244 hours.

425 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Yes, Mr Speaker, could the Minister clarify how many people were involved in these hours? Is it the whole of the City Fire Brigade and the Port personnel or just selected individuals?

**Hon. S E Linares:** No, Mr Speaker, as I said a total of 144 hours in 2012 were completed by the three Watches – that means the complete three Watches.

430

Additionally, I can give her the information that between 2012 and 2013, eight officers have successfully completed a tactical ship firefighting course at the Fire Service College in Morton-in-the-Marsh, UK. So that is even extra.

**Q18/2014**  
**Tercentenary Hall –**  
**Hire cost for private Christmas functions**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 18, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

435

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister with responsibility for Sports and Leisure advise how much the rental of the Tercentenary Hall for a private Christmas function is?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

440

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, there is no rental fee for the use of the Tercentenary Sports Hall for functions not of a sports nature.

**Q19-20/2014**  
**John Mackintosh Hall –**  
**Recruitment of caretaker and night receptionist**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 19, the Hon. E J Reyes.

445

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 768/2013, can the Minister for Culture say when the position of caretaker at the John Mackintosh Hall will be advertised and by when it is expected that this post will be filled?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

450

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this together with Question 20.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 20, the Hon. E J Reyes.

455

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 769/2013, can the Minister for Culture say when the vacancy for a night receptionist at the John Mackintosh Hall will be advertised, and by when it is expected that this post will be filled?

460

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, the answer to these questions remain as that of December's Parliament, Questions 768 and 769/2013.

465

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, in the answer to Question 768 and all those prior to that, the Minister said that he was waiting for the item to be included in the agenda of the board of the Mackintosh Hall and so on. Seeing that he is also the chairman of that board, can the Minister confirm if the item is now on the agenda and just waiting for the next meeting?

470

**Hon. S E Linares:** Yes, sir.

**Q21/2014**  
**Cricket and rugby –**  
**Alternative facilities**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 21, the Hon. E J Reyes.

475

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 771/2013, can the Minister for Sports and Leisure inform this House if he has now identified and agreed upon with the respective Sports Governing Association any alternative facilities to Europa Sports Grounds for the playing, teaching and development of either cricket or rugby?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

480 **Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, no further development has taken place since my answer in December's Parliament to Question 771/2013.

**Q22/2014**  
**Heritage sites –**  
**Works and costs**

485 **Acting Clerk:** Question 22, the Hon. E J Reyes.

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Heritage provide details of all works, together with respective costs, undertaken at any Heritage related site since the answer to Question 772/2013, stating by whom these works were carried out?

490 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, further to answer to Question 772/2013, I now hand over to the hon. Member opposite the information requested.

495

**Answer to Question No 22**

Further works undertaken at Heritage sites inclusive of costs and works carried out.

500

**a) Site:** Jumpers Bastion

**Works:** Manufacturing, fitting and paint three metal balustrades in compliance with building regulations.

505

**Contractor:** DGM Gibraltar Ltd.

**Total Amount:** £ 3,440.00

510

**b) Site:** St Jago's Arch

**Works:** Painting of railings and general heritage works

**Contractor:** SFA Interiors

515

**Total Amount:** £1,120.00

**c) Site:** Montagu Bastion

520

**Works:** Repairs to existing double leaf door

**Contractor:** DGM Gibraltar Ltd.

525

**Total Amount:** £680.00

530

**Hon. E J Reyes:** Mr Speaker, I would be grateful if the Minister does happen to have it at hand, for a bit of clarification. On the first site mentioned under (a) Jumpers Bastion, the Minister says that there were works undertaken in manufacturing, fitting and painting three metal balustrades in compliance with building regulations. This is in respect of which building works as such that are happening and are there any other related costs? Because if they are doing something in respect of building regulations, it must be because some building was taking place and this a new item. It was not something that was ongoing from the previous schedule, so I see nothing else in respect of building works being carried out at Jumpers Bastion.

535

**Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, if I remember correctly, the fitting of balustrades were to do with unsafe... the access to the whole of the Jumpers Bastion, where the steps go onto the main road. There are

540 balustrades there which are one beside the other, so that people do not run into the road. But on top of that, we are placing gate-type of things so that it is even safer. But it is to do with the painting of those balustrades that go onto the main road.

There are, I think, four exits from what we call the Saluting Battery – the whole of the Saluting Battery.

545 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Yes Mr Speaker, that does clarify it a bit better, because Jumpers Bastion: I was physically imagining the submerged bastion as such, but the Minister has clarified, this is probably the walkway, the Saluting Battery area there and so on. Yes. So perhaps in the title 'Jumpers Bastion', if he does not mind, we will add alongside with that the Saluting Battery area.

550 Coming to site (b) which is in respect of St Jago's Arch, in a previous answer the Minister has expressed that over £7,000 had been spent in the conservation works to St Jago's Arch and now there is painting and railings of general heritage works. Is this just sort of the topping off the completion, or is this a totally new project?

555 **Hon. S E Linares:** No Mr Speaker, as he rightly mentioned, this is just adding on to or finishing off the works. So therefore it is as it says there, painting of the railings, because there was scaffolding around and all that, you do not paint the railings until the end, and the invoice was then presented later.

560 **Hon. E J Reyes:** And hopefully lastly, Mr Speaker, the site (c) which is Montagu Bastion, I view it as a relatively wide area and its repairs to existing double leaf door: whereabouts is this door within the area that we all refer to as Montagu Bastion? Is it an external door, perhaps an internal door – anything that could help to shed information?

565 **Hon. S E Linares:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I am glad to say that it is where the youth clubs are, as you enter the youth clubs, in the youth centre, on the left where the motorbikes actually park outside, there was an old store which was the Housing Store and there is a little hill. If you see at the top there is a door. *(Interjection)* Yes, it is just a very small gradient hill, where the motorbikes are outside the youth centre, there is a gate to the youth centre on the right, and then on the left there is a little hill that goes up and there is a door there.

570 Inside that is all Montagu Bastion. There is a vault inside and that was used by the Housing Department, which now I am glad to say that the Heritage has taken over, and the door was in a very sorry state. In fact, I can tell the hon. Member, as an anecdote, I once went in there and we had squatters sleeping inside, so we had to fix the door and I told the squatter that by tomorrow, if he was not out, we would chuck him out!

575 **Hon. E J Reyes:** Well, Mr Speaker, I am really glad to hear the Minister saying that he has taken an interest in that area, because yes, all of it, whether it is used by the youth or by Housing or whatever...

The Minister there answered, in helping to clarify, he said that it used to be under Housing; it has now been taken over by Heritage. Is he aware, would that be given now passed on to Youth, so that they have a particular extension or like an annexe area there, or does he have in mind a future Heritage project, totally now independent from the Youth section?

580 **Hon. S E Linares:** Mr Speaker, we have not yet decided exactly what we are going to do with that area, but the two suggestions that the hon. Member has made, could probably be two that we can put on the list of things that we can do with it.

585 **Hon. E J Reyes:** May I just end by saying, Mr Speaker, I will obviously look forward to hearing the Minister once a decision is taken there, but whatever it is, given that he is indicating that he is looking at it and helping to preserve it in Heritage, he can count at least from that point of view on my support in whatever future use it entails, because we do share that common interest. I know a large number of the electorate do as well, in preserving where possible these things, so I congratulate him for that initiative of putting the doors and helping to preserve a site, *[inaudible]* the thing and please keep me updated so that we work together, rather than at loggerheads in preserving our heritage for the benefit of our children and grandchildren and future generations.

590 **Hon. S E Linares:** I will do, Mr Speaker.

**Q23/2014**

**Power station and gas storage facility –  
Separate construction tenders**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 23, the Hon. J J Netto.

595

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, further to Oral Question 773/2013, can the Minister with responsibility for Utilities, state why it was deemed necessary to have two separate tenders, one for the construction of the new permanent power station and another one for the gas storage facility?

600

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

605

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, it was considered that there were commercial and technical advantages for not tying together the construction of the power plant and the construction of LNG storage and regasification facilities, as these are different technologies and the market research that was carried out suggested that Gibraltar could obtain a better deal if it was tendered separately, targeting companies that specialise in construction of power plants or construction of LNG storage and regasification.

**Q24/2014**

**Power station and gas storage facility –  
Dovetailing the construction tenders**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 24, the Hon. J J Netto.

610

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, further to Oral Question 773/2013, can the Minister with responsibility for Utilities state how the two separate tenders for the new power station and for the gas storage facility will dovetail within their own respective milestones in order to provide overall coherence to the total project?

615

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth.

620

**Minister for Sports, Culture, Heritage and Youth (Hon. S E Linares):** Mr Speaker, the construction of the LNG storage facility is estimated will take considerably less time than the construction of the new power plant. The tender for scopes of work for the new power station advised the tenderers that the client will supply natural gas at the required quantities, temperature and pressure at the boundary of the footprint to the new power station.

625

The precise engineering details of how this will dovetail will be known once we have evaluated the engineering proposals for the new power station tenders. The LNG storage and gas supply tender will include details of engineering requirements to supply the natural gas to the new power station of the successful bidder.

630

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister will help me to be able to get an overall picture of the different aspects or facets of this major project, because I have seen reports in the local press that the storage for the gas will now be in the Detached Mole. Is that correct? Could the Minister perhaps confirm that?

**Hon. S E Linares:** That is the place that we are looking at, but we cannot confirm whether it will be there at this moment in time. We are looking at different options.

635

**Hon. J J Netto:** Well, I think that some Members at least who are members of the Development Planning Commission, not from the Government side obviously, nor civil servants, have made a statement to the press in which they actually claim that that is a fact. Perhaps other Members in the Government who are members of the Development Planning Commission may be able to provide the House with a bit more clarification on the matter?

640

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, I am Chairing the Inter-Ministerial Committee on the power station etc. The hon. Member will know that that is now at the stage of having gone to the tender etc. The answer given by the Minister a moment ago is the position, that the Detached Mole is one of the areas being considered. That is the position in fact.

645 **Hon. J J Netto:** When the Hon. the Chief Minister, indeed the Minister himself for Utilities says it is being considered, can I try to elucidate a bit more information out of that, in the sense of saying when it is being considered? Is it being considered because there are some studies taking place of different alternative locations, and to see the strength and weaknesses of the various locations?

650 Where are we in terms of being able to decide, because eventually the Government will have to decide on a particular place in order to make the overall project come to proper fruition in this place? So have any studies been conducted of various places?

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, when you say that something is being considered, what you are saying is that it is not something that you have decided to do but something that you are considering. Therefore we are considering that in the context of what could possibly be the location for such a plant.

655 So I do not think it is appropriate, Mr Speaker, for me to say more at this stage, but the hon. Member knows that this is at the stage of the GEA having gone out to tender.

660 Can I just ask him to wait to see what those announcements are before he pursues this particular issue? When the Government has reached a decision as to where the plant is going to be or has to be, then that will be announced.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Well, Mr Speaker, can I also ask the Chief Minister whether in considering the place, amongst the places that they are considering, whether at least environmental and health and safety audits are being conducted in order to determine which the ideal place is?

665 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, of course.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Have those health and safety and environmental audits now finalised and are being discussed and analysed by the Government?

670 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, some of them are still in process. That is why I am saying to him that this is at the consideration stage and that no final decision has been made. And it is not just the environmental and health and safety issues that are relevant.

675 He will know, like every Gibraltarian, that this place is two and half miles by one mile at its widest point and part of what we all have to do in living in this gem of ours is ensure that we ensure that different industries and different things happen, sometimes as close as possible to each other and sometimes as far as possible from each other. Those are the issues.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, by when does the Government think that they will be in a position to make a decision?

680 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the Government is keen to ensure that we can deliver a new power station for Gibraltar as soon as possible, so we would want to make decisions as soon as possible and that is all about when reports are finalised, when tender processes are completed, etc. I am not going to be in a position to give him a clear timeline as to when this particular aspect, this particular ingredient of this new power station solution is going to be finalised.

685 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, I am not asking for a clear timeline; all I am saying is whether the Government think that they will be in a position, say three months from now, six months from now, nine months from now, twelve months from now, to have been able to consider all the various documents that they are required to look into the matter and make a decision. That is all I am saying.

**Hon. Chief Minister:** Well Mr Speaker, that is asking for a timeline and that is exactly what I have said I cannot give.

## HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Q25/2014

New Mental Health Unit –  
Recruitment of staff

695 **Acting Clerk:** Question 25, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.



**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say when the post for the extra staff to man the new Mental Health Unit will be advertised and what the skill mix will be?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

700

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the process will start very shortly. The skill mix ratio is in the process of being finalised.

705

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, are there plans to increase the service, once the move from the KGV to the new site takes place, which would require hiring more personnel over and above the present complement, and if so, when will this increase in service take place?

710

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, this exercise is a relocation of an existing service to better facilities. The only challenge that we are facing is the fact that because we are on four floors, we may need a few more people on any particular shift, but we are not revising the service. We are relocating an existing service to a new improved location, so essentially it is the same service in a different site.

