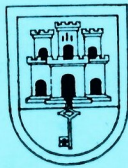


GIBRALTAR

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Meeting of
12 October 1982
171 to 273

NO. 171 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state what positive steps if any it has taken to protect Gibraltar as a finance centre and will Government make a statement on the matter?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, Sir, I take it that the Hon Member refers to the failures of two local financial institutions - a building society and an insurance company - to meet their liabilities to investors. If so, Mr Speaker, the answer is that the Government intends to bring to the House in the near future proposals to amend the relevant legislation so that there is better control and supervision over such companies. The legislation that would be affected is the Building Societies Ordinance and the Assurance Companies Ordinance. The Building Societies Ordinance was amended in the Finance Ordinance to give some immediate measure of control but a closer look at the Ordinance is now being undertaken.

I should mention, Mr Speaker, that the proposed review of the insurance legislation will be a complex one requiring expert advice which is not available locally. The Government is therefore seeking outside assistance and persons of the requisite calibre have already been approached and replies received. It is expected that a decision will be taken shortly on whom to appoint.

Pending a review of the insurance legislation it is proposed to examine the position of all insurance companies with a view to the implementation of new controls through the addition or variation of the conditions attached to the certificate that has been granted under Section 5 of the Assurance Companies Ordinance and through the making of rules under Section 10.

I should also mention that a new post has been created in the Treasury, that of Financial Sector Adviser.

Initially the Adviser will be responsible for the supervision of all finance sector activities, excluding banking, in particularly the vetting of applications connected with insurance companies, unit and investment trusts, and tax exempt companies. He will be responsible for the initiation and maintenance of legislation to provide a sound framework for the development of Gibraltar as a finance centre and for the on-going supervision of activities within the centre. He will assist the Banking Supervisor and act for him in his absence. The intention is that, after training, both locally and overseas, the Financial Sector Adviser will also assume responsibility for banking supervision.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 171 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I welcome that statement but could I at the same time whilst appreciating the balance that has to be maintained, will Government ensure that the legislation that is to come forward in these matters is brought to the House as quickly as possible so as not to lose the impetus that Gibraltar possibly has as a finance centre and not to lose the positive sides of Gibraltar as a finance centre in efforts to get everything right. Does he not agree that it is essential that legislation on the proposals should be brought forward at an early date?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Government agrees that it is important that legislation should be brought forward at an early date and the present intention is to bring the legislation to the House early in 1983.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government give an explanation as to the circumstances that have led to Gibraltar getting a bad name in the financial world through the collapse of Signal Life and what action, if any, is being taken to prevent the likelihood of a recurrence?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Mr Speaker, I regret that I am not in a position to give the explanations sought by the Hon and Gallant Member.

The circumstances surrounding the case of Signal Life Assurance Company Limited are still far from clear at this stage. The company has failed to produce by the 5 October the report and information required by the notice served on it on the 5 August. Details of the notice were published in the local press and in the Official Gazette. The returns and information sought would hopefully have clarified the position. As it is, the Government is now obliged to consider the cancellation of its certificate and to appoint an independent firm of auditors or inspectors to report on the company's affairs.

This, Mr Speaker, will be an expensive affair given the international nature and scale of the activities of the company but I think that the House will agree that it behoves the Government to ensure that the situation is clarified both in the public interest and that of Gibraltar's reputation as a finance centre. Token provision of funds for the purpose will be sought at a later stage in these proceedings.

Finally I should mention, Mr Speaker, that the company met the close scrutiny which is applied to all applicants for certificates under the Ordinance. Highly satisfactory references were produced for promoters of the company.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 172 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view of the damage that this has done and the bad press that we have been getting particularly in the United Kingdom, could the Hon Financial Secretary undertake to give some publicity as to the action that the Government is taking so that they see that we do take this matter very seriously in Gibraltar and that we are doing everything possible to prevent a reoccurrence?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, as I mentioned in my reply, the direction which was served on the company requiring it to provide information was published as an official notice in the Gazette and through the papers and it was also brought to the attention of the financial press in the United Kingdom and the action that the Government will now take because of the failure of the company to meet the requirements set out in the directive will also be given equal publicity.

NO. 173 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Sir, how many Government vehicles are there of Japanese origin?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

The Government owns fifty vehicles of Japanese origin. Ten of the vehicles are saloons, thirteen motorcycles and twenty-seven other vehicles, including vans, lorries and tippers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 173 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, when purchasing these vehicles does Government take into consideration the cost of spares and the availability of spares?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Sir.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, do these spares compare favourably with spares for cars of British origin?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I have not got the details immediately available, Sir, but my understanding is that the spares are more readily available and although they may be expensive, on balance, it is better to purchase the Japanese vehicles than others listed which may be not merely British manufactured or any other manufacture.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

In view that we seek aid from the United Kingdom and that is forthcoming, isn't it the wrong policy to purchase non-British items such as Japanese cars when in fact this could have

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect, I think there is a specific question on that. Next question.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, when considering tenders for motor vehicles or plant and equipment will Government give preference to such motor vehicles or plant or equipment that is actually manufactured in the United Kingdom?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

No, Sir. The determining factor in the award of tenders cannot be the origin of the article. Subject to the article satisfying the tendering Department's technical specifications the Treasury Tender Board's prime consideration is that of value for money. To apply the Hon Member's criterion as a matter of general policy could lead, in some cases, to uncompetitive tendering and restrictive practices.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 174 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, does not the Financial and Development Secretary agree that it is the desirable policy for the Gibraltar Government that depends so much on aid from the British Government and from the British taxpayer, that as far as possible it should purchase British and is it not possible to make a set of rules to enable the Government to distinguish when tenders are in fact uncompetitive and when they are not? Is it not desirable policy to follow what I have just said?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

If articles are being purchased with UK development aid we are required to purchase them from the United Kingdom unless they are on a list of materials which can be purchased locally, for example, from Morocco or Portugal, but the British Government itself in its aid policy recognises that whilst aid and trade go together, aid should not be used to support uncompetitive prices put forward by British manufacturers and in fact if we were on a specific tender to go for a UK tender which was significantly higher than a tender from another country and seek aid on it, we would probably find ourselves in difficulty with the ODA in justifying going for the higher cost article. That having been said, I agree with the Hon and Learned Leader of the Opposition that where there is no substantial difference between costs then by preference one would buy British.

HON P J ISOLA:

I am glad to hear that last bit of the answer because is the Financial Secretary not aware that a number of visitors to Gibraltar, including Members of Parliament, have commented adversely on the fact that British aid comes to Gibraltar one way and Gibraltar aid seems to go in the direction of Japan and will he not agree it is rather embarrassing for the Gibraltar Government in situations such as that and it was certainly embarrassing for me to find that all the Police cars, for example, are of Japanese origin? Does the Government not agree that there is a need to be conscious of the principle to buy British whenever possible?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 175 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state the expenditure head by head under the Improvement and Development Fund up to 30th December, 1982? There is a misprint here, Mr Speaker, it should read up to the 30th September, 1982.

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect to the Hon the Leader of the Opposition, that was the way the question was received.

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

On the assumption that the Hon Leader of the Opposition is, as is his practice, seeking information on actual and not projected expenditure I have taken his reference to mean the 30th September, 1982. Recorded expenditure on the Improvement and Development Fund to that date presently stands as follows:-

| | | | |
|------|-----|------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | £ |
| Head | 101 | Housing | 1,189,967 |
| | 102 | Schools | 1,136,503 |
| | 103 | Tourist Development | 116,166 |
| | 104 | Miscellaneous Project. | 214,057 |
| | 105 | General Services | 96,927 |
| | 106 | Potable Water Service | 94,228 |
| | 107 | Port Development | 119,517 |
| | 108 | Telephone Service | 170,660 |
| | 109 | Public Lighting | 19,244 |
| | 110 | Electricity Service | 1,011,597 |
| | | TOTAL | <u>£4,168,866</u> |

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 175 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, although Government spending seems to be on target in respect of housing, schools and the electricity service, there seems to be substantial slippage under all the other heads, is there any particular reason for this on the estimated expenditure?

