

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
MEETING OF 6 DECEMBER 1976

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

(1⁽²⁾ TO 53⁽²⁾)

QUESTIONS ASKED AT THE MEETING OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY HELD ON
6.12.76

No. 1 of 1976 (2)

ORAL

The Hon B Perez

Does Government intend to move the Revenue Station at Waterport further up into the Wharf Area?

Answer

The Hon Financial and Development Secretary

Yes, Sir. A Scheme has been devised which will permit Varyl Begg Estate traffic to come in and out of the Estate without the present customs supervision. This will be achieved by resiting the Revenue offices to the building presently occupied by the Port Department a after its re-accommodation at North Mole.

The scheme is now being costed and it is hoped that a start on the implementation of the project will be made early in the next financial year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.1 OF 1976

HON J B PEREZ

Would the Honourable Member be in a position to state how long it will take to build the new premises for the Port Department?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

I believe the new premises for the Port Department are available. It is a question of re-accommodation and moving out certain people mainly from the Stevedoring Company's Hostel at the No.1 Jetty.

The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state what are the latest estimates for each Head of Revenue for the current financial year?

Answer:

The Hon Financial and Development Secretary

Yes, Sir. Our projection of the Revenue yield in the current financial year are as follows:-

Head 1	Income Tax	£4,850,000	i.e. increase of	£1,600,000
"	2	Customs	2,600,000	" " " 200,000
"	3	Port, Harbour & Wharf Dues	171,000	" " " 37,000
"	4	Licences etc.	503,500	No Change
"	5	Fees of Court etc.	1,175,000	increase 243,000
"	6	Post Office	425,000	" " 23,000
"	7	Rents	680,000	" " 2,000
"	8	Interest	236,000	" " 70,000
"	9	Lottery	230,000	" " 20,000
"	10	Miscellaneous Receipts	587,000	" " 129,000
"	11	Municipal Services	2,443,000	decrease 200,000
"	12	Repayment of loans	11,900	No change

Thus the total revenue for the year 1976-77 is now expected to be in the region of £13,912,400 - an increase of £2,124,000 over the original estimate. I should point out that the projection of expenditure for this period is in the order of £4.5m over the estimate for the period.

I must stress that the figures I have just quoted are based on collections so far brought to account. The revised estimates which will come before the House in due course will be worked out at a later stage and are therefore likely to come closer to the final figures for the year.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, could the Honourable Member say whether if these figures are based on collections so far, the figures for the income tax do not in fact reflect the effect, for example, of the latest pay increases in the private sector and they do not reflect the under collection that may be resulting from the industrial dispute in the UK Departments?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

They reflect all factors mentioned by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition as far as we are able to estimate ahead of the information available to us at the moment.

HON J BOSSANO

Could I ask the Honourable Member as regards the decrease in the municipal services that is estimated, whether this in fact can also be accounted for by under collection as a result of the effect of industrial action in the Gibraltar Government over the recent months?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. The decrease under that Head of revenue arises mainly from a delay in billing mainly on electricity and water.

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government make available to Members, copies of the latest Agreements on Wages, Salaries and Conditions of Work signed between itself and (a) Government Industrials (b) Government Teachers (c) Government non-industrials (d) the Police Force (e) Doctors, bearing in mind that the House will be asked to vote funds in this connection?

Answer:

The Hon Financial and Development Secretary

Yes, Sir, I would only add that these agreements are not public documents and that they will be issued on request to Honourable Members by virtue of their position in this House.

No.4 of 1976 (2)

ORAL

The Hon G T Restano

Are service vehicles required by law to display exemption discs when using Main Street during the hours when traffic in that street is restricted?

Answer:

The Attorney General

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.4 OF 1976

HON G T RESTANO

Is the Honourable Member aware that on quite a few occasions service vehicles do in fact use Main Street during restricted hours without displaying the discs?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

I am not aware but if the Honourable Member says this is so I will ask the Commissioner of Police to have a check made.

The Hon G T Restano

In view of the alarming increase in burglaries and thefts generally, will Government consider re-introducing the system of patrolling the beat by the Police at night-time?

Answer:

The Hon Attorney General

In fact burglaries have decreased this year. In 1975 there were 295 reported burglaries or attempted burglaries with 65 arrests - this year, to the 26 November, there were 150 reported burglaries or attempted burglaries with 51 arrests. The Police have never abandoned the system of foot patrols and have no intention of lessening the number of foot patrols. They have also introduced mobile patrols and there is now more cover than before.

HON G T RESTANO

In numbers possibly the burglaries are fewer but certainly in the amounts of thefts made in the figures stolen, the figures are far higher. Would Government not say that in the past the type of patrolling by the Police was much more extensive than it is today?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

I have discussed this matter with the Commissioner and he assures me that in fact more cover is now being given than has been given before.

The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state whether the Police Force is authorised to use the Ambulance to transport either Police Officers or arrested persons?

Answer:

The Hon Attorney General

In general Police can use what vehicles they like and over which they have jurisdiction to transport both Police Officers and arrested persons. There is an old ambulance which is awaiting boarding which is used as a general purpose vehicle - it is not used as an ambulance and the Red Cross signs have been painted out. On the day of the sit-down in front of the Convent there was an "all vehicles" call to which one of the new ambulances responded. Three people were put inside and taken to the Police Station. At that time the Commissioner of Police ordered that the ambulance was not to be used for that purpose again.

The order did not get to the ambulance driver, until he had made two more trips taking on each trip two Police Officers and two arrested persons. It was not used thereafter.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, is the Honourable Member then in a position to give an undertaking that the ambulance will be reserved for transporting injured persons which might well result from Police arrest but that in cases where people are not in need of medical treatment the ambulance should not be used.

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

Yes.

The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state whether the Commissioner of Police consulted with higher authority before ordering the arrest of some 180 Trade Unionists involved in a demonstration outside the Convent on 8th November 1976?

Answer:

The Hon Attorney General

He did not.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable and Learned Member not agree that arresting this number of persons is sufficiently unusual in Gibraltar and indeed I would say in any other place as a proportion to the total population to warrant consultation with higher authority before a final decision is taken?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

I think not. The Commissioner of Police is responsible for law and order and he must make decisions on the spot.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that where a decision can in fact set off a train of events that may present a greater disruption of law and order than might otherwise have occurred, it was advisable that the decision should not be at the sole discretion of one man?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

I would not agree.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Member say whether in fact he assumes full responsibility for the judgement of the Commissioner of Police as far as this House is concerned?

MR SPEAKER

I do not think the Honourable Member is entitled to assume responsibility on a matter which does not fall within his province. You might rephrase the question.

HON J BOSSANO

Yes, could I ask, Mr Speaker, if the Commissioner of Police has got sole discretionary powers and is not responsible to anyone and does not have to consult anyone, who does the House hold responsible for actions that may be taken by the Commissioner, is it the Honourable and Learned the Attorney General or is it the Government?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

I am certainly answerable for the actions taken by the Commissioner of Police to this House.

HON J BOSSANO

Would the Honourable Member in these circumstances not agree that where an action is considered desirable by the Commissioner which may have widespread repercussions in our community as far as industrial relations are concerned, it would be advisable that at least he should inform either the Honourable and Learned the Attorney General or a member of the Government before the action is actually implemented even if he does not have to consult?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

It depends entirely on the circumstances of a particular case. Where the Commissioner of Police is faced with certain facts which in his opinion require an immediate decision then it is he who should take that decision without consultation.

HON J BOSSANO

Would the Honourable and Learned Member then agree that unless a decision is of so urgent a nature that it cannot be delayed, there should be an attempt to inform higher authority?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

Not necessarily.

HON J BOSSANO

But, Mr Speaker, has the Honourable and Learned the Attorney General not said just now that where a decision has got to be taken on the spot it is the Commissioner who has to take it. Is that what he has said?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

It is indeed what I have said.

HON J BOSSANO

And therefore, Mr Speaker, does it not follow logically, would the Honourable and Learned Member not agree, that if a decision does not have to be taken on the spot, if there is time to consult, there should be consultation. Would he not agree with that?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

It is I think for the Commissioner to decide whether a decision needs to be taken on the spot. In some cases he will consult, in others if he feels a decision must be taken on the spot he will take it.

HON J BOSSANO

But would the Honourable and Learned Member say whether he thinks that the Commissioner

MR SPEAKER

No, no. I am afraid you are asking the Honourable Member to express a personal opinion.

HON J BOSSANO

I see. Will the Honourable and Learned Member say then that unless the circumstances are such that the Commissioner considers that the decision cannot be delayed, the Commissioner, preferably, should consult. Would he agree with that?

HON ATTORNEY GENERAL

I think it is a very difficult question. The Commissioner

must be given a certain amount of discretion, he must **decide** in each case what he should do whether he should take immediate action or whether this is a case in which consultation might be useful.

No.8 of 1976 (2)

The Hon J Bossano

Is it Government policy to suspend their own employees without pay when the latter are taking industrial action short of strike?

Answer:

The Hon the Chief Minister

No Sir. Each case of industrial action short of strike would have to be considered on its merits and in the light of all the circumstances prevailing at the time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO. 8 OF 1976

HON J BOSSANO

Is the Honourable and Learned the Chief Minister aware that at the recent meeting of JIC the official employers stated that it was their policy to suspend employees without pay when taking industrial action short of strike?

HON CHIEF MINISTER

I am not aware of that but certainly it has not been done in a lot of cases by the Government.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, I am not asking the Government whether they are implementing their policy or not, I am trying to establish what the policy is. Would the Honourable Member say whether in fact the Gibraltar Government is prepared to depart from this policy even if the other two official employers are not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER

I am not aware in what circumstances that statement was made but I think it is quite clear that the right to suspend exists and indeed has been accepted by the Unions to exist. Each case would have to be looked at in its own merits and how each one

MR SPEAKER

Order, order. I would ask those gentlemen in the Strangers Gallery to remove those placards or to leave the gallery. There must be no demonstration or intimidation of Members of this House of any kind whatsoever. The public are entitled to listen to the debates but no more.

I think the Honourable the Chief Minister was holding the floor when we were interrupted.

HON CHIEF MINISTER

I was saying that the right exists and it is a matter of judgement in each case how it is exercised. And the right exists and has been acknowledged by the Unions to exist because at the time of the 24th December 1974, all trade unions associated with the official employers signed an agreement which includes the following paragraph:

"On this specific occasion the official employers agree as an exceptional gesture of goodwill to reinstate the suspended postal workers and telephonists on basic pay for the time lost when they would otherwise have been employed. All the undersigned unions agree that this gesture of goodwill by employers will not be regarded as a precedent if the occasion should arise in the future for management to exercise the right to suspend employees who fail to carry out their normal duties in pursuance of industrial action officially notified to the employer by a recognised trade union or staff association."

That is the end of the quotation. In other words, Sir, the unions concerned accepted in a formal agreement that an employer has the right to suspend any employee who does not carry out his normal duties, I might add that the Honourable Member himself signed that agreement.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, the Honourable and Learned Member still has not answered my question as to what the policy is regarding the rights that may or may not exist and may or may not be recognised. Is it the policy of the Gibraltar Government when faced with industrial action short of strike, generally speaking, to suspend their employees or would they do so only in extremely exceptional circumstances?

HON CHIEF MINISTER

Mr Speaker, I would go back to my prepared first answer which was: "No, Sir each case of industrial action short of strike would have to be considered on its merits and in the light of all the circumstances prevailing at the time."

HON J BOSSANO

Can the Honourable and Learned Member then say whether in recent industrial action involving clerical workers the Government has threatened any group of employees with suspension without pay unless they removed their industrial action?

HON CHIEF MINISTER

It did not reach that stage. There was a warning given to employees of the Government of what the Government would do in certain circumstances but no action was taken. In the course of the industrial action which was in process by the clerical grades, at the meeting with the Industrial Relations Officer he told them this and this is taken from the tape:

"I am instructed to inform you that your industrial action can no longer be tolerated by the Gibraltar Government and unless you are prepared to instruct your members to work normally those of your members who are not performing their duties will be duly warned and relieved of their duties and told to go home and come back at such time as they are prepared to work normally. Such action will not take place for something like 24 hours and I shall require your reply as to whether you are going to instruct your members to work normally so that we can come back and talk about the things which are outstanding or whether it would be unfortunately necessary for management to take their own action to rectify the situation you have created. In the light of what you have told me about yesterday's proposal, this is the only course of action which the Government of Gibraltar see open to them."

So that it was a warning of possible action in possible circumstances but not as a matter of policy of saying that every case of industrial action is going to be followed by suspension.

HON J BOSSANO

Can the Honourable and Learned Member say whether prior to this there was an occasion when individuals were informed that either they worked normally or they would be suspended in that same dispute?

HON CHIEF MINISTER

There have been, I understand, one or two cases which when the time came when in fact no work whatever was being performed, warnings have been given to people and one is glad to say that the warnings have had the effect of their returning to do whatever work was required at that time.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, can the Chief Minister say on what date that warning was delivered, the one he read out?

HON CHIEF MINISTER

Not without notice. I am answering a general question and I cannot go into the particulars.

MR SPEAKER

Next question.

The Hon Dr R G Valarino

Does Government realise the increasing pollution of sea-water and do they have any proposals to diminish this pollution especially during the summer months?

Answer:

The Minister for Education & Public Works

The Public Health Department monitor the pollution levels every two weeks around Gibraltar's coastline and every effort is made to track down the source of any effluent polluting the sea.

Government has made a considerable amount of money available for the modernisation and improvement of the sewerage system in Gibraltar and a large capital works programme has been drawn up.

It must be realised however, that a considerable amount of sea pollution occurring around Gibraltar emanates from external sources i.e. untreated discharges along the Mediterranean coast and shipping and therefore is beyond Government control.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.9 OF 1976

HON DR R G VALARINO

Mr Speaker, can Government confirm or deny the fact that at any time 25% of the Caleta Palace, Catalan Bay area complex are out of action and untreated sewage is pumped straight into the sea?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

No, Sir. When the pumps go out of action the sewage does not immediately discharge into the sea, there are tanks which have to be filled first. It is very rare for the pumps to go out of action unless, of course, there is industrial action which stops the electric supply to such pumps.

HON DR R G VALARINO

Mr Speaker, does Government know the actual bacterial count of E Coli of our beaches during the summer months?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, I have already said that the Public Health Department monitor the pollution levels therefore they must know but I am afraid I do not know those at the moment. I can find them if they are so required.

HON DR R G VALARINO

Mr Speaker, does Government know how the cholera epidemic in Naples came about?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Doubtless the Public Health Department will know something about it but the jurisdiction of this Government does not extend to Naples.

MR SPEAKER

Next question.

No.10 of 1976 (2)

The Hon J Bossano

What steps is Government taking to ensure that faults in the roofs of flats at Varyl Begg Estate are remedied before the onset of winter rains?

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

Sir, it would be convenient to answer questions Nos.10 and 12 together and with your permission I will do so.

MR SPEAKER

Shall we leave them until we call Question No.12. We will deal with No.11 now. Do you agree, Mr Bossano?

HON J BOSSANO

Yes, Sir.

No.11 of 1976 (2)

The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state when Penney House will be ready for re-occupation by its previous tenants?

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

It is expected that Penney House will be handed over to the Housing Section in August 1977.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.11 OF 1976

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Member say whether this is a much longer period than was envisaged originally when it was decided that Penney House needed reinforcing in order to make it safe again?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, there has been a certain amount of slippage in this matter.

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government confirm the existence of a dispute between the architects and the builders of the Varyl Begg Estate concerning responsibility for the state of certain flats therein and is Government prepared to have the work carried out itself pending settlement of any dispute which might exist in relation to the work done?

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

Government, early in 1975, pointed out to the consulting architects that the roofs leaked, rejected the acceptance of all the roofs on the project, and reserved its rights on the question of damage resulting from roof leaks. I confirm that the fact that repairs have not been carried out to the roofs or flats is due to disagreement between the consulting architects and the contractors as to the cause of the leaks.

A number of meetings between Government and both parties have taken place to try and resolve the situation. However, contractually the responsibility for putting in hand the repair of the roofs and the reinstatement of the flats rests with either the consulting architects or the contractors or both of them and Government could be prejudiced by taking action itself.

Furthermore Government is advised not to undertake any remedial works until such time as there is a written refusal by the contractors to carry out the works on the instructions of the consulting architects within the terms of the Contract which is still in force.