**Q26/2014  
Dementia Strategy –  
Details and publication**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 26, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

715

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services say when the Government will be publishing its national ‘Dementia Strategy’ for the treatment and care of people with Alzheimer and Dementia and what will the strategy include?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

720

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, this continues to be developed.

725

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Minister say at what stage the development process is at, because in May’s Parliament of last year, the Hon. the Minister for Social Services said, ‘It is envisaged that the plan will be published at the end of the year’?

730

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the fact that we do not have a published strategy as a document does not mean that we do not have a strategy. The important thing with strategies is the strategy, not the document. We are constantly developing and reviewing our strategy for dementia and for the elderly, as the different facilities that will be rolling out during the course of this year will demonstrate.

This means that this has to be a dynamic process, and the process is never quite actually finished. We are not prepared at this point to publish it because it is developing, we are looking at new facilities, we are looking at new ways of doing things, and I would rather delay the publication of a strategy for a number of months and have a better strategy at the end of it.

735

But we have a strategy and the improvements that we will see during the course of this year to the care of dementia and the elderly will speak for themselves.

**Q27/2014  
GHA locally qualified and eligible staff –  
Clarification of answer to Q812/2013**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 27, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

740

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, further to the answer given to Question 812/2013, can the Minister for Health clarify (a) which potential GHA staff applies to ‘staff’, which opens the answer in the first paragraph; (b) what the Hon. Minister means by ‘locally qualified’, quoted in the second paragraph; and (c) what the Hon. Minister means by ‘locally eligible’ quoted in the second paragraph?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

745 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, this question was answered at the time, and the Member opposite had every opportunity to ask for clarification by way of supplementaries and chose not to do so. That I believe is the correct time to ask for such information. It would in my opinion, Mr Speaker, be an unfortunate precedent if we were to get into the habit of asking the supplementaries one or two meetings later.

750 In any case, Mr Speaker, I will clarify, my reply is that the word 'staff' in this context applies generally and means employees. 'Locally qualified or eligible' means in general terms, a Gibraltar resident who has the required qualifications and fulfils the eligibility criteria for the post.

**Q28/2014**  
**Contract workers in answer to WQ167/2013 –**  
**Nationality**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 28, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

755 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, further to the answer given to Written Question 167/2013, can the Minister for Health say what nationality are the 11 contract workers who were offered indefinite employment?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

760

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, further to that question, the nationalities of the 11 contract workers who were offered indefinite employment are ten British/Gibraltarian and one Spanish.

**Q29/2014**  
**New Born Hearing screening –**  
**Commencement**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 29, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

765

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say when the New Born Hearing screening will start?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

770

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the GHA is currently looking at issues of training and validation for all staff who will be engaged in the screening process. Once this is in place, the full programme will commence.

775 The first phase is in place. We have recently purchased new equipment which is more sensitive and accurate in picking up any problems. This is initially being used in children who may be high risk such as those with the relevant family history, or in other cases, such as post meningitis – clearly, that is not neonatal.

780 It is difficult to give an exact date for the full roll-out, because we are looking at bringing out a team for training local staff and also looking at placements in the UK and it means scheduling times and dates that are mutually acceptable.

**Q30/2014**  
**New Prostate Clinic –**  
**Opening**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 30, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say when the new Prostate Clinic will be opening?

785

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, there is already a specific Prostate Clinic held on the first Thursday of every month, with urgent cases seen in-between as needed. The clinic is run by Consultant Surgeon/Urologist Mr Andrew Sene.

790

New improvements are currently being introduced with the purchase of new equipment donated through the support of the Prostate Cancer Support Group by the Kusuma Trust, such as a flexible cystoscope and a transrectal ultra sound scanner. This follows testing of equipment and a visit by the consultant to a UK centre.

795

This would allow, for example, for parts of the service which are currently undertaken in the Radiology Department, to be relocated to the specialised clinic area.

In addition, the Support Group has been offered use of a room at St Bernard's Hospital to assist with counselling and a new protocol to include Primary Care is being finalised.

We hope to have the whole new system in place during the first part of this year.

800

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, I missed the first part of that answer. Can the Hon. Minister again say, has the new equipment already arrived in Gibraltar?

805

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I did not say that, but I am told that the equipment arrived two days ago and now obviously has to be unpacked, commissioned and training in its use initiated. But it has just arrived in Gibraltar.

810

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Minister mentioned a room being made available for counselling within the hospital for the Prostate Cancer Support Group. Will this room also be opened up to other cancer support groups?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, perhaps I should add that the Prostate Cancer Group would normally use it on the day of the specialised clinics, so that somebody who may have had bad news would be able to avail themselves of the group's support and counselling. So the arrangements would have to be made as to which group would use it on which day.

815

#### Q31/2014

#### New emergency ambulances – Fitting under A&E canopy

**Acting Clerk:** Question 31, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

820

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health advise if there have been any problems with the new emergency ambulances fitting under the canopy outside of the Accident and Emergency department, and if so, what is being done about it?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

825

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, both ambulances fit under the canopy outside the Accident and Emergency department.

#### Q32/2014

#### Sponsored patients mechanism – Review

**Acting Clerk:** Question 32, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

830 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state what progress has been made with the complete review of the sponsored patients mechanism, and at what stage is it at in such an endeavour?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

835 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, views and information have been assembled and discussion is ongoing in developing the proposals.

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, does the Hon. Minister have a timeframe for the completion of such a review?

840

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker. I think it would be premature to give that. It is a complex issue. There are many different aspects that we are looking at and I would not like to be held to dates. But certainly we will see it during this term.

#### Q33/2014

#### Primary Care Clinic for children – Relocation to St Bernard's Hospital

845 **Acting Clerk:** Question 33, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say at what stage the GHA is in relocating the Primary Care Clinic for children to St Bernard's Hospital?

850 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the GHA is currently undertaking a consultation process with key staff groups, to assess the various options in relocating this service.

855 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, with respect, that is exactly the same answer the Hon. Minister gave me last May. Can he explain what has been the delay?

860 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the answer is the same because the answer happens to be the same. We are still in a consultation process. This is a complex issue; you cannot suddenly open a door and in come the patients. This is a complex issue which involves discussions between both general practitioners and paediatricians and we then have to look at the best sites to use. Therefore it is a complex issue and as I said before in relation to the Dementia Strategy, I would rather take a little bit longer and get it right. That is in fact the case in a number of the issues that have been raised today. The situation remains that we are discussing the options.

#### Q34/2014

#### Repeat prescriptions – Issuing without seeing a GP

865 **Acting Clerk:** Question 34, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say what the plans are to deal with the issuing of repeat prescriptions without the need to see a GP?

870 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I refer the Member opposite to Questions 869/2012 and 122/2013.

875 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, yes, I am aware of those answers. This is specifically in relation to those on repeat prescriptions who are still required to go to their GP after six months for medication, such as anti-histamine statins and are on these medications for a long term – whether a more expedient system for that category of patients or that category of medication... whether a more expedient system will be put in place.

880 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the Member opposite has answered the question for me; she has said this is for those patients that need to see the GP. If they need to see the GP they need to see the GP. Very often the GP will want to see them after six months.

885 It is possible, now that we have finally introduced, after many years of that not having happened, prescribing by nurse practitioners, that it could be a nurse practitioner who deals with this who would be perfectly qualified to do so.

But it is often the case that the GP actually wants to see the patient after six months, to see how they are reacting to the particular treatment. And if the GP wants to see them, then we cannot jump that one and do it in an administrative manner.

890 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, but my understanding is that a lot of these patients say that it is not necessary for them to go and see their GP, and that they are taking up an appointment slot just to pick up another set of prescriptions. Whether some other process will be considered when they just need another six months' worth of prescriptions and they can obtain it in another manner, rather than taking up a GP's time?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, that is a different set of patients to the one that I have just commented on.

900 If the GP feels that it is not necessary for them to be seen in six months' time, then the GP has the option of offering prescriptions for a longer period. However, having taken the point that the Member opposite has made, which is outside the answer that I have given, I will look and see whether there is a need for that and whether there is a significant number of patients who are just given six months prescriptions and the GP specifically says he does not need to see them. I will look and see whether that is a real problem, and if so, we will tackle it.

905 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Hon. Minister then confirm that the GP does have the option of prescribing for longer periods than six months?

910 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I would not be able to categorically answer that question, so I will not. This is why I offered to look into the situation.

#### Q35/2014

#### GHA employees on contracts – Eligibility for joining Superannuation Fund

**Acting Clerk:** Question 35, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

915 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, further to Question 813/2013, can the Minister for Health say whether GHA employees on contracts who have worked for less than four years are eligible to join the Superannuation Fund?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

920 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, at present, the option for these contract workers to join the Superannuation Fund is given when they are offered employment on indefinite terms. Employees have the option to back-date entry into the fund to the date of commencement, if they have not received the gratuity whilst employed on contract terms.

925 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, so can the Hon. Minister confirm then, for instance, doctors who have been on contracts for over four years, are they able to join the Superannuation Fund but they are still on a contract?

930 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the answer is quite specific. It is those who are offered employment on indefinite terms. It does not specify whether it is a doctor or not a doctor, but it is a question that they would have to fulfil whatever criteria are considered would justify them being employed on indefinite terms.

**Q36/2014**  
**GHA employees –**  
**Increasing nursing assistants**

935 **Acting Clerk:** Question 36, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

**Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health say if the GHA will be increasing its complement and employing more nursing assistants in the near future?

940 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, if this was operationally necessary.

945 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Presumably, Mr Speaker, the current position is that it is not considered to be operationally necessary, so therefore the current intention is not to increase the complement. Just for the sake of accuracy, is my interpretation of his answer correct?

950 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, at the moment, there are no current plans to increase the numbers, but if it were operationally necessary for any particular reason, then that is something that would have to be considered.

**Q37-45/2014**  
**St Bernard's and KGV Hospitals and Primary Care Centre –**  
**Fire drills, alarms and smoke detectors**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 37, the Hon. J J Netto.

955 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state if there has been any fire evacuation drill carried out at St Bernard's Hospital in 2012 and 2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

960 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 38 to 45.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 38, the Hon. J J Netto.

965 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state if there has been any fire evacuation drills at the Mental Hospital at KGV during 2012 and 2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

970 **Mr Speaker:** I think for better procedure, since it is the same questioner and the same Minister who is going to reply, I think that, Mr Clerk, you should call out each, one question after the other.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 39, the Hon. J J Netto.

975 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state if there has been any fire evacuation drill at the Primary Care Centre during 2012 and 2013.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 40, the Hon. J J Netto.

980 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state if there are fire alarms and smoke detectors installed throughout St Bernard's Hospital?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 41, the Hon. J J Netto.

985 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state whether during 2012 and 2013, the fire alarm systems and the smoke detectors installed at St Bernard's Hospital have been tested and certified and if so, by which professional entity and on what dates this has taken place?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 42, the Hon. J J Netto.

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**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state whether there are fire alarms and smoke detectors installed throughout the Primary Care Centre?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 43, the Hon. J J Netto.

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**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state whether during 2012 and 2013, the fire alarm systems and the smoke detectors installed in the Primary Care Centre have been tested and certified and if so, by which professional entity, and on what dates this has taken place?

1000 **Acting Clerk:** Question 44, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state whether there are fire alarms and smoke detectors installed throughout the Mental Hospital at KGV?

1005 **Acting Clerk:** Question 45, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Health state whether during 2012 and 2013, the fire alarm systems and the smoke detectors installed throughout the Mental Hospital at KGV have been tested and certified and if so, by which professional entity and on what date this has taken place?

1010

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, the last fire drills to have been held on GHA premises were as follows: Primary Care Centre, November 2012 – no such drills have been carried out previously; King George V Hospital, 2005, two following an incident in 2004 – there is no record of a previous one; St Bernard's Hospital, 2005 – it was not in that location before then.

1015

Mr Speaker, the lack of such fire drills in the past is a cause for concern to me, as the organisation had found itself with a lack of experience and expertise. I am pleased to say that we are now liaising with the City Fire Brigade in order to update the evacuation and fire drill programme, and fire marshals are currently undergoing training. There will therefore be at least annual drills as from this year. In addition, a full survey on the preparedness of the organisation in fire safety is underway.

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In relation to fire alarms and smoke detectors, these are installed throughout the Primary Care Centre, KGV and St Bernard's Hospital. They have been tested as follows...

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I have to add it was not in my script, but I note the hon. Member had asked which firm had done this – they have been tested by G4S Fire Security.

They have been tested as follows: St Bernard's Hospital – 30th January 2012; 13th August 2012; 28th February 2013; 13th July 2013.

Primary Care Centre – 30th January 2012; 31st July 2012; 13th April 2013; 12th September 2013.

King George V Hospital – 2nd May 2012; 19th October 2012; 20th May 2013 and 13th January 2014.