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Certain of the projects have only recently been approved by ODA and we have had to go out to tender to them, others particularly the telephone service and the electricity service, there are bills of exchange outstanding which we shall need to meet when the consultants confirm that the goods and services have been provided.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am particularly concerned, actually, with tourist development and port development, there there seems to be a considerable slippage and I would have thought that in both those areas there was an urgent need for progress.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

I think, Sir, that on the tourist complex the problem there is that we put in a project to ODA for the pedestrianisation of Main Street and we are expecting to spend £ $\frac{1}{2}$ m this year, they sought a lot more information on this and we have to revert on the project. On the port area again we were expecting to start before now on expenditure on the causeway and that is the main area where we have slippage.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 176 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, have any further sums of public money been spent since the end of February 1982 in the possible implementation of the Lisbon Agreement and if so will Government give details of such expenditure?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, expenditure incurred since the end of February 1982 in the possible implementation of the Lisbon Agreement is as follows:-

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| British Lines Road Laguna Estate Coach Park USOC Site | £119,735 |
| Four Corners and other Car Parks | £ 17,815 |
| Road Markings | £ 1,819 |
| Traffic Lights | £ 12,664 |
| Four Corners - Customs | £ 3,348 |
| Traffic Signs | £ 3,033 |
| Queensway - Romney Huts | £ 21,500 |
| | <u>£179,914</u> |

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 176 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

There was a mention of some traffic lights at a cost of £12,664, would the Minister care to say where they are?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, they are at the end of Sir Herbert Miles Road at the junction at Glacis.

HON W T SCOTT:

That is the one that has already been installed. I seem to remember, also dealing with traffic lights, that some while back, in fact last year or the year before, there was also talk of putting some traffic lights on or around Waterport, has any provision been made for that?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think I have a question later, Sir, on a pelican crossing and in the answer to that I will be discussing the whole question of traffic lights.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does Government intend putting the car parks which are not yet completed in use before the Lisbon Agreement is implemented?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the car park at the aerodrome is already in use, the car park at Queensway Romney Huts is already in use, the part that was going to be excised from the Alameda car park is still being used and as soon as we finish a certain amount of resurfacing the USOC area will also be available as a car park.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether firms that take on work at the Dockyard require a licence under the Trade Licensing Ordinance?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Mr Speaker, firms providing a service specified in the Second Schedule of the Trade Licensing Ordinance require to be licenced under the Ordinance if undertaking work anywhere in Gibraltar, including the Dockyard.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 177 OF 1982

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, does that mean in fact that firms that are undertaking work on the RFA refits, and there have been a very large number of them, are required to have a licence or not? The range of firms is something like thirty-two.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not sure under what heading particular firms would come, Mr Speaker, but what I can say is that licences are not required for ship building and marine maintenance. If it comes under the latter, marine maintenance, then because that is not in the Second Schedule a licence would not be required for that.

HON J BOSSANO:

But, in fact, Mr Speaker, it seems that a lot of these firms are in competition with local firms that are licensed to trade. How is it that the local firms apparently require a licence and the UK ones do not?

HON A J CANEPA:

I would have to look at the thing specifically, Mr Speaker, but as I say there is a list of services specified in the Second Schedule regardless of whether the Dockyard is involved or not. Presumably these firms that the Hon Member is referring to are dealing in a trade which is not listed in that Second Schedule.

MR SPEAKER:

I think the answer to the question has been clear. If they are engaged in trades which are included in the Second Schedule then they most certainly require a licence, whether they have or not the Minister does not know. Next question.

NO. 178 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state how many UK firms have applied for Trade Licences to take up contracts with DOE in 1982?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, ten applications and five notices of intention to apply for business licences to undertake works for the PSA/DOE have been received this year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 178 OF 1982

HON J BOSSANO:

Can the Minister confirm that this is an unusually high figure when compared for a similar period in previous years?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, I am unable to confirm that. I do not have information regarding previous years.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, will the Hon Member take it from me that this is the case and could he try and investigate why it is that the DOE seems to be particularly keen in the last year or so to put work to UK firms that have not previously traded in Gibraltar whereas in the past the work has apparently been undertaken satisfactorily by local firms?

HON A J CANEPA:

The position, Mr Speaker, is that in fact so far seven applications have been approved and I am informed that under the terms of the licences six of the firms can only undertake specialised work for the PSA, in fact the licence will only be renewed on receipt of confirmation from the PSA that the company is required to continue to provide these essential services and the services that these firms are providing are, for instance, mechanical engineers on desalination plants, secondly, inspection and repairs of steel chimneys and pylons, the installation and maintenance of fire protection and detection equipment, air conditioning and mechanical services engineers, boiler repairers and, finally, electrical and mechanical engineers for servicing distillers. They are only given, as I say, for a specific contract and they are not very often renewed, I do not think.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister agree that there is no apparent expansion suddenly of DOE presence in Gibraltar and presumably all these services were being carried out by local firms employing local labour and we are finding nowadays that there are UK firms bringing in UK labour which,

of course, has a detrimental effect on the level of employment? Would he not say there appears to be a change in policy for no apparent reason since the DOE's role in Gibraltar has not changed dramatically in the last twelve months?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I imagine that this is a matter that is gone into by the authority. I think they take into account the suitability of applications to undertake work on the evidence which is produced at hearings. I get minutes of all the meetings of the Trade Licensing authority. I do not interfere with their deliberations because they are a quasi judicial body, it is a well-balanced authority with majority representation from independent members including the Trades Council and the Chamber of Commerce, and I am aware of the fact that they go into their deliberations very, very thoroughly and very often there is even legal representation from firms that object and I am satisfied that matters are gone into very thoroughly. I am only on the periphery of matters and if as a result of reading minutes I am not able to get to the root of any particular case I ask questions about it, I get information from the Chairman but that is as far as it goes. I am not aware in the ten years or so since the Trade Licensing Ordinance has been in force, I am not aware that the Government gives directives as a matter of policy to the authority. What we do from time to time is to amend the Ordinance to bring into the ambit of the deliberations of the authority certain matters of policy which we think should be gone into but we do not give directives.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I was not asking the Government to look into the operation of the Trade Licensing Committee, presumably the Trade Licensing Committee is giving licences to contractors that have already been awarded a contract by the DOE subject to their getting a licence. What I am asking the Minister is to look into why it is that the DOE is giving contracts to new firms who are not established in Gibraltar? Is he aware, in fact, that the last firm which obtained a licence and had previously obtained a contract for the DOE is in respect of the painting of the Naval Hospital for which there is adequate capacity, I would have thought, in Gibraltar, is he aware of that, there is nothing specialist about that?