Government is doing its utmost to seek an early solution to this very serious and distressing matter.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.12 OF 1976

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, am I right in taking it that the Minister is quoting official legal advice on this matter that Government could be prejudicing its case by attempting to do the work itself pending a reimbursement of whatever funds are expended?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

That is correct, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree - he has given me a date as early 1975 - and late 1976 is an inordinately long period for this matter to be pending?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, Government has been pressing the consulting architect on several occasions. The consulting architect apparently has been pressing the contractors but between the two of these no agreement has yet been reached.

HON M XIBERRAS

Is the Honourable Member aware of the meeting I held with the then Minister for Public Works and the Minister for Housing on this matter sometime before the election and is he aware of what was said at that meeting?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

I am not quite sure to which meeting the Honourable Member is referring to, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS

I am referring to a meeting at the Minister for Public Works office some month or so before the election, and the Minister for Housing was also present when I was informed that the Minister was hopeful of a solution by the following week since the architect and the contractors had a meeting scheduled for the following day, i.e., the day after the meeting.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, from my colleague the Minister of Housing I understand this meeting was held sometime in July and we had a promise from the consulting architect that a report would be forthcoming very shortly. I am afraid that report has

not yet been forthcoming. We had a further meeting with this gentleman who has told us now he is writing a final letter to the contractors sometime this or next week after which action can then be taken.

HON M XIBERRAS

Am I to take it then that the delay is on the part of the consultants in submitting this report, and, if so, since the consultants are working for Government, will Government not agree that it should have taken a hand to see that this report was delivered as early as possible?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, we have an interim report. The Government has been pressing the consulting architect on several occasions but he, of course, has also to consult his legal advisers and get opinions and this takes a certain amount of time.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that a lot of time has elapsed and that a number of flats - I shall be asking him how many - are being affected and there is severe pressure from the Housing Allocation list?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, I agree absolutely.

HON M XIBERRAS

Will the Honourable Member then tell the House how many flats are in fact affected?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

I understand there is a question on that later on but I think it is around 86.

MR SPEAKER

There is a question and you will get an answer in due course.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, am I to understand from the Minister's first answer that the Government first became aware of the possibility of a dispute early in 1975?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, when the roofs were found to be leaking they obviously informed the consulting architects of this and said this must be put right. It is obvious that there are two possible reasons for such leaky roofs

MR SPEAKER

No, no. We are not going to go into the reasons because otherwise we are going to open the whole question. We are talking about the existence of a dispute and what is being done to get compensation and the date which is relevant to the existence of the dispute but let us not go into the causes for the leaks otherwise we will be here all day.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

The consulting architects then got in contact with the contractors and from then the dispute has continued.

HON M XIBERRAS

Yes, but can the Honourable Member give me the date.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

This was before my time Sir, but I understand it was early in 1975.

HON M XIBERRAS

Then, Mr Speaker, am I to take it that a report from the consultants has not been obtained almost two years later. Is this, in fact, the case.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

A full report on the reason for the leaky roofs has not

yet been obtained, Sir. There has been considerable discussion between the consulting architect and the contractors as to the reason why these roofs leak.

HON M XIBERRAS

I want to be sure on this, Mr Speaker. After two years which the Department knew the dispute existed a full report from the consultants who work for the Government is still not available. Is this a fair rendering of what the Minister has said?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Well, it may not be quite two years, Sir, but this is true. I understand in cases like this it is often a matter that has to be taken to arbitration to discover what is the reason for such leaky roofs and it is not uncommon that such arbitration may last another two years.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, I am not talking about the question of arbitration, I am talking about the report which the Government consultants should make available as its representation in the dispute.

MR SPEAKER

I think we are beginning to speak at cross purposes. I think the Honourable Minister has said that they have had legal advice that they must not interfere. Perhaps if you ask the Honourable Member when he got that advice and then

HON M XIBERRAS

I am not talking about the advice, I am talking about the consultants' report.

MR SPEAKER

Yes, but I think the Honourable Member has given a very straightforward answer to the question by saying that Government has not interfered on legal advice. Perhaps if you obtain the date when that legal advice was given and it

does not coincide then you can ask questions prior to the advice not subsequent to the advice. Do you follow what I mean?

HON M XIBERRAS

Yes, Mr Speaker, but I am afraid it is not the same line I am pursuing. What I would like to know from the Minister is whether they know the facts from their consultants, whether they have received a full report from their consultants and the answer is "no".

MR SPEAKER

No, for the simple reason that they have been advised legally not to interfere and not to take part in the dispute.

HON M XIBERRAS

I believe that the nature of the legal advice was that the Government should not enter into work itself for as long as the dispute existed.

MR SPEAKER

May we clear that point. What was the nature of the advice?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

The advice, Sir, that we have is that we should not undertake any remedial measures ourselves until the dispute is settled.

HON M XIBERRAS

What I am trying to establish now, Mr Speaker, is whether I am right in interpreting the Minister as having said that the full report of the Government consultants expressing their side in this dispute is still not available almost two years after the Government knew that there would be a dispute between the consultants and the contractors.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, that is correct. The consulting architects blamed the contractors for the leaks in the roofs and the contractors do not admit this blame.

MR SPEAKER

We are talking at cross purposes. You are now being asked a simple question. Has the Government instructed its own professional people to go into the causes of the leaks and is there a consultants' report.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

That is what I am explaining, Sir. They have instructed them, certain pieces of the roof have been taken for testing and they are still not at idem what is the cause of the complaint and so far we do not have a final report as to what is causing the leaks on these roofs.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, could I ask whether the dispute is circumscribed to this particular matter of the roofs or does it extend to other aspects of the building?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

No, Sir, it is mainly on the roofs.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mainly, but not exclusively. Is it only on the question of the roofs that there is a dispute or are there other aspects of the construction which are in dispute?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, there is a small amount of dampness in one or two ground floor flats and this of course has been queried by us with the consulting architects. I am not sure that he has taken this up with the builders as such. The main cause of the dispute is the roofs.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, the reason why I ask this question - and would the Honourable Member not agree that it is a matter for concern - is that if there is a dispute about the roofs and the roofs are faulty there must have been an effect in some of the flats under the roofs. I am trying to determine whether there is a dispute about the state of some of the flats under these leaky roofs.

MR SPEAKER

I think on that one you have got an answer. It was said that they had to put the roofs right and the reinstatement of the flats rests with either the consulting architects or the contractors. The reinstatement must of necessity be the reparation of all damage.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, I am trying to establish whether there has been damage as a result of the faulty construction or faulty design of the roofs, whether there has been damage to the flats underneath these roofs and, if so, what is the extent to which one issue is linked with the other. In other words how many flats are not in a fit condition because of the leaky roofs?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, obviously the flats beneath have suffered, that is how you know that the roofs leak. I am not sure exactly of the number of flats affected. Some are occupied some have not been yet given over to occupation but I think it is around 80 flats. Some of the damage is in the electrical circuits, some of the damage is in the actual roofs themselves and some of the damage is in the walls.

HON M XIBERRAS

Would the Honourable Member care to give an estimate of what the cost would be, a very rough one, would it be in the region of £1m or what will it be?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, I am not a consulting architect.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Mr Speaker, could the Honourable Minister look into the question of whether in fact there is any legal way in which the builders and contractors can be encouraged to produce a report fairly quickly rather than wait for two years?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, we have looked into that. We know what the position can be when certain situations have arisen but until the contractors refuse to do any remedial work on the roofs we cannot take action ourselves.

HON P J ISOLA

Mr Speaker, can the Government not consider in view of the fact that the dispute seems to be between the architects and the builders and the Government seems to be free from blame here and the tenants are the innocent sufferers, can the Government not consider the possibility of initiating legal proceedings in the alternative against the architect and the builders to accelerate the solution of this matter?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

That is probably the next step we shall have to take, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS

When, in another two year's time?

MR SPEAKER

Next question.

No.13 of 1976 (2)

The Hon Dr R G Valarino

Does Government intend to clean up and beautify this city and what measures are they taking in this direction?

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

The problems that have to be faced in attempting to clean and beautify this city are identified in the Gibraltar City Plan "Survey and Analysis" report, particularly in the Chapters on "Housing", "Transportation" and "Conservation Townscape and Landscape".

Following the exercise in public participation, the Development and Planning Commission are to recommend to Government the policies it should adopt to attain this objective.

These politice will be concerned with:-

- a. effective measures to ensure that buildings, both in the public and private sectors are maintained in good condition;
- b. measures to reduce conflict between vehicular traffic and pedestrians;
- c. measures by which the character of the central areas of the City is conserved and improved upon.

Dealing with the more immediate problem the streets in the town are swept two or three times a day and those outside the City limits once a day. In addition to the daily household and trade refuse collection, the Public Works Department have deployed two lorries which every day, excluding Sundays, collect accumulations, old furniture and other debris from the public highway. The principal streets in the town and south areas are normally flushed once a week.

The Public Works Department have, on average, 80 of their personnel employed in carrying out these tasks at an estimated annual, pre-1974 review, cost of £175,000.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.13 OF 1976

HON DR R G VALARINO

Mr Speaker, after that marvellous answer could the Minister say whether the Government is taking note of the pollution in the atmosphere?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, I do not realise where the pollution of the atmosphere fully comes into the beautification of the town but we do take note of it, Sir.

HON DR R G VALARINO

Pollution in the atmosphere tends to dirty buildings sooner than they would otherwise. Does Government know the actual figures of the pollution?

MR SPEAKER

Are we going back to pollution?

HON DR R G VALARINO

In the air, Sir.

MR SPEAKER

Well, fair enough.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

I should imagine the Public Health Department have something on this, I do not at the moment. I understand some of the pollution in the atmosphere is caused by dog manure.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr. Speaker, can the Honourable Member and I hope I am not treading on my Honourable Colleague's original question, but has the Honourable Member or anybody considered public participation in beautifying the City further than the

question of gardens and garden displays and so forth? Has he asked for actual support from the traders in Main Street for the beautification of Main Street? I know that there are some traders who are interested in this.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, in fact in the Gibraltar City Plan the whole of the public have been invited to make comments and to take part.

HON M XIBERRAS

I am talking about actually approaching the traders in Main Street with a view to their contributing also financially to the beautification of the areas immediately in front of their shops.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, that may be the next step in the Gibraltar City Plan, it has not been done yet.

No.14 of 1976 (2)

The Hon B Perez

Is the Government proposing to make out of bounds the "Talus Area" for motor-cycle sport?

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

The area used for the events has been considerably extended from that originally approved by Government and the slope has been undercut to provide an extended circuit.

The undercutting has caused localised instability to that section and it is therefore considered to be unsafe for participants and spectators alike. Consequently the area must be declared out of bounds on the grounds of safety.

However, this course of action would have been necessary in any event in about 6 months time as one of the projects in the current Development Programme is reclamation between Jetties 1 and 2 for the construction of a container handling berth. This project requires a considerable amount of fill material to allow the construction of the works to proceed and investigations are being carried out to test the suitability of the Talus material for the reclamation works.

It may be possible to allow the area to be used for motor-cycle sport once the excavation of the fill material has been completed.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.14 OF 1976

HON J B PEREZ

Mr Speaker, do I take the answer as being "Yes" from the Honourable Minister?

MR SPEAKER

The Honourable Minister does not have to answer that one. You take the answer to mean what you feel it does. You can ask questions on the information itself.

HON J B PEREZ

Will the Honourable Member then state if an alternative site is being made available for this most popular sport in Gibraltar.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

As I have already said, Sir, this area must be declared out of bounds. The Honourable Member can take that as ~~yes~~ or no, whichever way he wishes to understand it. We have not yet looked for an alternative site but we are willing to do so.

HON J B PEREZ

Mr Speaker, is the Honourable Member thereby undertaking to look for an alternative site and does he envisage that an alternative site will be made available within a short time?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

I do not make such a firm commitment as undertaking, Sir, I said we will look for it. It is not going to be easy.

The Hon B Perez

Does Government agree with the results of a survey conducted by the Youth and Careers Officer in which both parents and girls felt that Government was not doing enough for the youth of Gibraltar.

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

Although the surveys referred to by the Honourable Member represent a creditable effort on the part of the Youth Service to determine attitudes to a range of aspects covering its work and composition they can hardly be said to encompass the total range of opinion in Gibraltar, based as they were on replies received from 57 parents and 169 girls, of whom 39 parents confessed that they had not made it their business to find out what goes on in youth clubs and 115 of the girls did not belong to a youth club or organisation. Government would not agree in such simplistic terms that it was not doing enough for the Youth Service. It is aware of aspects of that Service which require more assistance in a number of ways and it tries each year within the limitations of its budget to improve these aspects. It is however, satisfied that the Youth Service is stronger than it has ever been before with corresponding benefits to the Youth of Gibraltar.

The Hon B Perez

Will Government state whether negotiations have been finalised on the question of experienced teachers?

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

There have been no negotiations since the negotiating rights are held by the Gibraltar Teacher's Association but representations have been made through the Head of Department by individual teachers formerly in the grade of Experienced Teachers. The matter, which is complex, is still under consideration.

The Hon B Perez

Would Government state the exact terms of the contract of employment under which the UK Teachers were brought to Gibraltar.

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

Fifteen Teachers were given contracts to work for one or two years in the Department from September of this year. Their basic salary is that of Scale I, payable to locally entered staff, and in addition they receive a 25% tax-free gratuity payable on gross emoluments at the termination of their contract, one free passage to and from Gibraltar to the United Kingdom, a baggage allowance and payment of the employer's share of their superannuation contributions to the Department of Education and Science in the UK. They have been accommodated in shared hotel accommodation at Both Worlds where their rent is subsidised by 50%.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.17 OF 1976

HON J B PEREZ

Would the Honourable Member then agree that these terms of the contract of employment for UK Teachers differ from those of local Teachers?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, local Teachers are not under a contract.

HON J B PEREZ

Mr Speaker, the question is whether the Honourable Member agrees that the terms of the contract of employment on conditions of work which has arisen from his answer differ from those of a local teacher?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir. They do differ. They differ insofar that one

gets a 25% tax free gratuity and the other one is on a permanent and pensionable scheme. There are other differences.

HON J B PEREZ

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member then agree that the accommodation provisions in the contract of employment of UK Teachers are not in the contract of employment for local Teachers, and why is this?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, local Teachers enter on a completely different basis. They come in on a permanent and pensionable scale. When you bring out people who fill emergency places we often have to give a contract and these contracts may vary, even one contract with another, from time to time.

HON J B PEREZ

Mr Speaker, when recruiting in UK did Government try to employ UK Teachers on the same terms as locally entered Teachers before offering the contract terms in question.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, with very little result.

HON P J ISOLA

Is it a fact, Sir, that because Government advertise in the UK for Teachers on the same terms as Gibraltar some months passed without young people in the schools receiving proper attention in key subjects for 'O' Levels and 'A' Levels and is this not something to be regretted?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, that is quite correct and it was because we could not get Teachers on local terms that we went to the further terms of the contract.

HON P J ISOLA

Will Government, whilst obviously recognising the rights of negotiating bodies in Gibraltar, bear in mind that the overriding factor in the recruitment of teachers must be a proper and decent education for the children of Gibraltar and that we cannot afford delays in any single year in education because that affects a whole generation of Gibraltar children.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, I thank the Honourable Member for that question. This was the paramount idea behind our recruitment. I am glad to say that irrespective of the contract terms offered we were happy to have a full staff at our schools at the beginning of September this year.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member does not recall the pressure from this side of the House for him to do precisely this sort of thing. Would the Honourable Member say whether these were the minimum conditions which the Government thought necessary to recruit the teachers that were needed here. In other words, could he have got away with less?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, we might have been able to get away with 24% but I do not think we went into all those nuances of the question. The normal situation when we have taken anybody into the Civil Service under contract terms has been a 25% gratuity and we did the same.

HON M X IBERRAS

Would the Honourable Member say on what his Department patterned the offer to these teachers? And would he not say that these are generally a reflection of the conditions that are offered to other branches of the service when expatriate officers are needed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, they are very similar to those as I have already said when we go out to contract for anybody in the Civil Service.

HON M XIBERRAS

Would the Honourable Member not say, however, that they were somewhat overgenerous in the circumstances?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

If the Honourable Member is trying to elicit the question of the superannuation, yes, I agree with him.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, on whose authority was this offer made and why was it made?

MR SPEAKER

No, that is out of order.