1030

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, when the Hon. the Minister for Health stated that there are discussions taking place with the Gibraltar Fire Brigade, can he actually inform the House when such discussion started?

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**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker, but they were certainly ongoing before I got notice of this question, in case that is what he is implying.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, in addition to having a discussion with the Gibraltar Fire Brigade in order to see how the emergency evacuation plan ought to take place, is this a matter which has been discussed

1040 within the Health Authority, given the Health and Safety Committee that exists between the management and the trade union representatives in the past?

1045 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I am not aware. Again I would need notice of that specific detail. I think I have answered the question perfectly well, expressed my concern at the lack of fire preparedness that I inherited, and the steps that I am taking to ensure that that is no longer the case. He has given me a marvellous opportunity to express publicly how little sensitivity there had been to the danger of fire. But those specific questions, I would need notice of.

1050 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, by when will the Minister think he will be in a position in order to have a plan which can be implemented for the purpose of fire evacuation drills, and not only that, in addition to that, also to be able to cascade the information to members of staff ? Because that information needs to be disseminated amongst members of staff and presumably, there needs to be what some people may call fire agents or fire marshals, who will be able to implement whatever the procedure is that eventually takes place.

1055 So can the Minister tell us whether this issue is likely to be in place perhaps within the next three months?

1060 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. Member had a similar conversation with the previous Minister for Health after so many years without any movement whatsoever. But one can only speculate on that.

Mr Speaker, we will be ready very soon indeed.

1065 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, I thought I understood, and if obviously I got it wrong, I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister would correct me, but I think he stated that once the procedures are in place, that he would like to be in a position that at least it is to be tested once a year. Was that correct?

1070 Because my understanding, from looking at the information in the UK as far as hospitals are concerned, and this is information which is readily available on the internet, I came across the fact that a lot of hospitals in the UK tend to execute fire drills almost on a weekly basis. I am not suggesting for one minute that that should necessarily be the practice here in Gibraltar, but given the fact that there are... well, the service users of the Health Authority, some of whom have disabilities and some of whom have sensory impairment of different kinds, the Health Authority will have to consider how appropriate will such drills have to be taking place.

1075 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, we will obviously heed the professionals who are advising us. I offered once a year because I think that is the minimum that I would require, but using the premise that they should be held once weekly, then in 16 years of Government by the party opposite, they have missed 2,496 fire drills that they should have had. *(Laughter)*

1080 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, so despite the Hon. Minister's horror and concern, can he confirm that no fire drills have taken place these last two years then at St Bernard's Hospital, the Primary Care Centre, or the KGV under his watch?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I have already answered that question.

1085 **Hon. J J Netto:** I am trying to find a particular note which I cannot find now, but one of the things that I would like to urge the Minister is that one of the things that managements do take in place when elaborating procedures of this kind, I think it is called something like PEEPS, Personal Emergency... In other words, they are looking at the service users that there is in the Health Authority, and given the nature of those individualised circumstances, they are taking into account for the purpose of when a fire drill has to be executed or even if a fire actually takes place, they know exactly where to go, how to go and perhaps optimise the evacuation procedure as soon as possible.

So can I urge the Minister that they take on board those particular practices in the UK because obviously they are essential given the service users that the Health Authority have?

1095 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Precisely, Mr Speaker, and the hon. Member opposite is really helping me very much this morning. It is precisely because of the complex nature of doing it that if it has not been done for so many years, it takes time to establish it and to carry out these measures properly. That is the exercise on which we are engaged.



1100 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister a specific question. He made a reference in answer to Question 41/2014 to the professional entity as the question is posed, which is assisting the Government in relation to this issue and I think he said... is it G4S Fire Security and is that the trading name? Can he give me the company name and with details as to whether it is a local company or it is a UK company providing professional input in relation to this matter?

1105 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** If you bear with me Mr Speaker, I will check and see if that is in my notes, but the testing was carried out by G4S Fire Security. That is the name of the company that I have been given and the actual... Let me just check my papers here – the actual survey and preparedness of the organisation is being done by a fire safety management company called Tenos. I do not have any more details of that.

1110 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, I would like those details and I suppose we could write to the Minister after this or maybe he could obtain the details from the civil servants and give it to us whenever he has a moment.

1115 Is he able to answer this question, Mr Speaker: is he aware of the cost of this exercise? Does he have that information with him? I appreciate it is a specific question – we can always ask it at the next sitting.

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, those are specific details which were not asked. I answered the question, I think, very thoroughly and in great detail. That information I do not have it.

1120 **Mr Speaker:** If the Hon. Minister is willing to and able to provide that information, well and good, but it does not arise from any of the eight or nine questions that have been taken together.

**Q46-53/2014**  
**Macaques –**  
**Combating illegal feeding and spread of disease**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 46, the Hon. J J Netto.

1125 **Hon J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if there has been any discussions between the Department of the Environment and the RGP, in order to establish a working methodology to avoid any illegal enticing or feeding of Macaques, contrary to the Nature Protection Act, or any of its subsidiary legislation, during the course of the last year?

1130 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 47 to 53.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 47, the Hon. J J Netto.

1135 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if there has been any discussion between the Department of the Environment and the Environmental Agency, in order to establish a working methodology to avoid any illegal enticing or feeding of Macaques contrary to the Nature Protection Act or any of its subsidiary legislation during the course of the last year?

1140 **Acting Clerk:** Question 48, the Hon. J J Netto.

1145 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if there has been any discussion between the Department of the Environment and the Customs Department, in order to establish a working methodology to avoid any illegal enticing or feeding of Macaques contrary to the Nature Protection Act, or any of its subsidiary legislation during the course of the last year?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 49, the Hon. J J Netto.

1150 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state, how many individuals have been fined for illegally feeding the Macaques within the Nature Reserve, during 2012 and 2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 50, the Hon. J J Netto.

1155 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state how many individuals have been fined for illegally feeding the Macaques outside the Nature Reserve during 2012 and 2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 51, the Hon. J J Netto.

1160 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state how many Macaques have been culled on a monthly basis since January 2012?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 52, the Hon. J J Netto.

1165 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state where the Department of the Environment is purchasing the noise makers used in order to frighten the Macaques at the Nature Reserve, who is purchasing the noise makers, whether a licence has been issued for such a purpose, and whether the noise makers purchased comply with our local laws on this matter?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 53, the Hon. J J Netto.

1170 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if the local population of Macaques are monitored for Hepatitis A disease, and if so, state how many are infected with it, what percentage of the population it represents, and if there is a vaccination programme for Hepatitis A being delivered?

1175 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, in answer to Questions 46 to 48, in order, yes sir, yes sir, and no sir.

1180 In answer to Questions 49 and 50, the same number as have been fined for this since the unauthorised feeding of Macaques was made illegal, about 100 years ago, after they were regularly coming into town. That is, none.

1185 In answer to Question 51, between 1st January 2012 and 31st December 2013, a total of nine Macaques have unfortunately had to be put down for veterinary or behavioural reasons: in 2012, August, three; September, one; November, one; 2013, March, one; September, two; October, one.

The Senior Executive Officer of the Department of the Environment purchases the noise makers from either of two specialist shops in Spain. The Collector of Customs grants an import licence each and every time noise makers are imported. These noise makers comply with local legislation.

1190 In answer to Question 53, a study was undertaken in 2000 by the Macaque Management team which identified certain Hepatitis A antibodies in 80% of the animals sampled. But I very quickly add that this needs to be qualified. Although not a direct consequence of the question, with your leave, Mr Speaker, I think I need to clarify this statistic, in order to avoid unnecessary fears.

1195 Mr Speaker, all the Macaques that tested positive back in 2000, did so for the IgG antibody, which indicates that the animals had been exposed previously to an infection, but were immune from the disease at the time of testing and therefore, and most significantly, were not shedding the virus, and therefore did not pose any risk. No Macaques at all, that is zero percent, tested positive for IgM, which is the infectious antibody, and therefore, I repeat, no Macaques tested would have been shedding the virus, and therefore there was no risk of infection.

1200 In fact, Mr Speaker, it is likely that the infection originated from humans. At that time, the veterinarian decided to vaccinate as many juvenile Macaques as possible, to create what is known as herd immunity. Blood testing after vaccination would be futile, as there is no way to distinguish between an immunised animal and one that had previously contracted the disease.

1205 The risk of humans acquiring the disease is negligible, provided normal precautions when in contact with any animal are taken, such as washing of hands. Hepatitis A can only be transferred by the oro-faecal route – that is, by taking by mouth after contact with faeces – and not by bites or contacts.

1210 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, my first question is in relation to any discussions being held either with the RGP, the Environmental Agency and the Customs Department. I think I understood the answer by the Minister was that yes, there had been some discussion taking place in order to avoid that. Can the Minister perhaps provide Parliament with more information as to the nature of those discussions?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, of course: what I said, Mr Speaker, was yes, Police; yes, Environmental Agency; no, Customs, we have not discussed with Customs.

1215 The nature of the discussions were a way of trying to get more application or enforcement of the laws. The discussions reached the conclusion that the law, as it stood, was a little bit complicated to enforce, and also that clearly the Police have many priorities, so this led to the decision, and there is a Bill before this House, which I think will be taken at the next meeting, in order to introduce fixed penalties and expand the enforcement abilities from the Police to include members of the Department of the Environment and the Environmental Agency, hence the discussions with the Environmental Agency.

1220 So it has been a long process of discussion, in order to better enforce this law, which as I said before, has never, ever in a hundred years, to my knowledge, resulted in any fines, and this is a process that is ongoing in order to improve the way that we manage the issue.

1225 **Hon. J J Netto:** Yes, Mr Speaker, but in order to try and see where this discussion is actually leading to... The hon. Member said that they are trying to discuss how more effectively they can enforce the law, and, in fact, he mentioned that there is a Bill later to be discussed at a subsequent date. But do I take it from the comments made by the Minister that the Minister is actually looking more specifically for a kind of multi-agency application, of the enforcement of fines, whenever anyone is identified for either illegally enticing, or illegally feeding, and having the co-operation of both the RGP, which unfortunately, as the Minister has said, in the past has not been there, because they have other priorities,

1230 But do I take it that as a result of these discussions, perhaps the RGP maybe able to prioritise and make a contribution in the help to tackle this perennial problem?

1235 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the idea is precisely to have a multi-agency approach to the problem, with the RGP continuing to be involved as the primary law enforcers in Gibraltar, but a multi-agency approach will mean that there will be more people on the ground, to be able to dissuade people from feeding the Macaques.

1240 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, obviously I do not want to necessarily anticipate a discussion which later on is going to be discussed, at a time when the Minister makes his speech in the First Reading of the Bill, so I do not want to necessarily anticipate any discussion there, but I think I heard the Minister saying that there had been no discussion at all with the Customs Department, is that correct?

1245 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, that is what I said, and I am now racking my brains to see whether I have actually mentioned it to a Customs Officer in conversation. No, seriously, Mr Speaker, I do not recall any discussions with the Customs. I do not think this is something that the Customs should be involved in.

1250 **Hon. J J Netto:** So the Minister believes that there is no reason whatsoever why the Customs Department, in the future, will be able to make a contribution, by way of issuing out fines for illegal feeding of Macaques. Is that what the Minister is saying?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the hon. Member knows I am very keen to export Macaques, but getting them to jump the border carrying anything that they should not (*Laughter*) to guarantee interception by Customs Officer is not one of those. I say that obviously in jest.

1255 Mr Speaker, there is no intention at the moment to engage with Customs. I think they have other duties that they need to deal with, and by expanding to the Environment Ministry and the Environmental Agency, I think we will have enough people on the ground, at least to make a good start at this multi-disciplinary approach.

1260 **Hon. J J Netto:** Well, Mr Speaker, certainly I would leave the issue of Customs there. But I just want to highlight to the Minister, in fact, that there is a reference to Customs in the Bill, so this is why I am asking the question; but leave it there, because obviously we can have the discussion much later on, when the Bill comes, and perhaps he may be able to provide more information as to the reason why Customs are actually included, among the different groups, (*Interjection*) hence the reason for the question.

1265 But, can I move on, Mr Speaker, with other supplementary questions? In relation to the firecrackers, noise makers, or commonly known as *petardos comunes* or *petardos chinos*, the Minister actually said that those are being purchased from two particular places in Spain. Now, can the Minister say whether the noise makers or *petardos*, whatever they are are called, abide by both the British Standards application and the European Union?

1270 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, the information I have, which I have given in the answer, is that they comply with local legislation, If he wants me to look more specifically at any particular legislation which he bears in mind, then I would be happy to take that away. He may be able to write to me, as indeed he often does, and I will certainly look at the information.