HON A J CANEPA:

I had a note on that particular one. Yes, it is a fact that there is a firm that has been given a licence to undertake the specific painting contract of the old Naval Hospital. It does not entitle the holder to a renewal, I am informed, but as a result of the exchanges that we have had in the House this morning, I will try to make the necessary enquiries.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, I do not know whether in fact the Hon Minister can answer this one, but is it a pre-requisite at tendering stage of any prospective tender for a contract at DOE to already have a licence in his possession or is it a case of the DOE awarding a contract to a

particular company and then that company soliciting a licence because if it is the second one, in fact, that is a great danger with the Trade Licensing authority of refusing that application?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think that it is a pre-requisite, I think the tender may be awarded subject to the company getting a trade licence.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 179 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, have the rules pertaining to the Public Health (Amendment) (No 2) Ordinance, 1981 in connection with the control of speedboats and their users now been completed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the rules in question, namely the Seaside Pleasure Boats Rules, 1981, were published on 25th June, 1981, and came into operation on 15th July, 1981, that is, on the day after the Public Health (Amendment) (No 2) Ordinance, 1981 became law.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 179 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Government give details of how these rules have been enforced?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Mr Speaker, perhaps the main point of the rules is to require people under the age of eighteen to get permission, not a formal licence because it is not that complex a matter, but permission before they may operate power boats and in fact this is now being administered, young people who want to operate power boats go to the Captain of the Port, they are given a form which is rather like the traffic form, it gives a number of questions relating to the rules, they come back and they are given an oral examination by the Marine Officer, they bring their own boats and they are taken for a practical test on the water. Apart from that, of course, the rules do provide for a restricted zone adjacent to the beach areas into which power boats cannot come except down marked channels and adjacent zones where they are restricted as to what they can do by way of speed and proximity to swimmers which is another 200 yards from the shore and I am informed that in practice this summer it has been found that the threat by speedboats or the dangers posed by them is not what it was and this new rule seems to be working.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, are these tests of competence a frequent occurrence or are few people taking advantage of taking these tests?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

An option does not come into it legally, Mr Speaker. Anybody under eighteen who wants to operate a power boat must obtain the permission or the authority of the Captain of the Port by undergoing one of these tests. It is a once only test but anybody who operates a boat without taking it is breaking the law.

HON G T RESTANO:

Have there been many people this summer coming in and taking the test?

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to get to that stage, with due respect. We are not going to get involved in this House as to the administration of it. This, I am sure, you can obtain from the pertinent authority but we must not get bogged down on the actual implementation of each regulation.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, the Hon and Learned Attorney-General mentioned the beaches. What other areas, for example, encompass or are established within the rules?

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect, if you read your regulations you will find out for yourself. Next question.

NO. 180 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many prosecutions have there been over the last two years for illegal fishing with aqualungs?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Mr Speaker, there have been no prosecutions of illegal fishing with aqualungs, ie during this period.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 180 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, can I ask why, seeing that illegal fishing with aqualungs is going on almost all the time in winter and in summer?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am not sure that I can answer why, Mr Speaker, I can say that the Police, especially the motorboat crews, do patrol regularly but the fact of the matter is there have not been any prosecutions.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 181 OF 1982

.ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government take readings of the aural levels at King's Bastion Generating Station and the New Generating Station and thereafter make this information known to the House?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir.

NO. 182 OF 1982

.ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state when it intends to present legislation in respect of the sale of medicinal products requiring a doctor's prescription?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, I am hopeful that the necessary subsidiary legislation will have been published before the next meeting of the House.

NO. 183 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

If, as seems clear, there is a need for St Bernard's Hospital to possess a scanner will the Minister for Health and Housing explain why this has not been purchased by the Government rather than having to rely on the praiseworthy efforts of the Lions Club of Gibraltar to obtain one?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, as the Hon Member well knows, all departments of Government have to restrict themselves to the funds available and, as far as the health department is concerned, such monies are spent in accordance with a strict priority list which far exceeds the funds which can be made available in any one year. Because of this it is always very deeply appreciated when charitable groups come forward and devote their efforts to supplementing our requirements and helping the community.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 183 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Does the Minister not accept that there is a need for a scanner in the hospital?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I would say that there is a need for a scanner in the hospital as well as there is a need for any other items of equipment but perhaps I ought to explain that the position is that a charitable association, as in this case the Lions, approached the hospital and said: "We would like to make a donation of up to £15,000 to £20,000. What have you got in your list of priorities which you would like us to purchase?" Of course we go down our list and we say: "We were either going to buy the scanner next year in 1983 or 1984, we would like you to buy a scanner". This is how it works, in the same case as we may have some other charitable organisation saying: "We would like to spend up to £1,000", so we look at our list and we look at the top of our list and say: "We would like you to spend £1,000 on this", this is how it works.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is it not the responsibility of Government to produce and to possess the equipment that is required and that it needs rather than having to rely on charitable organisations to provide it for them?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, the Government is not relying on charitable organisations. When there is a piece of equipment which is essential for the community, it is essential for the hospital, the Government buys it. What I am saying is that there is a distinction between what is essential and what is desirable. It may well be that there may be a new piece of equipment which does away with the scanner for next year, then that equipment would be desirable but may not be essential. The Government buys what is essential for the community.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question..

NO. 184 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would Government confirm whether one of the doctors at the Health Centre is due to leave Gibraltar and if so state when he is to be replaced?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, it is confirmed that one of the GPMS doctors will be leaving at the end of October and recruiting action is already in progress. In the meantime, the department is in correspondence with a medical officer who might fill any hiatus as a locum.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 184 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

When, Mr Speaker, will the advert go out for a new doctor?

HON J B PEREZ:

The adverts have already gone out, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

Where have they been advertised?

HON J B PEREZ:

In UK and in Gibraltar.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Does not the Minister for Health and Housing agree that the apparent growing practice of Consultants at St Bernard's Hospital seeing patients privately is seriously undermining the possibility of patients in the Group Practice Medical Scheme requiring appointments with the Consultants being attended as promptly as desirable and would the Minister take necessary steps to curtail this practice?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

No, Sir. I am satisfied that the Group Practice Medical Scheme is not being jeopardised by private practice.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 185 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister not agree that patients referred to the Consultants by doctors in the GPMS have a much longer waiting period to have an appointment with the Consultant than a patient who goes to see the Consultant privately?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I can only say that if that is what the Minister knows about his own department he knows very little about his own department because it does occur and I would ask the Minister therefore to investigate whether it is not correct that patients who are given an appointment, say, three weeks from the time they are referred are also advised that they can see the Consultant the following day if they go privately and pay a private fee?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, let me say that I can inform the Hon Member that I know of many public patients who are in fact seen well before private patients.

HON G T RESTANO:

I have asked the Minister, Mr Speaker, whether he will not investigate the matter?

HON J B PEREZ:

If the Hon Member has evidence in connection with any particular Consultant I undertake to investigate fully and then report to the House.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister have any knowledge of any single patient in the GPMS who has seen a Consultant privately and if so can he think why he should have done this?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, under our scheme a patient has a right to either go public or go private, of course, I know of patients who have gone privately to see Consultants and this is why I am saying that I know that a particular patient with a particular illness has been seen privately by one Consultant and he has had to wait for a month and I know somebody who has gone publicly and has been seen within two weeks.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I do not think the Hon Minister has got my question. Can he think why a patient who is entitled to see a Consultant for nothing and quickly, as the Minister states, should see him privately from the GPMS and pay? Must it not be that that is the quickest way of seeing him, it seems to me logical?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I take the point that the Hon Leader of the Opposition is making and let me say quite categorically and quite clearly in this House that this is not so. However, there are many people here in Gibraltar who like to say: "I am going private", because they may think in their own minds (1) that they get a better service, or (2) that they are seen before, but let me assure the House, Mr Speaker, that this is not so and as I said already to the Hon Member, if there is any evidence against a particular Consultant please let me have it and I will investigate.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I suggest to the Minister would the Minister consider asking the paid staff at the hospital, the clerical staff, to enquire from patients who belong to the GPMS, each patient that comes, why it is that he has sought a private appointment? That way, surely, Mr Speaker, he would be able to carry out the investigations he has promised my Hon Friend.