HON M XIBERRAS

If the Honourable Member considers that the conditions of the 25% tax free gratuity

MR SPEAKER

No, no. Order, I think we have got to be very clear on this. I think the Honourable Member can ask as to the conditions but we must not go into what motivated the conditions.

HON M XIBERRAS

I want to know why the offer was made if the Minister considers in one respect at least the offer was overgenerous.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, on the question of the 25% gratuity I do not think it was overgenerous. I think this is the normal terms and it is quite alright. The question of the superannuation, I think we could have got away if we had realised the situation at the time with not paying it. It was to some extent a slight error by the persons who were conducting the negotiations and when they were asked to pay the employer's share they agreed to it.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, am I right in saying that the electricity and light bills are also subsidised to the tune of 50%?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Not exactly right, Sir, and not wrong. They are in hotel accommodation and, of course, in such hotel accommodation electricity bills are normally included in the tariff charge.

HON M XIBERRAS

In fact, am I right in saying, Government pays 50% of the rent of the place and the services used there?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, that is correct.

HON M XIBERRAS

Am I right therefore in saying that Government does subsidise 50% of the electricity and water used, and would the Government not consider that to be a bit overgenerous?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Well, as it is an inclusive rent, yes, to that extent you are correct.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member say whether he has any plans to remedy the situation in the near future. In other words that we should have one rate for the job in Gibraltar?

MR SPEAKER

No, that is out of order.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, does not the Honourable Member recall when the matter was raised previously in the House that he said that the vacancies had been advertised in UK on the same pay and conditions as Gibraltarian teachers enjoy and that the response had been good. Does he recall giving that answer previously?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, the original response was good but when they found out all the conditions they did not continue responding.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, did the Honourable Member then re-advertise subsequently offering improved conditions?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

There was a re-advertisement when we were able to obtain two music teachers and in that advert we actually put down the full conditions mentioning the 25% gratuity, etc.

HON J BOSSANO

So, in fact, Mr Speaker, apart from these two teachers am I right in thinking that the teachers that were recruited were recruited in response to an original advertisement that did not specify the improved conditions and that those improved conditions resulted from negotiations between the applicants and the Government?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, that is correct. There was considerable to and fro-ing of correspondence between the applicants to the original advert who were then not satisfied with the terms and were willing to come under better terms.

No.18 of 1976 (2)

The Hon B Perez

What degree of consultation was there between the Government and the GTA before the UK teachers were contracted to come to teach in Gibraltar.

Answer:

The Minister for Education and Public Works

Consultation over staffing and conditions of service for teachers to be recruited from the United Kingdom took place between Government and the GTA in the three meetings of the Teachers' Whitley Council held during last summer Term. During these meetings the Official Side was made aware of the fact that if contract terms were to be offered the GTA would want them offered also to local staff and that if hostel type accommodation was to be offered the GTA would want it offered also to those local teachers in housing difficulties. Given the poor response to previous recruitment and the acute staffing shortage, particularly at the Boy's Comprehensive School, Government found it necessary to recruit on the terms described in the reply to the Honourable Member's last question.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.18 OF 1976

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that since he has said in a supplementary to the previous question that there was a lot of to-ing and for-ing before the final terms of the contract were arrived at, that that was an opportunity for him to consult the GTA on the way the conditions were being altered as a result of the attitude of potential recruits?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Sir, could I have that question repeated, please.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, since it appears that the Government originally advertised the post on certain conditions and then on finding that the applicants to the post were not prepared to come

to Gibraltar under those conditions found a necessity to improve the conditions, would the Minister not agree that that was an appropriate time in which to involve the GTA and explain to them that although they had wanted to offer certain conditions initially they were encountering difficulties and involve the GTA in the process in which the negotiations were taking place between UK recruits and Government.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE

Yes, Sir, it is my understanding that this was actually told to the GTA but the GTA now, apparently, have no remembrance of it.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that in fact if his concern as it appears is for the education of the children, that by creating superior conditions for a small proportion of the teaching force, he may find

MR SPEAKER

No, we are now departing. Next question.

The Hon F J Isola

Will Government state whether there is any immediate prospect of the Key and Anchor Club adjacent to Ince's Hall being released and will Government ensure its use for social and recreational purposes?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Government has been given to understand by the MOD that it will be possible to transfer a large part of the Key and Anchor Club premises as soon as certain reprovisioning works have been effected in connection with Inces Hall which will be retained by MOD.

The use to which the released accommodation will be put will be considered once the formal offer has been made to Government.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.19 OF 1976

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, could the Honourable Member try to ensure that when this property passes under the jurisdiction of the Gibraltar Government, it does not in fact fall into the long period of abeyance that we have seen other released MOD property subjected to?

HON A W SERFATY

Did the Honourable Member say the long period of abeyance? Well, in this particular case it is a building which exists and which is now being repaired. It should not take long for Government to make some use of it.

No.20 of 1976 (2)

ORAL

The Hon J Bossano

Can Government state when it is estimated that the proposed Varyl Begg School will be put to tender?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade & Economic Development

After the completion of all preliminary requirements application for project approval was made to ODM on 19 November 1976. It is estimated that tenders can be invited shortly after approval is received.

The Hon G T Restano

What feedback has Government received to the City Plan?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

The Development and Planning Commission has received eleven letters from individuals and organisations. There have been seven open letters published in the press and fourteen press articles. These are now being considered by the Commission.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.21 OF 1976

HON G T RESTANO

Are there any proposals in these letters that have been received to alter any part of the city plan which the Government intends to take up?

HON A W SERFATY

Well, to alter the policy to be pursued certainly there are.

HON G T RESTANO

Can the Honourable Minister expand on that question and perhaps give details?

HON A W SERFATY

This is a matter that is now being considered by the Development Commission and I do not think anything would be gained, Mr Speaker, by going into the details of the different articles which I have not got here with me and of the letters of the press and letters which have been sent to the Commission. This is a very complicated matter and the Commission has already in fact started considering these proposals.

HON G T SERFATY

What plans do Government now have to proceed with the City Plan?

HON A W SERFATY

When all these proposals and suggestions are considered by the Development Commission they will then be studied in detail by the Planning Department and by the Development Commission and then it will be presented to the Government. It will take a few months.

The Hon G T Restano

Are there any plans for Edinburgh House and Chilton Court to be released by the Ministry of Defence to the Gibraltar Government?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade & Economic Development

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.22 OF 1976

HON G T RESTANO

Is it not general policy that Services quarters will be moved to the southern area of town?

HON A W SERFATY

I do not know. What I do know is that military property and land which is surplus to requirements will come to the civil government.

HON G T RESTANO

I do not think that is a reply to the question, Sir.

MR SPEAKER

Basically the Minister cannot answer as to what the policy of MOD is insofar as land is concerned. I think the answer has been that there is no policy to hand over these particular buildings to Government. To that extent I think the answer has been given. Next question.

The Hon G T Restano

What plans, if any, does Government have for the development of Engineer House?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

The Development and Planning Commission are carrying out a reappraisal of their previous recommendations in the light of all relevant factors regarding the future of Engineer House and Government will consider their recommendations anew when this advice is received.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.23 OF 1976

HON G T RESTANO

Would the Honourable Member not agree that it is scandalous for such a large site in Gibraltar where there is such a lack of land that that site should have been left undeveloped for so many years now?

HON A W SERFATY

Yes, we agree, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO

Well, perhaps, the Honourable Minister will give us an explanation as to why this has been allowed to occur.

HON A W SERFATY

This site was put out to tender a few years ago, nothing was done over the years and the Government is now considering what is the next step to take and this is what the Development and Planning Commission will give advice on.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Member say how long the

Government has had the site in its possession since it took proceedings to recover possession of the site?

HON A W SERFATY

I could not say whether the Government is already in possession of the site. What the Government is trying to do is to do something about it.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, could I just ask the Honourable Member then in relation to his original answer to the supplementary about the advice that he gets, would he give the House an opportunity to consider what is being done or what it is intended to do in Engineer House before any train of events actually takes place?

HON A W SERFATY

Yes there was an undertaking

MR SPEAKER

You are being asked a simple question. Will the Government give an undertaking that before anything is done they will give full information to the House.

HON A W SERFATY

Yes, Sir.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

I did not get that quite clearly. Is the Government now in possession of the site.

HON A W SERFATY

I suppose we are in possession of the site.

HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, that particular answer was not very clear. Is

it in Government's possession or is it not in the Government's possession?

HON A W SERFATY

Yes, it is in the Government's possession. I would have wanted to do certain things in the area but I have been told that I cannot so we are in possession and we are not.

HON G T RESTANO

By whom has the Minister been told that he cannot do certain things in that area?

HON A W SERFATY

Well, this is the legal advice we received.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Therefore it is not in the possession of the Government if the Government cannot utilise that land at this stage.

HON A W SERFATY

It cannot utilise the land at this stage that is why I am not quite sure to the extent that we are in possession.

MR SPEAKER

May I, as a man of the law, clear the atmosphere. Whilst possession is 90% of the law, sometimes it is dangerous to do something on the land in which there is a dispute until the dispute is settled. I think that is what the Honourable Minister is trying to say.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can the Honourable Minister give us an indication as to how long the dispute is going to last?

HON A W SERFATY

I can say that the Government will receive the advice of the Development and Planning Commission within a matter of a couple of weeks.

The Hon G T Restano

When is it envisaged that the filling in between Numbers 2 and 3 jetties at the Port will commence?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

After considering a number of project proposals by several consultants Government has now received authority to engage the selected consultants to prepare a scheme for the filling in between Nos. 1 and 2 Jetties in preparation for a formal application for ODM approval. The report is expected to be ready in February 1977, and it is estimated that the contract could be awarded for the work approximately three months after the date of approval, if the sum tendered is within the approved limits.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO. 24 OF 1976

HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, how long has it taken for the consultants' reports, all of them, to be made to the Government?

HON A W SERFATY

Sir, perhaps I could help by giving a timetable of what has happened.

In January 1975 underwater contractors were authorised to carry out a site investigation. From January to October 1975, preliminary technical investigations by local experts were carried out. In October 1975 Consultants were invited to submit schemes. In November, 1975, the proposals were considered. On the 23rd December 1975, Consultants were selected and application for appointment was sent to ODM, that was in December 1975, and the approval was received from ODM in September 1976, 9 months afterwards.

HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, why was it necessary to engage consultants when local experts had already presented plans?

HON A W SERFATY

Well, Sir, this is rather technical. First of all whatever

consultants were going to consider the matter had to have an idea of the quality and the condition of the seabed and the Government ordered underwater contractors to do this work. Then a number of consultants, engineering firms, were told what the result was and were asked to submit their proposals. This was considered by the Government committee, and the Government committee decided that a certain particular firm should be selected to be the consultants so that they could prepare the working drawings and everything about the reclamation. The appointment of those consultants

MR SPEAKER

No, no, otherwise we will never get anywhere. You are being asked why were local consultants not engaged to do the work. That is all you are being asked.

HON A W SERFATY

Some were local, some were not.

HON M XIBERRAS

I gather that the Port Advisory Committee were consulted as well.

HON A W SERFATY

The Port Advisory Committee recommended that this work should be done.

HON M XIBERRAS

And were they not consulted on the manner in which it should be done.

HON A W SERFATY

No, Sir, I do not believe there are any engineers in the Port Advisory Committee and we required engineers.

HON M XIBERRAS

I know, Mr Speaker, and we have an architect in the House as well. Perhaps he also contributed a little bit. I take it that the Port Advisory Committee was consulted and did produce a scheme for the filling in of the jetties and the extension of the moles. Does that figure in the Minister's list of people who were consulted?

MR SPEAKER

No, no, I am sorry, we are not going to go outside the orbit of the question. We have been talking about consultations with the people who are going to carry out the work not as to the advisability of the project and how it should be developed.

HON M XIBERRAS

I follow your reasoning, Mr Speaker, but could I ask nevertheless whether the Port Advisory Committee was consulted.

HON A W SERFATY

On the manner as to how the work should be carried out engineeringwise they were certainly not consulted. They were not qualified to give an opinion.

HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, does the Minister feel or consider that once the space between these two jetties have been filled in there will be sufficient room for the containers

MR SPEAKER

No, we are not going to go into that either. Your question asks: "when is it envisaged that the filling in between Nos. 2 and 3 jetties at the Port will commence? If you want to know whether there are adequate facilities in the Port to deal with the workload, well that is another original question.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that it has taken two years to get round to the appointment of the consultants, how long does the Honourable Member think it will take to actually have the filling in finished and ready for use?

HON A W SERFATY

I have said that if everything goes well the report is expected to be ready in February, 1977, and three months after that work could commence. That brings us to about May 1977. I am not qualified to say how long the work could take but I should say that if the work starts, and this is haxarding a guess, in May 1977, the work could be ready by the end of 1978.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, does the Honourable Member think in view of the length of time that it has taken to do this, that the facilities that the Government has been trying to provide for the last three years will, in fact, be provided in time for the use of shipping to Gibraltar? I think the Member knows what I am referring to. The point I am making is in view of the fact that this is taking such a long time does the Honourable Member think that the time when it is envisaged the facilities will be available is in fact sufficient and, if not, should we not look at an alternative in order to provide the facilities earlier?

HON A W SERFATY

I have had talks recently with representatives of the shipping companies who have come to Gibraltar from the UK and I am satisfied that this scheme will as far as can be foreseen for quite a time

MR SPEAKER

No, I will not allow that. I would allow that it will provide for what it is envisaged and for the increase due to the slippage.

HON J BOSSANO

No, Mr Speaker, I am saying that the scheme was originally intended to provide certain facilities which it was envisaged would be needed at a certain point in time. It is quite obvious that they are going to take much longer to provide than it was envisaged originally. I am therefore asking the Honourable Member whether he thinks that in spite of this much greater period of time, they will be ready and available when they are needed?

MR SPEAKER

That is perfectly in order then.

HON A W SERFATY

The question is whether they are needed when they are ready, say, in two years time and it all depends on the time it

will take for approval from ODM to come. They will be what we really require even then.

HON J BOSSANO

No, Mr Speaker, that is not the question. The question is if, in fact, it was originally envisaged, for example, that we would need those facilities in 1976, does the Honourable Member think that by looking forward to providing them in 1978, or possibly in 1979, we are going to have the facilities ready when they are needed or does he not consider that we may possibly find that by the time we get the facilities available the shipping lines that have been asking for those facilities will stop coming here.

HON A W SERFATY

I get your question now. The facilities will be required before the end of 1978 and I am in touch with the Ministry of Defence for a provisional solution to the problem.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Mr Speaker, has the Minister taken into account the question of finance? Is the original money put aside sufficient to complete the job now in view that it has taken two years? Is the money available?

HON A W SERFATY

This we shall know when we receive the estimates from the consultants.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Therefore the money is not available at this stage.

HON A W SERFATY

It requires project approval and it is when the project is sent that we can hope to get the approval.

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government give a commencement date for the construction of the Public Works Garage and can Government indicate the present estimate of the cost of construction compared to the original estimate?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Commencement date will depend on receipt of project approval by ODM of a revised scheme submitted in April 1976.

Tenders will be invited as soon as approval is received. The original estimate was £187,000. The latest revised figure is over double this amount.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.25 OF 1976

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, could I ask the same question as my Honourable Friend asked in respect of the previous question, and that is, what happened to the money which was originally set aside for this project?

HON A W SERFATY

It is where it was a couple of years ago. That money has not been spent.

HON M XIBERRAS

It has not been spent?

HON A W SERFATY

Except that the steel frame has been ordered.

HON M XIBERRAS

I see. So part of the money, am I right in saying, has been used for the order of the steel frame and the rest is in the bank, as it were?

HON A W SERFATY

That is right.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Member tell the House whether there has been any substantial modification of the plans as announced to the House? I ask this question in view of various other modifications that have taken place since the plans were submitted to the House.

HON A W SERFATY

Well, I would ^{not} say substantial but there have been modifications because originally the Public Works Garage and Workshop was going to be erected in the site of the old Refuse Destructor. Then it was going to be erected on . . .

MR SPEAKER

Yes, but let us not go into that, we all know that. Have there been modifications or have there not been modifications?

HON A W SERFATY

There have been, of course. Different site, different buildings.

HON M XIBERRAS

What I mean is the Government has not considered any other major modification from the point of view of the siting?

HON A W SERFATY

Not major modifications.

HON M XIBERRAS

Does the Government have any contingency plans in case the project which is now going to cost something like £360,000 in case the project seems rather too much for ODM?

HON A W SERFATY:

No, Sir, we are hoping that the approval will be forthcoming.