1275 **Hon. J J Netto:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I will certainly take the offer, but my understanding is that they do  
not. They do not comply with EU Standards. The EU Standards are EU EN14035-15 and, in fact, the  
firecrackers, the Spanish firecrackers are actually, as I understand, illegal throughout Europe. The fact that  
Spain still manufactures and sells these particular noisemakers is in contravention of the European  
1280 legislation. So my point, if I am correct, is that the noisemakers that the Department of the Environment, or  
any other employee of the Government, are purchasing in Spain may well be illegal products in Gibraltar,  
even if they happen to be certified by the Collector of Customs when entering into Gibraltar.

1285 If that is the case, will the Hon. Minister look whether those purchasers are legal products, as far as the  
European Union is concerned; look into whether they abide by the British Standards, which are different  
and much higher in quality; and whether the Fire Brigade actually sanctioned the purchase of these  
particular products in Spain, given that they will probably have a policy in that regard, which says that if  
one person in Gibraltar wanted to sell these particular firecrackers, or pyrotechnics, they are illegal products  
under the policies of the Fire Brigade in Gibraltar?

1290 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, of course, I will look at these [*inaudible*]. In fact, I asked the hon.  
Member to write to me with precisely those facts and I would ask him to write to me with that, as it will  
make it easier for me to look at that.

I think I must comment, without being able to answer that specific point, that there are situations in  
which, for example, it is illegal to hold a firearm without a licence, but firearms can be used for specific  
issues. I am not comparing one to the other, but clearly, I will look at that information, and if it is the case  
that this causes a problem, then obviously we would have to reassess the use of these particular ones.

1295 But as I say, I cannot commit myself, because it may well be that the particular ones that are used do fall  
within the local legislation which is applicable, because, clearly some of what the hon. Member has told me  
may or may not be applicable to Gibraltar.

1300 But, certainly I will get the Department of the Environment to look at it immediately we receive the  
information.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Moving on, Mr Speaker, to my last set of questions, which dealt with the Barbary  
Macaques in relation to Hepatitis A. Yes, I do share the comments made by the actual Minister in the sense  
that this is not something to be worried about in relation to Hepatitis A. But I was not dwelling, if you like,  
on that itself.

1305 What I was trying to get information from the Minister on, I am not quite sure whether he actually  
provided that information, is that whether the Macaque who does have Hepatitis A, or all of them, they do  
have some vaccination themselves. We are looking here at the welfare of the Macaques, as well.

1310 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** What I explained, Mr Speaker, is that with the Macaques that had a positive test, it  
was a test for the antibody that proved that they had had the disease but had got over it. So they still had the  
antibodies in the body, but they were no longer – they had the protection, but they no longer had the  
disease. Then I explained that there was a vaccination of as many juveniles as possible, in order to create  
what is known as herd immunity, so that the younger ones who would not have been exposed to the disease  
at the time that the older ones were would then be given immunity by a process of vaccination and that will  
1315 have cut it off. They were no longer shedding so they were not subjected any more, and the juveniles were  
immunised.

So the issue is that that was one incident, which was dealt with at the time, and which we have no  
reason to think that is a problem at this point in time.

**Q54/2014**  
**Wildlife wardens –**  
**Extra employees to be taken on**

1320 **Acting Clerk:** Question 54, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if extra personnel are going to  
be employed in order to discharge the duties of wildlife wardens?

1325 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, this will be determined  
as part of the Upper Rock Management Plan.

1330 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, in the past, when I raised the issue of the Upper Rock Management Plan, I recall the Minister saying that this will be launched very soon, and that has been at least more than six months now. Can the Minister perhaps tell the House when it will be announced?

1335 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Very soon, Mr Speaker, soon. This is a complex one, once again, and I have the tendency of reading things, and always trying to improve on the last time, and then I think it is ready, but one more time.

This is going to happen very soon. I think we are talking about a few months only.

1340 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can I ask the Minister whether he himself believes that there is a need to have a dedicated group of directly employed people, working as wildlife wardens in the Upper Rock Nature Reserve?

1345 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, what I believe is that we have to have people carrying out the functions of wildlife wardens throughout Gibraltar. That is why we recently published legislation, which appointed the employees of the Department of the Environment, including the new Environmental Protection Officers, to be enabled, under the Acts of the Nature Protection Act, to perform those functions.

1350 So, at this point in time, these ladies and gentlemen are able to do that and have started this work in a small way; an induction and so on will be carried out, so at this point in time, I am not going to commit myself, as to whether or not we would require to employ specific people. The Upper Rock Management Plan will inform that and the experience that we have, we are now undergoing, by giving those powers to people already in employment, I think is the correct way of addressing this, and we are doing this in a staged process.

1355 **Hon. J J Netto:** Well, Mr Speaker, that is certainly a turnaround from the days when he used to be the General Secretary of GONHS, because he used to chastise – (*Interjection*) I am sorry can you calm yourself down, and allow me to continue?

**Mr Speaker:** It is for me to ask hon. Members to calm themselves down. (*Laughter*) The job of the hon. Member there is to ask supplementary questions.

1360 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I have to answer that comment. There is absolutely no turnaround – (*Interjections*) I am not giving way, Mr Speaker. (*Interjections*)

**Mr Speaker:** May I? The Hon. Mr Netto has the floor, if he wishes to ask a supplementary.

1365 **Hon. J J Netto:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1370 As I was saying, certainly a 180-degree turnaround by the former Secretary General of GONHS, when he used to chastise the GSD Government for not having a dedicated group of employed people to be wildlife wardens. Can the Minister tell the House that no extra amount of money will be provided for, to any private company, to undertake the duties of wildlife wardens in the next 12 months?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, first of all, I think that question is not a direct follow-up, and I have already said that we are looking at whether or not we are going to employ wildlife wardens as part of the Management Plan.

1375 But, I have to correct two things that the hon. Member has said, because I think they are very unfair, and I think that he, of all people, knows how unfair they are. Because, Mr Speaker, when I was General Secretary of the Gibraltar Ornithological and Natural History Society, I never chastised any Government, but I worked within the Government, and I may have had conversations with him, as Minister, and with others of his colleagues and Ministers on the issue. But I never chastised anyone: that was not my way of working, as he and all the Members opposite very well know, and I am still that same person, Mr Speaker.  
1380 That is a very unfair comment.

1385 But having said that, Mr Speaker, it is not a turn of any nature. I have said that I have empowered the whole staff of the Department of the Environment – 20, 30 people, I do not have the details now – plus two new Environmental Protection Officers to fulfil the duties of wildlife wardens. If the Ministers that I worked to in the past had responded to me when I said ‘we need wardening on the Upper Rock’, and had said, ‘Well look, we are going to have Environmental Enforcement Officers, and I am going to offer the whole of the Environment Department staff’ – which was much smaller than it is now, by the way – ‘and I will empower them to carry out those duties’, then I would have said, ‘Well thank you very much, let us see how it goes.’

1390 The allegations that the hon. Member has made are completely unsubstantiated, and anybody at all who knows me, and the way that I work and have worked, will know that that is the case.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, does the Minister consider that the employment, I think he said, of two Protection Environmental Officers is sufficient for undertaking the duties throughout Gibraltar for wildlife wardens?  
1395

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I refer to my original answer: this will be determined as part of the Upper Rock Management Plan.

1400 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, this may be a question which he may not have the answer to as yet, but does he have an idea, certainly from the employment perspective, as to which entity would be the employing body of these wildlife wardens? Would it be the GDC, for example, or a Civil Service post to be created? Can he answer that question?

1405 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I have already said that it has not even been determined. This is totally hypothetical.

1410 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, does the Minister not envisage, perhaps, the scenario whereby, despite having a situation where they have a multi-agency approach to this particular issue, and yet find that, despite all the willingness in the world, at the end of the day the RGP will not be able to provide the assistance that is required? Because that has been the case in the past, given their other priorities, and perhaps, for relying on other agencies, as in maybe like the Environmental Agency, would be, to use perhaps the Spanish saying, *desvestir un santo para vestir a otro santo* – meaning an employee of the Environmental Agency having to put aside some aspects of their normal day-to-day work, in order to do this particular work. Hence my reason, and hence my question, whether the Minister thinks there are sufficient people employed to undertake such duties. Can he provide an answer?  
1415

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, first of all, I have to correct: the hon. Member is getting two questions confused. The Environmental Agency is being empowered to deal with the feeding of Macaques, and they are out in the street, they issue litter tickets, they look after all sorts of issues, so they are already on the ground. So that will not detract them from any other duty, and that is a previous question.  
1420

This question is specifically on the question of wildlife wardens, which have not been extended to the same people, but in any case, I repeat my original answer: this will be determined as part of the Upper Rock Management Plan, and no matter how many questions I am going to be asked, I am going to give the same answer, because it is a work in progress. We have to assess it in relation to what we are already doing, and then we will come up with a properly worked out answer.  
1425

I have said it several times before today, Mr Speaker, I am not going to be rushed by the Opposition, into launching strategies, into publishing plans, or into giving answers which have not been properly studied. My scientific training has told me that I really have to lay the point, and then I come to the conclusions, and I am not going to be rushed in advance of that. So this will be determined as part of the Upper Rock Management Plan.  
1430

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister, whether he can provide the House with some sort of definition of duties that are likely to emerge, for someone undertaking the function of wildlife wardens?

1435 **Mr Speaker:** That does not arise at all. I am not allowing that supplementary. (*Interjections*) Any other supplementary? In that case we will go on to Question 55.

**Q55/2014**  
**Sewage treatment plant –**  
**Plans for construction**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 55, the Hon. J J Netto.

1440 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if there are plans in progress for the construction of a sewage treatment plant, and if so, provide Parliament with a statement as to the timeline for operations for the plant to start and the cost to build the plant?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

1445

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I can confirm that there are plans in progress for the construction of a sewage treatment plant, and that these are proceeding swiftly.

1450

The Government invited tenders for the design, build, finance and operation of a waste water treatment plant at Europa Point, in the Official Journal of the European Union on 28th June 2013. The tender was also advertised in local media, in line with statutory requirements, and a number of tenders have been received to date.

1455

The Government will commence the tender evaluation process on 24th January, in a couple of days' time. Government intends to award the tender, as soon as possible, once the tender evaluation process is completed. All aspects of the design and construction of the project rests with the tenderers, and therefore the estimated cost of the plant will only be known once a successful tenderer is chosen.

In terms of timescale, the Government envisages that the plant be operational within two years of awarding the contract.

1460

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can I ask for clarification, whether the Minister can say that the period for prospective tenderers, that period has now closed and nobody else can put further bids to the process?

1465

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, I believe that the evaluation process will start on 24th, because that is when the tender closes. (*Interjections*) Mr Speaker, the 24th I believe is tomorrow, so –

1470

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, could I ask the Government, and I am not trying to hold the Government to an exact figure certainly, but a kind of order of cost of what this project might entail? In other words, are we talking about a £50 million project, a £100 million project, a £150 million project, and I am not trying to hold the Government now to... within a couple of million either way.

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** No, Mr Speaker, I do not have that information. This is a tender process, and we...

1475

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister if he could perhaps tell Parliament, whether the Government is envisaging that the new sewage treatment plant, when it becomes operational, whether this will be connected, in any way to other plants, perhaps the waste treatment plant that the Government is proposing?

1480

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Mr Speaker, this is too early a stage to answer that question. We are processing tenders for the waste treatment plant, we are about to process tenders for the sewage plant, and this will then be considered in relation to that, but I do not have that information.

1485

**Hon. J J Netto:** Well, obviously, Mr Speaker, it is something that I would have to perhaps continue this line of questions on another month.

But could I ask, perhaps, one final question on this particular topic, and could the Minister state whether this particular project to build the sewage treatment plant will be funded, or the intention is to fund either wholly, or partially, either directly, or indirectly, by (a) Credit Finance Company Limited; or (b) from the proceeds of monies deposited in the Gibraltar Savings Bank?

1490

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, with respect to the hon. Gentleman, I believe that question was specifically asked by him at the last Parliament, or in the list that was asked at the last Parliament, of projects to be funded by... in the options put by the hon. Gentleman. The answer then was no, and it remains no.

1495

**Mr Speaker:** Next question.

**Q56/2014  
Cigarette stubs –  
Litter Committee discussions**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 56, the Hon. J J Netto.

1500 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment say if the Litter Committee has discussed the increased amount of cigarette stubs that litter our streets, and whether there are plans to place cigarette bins throughout Gibraltar, supported by an awareness campaign?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

1505 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, cigarette stubs have not been specifically discussed at the Litter Committee meetings.

I will explain: they do not appear in the minutes. There may have been peripheral conversations on it, but they are not something that was specifically discussed at those committee meetings.

1510 The issue has been dealt with internally by the Department of the Environment. Thirty bins with ashtrays have been purchased and will be deployed shortly, to see whether the system actually helps, of course.

1515 **Hon. J J Netto:** Well, Mr Speaker, that is certainly good news to hear from the Government side, but can I also urge the Minister on the second part of my question, that perhaps the introduction of those extra littler bins should be supported by an awareness campaign as well?

**Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I think that is a logical step to be taken, on the launch of the new bins.