HON J B PEREZ:

I have not promised, Mr Speaker, an investigation what I have promised is if I am given the evidence against a particular Consultant I will investigate. On the point raised by Mr Isola I do not think I have any right to ask any person who decides to go privately why he has gone privately, this is a right which any individual has, if he wants to pay he can pay and if he wants to afterwards go out and tell his friends and relatives that he has paid because he wanted to go private and he has got a better service, and I say he is wrong, then it is up to him.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does the Minister not agree that he does not know why the GPMS patient has gone private unless he asks him and that is the investigation I am asking him to institute because does he not consider it rather odd that a person who can see a Consultant for free should choose to pay? Nowadays the tendency, is it not, is for people to try and get something for nothing so does he not consider it odd that a member of GPMS should choose to pay when he does not have to pay and does that not require some enquiry on his part if the allegations that have been made by my Hon Friend are to be refuted?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, one further point. As far as people going for medical treatment are concerned I do not think one can say that they want something for nothing, that may be applicable to many other services which the Government provides but in my opinion after being Minister for three years, I do not think that applies to medical services.

HON P J ISOLA:

Could it be, Mr Speaker, that they pay because, as my Hon Friend has suggested, they get prior service, does that not require investigation?

MR SPEAKER:

We are now supposing. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would Government not agree that the post of Coroner would best be filled by a doctor?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the appointment of Coroner is governed by Section 3 of the Coroner's Ordinance Cap 34 which provides that the Governor shall from time to time by warrant appoint some fit and proper person to be the Coroner of Gibraltar, and may assign to the office either by way of salary or by payment of fees such remuneration as he may deem fit.

The Government is satisfied with the present arrangements.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 186 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Government not consider that a doctor is in a better position to understand and to fulfil the functions of Coroner than somebody who is not a doctor?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir.

HON P J ISOLA:

Why is it then that in the United Kingdom most Coroners are doctors?

HON J B PEREZ:

That is not correct, Mr Speaker.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister certain in his answer that that is not correct? Is it not the practice in the United Kingdom now wherever possible to fill the post of Coroner by doctors?

MR SPEAKER:

You are not supposed to answer that question, you do not know what happens in the United Kingdom, you are not responsible for that. Next question.

NO. 187 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

For how long and for what reason has Gibraltar been without an ophthalmologist?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, Dr Clarke our Consultant Ophthalmologist terminated his contract on the 16 June, 1982, and before leaving was most helpful to the department in arranging a series of locum cover over the period 20 June to 11 September, 1982.

Recruiting action had already commenced in April, 1982, when the vacancy was advertised in the professional journals in the United Kingdom and locally. The closing date for applications was set at 30 April, 1982; interviews were held in the United Kingdom on 28 May, 1982, and the successful applicant notified on the 9 June, 1982.

It is expected that our new Consultant Ophthalmologist will take up appointment at the beginning of November, 1982.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will the Minister for Health and Housing inform this House whether he has been able to effect any improvement to the filing system at St Bernard's Hospital?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the question of making improvements to the filing system at St Bernard's Hospital has continued to be the subject of investigation and the possibility of computerising these records is currently under consideration.

As an interim measure, extra space has been found in the hospital in order to decongest the present Records Office. This will ameliorate the situation until a final decision is taken on the definitive system of maintaining these records.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 188 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Government considered the use of microfilm?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, Mr Speaker.

HON G T RESTANO:

Has it taken the decision to use microfilm?

HON J B PEREZ:

Not yet, Mr Speaker. As I say in the answer to the question, unfortunately we have not yet come to a final decision.

HON P J ISOLA:

Why does it take so long to come to a decision on such a simple matter as the filing system?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, it is not such a simple matter as the Hon Leader of the Opposition thinks.

HON P J ISOLA:

What are the problems involved that make the decision so difficult, Mr Speaker, is it what we have seen in the Electricity Department and things like that?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 189 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state what is the position regarding the negotiations for the joint use of the Naval Hospital?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, discussions between the Director of Medical and Health Services and the new Medical Officer in charge, Royal Naval Hospital, are continuing but no firm conclusions have been reached.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 189 OF 1982

HON J BOSSANO:

Are these discussions, Mr Speaker, on the basis of the Ministry of Defence continuing to be responsible for the Hospital and making it available to the Gibraltar Government or are they discussions on the basis of possible joint control and the Gibraltar Government being responsible for the whole or part of it?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the truth of the matter is that the discussions are in fact of a very, very general nature and in fact the discussions are centred on both suggestions which have been put forward by the Hon Member opposite but as I say the discussions are indeed of a very general nature and no firm proposals have been made either way.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister agree that if at any stage it became more definitive than the way he has described it, it would require the involvement in the consultations of the staff side who might be affected by any changes in both hospitals?

HON J B PEREZ:

Absolutely, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government undertake not to allocate or allow the allocation of any new houses including St Joseph's Estate to people who have not been on the Waiting List for at least five years?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the allocation of new Government-owned houses is governed by the Housing Allocation Scheme which provides that no application for accommodation will be considered until the applicant has been on the waiting list for a period of two years from the date the application is received.

Since it normally takes applicants over five years to accumulate sufficient points to qualify them for accommodation there is no sufficient reason for extending the present two year period as proposed by the Hon Member.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 190 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I do not think the Minister has answered the question. I quite appreciate that two years is the requisite time before your points even begin to count. My concern, Mr Speaker, and perhaps the Minister will turn his attention to this and answer the question in the light of this information. Will the Minister confirm or deny that people who have been on the housing list for less than five years are nevertheless granted a sudden increase in pointage as a result of Clause 1(f) or whatever it is called and, alternatively, as a result of an increase in pointage following eviction or the house being condemned? Will he confirm that those people are entitled to a house on occasions before they have been on the list for five years?

HON J B PEREZ:

Every person is entitled to a house provided he is at the top of the list, provided, as I say, that he has been more than two years. Yes, I can confirm that there may have been cases in the past in which people either due to medical category or due to the fact that their houses may be unfit for human habitation or people who have been evicted by an order of the Court, it may well be that people have been on the waiting list for less than five years. What I am saying to the Hon Member is that as the scheme stands before two years you cannot qualify, after two years yes, but since it normally in I would say 99.9% of cases it takes people well over five years to qualify for a house there does not really seem any need to extend this. However, if what the Hon Member is saying is that I should now consider that if a person is living in a house and he is dispossessed by an order of the Court or a person whose house is declared unfit for human habitation or his roof caves in and he has only been in the waiting list for three years, if the Hon Member is saying that that person should not get a house then let him say so.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am not saying he should not get a house, he should not get a new house and I will say that, I am saying that now. Why will the Minister not answer the question, he seems to understand it. Are we having a Minister rather like in the style of the previous one?

MR SPEAKER:

Order. Do you wish to answer the question?

HON J B PEREZ:

I do not know what the question is.

MR SPEAKER:

The question is a very simple one. Will the Minister change the rules so that no new houses are allocated to a person who has not been in the housing list for at least five years?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have already said no, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

He said no without answering the question, Mr Speaker, he said no on different facts. We are encumbered with a similar style of Minister, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer to the question has been no.

HON P J ISOLA:

May I ask, Mr Speaker, whether he has yet seen the proposed allocation list for the new housing at St Joseph's and is there anybody in that list who has been on the waiting list for less than five years?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have not looked at the list closely, the Committee has met and has decided on the allocation already, to be perfectly honest, Mr Speaker, I do not know if Mr X or Mrs X has a house, I do not know. I intend to act on the recommendations of the Allocation Committee and if they decide on Mr X on the scheme then Mr X will get his house.