The Hon B Perez

Have Government considered the building of the Girls Comprehensive School in the Town Range area?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Yes, Sir, St Jago's Site was found to be unsuitable, impractical and costly for a school of the required size

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government state whether it still intends to build the Girls Comprehensive School at Montagu, and if so when is construction due to start?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Yes. It is the Government's intention to build the Girls' Comprehensive School at Montagu. The Consultants estimate that it will take 16 months after receipt of approval by the Projects Committee of ODM for work to commence.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.27 OF 1976

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, since there has been considerable controversy about the plans for the School, will the Honourable Member inform the House whether the interested parties who have been consulted before and who have representations before are now satisfied completely with the plans for the School.

HON A W SERFATY

The interested parties in the construction of the School.
Yes, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS

No, Mr Speaker, I am talking about the interested parties in the use of the School.

MR SPEAKER

No, no, let us not go into that, Mr Xiberras.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, I am asking that if Government intends to build the School there, are all the interested

MR SPEAKER

Still intends to build the School there.

HON M XIBERRAS

Still intends to build the School there. The last I heard of it there were still certain representations to be made and the question I am asking is whether the Teachers Association Parents Association etc., are now satisfied with the plans so that the Minister should continue to build the School there?

MR SPEAKER

Not with the plans, but with the siting.

HON A W SERFATY

The teachers, from my information, have agreed to the new School going there.

HON M XIBERRAS

Has the Honourable Member had any last minute thoughts on the siting of the Comprehensive School since it has come to my ears that an alternative site was considered very recently.

HON A W SERFATY

Not as far as I am aware, Mr Speaker. This is a complete surprise to me.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Member say what is the sort of timetable within which he expects construction to start and finish for the schools?

HON A W SERFATY

I think I have already answered that, Sir. Sixteen months after receipt of project approval.

HON J BOSSANO

I see. But, Mr Speaker, surely this is not entirely correct because will the Honourable Member not say that even if he

were to obtain project approval tomorrow for the Girls Comprehensive School, he would be unable to start work on it until he had obtained project approval for the Public Works Garage, constructed the Public Works Garage, moved out the people to the new one, and demolished the old one. Would he not say that that was the order of events and not, in fact, project approval?

HON A W SERFATY

The building is a pre-fabricated structure so I am not unduly worried about the fact. The Public Works Garage is bound to be approved long before the School by ODM.

MR SPEAKER

You still think that sixteen months from approval in spite of the considerations given by the questioner is right?

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, there is no logic to that, if the Honourable Member will allow me. Would he not agree that if he were to get project approval tomorrow for the School he would be unable to complete the work in 16 months?

HON A W SERFATY

The project approval tomorrow for the School? I cannot envisage the possibility at all.

HON J BOSSANO

Alright, Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that if he gets project approval in 3 months time

MR SPEAKER

You have answered that within 16 months of getting your approval you can construct the School.

HON A W SERFATY

Yes, Sir, so long as we get project approval for the Public Works Garage and Workshop before we get project approval for the School.

HON J BOSSANO

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Member not agree that in order to be able to give a more realistic picture to the House of the time it is going to take, in fact, we should know how long he estimates it will be before the site will be available regardless of the project approval. This is the point that I am trying to make. It appears to me, Mr Speaker, that from arguments that have been used previously by the Honourable Member, that it is a question of the construction of the Public Works Garage and the demolition of the old buildings that will decide the earliest possible starting date for the School, not the project approval.

HON A W SERFATY

Not necessarily, Mr Speaker, because the School is a very large school on a very large site and if it came to a pinch we could cut a hole in a wall on the garage and we could start work of the construction of the School. So it is not as complicated as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition is trying to make out.

HON J BOSSANO

Well, Mr Speaker, then perhaps the Honourable Member will agree that when he was using the reluctance of the workers of the garage to move elsewhere as an excuse for the delay of the School he was, in fact, falling into the misconception that he now appears to be wanting to accuse me of. Perhaps he will agree to that?

HON A W SERFATY

No, Sir. What we are trying is to build the Garage before we start work on the Comprehensive School but if there is a clash and if one does not have to commence before the other there is always that solution. Cutting a hole in a wall, that is all it needs.

HON J BOSSANO

So the Honourable Member then will agree that if he has any problems with the siting of the Public Works Garage in the site he proposes that will not delay the School.

HON A W SERFATY

I hope I have had enough problems already and we have already found the solution. A decision has already been taken on the siting of the Garage and that is that, with all due respect.

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government state what consultants fees are due in respect of the proposed building of the Girls Comprehensive School at Montagu, and who is liable to pay this amount?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

The professional fees payable to the Consultants are related to work involved up to the final scheme design stage and fees due to them for this work will amount to an estimated £100,000. These fees are being paid out of local funds on the acceptance by ODM that the fees will be a charge against the overall project cost when the project receives final approval.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.28 OF 1976

HON M XIBERRAS

So I take it the ODM will pay in the end?

HON A W SERFATY

Of course.

The Hon M Xiberras

Can Government say, in the light of the published city plans, what are its land requirements immediately and for the future and on what basis it intends to make representations to HM Government in this respect?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

It is too early to say what are Government's land requirements in the light of the published City Plan since this has been published in the form of a Survey & Analysis for public examination. The report identifies the problems of housing transportation, etc. and points the way to the adoption of policies with a view to their solution. Publication is only a first step in the process of establishing the City Plan in its final form in the light of any revisions which may have to be made to the draft following representations from the general public who have been given an opportunity to study its contents as prescribed by law. The final planning scheme will then be used by the Development and Planning Commission and all public officers and bodies as standards for guidance in the exercise of any powers vested in them. With regard to the policy to be adopted in regard to land surplus to defence requirements I can at present only at this stage refer the Honourable Member to the views expressed in my foreword to the Gibraltar City Plan.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.29 OF 1976

HON M XIBERRAS

I have read it with great interest, Mr Speaker, and all who have co-operated in producing this must be congratulated, if I may say so. But, Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that the City Plan says that some 51% of the usable land in Gibraltar is now in the hands of MOD, and does the Minister not recall, I think it was in 1973, the Chief Minister making an important statement at Budget time in respect of land requirements of the Government of Gibraltar, and would the Honourable Member not be able to state therefore what immediate needs the Government of Gibraltar has for this 51% of usable land at present held by MOD?

HON A W SERFATY

Let me try and remember if there are any immediate needs. For

example, there is an immediate need which I mentioned in answer to a supplementary, for the use of a large number of containers in the port. That affects Ministry of Defence land. As regards housing there is no immediate need. There will be some need, but it is not immediate, for the extension of the Technical College in Queensway. There is an immediate need there. The question of the land in Montagu Basin, that has already been solved. There is no problem in Town Range. There is no really immediate need and I stand to be corrected, but one of the immediate problems and I am talking of say 6 months time, is the question of space in the port for containers.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, would the Honourable Minister say that that accordx to the general spirit of the City Plan, the document itself, where a very big case is made for the devolution of land to the Government of Gibraltar? I would have thought, and the Minister will agree it is a reasonable assumption, that the Government of Gibraltar had a long list of land which it wished to acquire. Is the Minister not able to produce a comprehensive list of the immediate needs, or is he telling us that it is only in respect of containerisation that we need land.

HON A W SERFATY

To try and produce right now a long list, as the Honourable Member puts it, of immediate needs is not on. For example, if we need the stores at Queensway, the Cormorant site, the site around Governor's Cottage, these are not immediate needs. For example, the one at Governor's Cottage if we require it urgently to have a larger prison, then that might be an immediate need but not at the present moment of time.

I might mention, if the Honourable Member will allow me, that we are now under discussion with the Ministry of Defence on the question of the Camber. That is another immediate need I should have remembered, and there we are again in the difficulties of cost of reclaimed land and one thing and another.

HON M XIBERRAS

Am I to understand from the Minister's answer that the only real immediate need in respect of land is land for containerisation?

HON A W SERFATY

And the Camber.

HON M XIBERRAS

And the Camber. Those are the only immediate needs?

HON A W SERFATY

Yes, as far as I can remember now.

The Hon P J Isola

Will Government state what shopping and community facilities, with special emphasis on facilities for youth, will be available to residents of the Varyl Begg Estate, and will Government consult the Varyl Begg Tenants Association in this matter?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

The following facilities are or will be available at Varyl Begg Estate:

4 shops
an elderly persons' club
a nursery and
playgrounds for young children.

Accommodation has, in addition, been earmarked for a small chapel. It is also intended to make available premises for use as a tenants' social club if and when they become available. It is further hoped that a slipway will be constructed in the future which will provide facilities for repairs to small boats.

Government welcomes the co operation of Tenants' Associations in general in this and other matters although it must be appreciated that there is a limit to what can be done in any particular case or estate.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.30 OF 1976 (2)

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I welcome part of the answer but I wonder what the Hon Member means when he says that facilities for youth will be made available if and when premises become available. Is there a doubt then as to whether premises will be available for youth and does he not think it desirable that in an estate of the size of Varyl Begg it is important to have some sort of facilities for youth where they can get together and where their energies can be harnessed and developed?

HON A W SERFATY:

Of course, I don't want to hit at previous administrations but I don't think that the Varyl Begg Estate project could have made allowances for some of the items the Hon Member has mentioned. The blocks have now been built and we have got to remember such things as space for car parking which is a serious problem. We have thought about the possibility of a social club which might include facilities for youth. However, I cannot undertake at this moment of time when this will happen. Things are happening but not that fast.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am disturbed again because the Hon Member says "which might include facilities for youth". Does he not consider it highly desirable that there should be facilities for youth, if necessary in premises specifically set aside for that purpose?

HON A W SERFATY:

This is highly desirable, of course, but apart from the money we must find the space and to what extent are we going to further limit space available for car parking. We have got to strike the right balance. I am fully aware of the fact that the youth should have a club there but I am faced with these difficulties of finding space for car parking.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister not consider that the provision of amenities in the area is much more important than one or two or three car park spaces? Or is he going to give priority to cars rather than individuals?

HON A W SERFATY:

Well, the previous administration did not make proper provision for car parking and we are going to.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I think the Hon Minister should say that Gibraltar has that estate thanks to the previous administration.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Hon Member if I may assist him consider when looking at this problem the fact that in UK, for example, public buildings are used for more than one purpose and that it is not unknown for youth clubs to have schools in the evenings.

HON A W SERFATY:

I thank the Leader of the Opposition very much for that information. In fact there are other possibilities like building a youth club on stilts with car parking underneath. All these things are being considered. My professional background helps me in these things.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, can we have it that one way or another we are going to have these facilities at Varyl Begg at some time?

HON A W SERFATY:

Not as a commitment at this moment of time, Mr Speaker.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Has the Varyl Begg Tenants Association represented that they would like to see youth facilities there?

HON A W SERFATY:

Of course they would.

The Hon P J Isola

Is it the intention of Government to implement the Report of the Select Committee on Air Communications and, if so, can Government state what progress has been made in this respect?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Because Air communications is a non defined domestic matter it has to be discussed with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the report has already been referred to them.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO. 30 OF 1976 (2)

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Will the Hon Minister be taking into account the fact that there is a lot of talk that the flights are going to be reduced to six next summer? That the number available to

MR SPEAKER:

No, no, order. We are not going to discuss air flights. We are discussing a particular report and whether it is going to be made public. That is the only thing we are doing.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, isn't that report going to be utterly out of date if we don't take into consideration the fact that six flights, lets put it this way.....

MR SPEAKER:

We are not even discussing the validity or the import of the report. We are discussing the question whether it is the intention of Government to implement the report.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it the intention therefore to publish a report which is completely out of date? What progress has been made in respect of this report? I hope the Government is taking into account whether progress is going on i.e. the fact that it is intended to reduce the flights to six, that there will only be 215 seats for travel operators, that there are.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, no, order. I will not have that.

HON A W SERFATY:

May I put the Hon Member, Mr Speaker, at his ease by saying that we are very much concerned and in fact I have spent several hours at a meeting on Saturday afternoon.....

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to discuss air communications under this question other than the report.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister not agree that in fact if we are to seek solutions to the long term problems dealing with air communications, if we are going to have satisfactory air communications between Gibraltar and London and other places, that it is important that the Foreign Office should be asked to consider this report and its implementation very, very quickly indeed if we are not going to be caught up in the sort of problems that Members here are only too much aware of?

HON A W SERFATY:

I entirely agree, Sir. We had a meeting here when it was accepted on the 5th July and it was sent by the Chief Minister to the Governor nine days after that on the 14th July asking that the recommendations should be favourably entertained so we shall have to press once again.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister then express the sense of urgency of this House and could they please expedite.

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes, Sir.

No.32 of 1976 (2)

ORAL

The Hon J B Perez

Have the Government considered the proposals made by the Gibraltar Youth Association and the Youth and Careers Office as to the City Plan?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Representations and proposals referring to the section covering Youth activities, Community Centres and Cultural Activities on page H9 of the Survey and Analysis report, Gibraltar City Plan, have been received by the Development and Planning Commission.

The Gibraltar Youth Association submitted their representations and proposals in a letter dated the 10 November 1976 and the Youth and Careers Office submitted their representations and proposals in a letter dated the 12 November 1976.

These are now being considered by the Development and Planning Commission.

Does Government propose to merely organise a children's fair every year and not provide adult entertainment of this nature?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

It is not intended to organise a fair next year either for children or for adults.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.33 OF 1976

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

It is certainly sad to hear that. We know that this Government can hardly organise anything.

MR SPEAKER:

No, order, order. I will not have Members speaking across the House. I will not have members getting up at question time to make statements.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, since it is obvious that this Government finds it extremely difficult to organise anything....

MR SPEAKER:

No, they have not said that.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

On a point of order, may I just point to the House that this Government has got the ability of being re-elected with a great majority.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, but that is not a point of order.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, is it possible that a Government which is spending well over £11m or very nearly, a year, can't find it possible to organise a fair for the children of Gibraltar? Wouldn't it be possible out of those £11m to put a little money aside to give the poor children of Gibraltar, many of whom can't afford to go abroad, to have a fair in Gibraltar. Isn't that deplorable?

HON A W SERFATY:

It is deplorable, if the Hon Member says so but you see one of the main factors of this difficulty is that the Government is not prepared for tombola stallholders to use paper tickets. It is as simple as that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is that the sole reason why Gibraltar won't have a fair this year? Mr Speaker, is the Government incapable of solving that problem? Is the Minister not willing to try? Is the Minister not aware that there is considerable sympathy in Gibraltar for the holding of this adult festival and fair, and will the Hon Member please weigh in the balance his bits of paper from tombolas and the desire of the people of Gibraltar to have a regular fair and a good fair every year?

HON A W SERFATY:

I am afraid we have tried hard. I was the pioneer of post war fairs so I think I know what I am talking about. Its virtually impossible unless we allow tombolas to use paper tickets to organise a fair of any size. And let me tell this Honourable House that there are only two little roundabouts one small dodgen cars and one small swing for children in Gibraltar now. All the others have been disposed of by their owners.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Does not the Honourable Member believe that if this policy continues there wouldn't even be a small roundabout for children? Would the Hon Member not reconsider his decision in the light of the views of Hon Members on this side of the House?

HON A W SERFATY:

I am always prepared to reconsider any decision, of course I will, but I am not very optimistic about the results.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member please consult and if necessary seek assistance of his colleagues on that side of the House?

MR. SPEAKER:

Next question.

The Hon B Perez

Did the MOD consult the Gibraltar Government prior to the recent aircraft landing charges increase?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Yes Sir, and objections were raised. The Government was able only to delay implementation from October 76 to January 1977.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.34 of 1976 (2)

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, has the Government made any representations as to any future consultation prior to the increase?

HON A W SERFATY:

We were given an opportunity to bellyache about it, if I may use that word, but it is useless. Inflation is playing havoc and other factors too. And may I add that the element of landing charges in the operation of a Trident Two is 2½% and the element of this increase is only 0.7%. We have other very big problems in air communications, much bigger than that, and one of them is opening if necessary the airstrip at night after midnight.

HON J BOSSANO:

If the Hon Member will allow me to take up the last point. Surely he will agree that the airlines have used the landing charges as part of their arguments pointing out that they are twice as high as landing charges at nearby destinations. Will he admit that that is the case?