**Q57-59/2014**  
**Detached Mole –**  
**New bunkering arrangement**

1520 **Acting Clerk:** Question 57, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if the new arrangement for bunkering at the Detached Mole is a temporary or permanent measure?

1525 **Acting Clerk:** Answer the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

**Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 58 and 59.

1530 **Acting Clerk:** Question 58, the Hon. J J Netto.

1535 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment provide Parliament with an explanation as to the procedure covering the new bunkering arrangement from the Detached Mole, and what protection is in place to safeguard the environment?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 59, the Hon. J J Netto.

1540 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for the Environment state if, as a result of the new arrangements for bunkering at the Detached Mole, whether local fishermen will be able to continue fishing from that location?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer the Hon. the Minister for Health and the Environment.

1545 **Minister for Health and the Environment (Hon. Dr J E Cortes):** Mr Speaker, before I answer that, I would just like to say that the Hon. Minister for the Port would likely have answered at least some of these questions, as he has been leading on this, but in his absence on Government business outside Gibraltar, I am happy to provide the information.

1550 Bunkering activities in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters are regulated by the Gibraltar Port Authority, under the Bunkering Code of Practice, and the Ship to Ship Code of Practice. Bunkering activities at the Detached Mole are regulated in accordance with these codes of practice, and are subject to the same level of supervision and control as other bunkering activities in BGTW.

Among the measures in place to ensure protection of the environment are limitations on cargo temperatures, and hydrogen sulphide content of cargoes, booming requirements for transfers of persistent



1555 cargoes, GPA inspections for cargo transfers, and unannounced inspections of both the mother ship and the bunker barges involved in these operations.

At the moment this is considered a temporary arrangement.

1560 New procedures have been introduced to ensure the safety of anglers and ships berthed at the Detached Mole, while ensuring that the impact on fishing activities, which will continue, is minimised. These procedures have been agreed with the fishing associations.

1565 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. the Minister has said that these are temporary measures, or operations that are taking place. Can the Minister perhaps provide Parliament with a more elaborate explanation as to what the more permanent measures will be? I say this, because in the statement issued by the Environmental Safety Group, they argue that this will not in the future be a permanent onshore operation for bunkering.

1570 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** Yes, Mr Speaker, the comment that... clearly this is a statement by a non-Governmental organisation, and the Government is not party to those, or to what may have gone behind arriving at that statement. I am not able to offer more information than the one that I have given: I was asked whether it is temporary or not. I have answered that, and as I explained, my colleague, the Minister responsible for the Port is away on Government business, and did make it known to the Opposition that he was going to be away, and therefore I am not able to offer more information than what I have offered this morning.

1575 **Hon. J J Netto:** Do I take it that the only thing that has changed, really, is that before, this particular refuelling or bunkering operation was done in the Bay of Gibraltar, and now what we have is a large bunker storage tanker, which will be permanently docked or anchored inside the Bay, on the inside of the Detached Mole?

1580 **Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, if I may assist. The bunkering operations have not changed; what has changed is the location of the storage. Right. The hon. Gentleman needs to know that bunkering did not occur when this vessel was lying in anchorage, it did not occur between this vessel and the vessels that came to receive bunkers. This vessel was the storage vessel. It transferred bunker supplies to a smaller vessel, and that smaller vessel went out to the vessels that wanted to receive bunkers in Gibraltar.

1585 So the only thing that has changed is the location of the storage vessel. That has now been brought alongside. Now, I think it has been said, in the context, I believe, of an answer to a question put by one of the local newspapers, by the *Chronicle*, that this was at the instigation of the company, and was part of a process towards moving to a new more permanent solution in respect of storage of bunkers. But the hon. Member's supplementary is about the actual bunkering operation. The bunkering operation has not changed.

1590 **Hon. J J Netto:** Indeed, Mr Speaker, the fact that the bunkering operation was done outside in the Bay of Gibraltar, now is done inside the Bay of Gibraltar – (*Interjections*) sorry.

1595 **Hon. Chief Minister:** If I may, if the hon. Gentleman will allow me to assist him on this. The bunkering operation, the actual bunkering is still happening in the Bay outside of the Port. It is the storage of the bunkers that has come within the Port, not the bunkering operation.

1600 **Hon. J J Netto:** Well, given that the storage is inside the Bay, at the Detached Mole, given the concerns of the local environmental group here, where they argue that as a result of that new location, which is hypothetically, or hypothetically will be, close or adjacent to where the future gas storage facility for the power station will be, and considering that on the north end we have nuclear submarines being stationed from time to time, has any health and safety and environmental audit been carried out on the potential risk that may emanate from such a decision?

1605 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, if I may say so to the hon. Gentleman, that question to a great extent was already answered when he was asking questions of the hon. the Member with responsibility for Utilities, when he was asking about whether the gas storage was the subject of any health and safety audit, etc and he was told that it is presently the subject of such audits. So he knows, I put it to him, as a result of that answer, that such investigations are ongoing.

1610 But he needs to remember, and this is a point that all of us are unfortunately stuck with, we made a huge success of this community, being two and a half miles by one mile: if we had the land mass of others, I cannot imagine how the Gibraltarians would have led the world. Whether the bunkering vessel is storing

1615 bunkers on the Detached Mole, or whether it is in its old location, it is probably within 500 or 600 metres of the nuclear berth, and the residential facilities, etc. So it is all a question of determining what are the best places to put this, as I said to him before in relation to gas.

So, yes, it is. This is the subject, the issues surrounding the gas and where the gas could potentially go are the subject of health and safety investigations. Hazardous operations investigations, I think they are called.

1620  
1625 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. Chief Minister mentioned the fact that the Hon. the Minister for Utilities did mention that there are indeed health and safety and environmental reports which the Government is considering. However, the Opposition clearly does not have sight of such a report, so can I ask the Government that they provide Parliament with copies of such report, so that at the very least, the Opposition will be in a position to know the issues that have been considered, and be able to ask the relevant questions on this matter in the future?

1630 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I have told the hon. Gentleman, those reports are being prepared. It is not that they are ready; it is that they (*Interjection*) are being prepared –

**Hon. J J Netto:** What the Minister for Utilities said before was that they had already been done, and they are currently being discussed in Government. (*Interjection*)

1635 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, that I am afraid is not what the hon. Member said. But, look, if the hon. Gentleman's recollection is that, all he needs to do is, when the *Hansard* is ready, go back and check. But what I am telling him is there are a lot of reports, and the ones that he was asking about, which are those relating to gas, are in the process of being prepared.

1640 Mr Speaker, this will be a big change for our community. We will go from using one particular fuel type, which is diesel, to using a new fuel type, which is gas. People will need to understand whether there are any risks involved in using gas, what those risks are. There is risk involving any internal combustion fuel, any fossil fuel that is burnt, but of course, is there more risk, is there less risk? So, the hon. Gentleman can rest assured that when decisions come to be made about these issues, they will be fully explained, not just to this Parliament, and not just to Members opposite, but to the whole of the community.

1645 **Hon. J J Netto:** Yes, Mr Speaker, but the reality is that the environment does not work in isolation, and we cannot say we are going to have a report simply for the gas storage on one side of the Detached Mole and then next to that particular location, there will be another function which may require a more holistic one, in terms of risks of concern. Now, can I put it, can I ask the Chief Minister, or the Government, by when they reckon that the health and safety and environmental report will be ready, so that at least the Opposition may have sight of them?

1650 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, (*Interjection*) before the hon. Gentleman, in respect of his request for sight of the report, to the answer I have just given, and in respect of the timing of those reports, that is exactly the same question, with respect to him, that he asked when he was questioning the hon. Gentleman, and I got up to assist in respect of exactly this matter, and I told him I was not going to give him a timeline.

1660 Let me put it in this context for him: the power station, we have all agreed, is an important issue for Gibraltar. We have said we are committed to delivering it, so it is something that is, obviously, going to happen as soon as possible.

1665 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, in the Environmental Safety Group's statement, they urge the Government to have a rethink on the matter, as far as the location for the storage of – well the large bunker tanker storage facility there, and in fact, they go further to that, they suggest the Government that perhaps an alternative site that should be considered by the Government should be the King's Lines depot there, obviously once sufficient investment is done to infrastructural works to make it fit for purpose. Is the Government considering the suggestion of the Environmental Safety Group?

1670 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, the Government is not just considering the proposals of the Environmental Safety Group; it is considering a very large number of proposals in relation to this issue, and long before the Environmental Safety Group suggested the King's Lines, the Government, the MOD, and third parties are looking at possibilities, for example, involving King's Lines – something that he might recall I used to urge them to do, when I was in Opposition and dealing with these issues. And not just King's Lines, Mr Speaker, we are considering all sorts of other potential areas for bunkering storage, and not just bunker storage, but fuel storage. And, he will recall, Mr Speaker, that when they were in Government, I also used to urge them to consider about how to have a strategic reserve for Gibraltar, etc.

So, if he were to think back, he would know that the Government is considering that and much more, for much longer than just the period since the ESG made their statement.

1680 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, given that this new large bunker, storage tanker, is now closer to a built-up area, the west side of Gibraltar, have new procedures been considered or even implemented to avoid nauseating smells, bad smells associated with this particular industry, within the whole of the west side of Gibraltar?

1685 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, I am afraid the hon. Gentleman is wrong. The ship is not closer now to residential areas than it might have been. The ship was actually very close to residential areas where it used to be, and in the past when they were in Government, we had repeated incidents of noxious smells, and of what... the smell is of sulphur, like rotten eggs.

1690 And what he will know, Mr Speaker, if he bothers to think back to the issues, is that those things relate to the mix of the oil which can give rise to those smells, and the non-use of what is known as capture technology to have those fumes sucked in when the bunkering operations are ongoing. That is why it is important that he remind himself again, as I did a moment ago, that the bunkering operations are not going to change location. They will continue to happen where they used to happen. The only thing that is changed is that the storage, and therefore the replenishment of the smaller, the lighter that takes the bunker out for the bunkering operation, is now happening at the Detached Mole. Happening at the Detached Mole is not  
1695 any closer, in my view, than when it used to happen, where the vessel used to be, in respect of those who have homes in the south district in Gibraltar.

1700 But, look, noxious smells are something that will always be a concern, and the Government ensures that there are no noxious smells, using the procedures that have long been put in place in respect of such bunkering operations. Those do not change.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Right, Mr Speaker, the Hon. Chief Minister, reminds us of what he used to tell us when we were in Government, but, I have to ask him, in terms of the new technologies, of capture of those bad smells, have they been implemented now?

1705 **Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, look, I do not know whether the position is that they were implemented when they were in Government, or just after we were elected, but – this is what I am saying to him – they have long been implemented. And the movement of the vessel is not relevant to those things, or rather that does not change because of the movement of the vessel. There was a big issue with noxious smells some time ago, and at the time, mix or blend of oils was identified as the problem and recapture technology was one of the issues that was introduced, to ensure that these things did not happen – the way that the bunds are put around the pipes that take the oil from one vessel to another, and look, Mr Speaker, we have not had complaints of noxious smells at the rate at which we used to have them.

1710 I cannot remember, Mr Speaker, whether they deserve the credit for that, or whether we deserve the credit for it, but this is something now in the past.

1715 **Hon. Dr J E Cortes:** If I may assist, Mr Speaker, as to credit, because the hon. Members opposite like to refer to my past. Whether it happened before or after December 2011, I can certainly take a lot of the credit, because I campaigned in order to resolve this before I was elected a Minister. (*Banging on desks*)

1720 **Mr Speaker:** Next question.

## EQUALITY, SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE ELDERLY

Q60/2014

Equal Opportunities Commission –  
Establishing

**Acting Clerk:** Question 60, the Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond.

1725 **Hon. Mrs I M Ellul-Hammond:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Equality say, as per the Government's manifesto commitment, when the Equal Opportunities Commission will be established, and how it will be set up?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly.

1730 **Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, it will be set up in this term of office.

**Q61-66/2014**  
**Social Services' homes and buildings –**  
**Fire alarm systems and smoke detectors**

1735 **Acting Clerk:** Question 61, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state whether there are fire alarm systems and smoke detectors installed throughout Mount Alvernia?

1740 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly.

**Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 62 to 66.

1745 **Acting Clerk:** Question 62, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state whether during 2012 and 2013 the fire alarm systems and the smoke detectors installed throughout Mount Alvernia have been tested and certified, and if so, by which professional entity and on what dates this has taken place?

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 63, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state whether there are fire alarm systems and smoke detectors installed throughout the Care Agency Building for Looked After Children?

1755

**Acting Clerk:** Question 64, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state whether during 2012 and 2013 the fire alarm systems and the smoke detectors installed at the Care Agency Building for Looked After Children have been tested and certified, and if so, by which professional entity and on what dates this has taken place?

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 65, the Hon. J J Netto.

1765 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state whether there are fire alarm systems and smoke detectors installed throughout the premises of Dr Giraldi Home and St Bernadette's Occupational Centre?