HON P J ISOLA:

Does not the Minister think it very surprising, considering there is a question in regard to St Joseph's Estate, that he should not be able to tell the House the answer which is, is there anybody being allocated a house at St Joseph's who has been on the housing list less than five years?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have already said, Mr Speaker, that as far as I am concerned I do not see any need for changing the scheme from two to five years. On the second part of the question there may well be some people of medical category who may have qualified for St Joseph's, I do not know.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, on this medical point, as I understand it and we are not asking a question related to this, may I make this distinction now, those houses which are allocated for medical cases ie a small percentage, I am sure the Minister by now is aware of the percentage.

MR SPEAKER:

Let us ask questions.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I am not asking for this in respect of the medical categories. The medical categories is a different matter altogether. As I understand it, Mr Speaker, and perhaps the Minister will confirm this, in any housing project a certain percentage of houses are put aside for those medical cases in category A or B which are then allocated by the appropriate Committee. Will the Minister confirm that that is the case?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, 20%.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am not asking the Minister to interfere with that 20% allocation, I am asking him to investigate those cases in which new houses are given to people who have been less than five years on the waiting list and do not tell me it is only 1%, I do not care if it is only 1%.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, let us leave it at that. Let us have an answer to that one.

HON J B PEREZ:

I would again reiterate, Mr Speaker, the question of allocation of houses, as far as I am concerned, is done by the Housing Allocation Committee. If Mr X has qualified for a house on pointage, and let us talk only about pointage I am not going to the medical category, if he has qualified on pointage for certain reasons it is up to the Committee whether they agree that he is high up on the list. If what you are asking me is to look at the whole question of the Housing Allocation Scheme on the question of pointage, there is a question later on in which I will answer what my intentions are but as far as this question is concerned my answer is no, I will not change it from two to five years.

HON P J ISOLA:

Will the Minister investigate and inform the House before we stop sitting, look at the Housing Allocation list, he has got plenty of civil servants who can do that for him, and inform the House whether with regard to St Joseph's which is the new fifty houses for which I am sure there is a lot of competition, inform the House whether there is any person who is going to get a house in that list who has been on the waiting list less than five years and the reasons for this? That is a simple question.

MR SPEAKER:

Are you prepared to do that?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, but I have no control whatsoever, let me make it clear, on the civil service quarters, that has got nothing to do with me.

MR SPEAKER:

We are talking about St Joseph's.

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes, I am prepared to look at the list and tell him, I have not looked at the list.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, he can exclude civil service quarters, that is another system.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm or deny that anybody who is given a new house before having been five years in the waiting list gets it as a result of medical category?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. All the question asks is whether the Minister is prepared to change the allocation rules to deny the right to a person who has not been five years on the waiting list to get a new house and we are not going to expand the whole Housing Allocation Scheme for that reason. Next question.

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, I undertook this morning to consider the recommendations which had been made by the Housing Allocation Committee in connection with the allocation of St Joseph's. I was asked in particular to look at the list and see whether any offers had been made to applicants who had been less than five years in the waiting list. The answer to that, Mr Speaker, is that yes, there are four offers to be made to people who have only been four years in the waiting list but all these relate to bedsitters. May I add that obviously this is quite apart from offers which we made to persons who are medically categorised. So the answer is four and it will be for bedsitters. Whether they take up the offer of accommodation or not that is another matter.

NO. 191 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, is Government now in a position to publish a list of applicants who have been granted new or modernised accommodation on points as agreed in answer to Question 136 of 1982?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, a list is being prepared and will soon be published.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 191 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

When, Mr Speaker, this was afforded to me three or four months ago?

HON J B PEREZ:

Mr Speaker, in answer to question 136 my Hon predecessor merely stated that he would consider the matter, he did not say he would publish the list, if you read your Hansard properly. I have now considered the matter and the list will be published within a fortnight.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, with your indulgence. Is it a point of order, can I have your ruling on this one?

MR SPEAKER:

If it is a point of order, yes.

HON A J HAYNES:

Earlier on this morning, in fact, when I was asking Question 191 I asked the Government: "Is Government now in a position to publish a list of applicants who have been granted new or modernised accommodation on points as agreed in answer to Question 136 of 1982?" Sir, you will remember the Minister has now changed and is now the Hon Minister for Health and Housing. He indicated that Government had only considered and had not agreed to

MR SPEAKER:

The answer you got was that a list was being prepared and would soon be published.

HON A J HAYNES:

I was also told, Mr Speaker, that it was a matter to be considered.

MR SPEAKER:

He gave that as an explanation for the delay in the publishing of the list, I remember very distinctly.

HON A J HAYNES:

But as I understood it at the end of it

MR SPEAKER:

What is your point of order?

HON A J HAYNES:

The point of order, Sir, is that the Minister's answer in Question 136 did not say he was considering the matter, it said he had agreed so it was not a matter for the Minister to consider unless he was going to reconsider and would he clarify that point?

MR SPEAKER:

It is not a point of order. What you are trying to do is to open the question to find out whether the Minister would accept the fact that he was wrong in his statement this morning.

HON A J HAYNES:

I was told to read Hansard properly and I thought I had and when I look again I find out I did read Hansard properly.

MR SPEAKER:

Fair enough. I think you are bringing to the attention of the House that what the Minister said this morning was incorrect. That is all.

NO. 192 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will the Minister ensure that the allocation of all houses is made the prerogative of a Committee?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, the allocation of all Government houses by the Housing Allocation Committee is at present being considered.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 192 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

A change of policy, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state whether they have any tenants presently living in accommodation which has been declared unfit for human habitation by the Environmental Health Department?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 193 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Can he be rather more expansive, Mr Speaker?

HON J B PEREZ:

There are at present sixteen tenants living in accommodation which has been declared unfit.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, does he know how long these tenants have been living there?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, I do not, Sir.

HON A J HAYNES:

Has it been for as long as he has been a Minister?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have only been Minister for two weeks, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 194 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state how many of the fifty-one social cases waiting for pre-war accommodation in July of this year have been granted accommodation giving a list of the buildings where accommodation has been granted and will Government state the present number of accredited social cases presently waiting for accommodation?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, twelve social cases have been accommodated in the following buildings:-

5/11 Willis's Passage

9 Devil's Gap Road

39/41 Town Range

8/12 Castle Steps

2/4 Parody's Passage

4/12 Lopez's Ramp

2 Richardson's Passage

Gavino's Dwellings

3/5 Demayas Ramp

4 Rosia Ramp

9/13 Rosia Ramp

2/8 Ansaldo's Passage

At present there are forty-eight approved social cases.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 194 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Is the figure on the increase, Mr Speaker? Are we having more social cases being processed yearly?

HON J B PEREZ:

Obviously from the answer I have given him it seems it is slightly on the decrease but let me add that the question of social cases is dealt with by the Housing Advisory Committee and he will find that in my short experience as Housing Minister you have cases in which there are squabbles between in-laws which may last for a few months and then they may subside, so you have people going into the list and people being taken out, it changes.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I was wondering whether as an overall figure the number of people coming with complaints of a social case is on the increase or not?

HON J B PEREZ:

All I can say, Sir, is that from the two weeks that I have been there and from the answers that I have given the Hon Member in the House I think it is true to say that there has been a slight decrease on the number of social cases.

HON A J HAYNES:

Not, Mr Speaker, if it is taken in the light of last year's fiasco when there was not anybody to make reports for social cases but this, as I understand it, led to a build-up and if that is the case, Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that now that the backlog is being dealt with there is an increasing number of social cases being brought forward?