HON A W SERFATY:

They use all kinds of arguments many of which I don't believe.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, but would the Hon Member not agree that it is somewhat farcical to find the Ministry of Defence, which is directly responsible to Her Majesty's Government, increasing landing charges and British Airways, which is owned by Her Majesty's Government using the increased landing charges as an argument for increasing their own charges?

HON A W SERFATY:

You are probably right.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, is it true that the landing charges here are twice as much than those of nearby airports?

HON A W SERFATY:

I don't think they are twice as much. Nothing like it.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I just ask the Hon Member whether in this process of consultation he was able to point out, or he took the opportunity to point out to the Ministry of Defence, that the percentage increase that was being asked for was in fact in excess of the rate of inflation in Gibraltar? That in fact the increase that the MOD has brought about in landing charges is greater than the average increase that other products are being subjected to in Gibraltar.

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes Sir, the increase has been of the order of about 39% over a year. This has been pointed out.

HON J BOSSANO:

And therefore, Mr Speaker, what explanation was given? Does the Hon Member accept that the Ministry of Defence is somehow being inflicted to a higher grade of inflation than the rest of us?

HON A W SERFATY:

I cannot answer for the Ministry of Defence, Mr Speaker.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, what argument did the Ministry of Defence use with the Hon Member to convince him that an increase of this size was necessary?

HON A W SERFATY:

Sir, they insist that they are necessary.

The Hon J B Perez

What effects do Government think the flight frequency reduction by British Airways will have on our tourist trade and on hotels in Gibraltar?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

The effects of British Airways' decision are very serious indeed especially as only 215 SGIT seats are being offered to tour operators in United Kingdom.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.35 of 1976 (2)

HON J B PEREZ:

If that is the case, Mr Speaker, then it is very serious. Would Government state what policies they have taken to review the situation or to ameliorate the situation?

HON A W SERFATY:

The policy is that we must have more seats flying on the route. It is as simple as that.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Minister has been saying that for the last four years but what is the policy of the Government, what is he going to do about it?

HON A W SERFATY:

This is no laughing matter, Mr Speaker. This summer we have had ten flights with over 500 SGIT seats. In the summer and even now - but the matter is not so serious in winter - we are having six flights with 215 seats, less than half. Of course I am fully aware and I am doing something about it.

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the question was, what steps are Government taking?

HON A W SERFATY:

At this moment of time I don't think I can give details of the steps I am taking. There are other people involved and I cannot. I don't think it would be in the public interest to do so.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it right that the Minister is considering this now?

HON A W SERFATY:

Well, I've been having meetings. I had a meeting on Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member agree that the magnitude or the seriousness is that a number of hotels could well be put out of business if it is not possible to raise the number of available seats by next summer?

HON A W SERFATY:

Yes, Sir.

ORAL

NO.36 of 1976 (2)

The Hon J B Perez

Does Government believe that the 5% increase in air fares will have any detrimental effects on our Tourist Trade?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

Increases in cost are never helpful to the tourist trade.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.36 of 1976 (2)

HON M XIBERRAS:

Wouldn't it be primarily detrimental to the tourist trade or to other consumers?

HON A W SERFATY:

We always go to the CAA in London to try and get the fare increases reduced as much as possible and we shall carry on trying but the ironical situation is that as a result of that success of ours and everybody who goes there to fight increases in fares, the airlines respond by reducing the frequency over which the CAA has no jurisdiction .

MR SPEAKER:

We are getting out of line. You are being asked whether the increase in fares would affect the tourist trade.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Is there any other group of consumers which would be affected by this high percent increase more than the tourist trade?

HON A W SERFATY:

Not as far as I am aware. I am sure that the Gibraltarians who want to holiday in UK will also feel the pinch of course.

The Hon B Perez

Will Government be making any approaches to the British Government to subsidise British Airways on the Gibraltar Route?

Answer:

The Minister for Tourism, Trade and Economic Development

No, Sir, not at present.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.37 OF 1976.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Would the Government consider not just British Airways but other airways that are coming to Gibraltar as a way of at least ensuring that we have more flights coming to Gibraltar since there appears to be no other way of stopping the increases or reducing the flights?

HON A W SERFATY

I have already said that the matter is under active consideration, very active. But that does not necessarily mean we are going to subsidise British Airways who made a profit of £25m this year.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

I am not saying that we are going to subsidise British Airways. I am saying that ODA or whatever other agency in England is prepared to do it. If that were to be the policy of the Government that perhaps would bring more pressure on British Airways and other airlines coming to Gibraltar to be more careful about their increases in price since there would be another interested party seeing to that as well as the Gibraltar Government. Could the Minister not give some consideration to that?

HON A W SERFATY:

There are many ways of bringing pressure to the airlines.

HON A W SERFATY

You have been asked a question. You are being asked whether the Government is prepared to approach the British Government to subsidise other airlines for the purposes of flying to Gibraltar. Let us not lose sight of what we are trying to ask and what we are to achieve.

HON A W SERFATY

Sir, the matter is still under consideration and it may not be a question of a subsidy. There are other solutions which I am sure the House will prefer. There are other solutions but I am not in a position to say what they are now.

HON M XIBERRAS

Mr Speaker, in giving this matter consideration could the Minister bear in mind that Her Majesty's Government have suggested on their side that there should be subsidy of airlines in 1979.

HON A W SERFATY

It was the Civil Aviation Authority who mentioned the question of a subsidy.

HON M XIBERRAS

No, Mr Speaker, will the Minister bear in mind it was Her Majesty's Government that suggested this in December 1969.

HON A W SERFATY

Suggested what, Mr Speaker?

HON M XIBERRAS

That there should be subsidy of the airlines. Now, I am not asking him to accept that argument but will he bear it in mind?

HON A W SERFATY

We will bear it in mind.

The Hon G T Restano

Is Government satisfied with the state of our tele-communications with the outside world?

Answer:

The Minister for Municipal Services

No Sir. Insofar as telephone communications are concerned it has long been felt that the number of available circuits and the method of operation are inadequate to meet our needs. Constant efforts have therefore been made over the past two or three years (in collaboration with Cable and Wireless) to obtain from other administrations an increase in the number of circuits as well as semi-automatic methods of operation, to improve the efficiency of these circuits. As far as the Gibraltar end is concerned the necessary equipment is now ready for operation and we are waiting for other administrations to complete their arrangements.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.38 of 1976

HON G T RESTANO:

Why only semi-automatic?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Do you mean semi-automatic internationally or locally?

HON G T RESTANO:

I am asking why it should be semi automatic instead of automatic internationally.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

For automatic international subscribing you need automatic means of message recording for metering and we haven't that available because we haven't got the automatic circuits from other administrations.

HON G T RESTANO:

From other administrations? Does this apply to telephone calls to the United Kingdom?

HON MAJOR R J DELLIPIANI:

Yes Sir.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am not quite clear on this Mr Speaker. There are two ends and there should be metering at both ends, is that right? The Hon Member referred to other parties and this is what I am trying to clear up. Perhaps the Minister could inform the House as to what he means by "metering at the other end" because I have questions to ask if the answer is not what I expect it to be.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I repeat again Sir, a pre requisite for international subscriber dialling is an automatic means of message recording or metering. If and when better communications are available with other administrations the introduction of a fully automatic international service, that is, international subscriber dialling, will be considered in the light of the resulting trial.

HON G T RESTANO:

What does the Minister mean by "other administrations".

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Well I can say three. Spain, Morocco and the United Kingdom.

HON G T RESTANO:

Couldn't we establish it with the United Kingdom for the time being. Wouldn't it be possible to make an arrangement where I think the greatest difficulty arises now. Mr Speaker, does not the Minister realise that sometimes particularly from the United Kingdom to Gibraltar it takes as much as two hours. Would that for instance be relieved with the new system that we are going to have, the semi-automatic, and is it possible to do the metering from the other end.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker, I insist again, we are prepared at our end to deal with bigger circuits and more circuits.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being asked a simple question. Is the fully international automatic system not being implemented in Gibraltar due to the Gibraltar end or the other end.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

It is not up to us, Sir, it is up to the United Kingdom. To have a fully automatic system we need more circuits to justify the traffic.

MR SPEAKER:

Its at our end, in other words.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

It is still not clear. As I understand it we are going to have semi-automatic fairly soon from Gibraltar to the UK. And if we are going to have semi-automatic it means as I understand it, that an individual would be able to ask for a number from our exchange and the exchange would be able to dial directly to the number in the UK and that will speed traffic.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. Major Peliza will you ask for confirmation of what you have just said and then we know where we are.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I'll repeat the question of the semi automatic which/^{you}think is available.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, no, you are being asked a simple question whether semi-automatic means that the subscriber will be able to telephone the local exchange and the local exchange will be able to dial the number of the person being called. Is that correct?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Sir, we have that equipment in Gibraltar and it will be installed when other administrations are able to comply with our requirements.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Just on that point alone and as regards the United Kingdom, can the Minister give us an indication as to when this is likely to happen. I am talking now about traffic between Gibraltar and the UK and then I'll come to the other one.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I have no idea at the moment. The United Kingdom is not my responsibility.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Can the Hon Minister then say whose responsibility it is? Is he dealing with this matter ^{and who} is the person who has got to try and get the United Kingdom to install the metering or whatever it is at the other end?

HON MAJOR F J PELLIPIANI:

The GPO in the United Kingdom.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is it the responsibility of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is that the responsible department at the moment? Could we put some pressure somewhere else about this if it slows down?

MR SPEAKER:

In other words what you are being asked is what is Government doing to urge the GPO in London to implement the semi-automatic system?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

We are trying constantly all the time but it so happens that the United Kingdom circuits with Gibraltar are by-passed through other countries.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not possible to by-pass through Morocco instead of through Spain?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

The biggest problem, and I didn't want to say this in public, is Morocco.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Sir, would it be true to say that the other way i.e. UK-Gibraltar is the same, that there is no technical problem other than an administrative problem of getting the OK?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I agree with you, Sir. That is what I said at the beginning.

HON J BOSSANO:

Has the Hon Member indicated, in fact, in his last answer that ^{it} isn't purely a technological problem involving the GPO but rather a political problem of the repercussions on the attitudes of.....

MR SPEAKER:

No. I think what has been said is that the delay in installing the semi-automatic system between the United Kingdom and Gibraltar and vice versa is being held up pending administrative authority from the persons on whom we have to rely for installing the system.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member ^{has} said that the biggest problem at the moment here is Morocco, is that correct?

MR SPEAKER:

To obtain administrative consent from Morocco.

HON J BOSSANO:

And therefore I am asking him whether there is an indication here that the delay might be more.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, you might ask a question as to whether Government have any knowledge about the reasons for the delay.

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

Mr Speaker when we are talking about administrations, and I mentioned Morocco it is a delay on equipment on their part.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I right in saying then that there is generally agreement to the introduction for the use of this machinery which is here in Gibraltar and that the delay is in fact in the acquisition of the equipment by the other side, that is, Morocco. Is that the difficulty?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

That is correct.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Its purely not a question of a dispute on principle, Mr Speaker, it is a question of a delay in the Moroccan Authority obtaining the equipment and we can hope to see the semi automatic dialling in the not too distant future or as soon as the Moroccans obtain the equipment?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

That is correct Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, when can we expect to have automatic dialling on the telex system?

HON MAJOR F J DELLIPIANI:

I need notice of that question, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Surely that is telecommunications, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

You are being told that the Minister needs notice of the question.

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government state, in the light of the City Plan, whether it will be feasible in the foreseeable future to move the facilities now available at St Bernard's Hospital to the Naval Hospital?

Answer:

The Minister for Medical and Health Services

I can say in this respect that discussions on this subject have been going on at different levels for the past year or so, whether or not it is feasible for a merger to take place in the foreseeable future is a matter of conjecture as to whether negotiations can be successfully finalised.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.39 OF 1976.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker will the Hon Member bear in mind that I did not say merger, I was thinking of the moving of facilities from one place to another. Has discussion been going on about this as well?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

This is what I meant by merger, that eventually I myself believe and I think the House would agree with me, that the ideal site to have one unified hospital is in the Naval Hospital and it is on this channel that we are discussing but discussions are still taking place.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to understand then that the point of view of the Minister in these negotiations, these discussions, is that the present St Bernard's hospital should either be reduced drastically or even cease to exist as a hospital and that the facilities should be moved over to the Naval Hospital?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

What I am saying is that if all goes well, and let me tell you that they assume that it will take five years if and when we come to an agreement before the move could be made, ^{I am} against taking it piecemeal for the very simple reason that you will have half of a hospital working in St Bernard's subjected to vandalism in that part which is empty and at the same time having to keep at a very high cost the basic facilities for the few patients that remain, so we are aiming at doing it at one go if the whole thing goes through.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Just before the election, I would imagine Mr Speaker. Would the Hon Member not agree that with the five years before him - if he is still in the post, Mr Speaker - would the Hon Member not agree that there is ample time for consultation with Hon Members on this side of the House on this very important matter involving certainly the biggest chunk of our medical services?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I would say, Sir, that if anything concrete develops I would certainly bring it to this House before any final decision is taken.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am grateful for that reply, Mr Speaker, but will the Hon Member inform the House whether in connection with the possible transfer of site or merger, as he has called it, he is also discussing conditions for a merger proper?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes Sir, all this has been discussed with the primary view in mind that whatever we do it is not at the expense of the Gibraltar community suffering.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that consultations with this side of the House should take place in the not too distant future in view of the fact that discussions have been progressing now for a year?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Sir I am afraid the MOD consider that for the moment the discussions should be held on a confidential basis and the reasons were, because they were informal talks, to prevent raising false hopes so that if agreement was not reached no grounds could be given to anybody to pick up on any particular point of disagreement to create ill-feeling - we have had enough of that already - and, thirdly, that even if the two parties that are now discussing were to agree, the agreement is subject to the agreement of other ministries concerned. But I can assure the House that whenever anything takes concrete shape I would not move before the whole thing is brought to the notice of the House. I can assure the House that the Gibraltarian community is uppermost in our minds.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Member bear in mind that this, if it is achieved, would be a very important step in the development of the medical services and that I certainly wish him luck on this matter.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Thank you very much.

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government state whether there is a shortage of nursing staff at St Bernard's Hospital?

Answer:

The Minister for Medical and Health Services

The usual endemic shortage of nursing staff exists at St Bernard's Hospital.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.40 of 1976 (2)

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister not aware of a recent communique by members of ACTSS representing nurses that there was quite a serious shortage of staff over a long period of time?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, this is not correct. Up to September we were in one of those fortunate positions where we only had half a body short. Some members opposite will wonder which part of the body was the one that was short, but it is only because we take part-timers that you may get 2½ people not working full time and really the shortages came about some time towards the end of September. By the end of October we were 12 short and then in November 25½. And the reasons are obvious Sir, we get during the summer months quite a number of students who come over and take jobs in the hospital and then we are full up and then suddenly the numbers come down when they go away. But I would like to mention that with the recruiting that is going on all the time we have had a number of people, about 20, most of whom have been taking their general knowledge examination during the last 4 or 5 weeks and we have got 20 down who will then be subject to a selection board. The reason why at this stage we have not thought it wise to call a selection board - and I would like to mention that some of them have not as recent as a week ago - is because the environmental climate at the moment is not the correct one, and secondly because some of them have expressed the view that if they are going to come in they would rather do it after Christmas.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Would the Minister agree that there is a serious shortage of midwives?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, none at all. The two midwives that we were short of have now come from the UK and the Union were very nice about it and they accept to take these two sisters supernumerary to our requirements because they were specifically to do midwifery. So now we are fully staffed.

HON DR R E VALARINO:

Sir, how long are these midwives coming for?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

For as long as they will not deprive the Gibraltarians when they are qualified of becoming one. There may be a period when there may be overlapping but immediately ours come back they are being taken in such a way that they will phase out and ours will take over but there may be a period of overlapping, two or three months, perhaps.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Sir, what is Government doing to obtain local midwives?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

We are constantly sending them to be trained, but it so happens that once they are there and take their SRN then many of them return and say they won't take their midwifery and it is a question of sacking them and then being without a sister as such or retaining them and putting up with the problem.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, am I not right in saying that in the recent dispute that there was.....

MR SPEAKER:

You must be careful because you have got another question on this matter.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am talking about the figures for the shortage of nurses was it not something like fourteen short?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, I am afraid they are only 25½.

HON M XIBERRAS:

No I am saying that the union side.....