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**Acting Clerk:** Question 66, the Hon. J J Netto.

**Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state whether the fire alarm systems and the smoke detectors at the premises of Dr Giraldi Home and St Bernadette's Occupational Centre have been tested and certified during 2012 and 2013 and if so, by which professional entity and on what dates this has taken place?

1775

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly.

**Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, there are fire alarm systems and smoke detectors in Mount Alvernia, Dr Giraldi Home, and St Bernadette's Resource Centre, and smoke detector alarms in the Looked After Children facilities.

1780

No fire alarm system or smoke detectors were installed in Mount Alvernia during 2012 and 2013.

Dr Giraldi Home and St Bernadette's Resource Centre were tested on 28th February 2013 and 25th May 2013 by GibElec.

1785

The Looked After Children facilities have smoke detector alarms which are inspected for quality assurance on a daily basis by managers responsible for the facilities and looking after the children. Repairs,

when these are needed, are carried out by the Care Agency maintenance crew, who also inspect alarms on a monthly basis.

1790 **Hon. J J Netto:** I think I missed, actually, Mr Speaker, the first part of the hon. Lady's answer to the question. Did I understand rightly, she said that there were some premises... I think, she might have said the KGV... I beg your pardon, Mount Alvernia, where there were not any fire alarms or smoke detectors. Have I understood it wrongly, perhaps?

1795 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** No, Mr Speaker, what I said, in answer to the question which asked whether any had been installed in 2012 and 2013, I answered that none had been installed because they were already there. They have not been installed in 2012-13.

**Q67-69/2014**  
**Social Services' homes and buildings –**  
**Fire evacuation drills**

**Acting Clerk:** Question 67, the Hon. J J Netto.

1800 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state if there have been any fire evacuation drills at Mount Alvernia during 2012 and 2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly.

1805 **Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 68 and 69.

**Acting Clerk:** Question 68, the Hon. J J Netto.

1810 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state if there have been any fire evacuation drills at Dr Giraldi Home and St Bernadette Occupational Therapy Centre during 2012 and 2013?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 69, the Hon. J J Netto.

1815 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the Minister for Social Services state if there have been any fire evacuation drills at the Care Agency Home for Looked After Children?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly.

1820 **Minister for Equality, Social Services and the Elderly (Hon. Miss S J Sacramento):** Mr Speaker, I can confirm that fire drills have been carried out at Mount Alvernia, Dr Giraldi Home, St Bernadette's Resource Centre and the Looked After Children facilities during 2012 and 2013.

1825 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, can the hon. Lady, perhaps, inform the House as to how often perhaps the fire evacuation drills happen? Is it once a year or perhaps more than once a year?

1830 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, they happen more than once a year. For example, in Mount Alvernia, we had drills, two in July 2012; two in December 2012; one in March 2013; two in April 2013; one in August 2013; and one in September 2013.

1835 **Hon. J J Netto:** I am grateful for that, Mr Speaker, but can I ask another supplementary question in line to what I asked to his colleague before, given the vulnerability of some of the service users, given their conditions, mobility, perhaps disability, and other complications – not all, indeed, but some of them – does the management have in all these facilities a personal plan designed, taking into account the various needs of those particular individuals for the purpose of executing those fire drills?

1840 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, it is significant that, actually, we do have it now. I just gave an example of the drills that we have had at Mount Alvernia, but if I can say that, at Giraldi Home and St Bernadette's we have had drills in March 2012; June 2012; September 2012; January 2013; August 2013;

1845 and October 2013. Prior to December 2011, Mr Speaker, we can only find a record of one such drill taking place at Dr Giraldi and St Bernadette's (**Several Members:** Shame, shame!) and that was in 2011. But, in any event in answer to the question, yes there is – in the same way as my colleague answered, yes there is now a strategy going forward in all the homes that we are looking at our requirements in terms of the fire procedures. Of course, fire alarms and fire systems were already in place; fire evacuation drills did take place in some of the facilities – not all of the facilities, but going forward, this is now happening in all of the facilities.

1850 **Hon. J J Netto:** Mr Speaker, given the fact that there have been fire drills, exercises being carried out in various parts of the buildings that pertain to Social Services, when they actually carry out those fire evacuation drills, do they take on board different possible scenarios? For instance, a fire may emerge in the front entrance of a particular building, and therefore the requirement is needed that the evacuation actually takes place through a different route.

1855 I say this because, again, this is part of the research I was doing in relation to the UK, that the actual plans they may have on particular premises differ every single time – or sometimes it differs when they do the actual drills. Of course, that will depend as well on the characteristic of the building. But, what I would like to ask the hon. Lady is whether they have taken into account that there is a need, perhaps, to have different routes of evacuation, depending where the fire location is.

1860 **Hon. Miss S J Sacramento:** Mr Speaker, this is not information that I have, that I can confirm, but I would imagine that those tasked with ensuring that there are drills taking place will do so responsibly and however necessary. So, the hon. Gentleman can rest assured that going forward, in any event, I will check that this is the case, but I am sure that it is already.

## FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GAMING

Q70-75/2014

### Gibraltar International Bank – Plans for establishment and running

1865 **Acting Clerk:** Question 70, the Hon. D J Bossino, on behalf of the Hon. S M Figueras.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services provide details to this House of progress in the establishment of the Gibraltar International Bank?

1870 **Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services and Gaming.

**Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola):** Mr Speaker, I will answer this question together with Questions 71 to 75.

1875 **Acting Clerk:** Question 71, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services say the precise extent to which the Government and/or the Gibraltar Savings Bank will be involved in the establishment and running of the Gibraltar International Bank?

1880 **Acting Clerk:** Question 72, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services say whether any premises have been identified for use by the Gibraltar International Bank, and if so, which premises and on what terms?

1885 **Acting Clerk:** Question 73, the Hon. D J Bossino.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services say how the Gibraltar International Bank will be funded and, in particular, whether the Bank will be funded by either of the Gibraltar Savings Bank, Credit Finance Limited, or any other Government agency or company, whether directly or indirectly?

1890 **Acting Clerk:** Question 74, the Hon. D J Bossino.

1895 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Can the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services say how the Government intends that the Gibraltar International Bank will be capitalised?

**Acting Clerk:** Question 75, the Hon. D A Feetham.

1900 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister please say who are the Government's proposed directors and managers of the Gibraltar International Bank, giving their names and professional backgrounds?

**Acting Clerk:** Answer, the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services and Gaming.

1905 **Minister for Financial Services and Gaming (Hon. A J Isola):** Mr Speaker, in answer to Question 70, a high level steering group has been established to assist me, in defining the shape, substance and form of the Gibraltar International Bank. The group includes input from the Financial Services Commission, the Finance Centre Department, the Gibraltar Banking Association, and experienced bankers.

1910 In addition, accountancy, banking and legal professionals have been engaged to prepare the licensing application, including a business plan, and other necessary components. The application was submitted to the Financial Services Commission in late December, of last year, and I am confident that an in-principle decision will be received, by us, in due course. These professionals continue to assist us, in all technical aspects of the Bank and its application.

1915 Banking platform providers are being examined, and one particular operator in this field has already been to Gibraltar to familiarise themselves with the relevant systems.

Premises have also been identified and architects engaged.

1920 In answer to Question 71, as has been stated before, Mr Speaker, the specific intention of the Government is to ensure that the Gibraltar International Bank's day-to-day operations are independent of Government. It will be run on commercial lines by an independent management team with significant banking experience.

I am pleased to inform this House that the Government has identified premises for use by the Gibraltar International Bank. A number of options have been considered, including privately owned property.

1925 The premises that have been identified, after discussions with the Banking Committee, are Government owned and the terms of occupation are currently under consideration. An announcement will be made, once these matters have been agreed.

In respect of Question 73, Mr Speaker, no decision has yet been taken as to how the Gibraltar International Bank will be funded.

1930 In answer to Question 74, Mr Speaker, the Gibraltar International Bank will clearly need to be capitalised by its shareholder. No decision has yet been taken as to how this will be achieved.

In answer to Question 75, Government is not yet in a position to disclose the proposed composition of the Executive team, nor indeed of the intended Directors of the Gibraltar International Bank. Although discussions continue with regard to these appointments, no announcement can be made at this moment in time.

1935 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, in relation to the answer the Hon. Minister has given in connection with Question 70, he talks about the high level steering group, I think he described it, and of course, we asked about progress, and I am grateful for the full answer he has given, but is he able to tell me now, whether he is in a position to advise this House whether he thinks that the Government will be able to stick to its publicly announced timeline of completion by, I think it is autumn this year. I think it is October this year.

1940 **Hon. A J Isola:** Yes, Mr Speaker, it is certainly our intention, to meet the very tight and strict timeline that we have set. As you will appreciate, it is not just the property or the platform or the people; there are a whole host of things that require to be prepared and put into place, long before the opening of the branch. But we have set a strict timeline, because that is a necessity that we have.

1945 So the simple answer is, yes, Mr Speaker, we have every intention of sticking to the timeline we have set, and very much hope that we do.

1950 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, did I hear the Hon. Minister correctly, when he said that the business plan had not been completed, in his answer to 70, and that it was in the process of being completed by this high level steering group, as he described it?

**Hon. A J Isola:** No, Mr Speaker, I said that the business plan had been prepared in consultation with the accounting, legal and banking team that we had engaged, not the Banking Committee, and that has actually been submitted to the Financial Services Commission.

1955 **Hon. D A Feetham:** But, in that application, the Government has not identified how the Bank is going  
to be capitalised, and where the money is actually going to be coming from? Because, of course, he has said  
to this House today that no decision has been made, but anybody that has any experience of applications to  
the Financial Services Commission in respect of any licensing issues, that is one of the issues that one  
1960 would expect the application form to contain – how a bank or a company is going to be capitalised. So, has  
the Government not made a decision, and that has not formed part of any disclosure that has been provided  
to the Financial Services Commission? What is the position in relation to it?

**Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, it is really quite simple. The hon. Member has touched on a number of  
different areas which have different facets to them. As I have said, in answer to a separate question, the  
1965 Executive team has not yet been appointed. That is relevant to the extent that we wish to engage them in  
issues like capitalisation. Of course, the business plan has been put forward to the Financial Services  
Commission, and of course, the shareholder, being the Government, will arrange for its capitalisation, but  
as the hon. Member will know full well, at the end of the day, the capitalisation of the company is done by a  
1970 process of consultation with the Regulator, meeting the ICAP requirements, meeting the requirements of  
the business plan, and then a conclusion is then reached. So the capital will be provided by the shareholder,  
and the capital will be fixed in consultation with the Executive team, the Financial Services Commission, to  
ensure that we meet the regulatory requirements that will be set on us, as a regulated entity.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, but with respect, that does not follow the previous answer that he has already  
1975 provided to this House. You see, one of the questions that Mr Figueras asked was whether this bank was  
going to be funded out of the proceeds from the Gibraltar Saving Bank or from Credit Finance, and the  
answer that the hon. Gentleman gave is the Government had not made a decision in relation to that.

Now, I would have thought that before one submits an application to the Financial Services  
1980 Commission, the Government would have made a decision in relation to that, because that is precisely one  
of the questions, certainly, that one would expect a regulator to make, because if it is capitalised from  
monies coming from the Gibraltar Savings Bank, and from Credit Finance, the Government wants this to be  
an independent run institution, independent of the Government. But I would have thought that if it is being  
1985 funded from the Gibraltar Savings Bank, or from Credit Finance, that that is information that ought to be  
before the Financial Services Commission, and it is certainly a decision that the Government ought to have  
made before making the application.

It seems to me, Mr Speaker, that this is an application that really is being rushed through with the  
Financial Services Commission – I do not know why, but it appears to be rushed through, without essential  
1990 information that one would have expected to have been included in an application of this nature, going to a  
regulator. Can the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services comment on that?

**Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, if we do it quickly, we are rushing it; if we do it slowly we are being  
lethargic. I do not think we could ever quite keep the Members opposite happy, or indeed, with respect to  
their obsession with Credit Finance. Anything that we do or suggest, like a jack-in-the-box, up comes  
1995 Credit Finance. What this Government is doing, in consultation and being advised by serious professionals,  
including the hon. Member's partner, who submitted the banking application on our behalf, I do not think  
would agree with him, that it is rushed or done in a haphazard manner.

In fact, entirely the opposite: a huge amount of work has been put into this application by our lawyers,  
our accountants and our banking experts, in conjunction with a very high-powered Banking Committee that  
2000 includes the regulator. Now, for the hon. Member to stand up and say that this is being rushed through, ill  
thought and ill conceived, with the best intentions, in my view, Mr Speaker, is completely ill conceived, to  
the extent of being irresponsible, on something as serious and important to the community as this bank is.

And it is also worthy of note, Mr Speaker, that the entire community have welcomed this process, and  
this bank, because they fully understand and recognise the need and the importance of this bank to our  
2005 community. I say the entire community: I am perhaps misleading the public, because the hon. Members  
opposite have not. They very cautiously welcomed, as they usually do, anything that is positive or good for  
the people of Gibraltar.