HON J B PEREZ:

No, Sir, on the contrary, I think there is a slight decrease.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, is Government satisfied with the criteria employed for the allocation of points of housing applicants?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, subject to the amendment of Clause 7 relating to Waiting Time, Government is reasonably satisfied with the criteria set out in the Housing Allocation Scheme for the awarding of points to housing applications.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 195 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

What does he propose to do about Clause 7, Mr Speaker?

HON J B PEREZ:

On the recommendation of the Housing Allocation Committee it is proposed to increase the points awarded to applicants on the Waiting Time. This is done with an idea of overcoming the problems which were outlined by the Hon Member in his previous question when he was asking me to change the scheme from two to five. It has been proposed to have the following changes. On completion of the third year on the waiting list the present and the revised would be the same, namely, 15 points. On completion of the fourth year, the present and the revised would be the same, 30 and 30. On completion of the fifth year on waiting time the present points are 45, it is intended to increase those to 60. On completion of the sixth year on waiting time the present is 65 points and it is proposed that those 65 should become 120 points. On completion of the seventh year on waiting time the present pointage is 85 and I am now proposing to up that to 190. On completion of the eighth year on waiting time the present points awarded are 105 and I am proposing to increase these to 270. On completion of the ninth year on waiting time the present pointage is 125 and I am proposing to increase those to 360 points. On completion of the tenth year and for each year thereafter additional points are awarded, at present you only get 30 points, my intention is to increase that to 100. Let me say, Mr Speaker, that all these points have been on the recommendation of the Housing Allocation Committee.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, he seems to accept the principles outlined in the earlier question.

MR SPEAKER:

You should be highly satisfied then.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am but I do not know how it is going to affect the other criteria. If you introduce this increase in pointage is it not going to undermine the value

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to debate, with due respect.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that the increase in pointage as regards the waiting time will undermine or devalue those points presently given for dampness and medical cases, etc?

HON J B PEREZ:

Yes and I agree that the emphasis should be on people who have been waiting for a very long time.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 196 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will the Minister consider increasing the number of the monthly lists of highest pointage housing applicants?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Yes, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 196 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

To what, Sir?

HON J B PEREZ:

I have not decided yet how many I am going to publish.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, in October of last year the person standing in for Mr Zammitt, Mr Featherstone the Hon Minister for Public Works, indicated that perhaps we can increase it to 25 or 30 but that was a year ago and they still have not come with a number let alone an increase.

HON J B PEREZ:

All I can say, Mr Speaker, is that when I started I think the number was 5. The question he is asking me is will I consider increasing it. I am telling the House yes, I will consider increasing it, I have not made up my mind as to whether I am going to have everybody on that list or whether I am going to have 10 or 25.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 197 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government release the figures of applicants on the Waiting List as at 4.10.82 giving the number in respect of the various categories ie 4 rooms, 3 rooms, etc?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Sir, there are 1,826 applications on the Housing Waiting List as follows:-

179 for Bedsitters

415 for 2RKB

691 for 3RKB

475 for 4RKB

61 for 5RKB

7 for 6RKB

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 197 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, this is an alarming figure, indeed. I have periodically, as the Minister will recall, asked questions of this nature. Will the Minister confirm that in fact the numbers are going up rather than down?

HON J B PEREZ:

Let me say one thing, Mr Speaker, from my short experience as Housing Minister. Although the numbers may be going up, I am of the opinion that what is occurring is a lot of double counting, for example, a house in Laguna Estate in which you have two families living, you will probably find that you have three applications from that house, you do not need three houses you possibly only need one but let me say that I am undertaking to look at two things in the Housing Department, the first one is as to how effective the Housing Allocation Scheme is in securing the fairest allocation of houses.

MR SPEAKER:

With due respect, we are beginning to make statements.

HON J B PEREZ:

The second thing I will be doing is that I will be looking and seeing how the percentage

MR SPEAKER:

You have been asked if the list is in the increase or is it in the decrease.

HON J B PEREZ:

I do not know, Sir. What I am doing now is that I intend to have a public survey and ask all householders to fill in certain forms in order to be in a position, Sir, to answer the question.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Will Government state what were the qualifications required to be held by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer before the current review and furthermore whether the current review has been completed and what is the extent of that review?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Sir, the qualifications required for the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer has been since 1977 a Diploma of the Institution of Fire Engineers.

The current review has not yet been completed. This review is looking at the grading of the post. Once it is finalised the qualification requirement will have to be reconsidered depending on the level of the final grading.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 198 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, the Hon Member said a Diploma. Can he say what degree of Diploma, was it a graduate or a membership?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Sir, it is one or the other but I am not sure which. The graduate and the membership Diploma are both qualifications for the Chief Fire Officer, they both must be for the Deputy Fire Officer but I will undertake to find out whether the lesser one, the managerial one, the membership one, is itself sufficient.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Hon Member aware that an inspection in 1977 recommended that the Deputy Chief Officer be of graduate membership?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I am not aware of that, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

I can confirm that, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, is it the intention in the future for the Deputy to have a graduate membership?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I cannot comment on that at this stage, Sir, the grading is in the process of being finalised.

HON G T RESTANO:

May I ask who, in fact, is carrying out the review?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

As I undicated to an earlier question, Sir, that it is by way of a staff inspection.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Hon Member inform the staff inspectors because I think it is important that the recommendations in 1977, or rather would he make the 1977 recommendations available to the staff inspectors?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Sir, before I answer that may I just clarify a previous answer. The staff inspection has in fact been completed, it was completed in 1981, what is now happening is that the finalisation of the grading is being considered in the context of the senior grades review. To come to the question which was last asked by the Hon Member, I cannot myself but I am quite sure that the staff inspectors would have been aware of what happened in 1977 because it would have been part of their function to have regard to any previous action.

HON G T RESTANO:

Are these staff inspectors, Mr Speaker, inspectors of fire services or are they completely divorced from the fire service?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

I do not know, Sir, but I think that they are simply government staff inspectors at large.

HON A J CANEPA:

I think that staff inspectors is perhaps the wrong term to use, they were two very senior and very experienced experts in the field of salaries and wages revisions who were brought out from the United Kingdom to look generally into the question of the senior grades, that is, very senior officers above the level of Senior Executive Officer. They are not particularly expert in one field or another, they deal with the general broad spectrum of all senior grades.

HON G T RESTANO:

Which is precisely why, Mr Speaker, I hope that the recommendations of experts in that particular field will be taken into account because in 1977 the report did recommend that a certain grading be held by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and I believe and I hope that the Government can see its way of taking account of those recommendations and ensuring that that post does require a graduate membership.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 199 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Mr Speaker, has agreement yet been reached between Government, Management and Staff for the operation, administration and management of the Waterport Power Station?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the Steering Committee recently set up under an independent Chairman is the forum in which negotiations are currently in progress between the various parties concerned in the operation, administration and management of the Waterport Power Station.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 199 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Does that mean, Mr Speaker, that no agreement has been reached yet?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as the answer said, the Steering Committee is the forum for negotiations and these negotiations are continuing.

HON G T RESTANO:

So therefore no agreement has been reached, will the Minister confirm that?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

I can confirm that no agreement has been reached up to now, Sir.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister not agree that that is a terrible situation with the Waterport Power Station about to open and no agreement being reached? Can he give a reason why no agreement has yet been reached?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, on a point of order. There is a substantive motion of censure on this matter, generally, in the Power Station and I think it would be most unfair to have to answer details of matters which are going to be broadly discussed in a motion of censure.