MR SPEAKER:

The Minister cannot be asked to confirm what the unions say. You have asked whether there is a shortage of nursing staff.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I can see that the hospital is fully staffed in summer, Mr Speaker. I am talking about this statement that has been made and I was going to ask the Minister whether it is not a matter for concern for him that this figure should have been quoted.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It is and I confirm those figures, Sir. There are 25 Junior Nurses and there are 16 Staff Nurses but there is nothing you can do about it because staff nurses are recruited from the people who are coming from below and this year the number of staff nurses are higher because Staff Nurses are then promoted to Sisters and thanks God the complement of Sisters is complete.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am worried about the apparent discrepancy between the Minister's answer and the figures quoted by the nurses. Am I to take it then that all in all there was a shortage of some 40?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

There are a shortage of 40 but as regards the 16 Staff Nurses these vacancies are normally filled by recruitment from the junior grades when these qualify and obtain registration. This is therefore a gradually reducing number.

HON M XIBERRAS:

So its more an apparent shortage, the Minister is saying, than a real shortage.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It would be unfair to say there is an apparent shortage, it is a shortage.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Well, Mr Speaker, my next question is, does this shortage, real or apparent, put any more strain on the nursing staff at the hospital?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It must certainly put some strain and more overtime, of course.

HON M XIBERRAS:

The nurses were in fact saying that they were doing very well because they were coping with the shortage that there was, so it does put greater strain. I would ask the Minister also what the average shortage is over a period of time.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Usually one can say that during the year on an average it is about 10 or 12 of the junior nurses and the staff nurses vary. For example, by July we ought to have 7 less vacancies when the promotions take place.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is there a great deal of wastage in the sense of people leaving the job and is this the cause of the shortage?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes, there is a complete drain, people come in and then the boyfriend does not like her being on duty at night, and so on and so forth.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is it possible that the so called shortage is aggravated by nurses having in some cases to do jobs that normally would be done by Doctors because, in fact, there is a need for more doctors in the hospital?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No Sir, I don't think there is. We have got a full establishment of doctors and in fact we have one too many at the moment..

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am not talking about the establishment. It is whether in fact the establishment is too low?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No I don't think so, Sir, that hasn't been brought to my notice.

HON J BOSSANO:

I would like to ask the Hon Member whether he is making any sort of concerted effort in the recruitment of school leavers for nuses because there is apparently quite a lot of difficulty in finding employment for school leavers.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

That is how we do it. The recruitment is carried out in liaison between the hospital authorities, and the Careers Officer and the Schools. Volunteers are sent up by the schools, we also go to the Schools, we talk to the girls and that is how we got the 20 girls we have in our books at the moment.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could I ask the same question in respect of nurses as my Hon and Gallant friend asked in respect of doctors. Is the Minister satisfied with the establishment of nurses, i.e. that the number is adequate?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The full establishment is adequate.

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government make a statement to explain the disconcerting public disagreement between the administration and nurses at St Bernard's Hospital regarding nursing standards there?

Answer:

The Minister for Medical and Health Services

The industrial action taken by the Nursing Grades some seven weeks ago took the form of the staff refusing to wear uniforms whilst on duty. The non-wearing of uniforms must be regarded as a lowering of accepted nursing standards as it can lead to the risk of cross infection as well as causing confusion to patients and visitors.

Clearly in the seven weeks in which this action was continued these standards continued to deteriorate and the reasons for the advice given by the Consultants to the Government was to avoid unnecessary risks to the public.

I should make it clear that the phrase 'deteriorating nursing standards' used in the Press Release issued on the 23rd November 1976, referred only to the risk of cross infection and to the causing of confusion to patients and visitors and the setting of a very poor example to the junior staff, the consequence of which will be a lowering of accepted medical discipline. At no time has it been suggested that there has been any slackening off of the nursing staffs' interest in their work or in their customary devotion to duty and the welfare of the patients under their charge. I am informed that, in spite of existing difficulties, both the doctors and the nursing staff are giving of their best in the interests of the patients.

I should therefore like to take this opportunity to call on all concerned, in a spirit of cooperation, and in the general interest to forget their past differences and enable formal negotiations to continue with a view to resolving a number of issues which still remain.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO. 41 of 1976 (2)

HON M XIBERRAS:

A view Mr Speaker, which I share entirely and that is why I am asking this question because it was disconcerting public disagreement. Mr Speaker, could the Minister say or assure the public that in fact those standards of nursing which generally affect the wellbeing of patients, in other words the safety of the patient, were not at risk.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I entirely endorse the Hon Member's remark and I share those views.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member not then say that the statement made on behalf of the Government was disconcerting to members of the Public?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Not quite. Sir. I think one has got to live in the hospital to find out what was going on. I wouldn't like after the last remark I have made to enumerate the number of things that have given rise to unfortunate anxiety to patients, to staff, to discipline generally, and I would rather end on that happy appeal that the doctors and the nurses should get together and sort their differences without in any way affecting the running of the hospital.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I have no doubt the Hon Member would but perhaps he might be better advised not to have allowed this public release to have come from the Government in the first place. Now that it has been made, Mr Speaker, could I ask the Hon Member whether he was a party to it.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I was a party to it in the sense that the communique was brought to me. After and following some representations made by other bodies, the doctors and the senior people in the hospital found that it was very difficult for them to keep up with discipline, it was very difficult for them to open the intensive care unit, it was very difficult for them to see nurses going in and other senior nurses bringing them out. All this was going on to the detriment of the patients and I had one patient in my office who came to me and told me: "Look, I was asked to undress from the waist upwards and suddenly I found somebody with a red jersey and blue jeans and I was embarrassed probably it might have been a nurse but this is not on". It happens in other spheres but I wouldn't like to carry on enumerating. I think that we all want to see normality restored and I hope that after the words that have been expressed in this House this will happen. I can assure the Hon Member, and I say this not because I am in this side of the House, I will always say it wherever I am - that I have got a very soft spot for the nurses but there are things which I cannot agree with in the way they have tackled it.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, without in any way expressing a view about the industrial action of the nurses, may I ask the Minister if as he has now stated the actual nursing standards those pertaining to the safety of the patients were not in any way at risk, why as I understand it the Government also said at the same time that they would be reducing the intake of patients to the hospital.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

No, Sir, I never said that there wasn't a risk to the patients. I think I have made it quite clear that there was a risk to the patients and that is why they decided not to take - and some of the Hon Members here will know more than I do about these technical phrases - they were not prepared to take cold cases to avoid infection because we had already some infection going on.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member make sure that the nursing staff understand the position as it has been explained now without in any way prejudicing the claim which is before the hospital or the Government in any way?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

It has been explained to them on umpteen occasions and in fact one of the executives of the union was quite clear that it was his view that the nurses should be wearing uniform. I have tried my best to explain it to them, to explain it to other members of the Union, to meet people at 10.30 a.m. on a Sunday to try and get them together to solve their industrial problem. I can assure you that this time it hasn't been left pending to see what happens.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member inform the House of what the actual situation is now. What stage has been reached.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

On what?

HON M XIBERRAS:

On the matters that occasioned this public disagreement.

MR SPEAKER:

No, no, we are not going to go into the industrial dispute. We have gone into ~~every~~ everything to do with the statement itself and the disconcerting public disagreement but no more. We are not going to go into the merits of the claim.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member say whether this disagreement continues?

HON AP MONTEGRIFFO:

I don't know really what they are disagreeing about because lets face it, the original claim for double time on Sunday was proved to be...

MR SPEAKER:

Let us not go into that. Next question.

No.42 of 1976(2)

ORAL

The Hon Dr R G Valarino

Does Government propose to stop routine primary smallpox vaccination of all children, as has been done in the United States and the United Kingdom? Does Government intend to introduce BCG Vaccination and Immunization against measles?

Answer:

The Minister for Medical and Health Services

Yes Sir. Draft legislation has already been agreed to by Council of Ministers for the abolition of compulsory routine primary smallpox vaccination of all children.

Consultations are in progress at the moment with the Department of Health and Social Security in the United Kingdom and the World Health Organisation on the subject of BCG vaccination and immunisation against measles and subject to whatever advice is received it is proposed to introduce these procedures in Gibraltar.

The Hon Dr R G Valarino

Does Government believe in the need for a District Community Physician?
And if so, does Government intend recruiting one?

Answer:

The Minister for Medical and Health Services

Government does not at this stage include in its programme the recruitment of a District Community Physician.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.43 OF 1976 (2)

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Does Government know the functions of a District Community Physician?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Yes Sir.

HON DR R G VALARINO

Could we please hear them?

MR SPEAKER:

No, that is outside the orbit of the question.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Could the Hon Member say why it is not intended to recruit a District Community Physician?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

The reason why we are not contemplating at this stage engaging a District Community Physician is in that the last 2 or 3 years we have introduced a number of radical steps in the Medical Department, they are still suffering from organisational problems and we would rather put them right before we launched ourselves into a new venture.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, are these administrative problems that the Minister speaks about precisely because there isn't a District Community Physician?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

I am afraid that that may be his judgement, it is not mine.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

A district community physician is a full time administrator. Could I ask the Minister who is at present administering the hospital and is it a full time job?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

A community physician is not in all cases a full time administrator, to start with. The present administrator of the hospital is the Director of Medical and Health Services.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Could I ask the Minister how much the Director of Medical and Health Services gets for his advice as administrator? What proportion of his salary?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Its a composite salary. He gets £7,000 odd under Morgan.

MR SPEAKER:

No, you are being asked what proportion of his salary is attributable to this particular work.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Its not a question of a proportion, there is no breakdown. His salary covers all his duties.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

As far as I can see from the estimates, he gets £300 a year for his advice to Government. Am I right or am I wrong?

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

He is getting £7,000, I think exactly the same as any other head of department. That is what he is getting now.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

He is getting £300 above a hospital consultant. £300 for the job he is doing.

HON A P MONTEGRIFFO:

Not quite.

The Hon G T Restano

When will those families still living in Nissen Huts at Catalan Bay be re-housed in adequate accommodation?

Answer:

The Minister for Housing and Sport

The families who occupy Nissen Huts at White Rock Camp were accommodated there in May 1976 for their own safety, because the building they occupied in the village was in a dangerous state of collapse. It is not yet known when the next development programme at Catalan Bay Village will take place.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.45 OF 1976 (2)

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I think that is a very unsatisfactory answer, "it is not yet known when the next development will take place". Does the Minister not consider that in today's day and age it is deplorable for families to be living in Nissen Huts?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I concur fully, it may be deplorable but at the moment we don't know exactly when the next development programme at Catalan Bay will take place.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, may I ask when will Government be in a position to say when this new development will take place?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I would assume that Government will be in a position to answer this question more specifically after development aid talks take place in London which will be, I think, sometime next year.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, are the houses that were in an unfit state for living being left as they are?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, the houses where these people were residing have been rendered completely unfit and they will be demolished.

HON GT RESTANO:

Mr Speaker could the Minister say when they will be demolished?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Again, Mr Speaker Sir, it would depend entirely on the demolition programme.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, are any of these families living in Nissen Huts at Catalan Bay, those who either moved into the Nissen huts sometime last year, I believe.....

HON SPEAKER:

No, the Minister has said that they are the people who were decanted from unsafe houses in May 1976.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to take it that these are the only families concerned?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir, there are I think two families that I can recall who have been living in the Nissen huts before the others moved in.

HON M XIBERRAS:

And the same action is proposed in respect to these two families as to the other families the Minister has referred to?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think the Hon Member well knows the circumstances of the other two families. It will be a question of how one rehuses these two families. It is a question of dialogue between the Catalan Bay Committee which do their own housing allocation.

HON M XIBERRAS:

They do their own housing allocation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well, Catalan Bay have their own point system within the Village Council.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, isn't one of these two families we are down to now, one in which there was a court case and in fact there was an undertaking by the Minister to re-accommodate as early as possible?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes Sir, I didn't like or didn't want to define a particular family or either of the families or both of these families. I think when the time comes due consideration will be given to every specific case living at White Rock Camp.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to take it then that this particular family will be re-accommodated ahead of the others?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well, that I cannot say, Sir. It depends entirely on what accommodation comes up and when.

HON M XIBERRAS:

And if so, is it Government's intention to re-accommodate these families within Catalan Bay, or outside?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, experience has shown in Catalan Bay that those residents of Catalan Bay prefer to take up accommodation within Catalan Bay although several of them as we know have moved into other estates. We do our utmost to try and rehouse them if possible within Catalan Bay.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Was there any time limit on this particular family being re-accommodated?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Not that I can recall, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister saying that for the time being there is no provision at all for those families in Nissen Huts to be moved out?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Not at the moment, Sir. We certainly intend to demolish the old building at Catalan Bay as quickly as possible and subsequent upon that we intend to build something there but I just can't say when we will be able to do so and they will be rehoused the moment that we are able to construct adequate accommodation for them.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, then the Government is using these Nissen Huts as a decanting area?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I don't think one should classify that as a decanting area. The Nissen Huts we have at Rock Camp have always been used by Catalan Bay people when they have had severe problems in the village. It wouldn't be a decanting centre in the general interpretation of a decanting centre but it has been used on more than one occasion for shuffling people around within the Catalan Bay development.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, is it not to be inferred from the answer that if the recommendation of the majority of families will depend on the development talks to be held at sometime in the future it is likely therefore that the Nissen huts will continue to be used in the way they are being used now for at least another three years?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I can't look into the future, I wish I could, I can't really say Sir, it would depend entirely on the circumstances at the time. I think we would all like to get rid of the Nissen huts. I think it is unsightly just to have them there.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think the Minister has used the term "as soon as possible". Perhaps he might like to clarify what he means by "as soon as possible".

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, as soon as possible means as soon as we can go to Britain, provide them with our development programme for the next 3 or 4 years and get on with the job.

The Hon M Kiberras

Will Government state whether it is prepared to give the GASA financial technical and any other aid that might be necessary in the Association's endeavour to construct a swimming pool and will Government further state on what site it is prepared to allow construction?

Answer:

The Minister for Housing and Sport

Sir, no approach to Government has been made by GASA for financial, technical or any other aid that might be necessary in the Association's endeavour to construct a swimming pool of their own, nor has a site for construction been requested.

If and when GASA decide to approach Government, consideration will be given to their requests.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.45 of 1976

HON M KIBERRAS:

Would Government nevertheless view, in view of the representations which I am making now, would it view favourably an approach of the kind described?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, GASA's request would have to be viewed in conjunction with any future provision of recreation facilities at Montagu Basin which will incorporate a swimming pool for use by the whole community.

HON M KIBERRAS:

In view of the very special and excellent work which is done by members of GASA in raising young swimmers, would the Government nevertheless not be able to commit itself to certainly initiating talks with GASA in respect of the swimming pool that they have planned?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, firstly I think it would have been GASA to have approached Government which to this day has not been done. Secondly, Government will always consider representations made by any association as we have done in the past.

HON M KIBERRAS:

In the event of such an approach being made, and I am sure that it will, would Government consider such questions as siting?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, we would certainly but there are more than one problem to be looked at, not just a site.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member bear in mind when he is approached, however, that the GASA have had an abiding interest in swimming over the years and it is they more than anybody else who have contributed to the rather extensive popularity of the sport and the better standards that are being achieved day by day. Would he bear that in mind?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I always bear that in mind and I praise GASA highly for what they have done.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member not agree that there is room for an Association such as this kind which is personally devoted to raising swimmers and the standard of swimming, that there is room for such an association to have special facilities in respect of swimming in Gibraltar, something akin to the Sandpits Tennis Club. There is another question tabled and the Minister has already given an indication of how he is going to answer that. Therefore, I am asking whether the Minister indeed feels that GASA does deserve some sort of treatment such as was given to Sandpits or was given in respect of the basket ball court to the Basketball Association.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I am afraid that the Hon Member may be rather confused. In the case of Sandpits, money was given by Government with a proviso that membership would not be restricted. In the case of basketball it was a question I think of the Rotary Club that provided money for the construction of the basketball pitch. However, Sir, in any aspect where public money is given to any Association for use of facilities, one would have to be very careful about providing money for a facility for the exclusive use of that particular association or organisation. However, I don't want to dwell into that at this stage Sir, but it is a matter that would have to be considered.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to take it, therefore, Mr Speaker, that if the approach from GASA is made conditional on the public having some access to the swimming pool then the Minister would consider the request more favourably?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I think I ought to declare that the one sport that I do know something about definitely is swimming and I think in admiring GASA's efforts for sterling work over many years, I personally feel it would be a waste of money for the construction of a swimming pool that would not be used all the year round. The construction of a pool involving public expenditure that could only be used during the summer months would to me be something like the Nuffield Swimming Pool which lies dormant from the end of September to the end of April or May.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Hon Member please take note that in fact the plans which GASA tentatively have would meet that condition of extended use of the pool other than the summer season and would the Hon Member however before taking a decision which would exclude any Government help to GASA in this respect, make sure that there is a meeting between himself and the affected party bearing in mind that GASA is the representative association of swimming in Gibraltar.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I can assure the Hon Member that relations between the Minister and GASA are excellent. I have to this day and I am still waiting for GASA to make some approach to me, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member nevertheless give that assurance to me, that he will consult GASA on this matter.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I think GASA should consult me in all modesty.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Well it depends, Mr Speaker, whose modesty we are talking about Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that if he does have any other plans which might conflict with GASA's, it is only fair that he as Minister responsible should consult the interested association?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I can assure the Hon Member opposite that for a number of years I have been telling GASA of my intentions.