Mr Speaker, it would be entirely irresponsible for this Government to say how or what the capital is  
going to be, when it has not yet been agreed with the regulator. If the capital is to be £500,000, or £50  
2010 million, I think Government would require to consider how best to capitalise, and where that capital should  
come from.

The Members opposite should know, there is a European Union Directive which sets a minimum  
capital, but there will be very few banks that go with a minimum capital. We certainly have no intention of  
doing it, to ensure that people know, before the Opposition start talking it down, that it is 100% capitalised,  
properly and effectively, and so, if the Government follows the advice of our legal advisers, our accounting  
2015 professionals and our banking professionals, I am happy for them to have that discussion with you directly.



**Hon. D A Feetham:** What a load of nonsense I have to say, Mr Speaker!

I have not said that this is ill conceived or ill thought out. I will reserve my judgement until I hear more from the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services, in relation to how this is going to be structured, where the money is going to be coming from, and exactly what it is going to be used for. That is precisely why we have cautiously welcomed the enterprise.

Indeed, if we had been elected into Government, we would have done something similar, but it would have been truly independent of Government, and would have been capitalised through funds provided by the Government.

Now, with respect to the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services, on the one hand he says, that we are obsessed with Credit Finance, but he himself has said that he is not ruling out that the money to capitalise this bank comes from Credit Finance Company Ltd. He has not ruled it out, so how can we be obsessed by something that he is considering as an option. It is a ridiculous statement for the Minister, with respect, for him to make.

Now, Mr Speaker, can I ask the Hon. the Minister for Financial Services, will this decision in principle, from the Financial Services Commission, wait until the new Chairman or Chairwoman of the Financial Services Commission is in place? As I understand, she is going to be in place in February – March, I mean, he will correct me if I am wrong. But will it wait until... bearing in mind, this is a very important application indeed? Will it wait until then, bearing in mind that it is an important application, and it is also an application that has been filed, lacking some information necessary, at the end of December of last year?

**Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, I do not understand how the hon. Member can say to the people of Gibraltar that –

**Mr Speaker:** Now, just a moment. I was going to interrupt the Leader of the Opposition, when he was beginning to debate with you. You are now both of you beginning to debate, and that is the first time this morning that hon. Members are beginning to debate, during Question Time, and I am not having it. You answer the last supplementary that he asked. Right, that is your job, to answer that supplementary, not to debate as to what they would have done, or what they would not have done, or what you would have done. I am not having a debate on this issue, because, I know how things can get out of hand. Alright. Particularly, when members of the hon. and learned profession of barristers are concerned.

So, I am giving a warning, right at the beginning, right, that I am only allowing the Leader of the Opposition to ask supplementaries and you will answer those supplementaries, but you will not have a debate.

**Hon. A J Isola:** I am grateful, Mr Speaker.

In answering the question, Mr Speaker, the Opposition, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, has premised his question by suggesting that the application made has been rushed, and is not complete. That is simply not the case. And unless he has seen the banking application that has been made on behalf of the bank, he could not possibly make that judgement. So, I do not understand, on what basis he can possibly stand up here today, and say to the people of Gibraltar that the application has been rushed through, and further, that it is incomplete – because he has not seen it. So, on what basis does he make that question, or make that suggestion? (*Interjection*) Well yes, my hon. Friend is reminding me that in fact, he is suggesting that his hon. firm has made a haphazard rush to an incomplete application. I have seen it myself, I have read it through myself, Mr Speaker, and it is an excellent application. Which is why the person that is doing it for us was selected, because she is excellent at what she does.

Mr Speaker, with regard to the suggestion, which I find extraordinary, in his question that the application should wait until the new CEO of the Financial Services Commission is in place, is wholly improper. It is improper on the current Chief Executive, it is improper on the forthcoming, the new Chief Executive, and it is improper on anybody else within the Financial Services Commission who is involved in the process of licensing and regulating our financial services sector. Because, what he is implying, is that we are trying to rush it through, with the incumbent, in case the one that is coming in does not like it.

Mr Speaker, the Financial Services Commission, as this Bank will be, is an independent institution, and it dictates its own timescales, by whom, and by when, applications are considered. And in answer to the hon. Member's question, I think it is wholly improper for him to suggest that there is any advantage to be gained by having it heard through this CEO, or the next CEO. They are both professional people, and I trust in their judgement. (*Banging on desks*)

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, I will take my own council as to what is proper and improper and I certainly will not take council from the hon. Gentleman. (*Interjection*)

Mr Speaker, why is the hon. Gentleman reluctant to provide this House with the information to the question that I asked – not the supplementary but the Question that I asked at 75, who the proposed

directors of this particular company are, both executive, and non executive directors, being proposed in the application.

2080 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, the simple answer to that is twofold. Firstly we are in the process of identifying the people that we believe, to be best suited to do those jobs, so agreement has not been reached with them, as yet.

2085 And the second aspect of that is that they cannot be appointed until such time as the regulator approves their appointment. As the hon. Member will know, directors and non-executive directors of any credit institution are required to be approved by the regulator, and that has not happened yet. So, as and when we have got through those two hurdles, we will make a statement as to who they are. But, at this moment in time, we are not in a position to do so.

2090 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Well, Mr Speaker, you see, every time the hon. Gentleman stands up, and he provides an answer, the alarm bells begin to ring, in relation to my original concern with all this. He says to me, we are in the process of identifying the directors. That is what he has said to me, now. Now, every single banking application that I have seen has always identified the directors, the mind and management of the company that is applying for a licence. He does not know where the money is coming from, because he does not know whether the money is coming from Gibraltar Savings Bank, from Credit Finance or  
2095 somewhere else. Well, look, I am afraid that if this is not an application that appears to be rushed and incomplete, because the Government has not made decisions on crucial aspects of this application before submitting the application, well I do not know what is. Does the Government, at the very least, have a shortlist of people that they have identified to the Financial Services Commission, so that the Financial Services Commission can at least say, well look, out of these ten (*Interjection*) these three are acceptable?

2100 **Mr Speaker:** Let him answer that question, does the Government have a shortlist?

2105 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, the Government is taking the advice from a very senior Banking Committee, comprising of representatives from the Banking Association, from the Financial Services Commission, from the Finance Centre Department and from professional bankers. We have identified individuals, we have not agreed terms, and we have not got regulatory approval. Now, surely it is better for the hon. Member to wait for these appointments to take place, before he jumps up to judge whether alarm bells should or should not be ringing. Because there is plenty of time for him to do that, and these announcements will be made, obviously, many, many months before the Bank opens, in the third quarter of  
2110 this year. As indeed will the appointment of the CEO, and the COO, which are crucial to the functioning of the bank.

2115 The Government has told the Opposition and the people of Gibraltar that it will be an independently managed bank, on commercial lines, run by people with enormous banking experience. Why do you not simply await those names and those details to be released, as and when they can be released, and then form a view, rather than jump the gun, and make suggestions of alarm bells, hastiness, and ill preparation, which is what the Member continues to do?

2120 **Hon. D A Feetham:** But, Mr Speaker, how can the Government feel so confident that it is going to receive an approval in principle by February, when the application is so lacking in critical information? This is what I do not understand. The answer may well help me in a professional capacity as well, because maybe I can go back, and I can do exactly the same, and obtain approvals in principle, in two months, for a *bank, a bank*. We are not talking about a kiosk on Main Street; we are talking about a bank. An approval in principle, in barely two months, without having identified to the FSC the directors, without having identified to the FSC where the money is actually going to be coming from. (*Interjection*) I mean, I do not  
2125 understand how –

2130 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, I find it staggering that the hon. Member should say what he is saying, because what this Government is doing with this application is precisely what we have been advised to do by our lawyers, (*Interjection*) his firm, his partner, who tell us that it is absolutely normal when making a banking application, to receive an in-principle consent, subject to a list of conditions, which include the directors, the executives, the premises, the team – absolutely normal. Now, if my hon. and learned Friend has a difficulty with that, I suggest he takes legal advice. Because I have taken legal advice, and I am following exactly the advice that we have received.

2135 **Hon. D A Feetham:** In terms of the steering group, this high level steering group that the Government has set up, whom from the FSC is sitting in this high level steering group that is helping the Government,

and precisely what is the nature of the assistance that the steering group is giving, in relation to this particular bank? (*Interjections*)

2140 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, the Chief Executive Officer of the Financial Services Commission sits on the Banking Committee, and he gives support, as he has an intimate knowledge of banking operations, from a regulatory perspective, and on an operational perspective.

2145 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, but what is the purpose of the steering group? Because we have a situation where the (*Interjections*) application has already been submitted to the Financial Services Commission. It is not uncommon for the Financial Services Commission, and whoever makes the application form, to be in contact in relation to the application. But what is the steering group precisely for, in relation to the set up of this particular bank, and why does it require somebody from the Financial Services Commission, in this case a high level, the Chief Executive to be on it as – ? (*Interjection*)

2150 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, the Banking Committee was set up to take advice at the highest level from people across the sector, including the regulator. It has been immensely helpful to me in advising me. I have no experience of setting up a bank, I have never done it before. And consequently, the more advice and assistance that I can get in that process, the better the product will be, and that is what everybody wants.

2155 The assistance of the regulator has been as significant as each of the other members of the team. We do not meet with the regulator on the licensing application; that is done entirely by the professionals, who meet with the FSC – not with the CEO, as it happens; the person in charge of banking – on a very regular basis. They met this week and they meet again next week, as they go through the application process. I thought it was entirely appropriate that we should seek assistance and advice from them, because they have enormous experience, not just of one bank, but across the entire banking spectrum in Gibraltar.

2160 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. the Minister, and I would ask him to clarify, in two answers he has given, in relation to the identification of the directors and managers of the bank, he says that the Government is in the process of identifying, and I think, in answer to a further supplementary, he said that they have indeed been identified. First of all, can he clarify the position? What is in fact the position?

2165 And also, a second supplementary, if I may, Mr Speaker, because it is related: is it the intention, depending on how he answers, as part of the process, to advertise the positions? Is that going to form...? If the answer is you are in the process of identifying, it is possible that as part of that decision-making process, the Government intends to advertise the positions.

2170 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, it is an ongoing process, you speak to different people, you take advice from different people, different names are proposed, discussions then ensue. We have a good idea of who we would like. We need to agree with them, we need to get regulatory approval for them, and it is just an ongoing process. There is not any issue, there is not any difficulty. It is like if you are wishing to appoint certain people, you sound out, you take advice, you then try and agree terms, and then those terms are conditional on regulatory approval.

2175 So it is simply a process that we are going through, and we hope to be able to come back to you, and tell you who we propose that they will be, somewhere along the line. But, it is simply a process we are going through. Whether those specific jobs will be advertised, the answer is no. Whether the remainder of the jobs will be advertised, of course, yes. Outside the senior executives, because the intention is, once they are in place, they will then drive the process. They will then do the interviews, they will have a much better idea of what is needed than I do, or we do.

2180 **Hon. D J Bossino:** Mr Speaker, also, in answer to one of the questions, he made a reference to the shareholder. Is he in a position to identify to this House who that shareholder is? Or will that also have to await, as he said earlier, the conclusion of the application, and at some point, we will get another statement from the Government, providing the further details that we have asked in this House already, and this one which I am asking now.

2190 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, at the moment the ultimate shareholder of the company is the Government. In terms of how that evolves, if there is to be any change or not, we do not know, but that is something that is obviously being considered in line with everything else that I have mentioned this morning.

Was there a second question there? No.

2195 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Is it the Government, or a Government-owned company? Can he be more specific in relation to that? (*Interjections*) A Government-owned company?

**Hon. A J Isola:** Ultimately the Government. (*Interjections*)

2200 **Hon. D J Bossino:** The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition has asked specifically, now, who owns the  
bank, and it is directly the Government, as opposed to... because I think the Hon. the Minister for  
Employment is suggesting that the Hon. Minister was now answering questions, answering in terms of  
ultimately the Government. Obviously, it is within the realms of possibility is that in giving that answer  
2205 there is interposed between the bank and the Government ultimately, a Government-owned company. Can  
he explain the structure as it currently stands? Or have I misunderstood...?

**Chief Minister (Hon. F R Picardo):** Mr Speaker, look, as hon. Members will know, the Government  
owns many things. It owns some things directly, and it owns some things through companies. When it is  
applying for the licence, it is applying through the licence with the Government as the shareholder. Now  
2210 whether that ownership of those shares is ever going to be put into a corporate vehicle is something which,  
subject to regulatory approval, may or not happen. It is not an issue which would be surprising, given that,  
for example, the Government owns buildings, some of them directly, and some of them through companies.  
This is just part of the structure of the Government which has been in place for many years, including the  
time that they were in office, and he will know that there are a number of Government asset-holding  
2215 companies. When the shares in this bank crystallise, they may be put in a Government company, but the  
application is by the Government itself.