MR SPEAKER:

In fairness to the Opposition I think the Opposition is entitled to seek whatever information they require at the present time.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

And they have got the information they want.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can we have an answer? I am asking why has agreement yet not been reached?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, because negotiations are taking place. I am not a member of the negotiating body but negotiations are taking place and they will proceed in due course. I can go no further on that question, I am very sorry.

HON G T RESTANO:

When did these negotiations start, Mr Speaker?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Negotiations started as soon as we had a Chairman for the Steering Committee, Sir, they started soon after that.

HON G T RESTANO:

Can the Minister say when this was, that is what I asked?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have not got the actual date at hand but I will find out and I will give the Hon Member the answer later on in this House.

HON G T RESTANO:

Was the Chairman appointed quite recently or has he been there for a long time?

MR SPEAKER:

He has not got the information but he is going to let you have it, it is as simple as that.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, the Committee of Inquiry into the electricity situation found

MR SPEAKER:

We are not dealing with that.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, if I may, because it is of some importance, the Committee of Inquiry thought it important enough to come up with an interim report amongst which some of the recommendations they made, this was in April, was the establishment of a Steering Committee and I think that it has taken Government something like up to the 9th September, I think, if my memory serves me correctly, for that Steering Committee to meet which is in fact some few months since April and in fact it is even something like three months after the final report

MR SPEAKER:

What is your question?

HON W T SCOTT:

What I am asking the Government is, why so long?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I think, Sir, that that is one of the main things that arise out of the general debate which we will have on the motion of censure.

MR SPEAKER:

Yes, I tend to agree that that is the sort of thing which will be debated.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, but in a debate

MR SPEAKER:

You are asking why they have not done certain things and whether they should have done it. I think that will come in the debate itself. Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would the Minister for Municipal Services state when he expects the two engines at Waterport Power Station to be fully operational and would he explain the reasons for the slippage which has occurred?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the first of the engines at Waterport Power Station has been fully operational and supplying power to the system for the last five weeks. The second engine became fully operational last week-end.

In a project of the magnitude and complexity involved in a power station such as Waterport, built to a tight programme and involving a number of engineering disciplines on a small site, some slippage was inevitable and to be expected. This is due to a wide variety of reasons, including design changes, site difficulties, material shortages, shipping delays and commissioning adjustments, making it impossible to single out any one principal reason.

The important consideration is that the station is now nearing completion and our main concern has been and must continue to be that it should prove to be an efficient, reliable and soundly built installation.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 200 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Does that mean that the Station has not yet been taken over by the Government?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Sir, reliability periods are continuing.

HON P J ISOLA:

When is it likely to be taken over fully by the Government?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, when the reliability periods are concluded.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 201 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can the Minister for Municipal Services explain the reasons why it has not been possible to connect International Direct Dialling with Spain on 1st October, 1982?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, direct dialling to and from Spain has not been possible due to technical reasons involving the Spanish network and to the fact that restoration of the telephone service with Spain is still not on a permanent basis.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 201 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Minister satisfied that this is merely a technical problem or does he think that it is a political decision?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is what we have been led to believe. Spain needs to instal some technical equipment to accept traffic from Gibraltar, this is considered minimal and arrangements, once clearance is given by Spain to connect it up, should not present any great difficulties.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Since HM Forces Telephone network is not geared to a metering system will Government confirm that local calls from Forces numbers to ordinary subscribers will be free whilst chargeable if an ordinary subscriber calls a Forces number?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the rentals for Forces lines were increased by 15% on 1st October, 1982, which is IDD date and local call metering date, in order to compensate for the loss of revenue from local call metering.

Once the Forces exchanges are in a position to meter their subscribers, calls from these exchanges will also be metered in the same way and at the same charges applicable to our subscribers.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 202 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Has the Government not negotiated with the Forces so that they do have meters?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a matter for them, I believe they are now in the process of having a contract and once their installation is equipped then they will be the same as us. Fortunately this time we have been somewhat earlier than they have.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is there any indication as to when they will complete the process?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes, Mr Speaker, it will take approximately, I would have thought, about eighteen months but it could be earlier.

HON G T RESTANO:

Is the Government satisfied that 15% is sufficient to cover charges that would accrue if the numbers were metered? In other words, how has the figure of 15% been reached?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

The figure of 15% was reached because we have almost annually increased at budget time by 15% and being the 1st October and taking everything into account and all the details we had, we felt that 15% was the figure necessary in this case and the lines were thus increased by 15% as from the 1st October. This is not to say that if Government feels otherwise there could be another percentage increase whenever we deem it necessary but at the moment it is 15% as from the 1st October.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state the average earnings from telephone rentals in the last quarter and will Government state its projected earnings from rentals and local calls in this next quarter?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, earnings from telephone rentals last quarter were estimated at £188,750. It is estimated that this quarter's rentals will be £191,000. The income expected from local charges is estimated at £39,000 for the quarter October to December, 1982. This figure has been arrived at on present available information and taking into account the possible effects of introducing local call metering charges.

The computerisation of telephone accounts makes it possible to monitor monthly traffic units. Subscribers will therefore be sent monthly advice notices giving the number of units used for each of the first nine months of IDD. This will also enable Government to consider rental reductions at an early date.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 203 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister say whether IDD as regards local calls involves greater expense on the part of the Telephone Department, the same or less?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, this is obvious, we have had a very large capital expenditure for the IDD.

MR SPEAKER:

I think you are being asked the running costs of the Department.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if I can repeat my question. Will the Minister state whether or not the introduction of IDD, as far as running expenses are concerned, result in an increase for local calls management or a decrease? Does it cost your department more to run IDD local calls or not, am I making myself clear?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Let me, first of all, deal on the IDD. Obviously once we have introduced the IDD we have to keep the IDD network up to scratch. This will mean a certain increase because we need more equipment which may be necessary if a fault occurs.

MR SPEAKER:

I think we can narrow down the question. The way I understand it and perhaps the questioner can then correct me, is whether the introduction of IDD has increased the day-to-day running expenses of the department, forget capital expenditure, is that correct?

HON A J HAYNES:

That is correct.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, as far as the day-to-day running of the department IDD has certainly not increased it in any substantial amount.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am glad to hear that, Mr Speaker, that means therefore that we have got, if my mathematics are correct which they are not normally, about a £40,000 increase in the projected earnings for just one quarter and that £40,000 is about 25% increase in local calls, is that correct?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, if the Hon Member will divide £39,000 by £191,000 he will find that it is 20%.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has stated that he is considering reducing the rentals. Will the Minister say when he proposes to make this announcement and whether he is going to reduce the rental by the amount of the increase in revenue or not?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is impossible to say. As I said previously, the computerisation of telephone accounts makes it possible to monitor monthly traffic units. We shall be able by the beginning of December to have the evaluation of two months which is October/November, November/December. Depending on this and depending on traffic evaluation figures then this can be considered by Government and if there is going to be a reduction it shall be brought before the House but at the moment it is impossible to (a) state definitely whether there will be a reduction, and (b) when the reduction will take place.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can I ask the Minister whether he has an idea of how much of the projected earnings from local calls comes from Government departments and has Government given any directive to Government departments so as to ensure that the earnings from Government department calls which are in effect paid by the taxpayer do not increase unduly?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, on the first one I cannot answer because I do not have the necessary information. On the second one, yes, all Government departments have been told and directed as to the use of local call metering and in fact they have been given specific instructions for the use of local call metering and therefore there should be a great deterrent in that sphere.

HON P J ISOLA:

Have they been given a directive that they cannot use the telephone for private calls?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Yes.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister confirm that this projected 20% increase in revenue is a conservative figure and that the likely result is going to be

MR SPEAKER:

No, he does not know, he has given an estimate.