HON M KIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member give me an assurance nonetheless, Mr Speaker, that he will consult GASA?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I can assure the Hon Member that I have consulted GASA in the past.

The Hon M Xiberras

Will Government make a statement as to the number of flats at Varyl Begg Estate which are still not fit for allocation?

Answer:

The Minister for Housing and Sport

Of the flats which Government has taken over at Varyl Begg Estate there are 19 which are unfit for allocation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.46 OF 1976 (2)

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, of the flats that have actually been taken over and I take it that these 19 are the only ones that have been completed?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I am afraid I don't understand.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, there might be more which have been completed but have not been taken over.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That's right. That is so, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

So there are 19 in all.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

No, Sir. Nineteen that are unfit for allocation of those that we have already accepted.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Yes, Mr Speaker, my question is the number of flats that are completed, in fact.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, the flats we haven't taken over we certainly can't allocate.

MR SPEAKER:

No, but you may have the knowledge as to whether there are some flats which have not been handed over to Government and if they were handed over to Government they would not be fit for allocation. That is what you are being asked.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

To an extent yes, Mr Speaker. But Government cannot accept responsibility of not allocating a flat at Varyl Begg which one hasn't accepted. I am really spelling out here the number of flats that we have accepted and that we find unfit to allocate.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, are there any flats which the Minister has not accepted because he knows they are not fit for allocation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Well, Sir, there are four blocks at Varyl Begg which we have not accepted, which come to 130 flats.

HON J BOSSANO:

Is the Hon Member then saying that there are four blocks that he hasn't accepted because all the flats in them are not in a fit condition to be allocated?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, we have four blocks there which are not fit to be taken over at this stage.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Am I to take it then, Mr Speaker, that the answer to my question is that there are some 130 flats which are completed but cannot be allocated because they are not fit for allocation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

That is not quite so, Sir. The four blocks would comprise some 130 flats, roughly, all of which are not unfit. The fact that there are some that leave much to be desired prohibits Government from accepting these flats.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am trying to establish Mr Speaker, how many flats should have now come on to the market, as it were, for allocation.

MR SPEAKER:

What the Hon Minister is saying is that the fact that they have been unable to accept the four blocks which he mentioned doesn't necessarily mean that all the flats in these blocks are unfit for allocation, but if they had been accepted they would prejudice their case.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am trying to find out how many flats there are going to be in the immediate future for allocation and at what stage in the pipeline they are. So would the Hon Member say whether this figure of 130 plus 19, 149 flats, are flats which they are not able to allocate at the present time but which will become fit for allocation or allocatable in the near future.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I hope they will be allocated in the near future.

HON M XIBERRAS:

This is the object of the original question. Would these 149 flats, in fact, make up the bulk of the next allocation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

They will make up the total of the next allocation, Mr Speaker.

The Hon B Perez

Would Government state whether they have any immediate plans for building an indoor swimming pool which would provide all year round swimming facilities?

Answer:

The Minister for Housing and Sport

No, Sir, there are no immediate plans for the building of an indoor swimming pool though this is considered a most desirable amenity as and when we can afford it.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.47 of 1976

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, would Government then state when they anticipate that the swimming pool will be given due consideration, when can we have a swimming pool in Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, Sir, Hon Members may have read the Town Planning Report where a particular page is dedicated to the desirability of an indoor swimming pool. Again, as I have previously mentioned in other questions, Sir, it will have to be obviously a matter of circumstances, of priorities, and obviously of financial consequence.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker Sir, does the Minister believe or think that Gibraltar will have to wait until we are in Government again before we have a swimming pool as happened with the stadium?

MR SPEAKER:

That is not a question. You don't have to answer.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, since the Hon Member will no doubt admit that the idea of the swimming pool which he so eloquently described in the City Plan, has been one which has been kicked around here in the House for a good number of years, would he not agree that some sort of intermediate stage would be desirable?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I think it is no secret that the cost of a covered swimming pool would well be in the region of £1m. There is no doubt about that in my mind or in minds of members on this side of the House. To construct anything halfway would be to me, Mr Speaker, an entire waste of money, and I think we deserve much better than that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Of course Mr Speaker, we do, we, this generation, do. Would the Hon Member not agree that a venture such as the other one I mentioned earlier might very well form a good bridge between one thing and the other?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I am sorry but I cannot agree with that. Swimming is an all year round sport and if it is to be competitive it has to be all year round. You cannot swim five months of the year and be a swimmer.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker but would the Hon Member not consider in view of the fact that the other proposal is somewhere in the region of £3,000 compared to £1m, would the Hon Member not consider that it is worth at least investigating before his very desirable plans for a good swimming pool, a £1m swimming pool, come to fruition?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, an £3,000 swimming pool would be something much less than what the Nuffield Swimming Pool is today, and that is lying dormant completely.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, would not the Hon Member consider that something in the region of £6,000 as much as was given to the Gibraltar Football Association for one particular venture, is some worthwhile expenditure in order to provide some bridging facilities between one thing and the other?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I must tell the Hon Member that I cannot agree with him at all. If he knew about swimming he certainly wouldn't argue that way.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I just ask the Hon Member to confirm that there will be no reference to a swimming pool in the next development programme. Is that correct?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Sir, I am afraid that is not the case. Again it becomes a matter of priorities at the time. We haven't as yet sat down as to what our Development Programme will be for the next four years but I think my interest within that is more than well known.

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The Hon G T Restano

What are the statistical figures, in terms of numbers, and broken down into nationality and origin, for shop assistants and managers?

Answer:

The Minister for Labour and Social Security

Accurate figures, by nationality, are available in respect only of non-EEC nationals for whom employment permits are required. The numbers of permits in force in respect of such persons employed in the retail distributive trade are as follows:

Managers and/or Accountants:	18 Indian citizens
	4 Moroccan "
Shop Assistants, Shop Cashiers, handymen and, other analogues grades	58 Moroccan citizens
	53 Indian citizens
	10 Spaniards
	5 Pakistanis
	4 Sri Lankans

There are also about 700 EEC nationals, the majority of whom are Gibraltarians known to be employed in the trade, but in respect of whom no particulars are kept as to the actual nature of their employment.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO No.48 OF 1976 (2)

HON G T RESTANO:

I am surprised at the Minister's reply that the figures for EEC nationals are not available since an employment survey by the Statistics Office comes out every six months and in that particular survey a breakdown of nationality is required by the employers.

HON AJ CANEPA:

That may well be the case, Sir, but his question refers not just to nationality but to origin as well and once numbers are enumerated on the grounds of nationality there is no distinction made with regard to origin.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask the Minister if he knows what these employment surveys include. I believe they are included in his Department but they do specifically ask the question as far as British nationals are concerned, what their origin is. Whether it is British/Gibraltar, whether it is British/UK or British/Canadian. I would have expected the Minister to have known this.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am giving the Hon Member, Sir, the figures which are available to the Department of Labour and Social Security. The employment survey is available, obviously, it is a publication which is tabled in the House but in respect of people who require work permits we do not have any breakdown of origin.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Hon Member say what unemployment figures there are amongst Gibraltarians individuals looking for employment as shop assistants?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am afraid, Mr Speaker, that that doesn't arise from the question at all and I of course require separate notice.

MR SPEAKER:

Well, it does arise to the extent that there is an object to the question, but of course, you must be given time to look up the details.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister not agree that there is a certain amount of unemployment amongst Gibraltarian shop assistants and that for 150 non-EEC nationals to be employed as shop assistants is detrimental to Gibraltarian shop assistants?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is a well known fact, Mr Speaker, that both the present Government and other Governments in the past have given priority of employment to Gibraltarians. There has always been a small element of unemployment in Gibraltar - it is a very small one. There have been in the previous House, debates about the matter. I explained the steps which I proposed to take to meet the problem and I think that I am being successful. I am succeeding in meeting the problem of this small element of unemployment that the Hon Member has raised.

HON G T RESTANO:

Will the Minister commit himself to replying to the question which he was unable to reply to before as to the unemployment figures both registered in the Department of Labour and Social Security and in the Youth Department?

HON A J CANEPA:

Gladly, Mr Speaker. If the Hon Member gives separate notice of the question at the next meeting of the House there will be no problem of having the figures ready.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am giving notice now, Sir.

MR SPEAKER:

There is no need to because you can give him a written reply to the question.

HON A J CANEPA:

I will give him a written reply with the figures.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I ask the Hon Member whether, in fact, he has taken practical steps to reduce the number of work permits issued in this particular category in view of the fact that there is unemployed labour available in Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Sir. I have a feeling the Hon Mr Bossano wasn't present in the House during my intervention during the Budget Session where I laid down in some detail the steps that were being taken to meet the problem and one of those included the non-issuing of any new work permits to shop assistants of non-EEC origin.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not a fact that the reduction in the number of permits issued has been minimal, for example, over the last six months when the quota has been fixed for a six month interval?

HON A J CANEPA:

The reduction has been minimal but the fact is that all the quota has been fully taken up and therefore the vast majority of applications that have been received for work permits for shop assistants 98% or 99% are being turned down.

HON J BOSSANO:

But Mr Speaker, what the Hon Member then is saying is that the step he has taken is not to allow an increase in immigrant labour but in fact the amount that there was six months ago was not significantly different from what there is now or what there was the last time the Manpower Planning Committee met, Mr Speaker.

HON A J CANEPA:

Precisely, Mr Speaker, I did say then in March that the first step was going to be not to allow any further increase and not to issue any fresh work permits. As work permits expired they would not be renewed and this is what is being done and it is having a great deal of success.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, Mr Speaker, the Hon Member then is saying that since March, work permits that have expired in this category have not been renewed. Is that what he is saying?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, no new work permits have been issued.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the Minister has said that the quota of work permits relative to this trade has been reduced by the same amount as the people who have given up their jobs in Gibraltar.

HON A J CANEPA:

Yes, Sir, that is the case, Mr Speaker. In addition to that, no new work permits are issued. If we receive an application for a new shop assistant or someone to replace some other shop assistants who may have been working in Gibraltar for very many years and has left, that is turned down. If we get a request for a renewal of a work permit because the contract might be renewed every year or every two years in respect of somebody who has been here ten, twelve, fifteen years, that is another matter.

The Hon M Xiberras

What part did Government play in the recent wage negotiations between the Gibraltar Master Builders Association and the Transport and General Workers Union?

Answer:

The Minister for Labour and Social Security

About a month ago representatives of the Gibraltar Master Builders Association sought a meeting with the Minister for Education and Public Works and myself in order to gauge our reaction to the offer which they proposed to make to the Transport and General Workers Union in connection with the then current wage negotiations.

Subsequently, when negotiations in the industry actually reached the dispute stage, I myself called the Gibraltar Master Builders Association's representative again to a meeting, which was attended by my colleague for Public Works, the Regional Director of PSA/DOE, the Director for Public Works and the Director of Labour and Social Security in order to discuss the matter. Arising from this meeting, negotiations between the two sides of the industry were resumed immediately, and a settlement was reached within two days.

I think that it should be made clear that Government's part in the above discussions with management was mainly as a client of the industry, rather than as an intermediary in the dispute, as is evidenced by the fact that at no time did the Union side approach me or my Department or seek our services in the dispute.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.49 OF 1976 (2)

HON M XIBERRAS:

Will the Minister then deny the allegation that has been made that Government agreed to certain rates with the Gibraltar Master Builders Association without consulting DOE first?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is correct, Sir.

HON M XIBERRAS:

The Minister is denying it.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not denying it, we did not consult DOE at the time.

HON M XIBERRAS:

And in fact you agreed with Gibraltar Master Builders Association as a client in the industry.

HON A J CANEPA:

We told them that the Government would find any claim for reimbursement in respect of those agreed wage rates acceptable.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member or the Government generally not ^{have} thought it wise to consult in view of the fact that Government in its other capacity and as a major client along with DOE is very likely to pay the same rates eventually and does he not think that in fact the subsequent withdrawal or breaking down of the offer of £7 was a direct cause of the strike.

HON A J CANEPA:

That is where I am not sure that I agree whether that was the direct cause of the strike or not. No, I don't agree.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Would the Hon Member answer the first part of the question. Would he not think that it would have been at least prudent, if not responsible, to discuss the matter with DOE before saying to the Union that Government was prepared to go along with a certain sum of money of over £7.

HON A J CANEPA:

It would have been, Sir, and I take full responsibility and it is my fault it wasn't done and perhaps I may explain why it wasn't done. For the last two years since there was a dispute in the industry in 1974 I was under the impression, because this is what in fact used to happen, that the proper consultative procedure should be channelled or was being channelled through the Financial and Development Secretary. It was until very recently the Financial and Development Secretary particularly the predecessor of the Hon Mr Collings, who had contacts with the Regional Director of DOE insofar as matters affecting both Government and DOE as client of the building industry were concerned. And it was because I was labouring under that misapprehension that I did not advise the GMBA correctly as I should have done, because for instance I asked them to write to the Financial and Development Secretary and not to the Director of Public Works as I ought to have done, and also because I was under that misapprehension, that I myself took no step whatsoever to consult the Regional Director of the DOE. Subsequently the matter reached the dispute stage and I was indirectly approached by the Regional Director of the PSA, the approach came through the Deputy Governor, we had a very fruitful meeting, that led to the meeting that I have referred to in my answer, and I can assure the Hon Member opposite that the lines will never be crossed again. Proper machinery has now been established to deal with this sort of procedure.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I find the Hon Member's honesty commendable. Could he just answer one more particular question and that is with whose authority did the Hon Member agree that the £7 or over £7 was something which Government could wear?

HON A J CANEPA:

Both my Hon Colleague on my left and I knew that if claims based on those figures were made to Council of Minister we could guarantee that Council of Ministers would have no problem in agreeing to that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, but wouldn't these funds come eventually from Her Majesty's Government in the majority of the projects. How could the Minister agree to other rates being paid in the building trade in Gibraltar if most of the financing as far as Government was concerned would come from ODA.

HON A J CANEPA:

These increases, Mr Speaker, were the inevitable consequence of Government's wages policy. And if Government is prepared to pass on to the tax payer certain increases it must.....

HON M XIBERRAS:

Not to the tax payer, to ODA.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am saying that if Government is prepared itself as an employer to pass on the consequence of its wages policy to the tax payer, then as a client of the building industry it must also be prepared wherever the funds are coming from, it must also be prepared to meet the consequences of certain legitimate increases in the building industry, a matter about which the Government was being pressed by the Hon Leader of the Opposition for the last two years and something that we committed ourselves to do in January this year.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, and a point which I entirely take. But would the Hon Member nevertheless think it rather over generous on his part to agree to this.

HON A J CANEPA:

No, we had a commitment. The Government voted in favour of a motion in the last House of Assembly.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Yes, Mr Speaker, a motion which took quite a long time to get agreement to precisely because there was need for consultation with DOE. The specific question, Mr Speaker, is why was not the Financial and Development Secretary consulted by the Minister?

HON A J CANEPA:

I spoke to the Financial and Development Secretary afterwards and his answer was that whatever I thought was fair he would go along with that, which is very refreshing I must say.

The Hon J B Perez

Is Government content with the present prison conditions? - are there any reforms envisaged in the near future?

Answer:

The Minister for Labour and Social Security

Government can never be fully satisfied with present prison conditions, particularly with regard to shortcomings which derive from its unsatisfactory location and environment.

In the near future, Government proposes to increase the staff of the Prison by a senior prison officer and two basic grade officers. This will make it possible to arrange for training of staff in the United Kingdom in general aspects of prison work, and also to select a candidate who would become a trades officer with a view to introducing a programme for training prisoners in the construction trades to handyman's level. This will expand and improve the present scheme of work from outside sources and maintenance of the prison buildings. In this connection, the wage-earning scheme will also be amended.