**Hon. D J Bossino:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I am grateful for the answer. Now, again, in relation to one of the  
questions which I posed on Mr Figueras' behalf, which relates to the premises, I think the Hon. the Minister  
2220 answered that a number of options were being considered, but they are all Government-owned properties. Is  
he...? He is nodding, so maybe he can clarify the position – that is what my note says. I assume it was  
Government-owned property, but if it is not, then I would encourage him to take the opportunity to clarify  
the position. But, my question was, Mr Speaker, whether he is able to identify in this House which options  
2225 are being considered.

**Hon. A J Isola:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I said in my answer that a number of different options had been  
considered, including privately owned property, and that premises had been identified, which is  
Government owned. That is what I said. (*Interjections*)

2230 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Effectively, you have considered a number of alternatives, but you have chosen  
Government-owned premises, and can he identify those Government-owned premises. There surely cannot  
be any difficulty in doing that?

2235 **Hon. A J Isola:** Mr Speaker, the position at the moment, as I said in my answer, is that once we have  
agreed the terms, and everything is ready and it can be formalised, an announcement will be made, but not  
at this moment in time.

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, but, Mr Speaker, the terms with what – with the Financial Services  
Commission, because they might not agree these particular premises? Is that what his concern is?

2240 I am just trying to identify the reason for the Hon. Minister's reluctance in providing me with  
information that I seek, in terms of identifying these premises. If the answer is, well the FSC may not find  
those premises suitable, and there is a risk of that, then perhaps I could understand. But, having identified  
the Government-identified premises for this bank, I think it is a perfectly legitimate question for the  
Opposition to ask, which is well, what are the premises and the venue identified?

2245 **Hon. Chief Minister:** No, Mr Speaker, the issue is not a Financial Services Commission issue. The  
issue is that the Government in respect of that property has other responsibilities that it needs to ensure it  
can deal with, before it is able to finally say okay, we having identified it. We can now confirm that there is  
no other call on this property, and it can be used for that purpose, and that is the process that, I think, makes  
2250 it important for us, not to make an announcement until we are ready to do so.

Because, Mr Speaker, the hon. Gentleman will allow me to go back to this theme that I have developed  
today: Gibraltar is two and a half miles by one mile, and in respect of property, there are many calls, by  
many different parties, for each particular property – in particular, public property – so we are in the  
process of ensuring that that property can be used for this purpose, both structurally, both in terms of what  
2255 other calls there may for it, and what other commitments there are for it, and we will make an  
announcement as soon as we are ready to do so in this respect.

The hon. Gentlemen seem to be pursuing us on this issue, as if we do not intend to make an  
announcement. They like to pretend that we want to keep things secret. Well, look, Mr Speaker, at least on

2260 the day that the bank opens, we will be telling people where it is, so that they can turn up to open their accounts. They just need to abide with us a little bit more, so that we are able to make the announcements, in the proper way, when we are able to do so, having dealt with all of Government's obligations, not just regulatory but also as landlord, as owner of property and as an employer of people.

2265 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, the Hon. the Chief Minister, keeping anything secret – perish the thought of that! But I can understand the answer, if it is based on this: that there might be calls from somebody in the private sector, because the premises are occupied by someone in the private sector, and identifying those premises might, for example, as an example, lead those private individuals playing hardball with the Government, in a way that perhaps is not in the public interest. But, if there are calls on these premises from, for example, Government Departments or the public service, well I do not understand  
2270 why there would be any type of commercial sensitivity, or any other type of sensitivity, in identifying the premises. Can he identify what the problem is in relation to these calls? (*Interjection*)

**Mr Speaker:** May I say that hon. Members of the Opposition really do need to listen, very carefully, to the main answers that are provided to questions, because sometimes the information that they are seeking is  
2275 already contained in the main answer that has been given, and they may not realise that that is the case. Let me quote the sentence, that I have in the answer here, with respect to the premises.

2280 'The premises have been selected after discussions with the Banking Committee are Government owned and the terms of occupation are currently under discussion.'

That was the answer, that was the main answer that was given. Hon. Members do not seem to... perhaps they were not paying 100% attention, and they missed that point. (*Interjections*)

2285 **Hon. D A Feetham:** With respect it has nothing to do with the question I have asked –

**Mr Speaker:** Let me go back to what I am saying. These matters of... These questions are about a very important issue, and it is clear that hon. Members are going to spend more time in asking supplementaries, that may be the case with a run-of-the-mill question. But I, as Speaker, have a duty to point out to hon. Members that, very often, the answer has already been provided in the main answer, and yet they ask a  
2290 supplementary about exactly the same thing, and that is quite unnecessary.

2295 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Yes, and in the last session of Parliament, Mr Speaker tried to give me a lesson about how he was a member of the Public Service Commission, and he had some kind of knowledge which made a question that we asked inappropriate.

**Mr Speaker:** That is totally irrelevant – nothing to do with what is happening at the moment. My job, as Speaker, is to see that the Rules of this House are implemented. If the hon. Members do not like the way that I am carrying out my duties, they know that they have got recourse to certain steps.

2300 **Hon. D A Feetham:** Well, I certainly do not like the way that the Hon. Mr Speaker has made interventions last time, has made an intervention now, and implied that somehow I do not know, as Leader of the Opposition, the answer that has been provided by the Hon. Minister. Well...

2305 **Mr Speaker:** Would the hon. Member sit down! Would the hon. Member sit down! Would the hon. Member sit down!

**Hon. D A Feetham:** May I, at the very least [*inaudible*]

2310 **Mr Speaker:** Will the hon. Member sit down!

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Well, Mr Speaker can shut me up, but I do not think [*inaudible*] –

**Mr Speaker:** Will the hon. Member – will the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition sit down!

2315 Look, where answers have been provided to a number of questions on the Agenda, five or six questions have been answered, and it does happen – and I notice it, because I happen to have the text, nobody else has got the text on that side, but I happen to have the text.

2320 At the last meeting, may I remind the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition that I tore out a page of my answers, and I passed it on to the Opposition, because they had missed the answer. I have the full text of the answer, and therefore I am aware whether a question that has now been asked as a supplementary has already been answered or not. I am aware of that, and therefore, because I am aware, I am saying that,

perhaps, the hon. Members, in listening, because they do not have the advantage of the text... So what I am saying is, please pay very careful attention, on these matters of vital importance, to the original answers that have been given. What is wrong with that, that I should give such guidance? (*Interjection*) What is wrong with that? What is unreasonable about that?

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**Hon. D A Feetham:** Because you are suggesting, and with respect to Mr Speaker, it is not the first time – he has intervened in the past, as well, in a manner that we do not believe is fair – he is suggesting that we do not listen to the answers, or that somebody here has not listened to the answer.

2330

I have asked a question: it is not related to the information that the Hon. Mr Speaker has actually just read to me, and it is patently obvious it is not related to what he has just read to me. And therefore, look, the Hon. the Chief Minister was quite prepared to stand up, without Mr Speaker making this a battle between the Opposition and the Chair, he was prepared to answer the question, and that would have been the end of it. But, Mr Speaker has chosen to intervene, as he has chosen to intervene last time, and indeed in previous months as well.

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**Mr Speaker:** Mr Speaker will intervene whenever he deems it necessary, in order to have good order, and if the hon. Member is not satisfied, he can bring a motion of censure against me. That is the recourse that they ultimately have.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, may I rise a moment, just as Leader of the House, to say one thing. You have an invidious job, as Speaker. Not all of us will always agree with things that you may say about each of us, as is normal in the cut and thrust of debate. But, I think it is important – and I hope I speak for *all* Members, Mr Speaker – that we always accept your Rulings, and either take issues up with you calmly at the end of sessions, or in the process of sessions where we consider that the business is being interrupted, but that we always do so with the temperance that you ask us to share with each other, that we should also share with you.

2345

And can I just ask all Members, in my capacity as Leader of the House, not as Chief Minister, just that we should reflect on that, before we take matters any further, because I think it is in the interests of our community that everybody sees full respect paid to Mr Speaker in this House when we are debating these issues.

2350

And, Mr Speaker, if you will allow me, I would suggest that given the temperature to which the debate has risen at this moment, that we should simply recess the House now until 3.00 p.m.

2355

**Hon. D A Feetham:** Mr Speaker, it is in his prerogative, of course, as Leader of the House, to adjourn the House. I have to say that, we, as an Opposition, have always attempted to conduct ourselves in a way that is temperate.

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But at the same time, what the Opposition cannot do is accept or be pushovers in a situation where it believes that it is being unfairly treated. I have always, *always, always* when I have faced this situation, attempted to do so in a calm, measured way. But what I cannot do is refrain from calling a spade a spade, when I believe that a spade is indeed a spade. That would not be true to myself. It would not be true to my parliamentary colleagues, and I do not think that it does democracy any justice at all.

But perhaps he could just simply answer the supplementary question, and we just move away from this particular topic, because that was the last supplementary question – but it is up to him.

2365

**Mr Speaker:** The Hon. the Leader of the Opposition is accusing me of treating the Opposition unfairly –

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**Hon. D A Feetham:** No. May I say... No, I am not saying that the... and I do not want the public to go away with the impression that I am suggesting that the Hon. the Speaker is inherently treating the Opposition unfairly.

I believe that the Hon. Mr Speaker has been unfair in the comments that he has made today, as indeed he was unfair last time round in the comments that he made about the Public Service Commission.

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Now, taking that position, I think that it is incumbent upon me to say we are... that the comment is not unfair. That is not being discourteous, to the Chair, or to anybody else. Indeed, it is just simply calling a spade a spade.

But I am not suggesting, for the record, Mr Speaker, that I believe that Mr Speaker has some kind of, either... you know, a campaign against the Opposition; I am not. But the comments that Mr Speaker has made today, as indeed last time round, are not, in my view, fair to the Opposition.

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**Hon. Chief Minister:** Mr Speaker, this is the point I was trying to make to the hon. Gentleman before. I know that you want to reply to him, but he needs to understand that we sometimes all feel hard done by Mr

Speaker's Rulings. It is normal. Anybody who is playing football on a pitch will always feel that sometimes the referee is calling him foul, when actually one feels that one is not being called foul.

2385 During the course of this morning, Mr Speaker has allowed the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition to make some remarks before a question, but has then stopped the Minister before he was able to reply to that. Look, this is the run of play, and what I want the community to know, Mr Speaker, is that we have full confidence in the way that you are discharging your functions, and in the manner in which you are doing so, which we believe to be fair to all Members of this Parliament, because I believe Mr Speaker looks at us each as a Member of this Parliament, and not in which particular grouping we sit.

2390 I do not know whether the Rules allow it, but I think that, given the issues that have been raised, I think it is appropriate for me to move that the House vote confidence in the Speaker, and I assure you of our full support in that respect.

2395 **Mr Speaker:** By the nature of things, the job of the Speaker involves having to deal with matters that are raised... More time has to be given to matters that are raised by the Opposition than by the Government.

Questions are not asked by the Government; they are asked by the Opposition, and therefore the Speaker has the job of considering these very detailed Rules governing the right to ask questions, and it is with them that either the Speaker, directly or through the Clerk, has to deal.

2400 I consider that I am liberal in the way that I interpret the Rules governing the right to ask questions. Because, for instance, there is a particular Rule that says that a question shall not refer to any debate that has occurred or answer that has been given within the preceding six months. If I, as Speaker, were to implement that Rule strictly, perhaps we would only be dealing with 20 questions today, and not with 120. Because many of them are exactly the same question that was asked at the last meeting. (**A Member:** Every month.)

2405 At the last meeting, since the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition has referred to it, the Hon. Mr Bossino asked the question about the Labour Inspectorate. I have got 12 pages of *Hansard* here on one question – it must have taken 45 minutes, an hour. That is, I think, an indication of the extent to which I try to give the Opposition every opportunity to do their job.

2410 Today on the Order Paper, exactly the same question appears, from the Hon. Mr Damon Bossino. The only difference is that 'further to Question 799'. No one is going to tell me that in the exchanges that are going to occur, further to when answers are given that there will be no repetition of what went on in the 12 pages. Nevertheless, I mean Parliament is Parliament, and the Speaker wants to see that Parliament get an opportunity, that Members get an opportunity, to do their job.

2415 I just mention that as an indication of the fact that it is very often... liberality has to be given to Members of the Opposition, because they are the ones that are asking the questions. The Government only brings Bills to the House. That is all. So, by the nature of things, the weight of interventions on the part of the Speaker is invariably, given the nature of things, going to have to be with reference to the Opposition, more than the Government. But I do try, very hard, to strike a balance, and I have no compunction about bringing to order any Member of the Government, including the Chief Minister, if I feel that I have to.

2420 (*Banging on desks*)

Perhaps this might be a convenient time to recess until three o'clock this afternoon because if we do not, and matters carry on further, I may decide to stay at home.

*The House recessed at 12.44 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 3.00 p.m.*