Provision is being made in the Draft Estimates for 1977/78 for the purchase of materials for handicraft as well as for remedial education as an expansion of the present rehabilitative programme.

The Superintendent and the Prison Board will shortly submit to Government recommendations to introduce a system whereby in certain circumstances a prisoner may be found employment outside the Prison and return to the Prison only at night.

SHPPLEMENTARY TO NO.50 of 1976 (2)

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Hon Member about the physical condition not only of the prison at Moorish Castle but of the cells in the police station. Is he satisfied with the physical condition?

HON A J CANEPA:

I understand from the Hon Chief Minister that in fact I am not responsible for the cells, though I understand that there are certain matters appertaining to the cells that are being taken up in other quarters.

The Hon J Bossano

Did the UK Departments consult with Government as to their intention to suspend without pay on 25th October, 1976, clerical employees who were then taking industrial action?

Answer:

The Hon the Chief Minister

The Government was aware of the MOD's intentions but not of the precise manner in which it would be put into operation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.51 of 1976 (2)

HON J Bossano;

Mr Speaker, was the Government aware that the intention was to suspend everyone or did they think it was intended to be selective, and to what extent was the Government informed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The point is, as I say, that the Government was aware that there was intention of suspension but not of the precise manner in any way. How they were going to do it was a matter for each employer.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, did the Government in fact point out to the UK Departments the possible serious repercussions of a wholesale suspension as in fact has materialised?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

As what was going to be done was not known, it was impossible, to say what effect it would have. The point is there was discussion about suspension but not the manner of doing it and if Hon Members will recall what I said this morning as far as we are concerned we look at each case on its merits but that is all I can say on that one now.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, is it not the case that when the notice was given to the UK National Officer in Gibraltar it was made quite clear what was intended. Did the Hon and Learned Chief Minister not obtain the information at that same time?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Sir, I did not.

HON J BOSSANO:

Will the Hon and Learned Member say whether he in fact himself made any approach to the UK Department when he saw the manner in which it had been implemented on Monday morning?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I was approached by I think it was the chairman of the CPSA, in fact I had been approached long before the matter reached that stage with certain representations which I passed on with my own comments to the Governor and I have met them subsequently on a number of occasions, I cannot say how quickly after the immediate action that was taken, I could not say now from memory I would probably have some record, when I was seen by the CPSA on the manner in which the suspension has been effected.

HON J BOSSANO:

Could I just ask one more question, Mr Speaker, of the Hon and Learned Member. It is correct is it not, Mr Speaker, that on the same date as the ultimatum was issued by the UK Department in the case of the Gibraltar Government, to use the Hon Member's words, employees were warned that there might be action in the pipeline. Could he confirm that the coincidence in no way indicates that it was a joint exercise on the part of the UK departments and the Gibraltar Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, it is very difficult to give a clear cut answer to that question. Let there be no misunderstanding that we had at the time a common problem which, as the Hon Questioner knows was discussed between the two employers and a decision was taken of certain action to be taken, the manner of the action was left to each employer to do it his own way. No agreement was reached on that. And I would like to take this opportunity of making it public that there was no question of any conspiracy between the two employers as to what had to be done or not. The point is that at a particular point in time we both had this same problem and advantage was taken, as the Hon Member well knows, of the presence in London of the Deputy Governor on air communications business and there was some consultation in London as to the effect that the action was having on both sides. But the manner in which each employer was to carry out the question of suspension was a matter for the employer itself and I would resist being told how I have to tackle a situation myself as much as no doubt the MOD would be told at that level how they would have to tackle their own. Each one must be responsible for his own employees and this is the way it happened.

HON J BOSSANO:

I am sure the Hon and Learned the Chief Minister will agree that as Government of Gibraltar for him the MOD must be another employer and he is in a position to tell things to MOD.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

/weight/ I am as much in a position to tell things to the MOD as I am to tell anybody else, the point is what / it carries in what circumstances. The MOD is a big employer in Gibraltar and I have left no doubt in the minds of those with whom I communicate, of my views of the manner in which certain things are done. But I am not really in a position to tell the Ministry of Defence how they should conduct their affairs except to make representations in respect of any matter which I consider to be of sufficient public interest.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, did the Hon Member not think it of sufficient interest to at least inform the UK Departments that the Gibraltar Government was contemplating similar action in the sense that a warning had already been drafted.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I was not involved in any way. This was at the level of management and at the time I was not involved in any way with the MOD in the matter and therefore I was not present and there was no question of any opportunity of my having said so. All that was agreed was that certain matters were having effect and the employers had the same problem, but that is all. I have not taken part in any joint consultations with the MOD in this matter at all.

HON M XIBERRAS:

At the level of management by which I should imagine the Chief Minister means the IRO, did in fact the Gibraltar Government as an employer communicate to the UK Department, on or around the same date, their warning, as drafted, bearing in mind as the Chief Minister said they had a common problem.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It is terribly difficult for me to say the sequence of events as to how that was done. All I can say is that there is normally I am assured a constant consultation between the two sides, the IRO and the Civilian Establishment Officer. I would have thought that they meet often enough to have discussions about this matter at that level.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, wouldn't in a planned suspension of a considerable number of employees either in the UK departments or in the Gibraltar Government, wouldn't such a step be considered by the Chief Minister as of sufficient public interest to.....

MR SPEAKER:

No, no we are departing from the question.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Well, Mr Speaker, all I wish to say is that now the Chief Minister is saying that the consultation took place at the level of management.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I think in fairness to the Chief Minister you asked him if he had an opportunity, as you thought existed, to tell the MOD something and he has explained that he did not because he wasn't there. Now you are going further.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I am asking now whether the consultation that took place or the information that took place was in his presence or not, or was it at managerial level.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I said that that had nothing whatsoever to do with these consultations at all.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I am considering Mr Speaker, in view of the fact that there was a situation in the Gibraltar Government whereby the Government was at least thinking of issuing a warning and did issue a warning eventually, would he not consider that such a decision, which has brought about some rather serious consequences, whether such a matter is a matter for officials or is it a matter for him as well. In other words should consultations not have been carried out by the UK department at Ministerial level?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I don't think so.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, I go back to my original question, why does the Chief Minister not think in the public interest as he has mentioned, that this decision to suspend a good number of people in the UK Departments or, I might add, in the Gibraltar Government, was not of sufficient importance to be asked at ministerial level? The Chief Minister said that the Government was approached at a particular time by the UK Departments not with the details of how....

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

If the Hon Member will give way. It was no question of being approached it was a matter of a joint problem that there was and I did say - and this is also well known to the union side - I did say that advantage was taken of the presence of the Deputy Governor in London in respect of the CAA hearing where there were discussions in London at that level regarding the question of the situation in Gibraltar arising out of the industrial action.

HON M XIBERRAS:

So it was the Deputy Governor, in fact.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I said that before.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Oh, I see because he didn't say it very clearly, Mr. Speaker.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I said it very clearly. If the Hon Member was not listening it is not my fault.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Or does not wish to say it very clearly.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. There is no imputation to be made here. The Chief Minister did say very clearly and I have no doubt he said it and I am sure that no other Member perhaps other than you, have any doubts that he said it. He definitely referred to the Deputy Governor who was in London for the purpose of the CAA consultation. That is what the Chief Minister said.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I understood clearly what he said about the Deputy Governor, Mr Speaker, that I understood clearly, but then he said it was taken at management level.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Even that I consider to be management level as far as I am concerned.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I see, I thought he was talking about the IRO in fact when he talked about management level.

MR SPEAKER:

Order. What is the question?

HON M XIBERRAS:

The question, Mr Speaker, is were there any consultations between DOE - this is a fresh question, of course - was there any consultations between the UK Departments and the Gibraltar Government, other than those carried out through the Deputy Governor?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I say that I imagine that there must have been constant consultation between the IRO and his opposite number here.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Member imagines now at this stage with a question which he is answering asking whether there were consultations, I am asking what was the nature of these consultations?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. I am afraid that that is not the question he is answering. The question he was supposed to be answering which he answered long ago from which we have departed was whether the UK Department consulted with Government as to their intention, not as to how they each were going to act in certain circumstances.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Very well, Mr Speaker. What I am asking now is did the UK Departments consult only with the Deputy Governor or was there any other approach from the UK Departments at any other level.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I said I imagine that following on the meeting in London, there must have been continuing discussions in Gibraltar between the IRO and his opposite number because that is what they are therefor.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, they are there for that, there is no doubt and they are there to settle problems afterwards. I am asking the Minister in his ministerial capacity, put it this way, at what stage did he get to know about this consultation between the UK Departments and the Gibraltar Government?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

About what?

HON M XIBERRAS:

That, the people were going to be suspended by the UK departments.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, no, this is the thing which apparently doesn't permeate into the head of the Hon Member or he doesn't want to understand it.

MR SPEAKER:

No, no, I am going to stop this. I am afraid, Mr Xiberras, that unless you are going to be specific, unless you are going to ask a question to ask for information, I am going to rule you out of order. Now you think it out and ask it if you want to.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I have already thought it out. Mr Speaker, what was, if the Hon and Learned Member would be kind enough, what was in fact what the UK departments consulted with the Gibraltar Government about? What did they say?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It was not a question of the UK Government consulting the Gibraltar Government it was a question that there was a common problem at the time and following on the presence in London of the Deputy Governor there were consultations there regarding the situation which was arising in Gibraltar. We had a big problem ourselves but fortunately we solved it and so much for that but we both had a problem at the time and there were discussions in London which led to a situation that might lead to the need to suspend people. How each one was to carry out that part of the general agreement about suspension was for each employer to decide. I have given clear information earlier this morning in respect of another question how we went about the matter, that is all I can answer here for, how we've dealt with the matter. What other people have done, people must answer somewhere else.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, did the Deputy Governor then inform the Chief Minister on his return from London as he was I think accompanied by a Minister although I do not know whether the Minister was present at the meeting or not.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, no.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Did the Deputy Governor on his return from London inform the Chief Minister of the rather serious situation which was brewing up?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

He didn't have to go to London to tell me of the serious situation that was brewing up. It was brewing up in Gibraltar.

MR SPEAKER:

No, I think the questioner is referring to the intended action by the MOD. Is that right? The serious situation is not the actual existence of the dispute but the fact that the MOD intended to suspend. That is what you are being asked.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Yes, of course, the common purpose in London was that there was this problem and each employer was getting the clearance of the other that the stage had come having regard to the similarity of the nature of the industrial action that they both had a problem. How each one was to carry out his way of doing it was for each employer. The manner of doing it to my knowledge was not discussed and I am sure that if it had been discussed I would have learned of it.

MR SPEAKER:

I will ask you one question so that we are not at cross purposes. Is that the information that the Deputy Governor gave you?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Of course.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, did the Hon the Chief Minister know when the Deputy Governor departed or at any other subsequent stage that it was intended to have a meeting in which this joint or in which this similar problem shared by both sides separately was going to be discussed?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I did not know that it was going to be discussed. I knew that there was a problem, the problem was there, but I did not know specifically that it was going to be discussed. The problem was there and we had talked about the problem before. Let there be no misunderstanding about that.

HON M XIBERRAS:

I see, Sir, so it was purely coincidental Mr Speaker, that the two problems had arisen at that time separately but they were of exactly the same nature that the projected action was in fact in the nature of a warning in both cases.

MR SPEAKER:

No, no, the Chief Minister hasn't said that. It had been agreed that each party would take whatever action they considered necessary to tackle the problem.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, the situation is in fact as the Hon and Learned the Chief Minister has explained it that both employers discussed their similar problems in London and both decided that they would probably have to go on to suspend people but then each separately decided how to tackle the implementation of this policy.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I wouldn't put it so positively. I think he has got nearer to understanding the situation, if I may say so, than the previous questioner but there was no question of a positive decision each one to decide his own way. The point was that there was a decision of suspension and the matter, as far as I am concerned and as far as I know, the method of implementation, was not discussed one way or the other.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I just ask the Hon and Learned the Chief Minister whether in fact there were officials of the Foreign Office as well involved in these discussions in London?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I wouldn't know, I would have to ask for that. I don't know.

The Hon M Xiberras

Why has the permanent cadre of the Gibraltar Regiment not been awarded the same degree of retrospection in the pay award made to it parallel to the Scamp Awards?

Answer:

The Hon the Chief Minister

The pay of the Gibraltar Regiment is, of course, a matter for the MOD. I am, however, informed that an interim award has been given in addition to regular consolidations of COLA which have catered for retrospection. It should also be noted that the effective date of the Gibraltar Regiment Pay Review does not coincide with the effective date of Pay Settlements in the Official Sector.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.52 of 1976 (2)

HON M XIBERRAS:

Does the Hon Member hold with that argument?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Do I hold with that argument?

HON M XIBERRAS:

Yes, does he agree that the COLA has in fact offset the need for retrospection?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I haven't said that it has offset the need for retrospection. All I have stated is the fact that an interim award has been given in addition to regular consolidation. I should also say that the date of implementation of increases is not the same as ours, and that is all I have to say.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, it is parallel to the Scamp Awards, not exactly on the same dates. Mr Speaker, is the Hon Member aware that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction about this matter in the Regiment?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I am not aware of that and if there is I am very sorry to hear it but I am not aware of it. On a previous occasion I was made aware of certain thoughts of certain officers which I looked into and I heard that later on the matter was satisfactorily solved without intervention but I am not aware of any dissatisfaction at this stage.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Member make himself aware in other words would he inform himself of the situation and listen to what is being said on both sides and use his good offices to ensure that the members of the permanent cadre do not get a worse deal than other people.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I will make enquiries but I have not yet become District Officer of any union to go and talk to the men on the spot to find out whether they are happy with their conditions of work or bring them out on industrial action.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that the Chief Minister will do as he has been asked to do or not?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It means that I will not go looking for people to tell me what the problems are but if they have problems I am approachable and quite happy to listen to them.

The Hon P J Isola

What progress has been made in pursuing the recommendations of the Select Committee on Broadcasting and does Government intend to move the appointment of a new Select Committee on the matter?

Answer:

The Chief Minister

Sir, as a first step towards the proposed introduction of colour television a Studio Engineer of the Studio Capital Projects Department of the British Broadcasting Corporation will visit Gibraltar shortly to advise on quotations received for colour television equipment. He will also be expected to advise on studio centre planning and installation and outside broadcast facilities.

Regarding the second part of the question, Government does not consider it necessary to move the appointment of a new select committee on the matter for the time being.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO NO.53 of 1976 (2)

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Chief Minister say whether in fact an offer was made some time ago for a complete station to the tune of about £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m and that if now it was decided by any Select Committee to go ahead with a similar scheme it would cost about double that amount?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I hope it isn't double. There was not only one offer there were several and this is what we are looking at. There is no doubt that the fact that for many reasons the question of colour television has not been implemented, has meant that the cost now will be much more than would have been the case some time ago. Equally, if we take a decision now it will be much cheaper than if it is left another year or two. That is of course an inevitable matter of mounting costs and the point is whether you have to hurry and spend everything because it is going to cost more tomorrow. I hope that this engineer who will be arriving on the 13th December will produce an early report that can give us the go ahead and then start thinking about how the money is going to be obtained.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

When the engineer does come and I hope produces a report will the Chief Minister see that action is taken immediately after and a decision taken one way or the other otherwise I think the time will come when Gibraltar will not be able to have a colour television station.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, as I don't enjoy colour television as much as the Honourable Questioner because I don't live in London I'll tell you that I am very anxious to have colour television for Gibraltar.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I was just merely reminding him of his election promise, Mr Speaker.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, on this question of not appointing a Select Committee, would Government consider why it is not considering appointing a Select Committee immediately on this issue bearing in mind that the last Select Committee in its very report states that there was not very much time for it to complete its deliberations and many things were left hanging in the air.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, I haven't closed the door to that the only point is that I thought perhaps since we are having this report we might get the report and then see what comes out of it but I am not against having a Select Committee to consider the other matters. I thought the most urgent matter now was the question of looking at the tenders.

HON M XIBERRAS:

Mr Speaker, even the appointment of this gentleman I think was a recommendation of the Select Committee and does he not think that there should be a Select Committee to discuss the matter with him when he comes?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, I think we will have to wait for this report and see what happens with that and then decide. I am not against it but I want to wait and see what the report says.