HON A J HAYNES:

Perhaps he can say, Mr Speaker, whether it is a conservative estimate or not?

MR SPEAKER:

No.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, the Minister has talked of possible reductions after an assessment has been made after a number of months operation of IDD insofar as local metering is concerned, can I ask him when this takes effect or when it is being considered because he has always been talking about reductions on calls. Can I also ask him to seriously consider the increase of the number of units associated with the rental charge?

HON DR R G VALARINO:

Mr Speaker, Sir, the whole thing was actually looked at in the context of costs therefore certainly as far as the Hon Member Mr Scott is concerned I can offer him no concrete information as to the answer.

HON W T SCOTT:

I am only asking the Government to consider that.

HON DR R G VALARINO:

We shall consider it.

NO. 204 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government ensure that the Automatic Dialling Clock is corrected as soon as practicable after a power cut?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Sir, the speaking clock is affected by power cuts and is corrected as soon as possible after a power cut has been experienced. However, arrangements are being made so that the clock will not be affected by power cuts in the future.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 204 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, is he aware that though he has indicated that it is corrected as soon as possible in fact it has been out of time for as much as two days and people have been ringing up and spending 10p to be given the wrong time?

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 205 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government outline the options and their different costs proposed as alternative plans for rehabilitation of the prison in the event of insufficient ODA funds being made available for the major proposed scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

Sir, an Ad Hoc Committee chaired by the Hon Major F J Dellipiani, Minister with responsibility for the Prison, has been studying the various options for the rehabilitation of the present Prison building. Its recommendations have been submitted to Council of Ministers. Council has agreed that the scheme should be costed with a view to carrying out its implementation in stages.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 205 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

How much money is the Government prepared to put into the new rehabilitation of the Prison?

HON A J CANEPA:

That question I am not prepared to answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister know the answer?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not prepared to answer it, I am not even prepared to consider answering that question.

HON A J HAYNES:

Why, Mr Speaker, is there any good reason for it?

HON A J CANEPA:

Because the Government cannot make a statement just like that as to how much money it is prepared to put into the new Prison. If the ODA were prepared to pick up the cost of the £5m we might look at it, if they are not prepared to contribute one penny it alters the situation completely.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, in a question session in December of last year the Minister when asked whether he would be prepared to give certain contributions from ODA other than the £4m projected, indicated that he would not but that they were considering a smaller figure, am I correct? We would like to know, Mr Speaker, since we are interested about the Prison, how much money he is prepared to put into a Prison.

MR SPEAKER:

The answer is that he is not prepared to give you that answer, it is as simple as that, you have been told already, it is no use insisting. Next question.

12.10.82

NO. 206 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government make representations to the Ministry of Defence with regard to Dockyard Apprentices who have recently completed their training so that they will be no worse off in continuing employment than other employees in the Dockyard?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

Sir, in view of events since the question was tabled there is no need for Government to make representations on the matter.

NO. 207 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what measures is Government taking to stem the flow of increasing unemployment?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

Sir, for some time now the main area of unemployment has been in the Construction Industry, which, like the Hotel Industry, has its peaks and troughs.

The current year has seen periods of inactivity as contracts come to an end and there have been insufficient major projects to offer continuity of employment in this industry.

Everything possible is being done to maintain employment for construction workers and matters could no doubt, improve with such projects as the Multi Storey Car Park at Casemates, Phase 2 of Rosia Dale Housing Project and the extension to the Bayside School.

Some projects which are likely to get off the ground before the end of the current year are:

- a. The Sewerage Pumping Station at Catalan Bay, and
- b. The Container Unstuffing Shed at the Port.

It is also expected that construction work on the Viaduct Causeway will commence next year. In addition the renewals to the salt and potable water mains may result in the employment of additional temporary labour.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 207 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

There is nothing on new housing, is that correct, Mr Speaker?

HON A J CANEPA:

I mentioned the Rosia Dale Housing Project.

HON A J HAYNES:

How long will that take?

HON A J CANEPA:

That has already started recently, I think it started last week.

HON A J HAYNES:

When is it due to finish?

HON A J CANEPA:

It is an eighteen month project.

HON A J HAYNES:

Is there anything else you have by way of housing, Mr Speaker, or is there going to be a moratorium on housing?

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to discuss housing in this question, I can tell you that much.

HON A J CANEPA:

There are numerous housing projects included in the development aid submission.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government state why Family Allowances have not been raised in the last two Budgets and does Government not consider this discriminatory to larger families?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

Sir, in 1979, Government introduced an Income Tax/Family Allowance Package, which improved considerably the position of the middle and lower income groups. Further improvements, under the Income Tax Ordinance have continued to be introduced since then, as part of Government's policy to provide relief to those who most need it.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 208 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

I am aware of the extra tax allowances that benefits families or benefits the one child family where there have been increase in the last two budgets but families having two or more children, their cash return at the end of the year seems to be less than that for the one child family. What reason does Government have for not equating children whether the first, second, third or fourth born?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not know what he means, Sir, by equating.

HON W T SCOTT:

I think that the tax allowance now for the first child is something like £300 and for the second and subsequent born it is £250. At one stage in the budget of 1979 there was an equivalent, £250 being £5 per week. There was an equivalence between the first born in the income tax allowance for that first born and the family allowance for the second and subsequent children. That seems to have gone by the board, as it were, in the last two budgets. I am asking Government what reason do they have for discriminating between the first, second and third children?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think that I follow the Hon Member, I do not think his argument stands the test. As far as income tax allowances were concerned, Sir, what happened before 1979, as I recall, was that in respect of the first child greater tax relief was given than in respect of second subsequent children. I think in respect of second and subsequent children the relief was £100 per child whereas I think in the case of the first child it was £250. The first child was not in receipt of family allowances whereas the second and subsequent children were in receipt of family allowances. I forget

exactly what the figure was in 1979, I think the level of the allowance was perhaps £3 per child and at the time when we did away with income tax relief for the second and subsequent children, I think we increased the allowance from £3 to £5 in order to compensate and in order to increase family allowances.

HON W T SCOTT:

What I am suggesting, Mr Speaker, is that although the income tax allowance for the first child has been increased in the last two budgets, the family allowance of £5 for the second and subsequent children have not been raised, that is what I am after. I am asking the reasons why not?

HON A J CANEPA:

Basically I would say a question of availability of funds. A further increase in family allowances would have meant increased expenditure which would probably have had to be met by increased taxation and the Government in its budgetary policy has not considered in the last two years that it should do that.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 209 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government inform this House as to the response to its recent advertising of the Industrial Training Scheme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

Sir, if the Hon Member is referring to training facilities which Government is again making available at the Construction Industry Training Centre to those apprentices who were successful in the 1982 Apprentices Exams, but who are not able to obtain an apprenticeship, the closing date for applications is October 15th.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 209 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

Will Government say whether in fact what the Hon Minister for Education and Labour and Social Security answered in one of my supplementaries on Question 43 which dealt with the same subject that it was envisaged that the advertising because of the poor response last year, that the advertising would be increased and in fact, has it?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not think it is really a question of advertising, I think it is a question of the Principal Youth and Careers Officer in particular working very closely on the one hand with the Construction Industry Training Officer and, secondly, with the people concerned with whom he has a great deal of contact because young people register as unemployed with him and not with the Labour Department. I think it is a question of the work which is done by the Youth and Careers Office rather than notices put in the press which very often people from practical experience one knows very often they do not even see, that is what I think is required to persuade young people.

HON W T SCOTT:

In advertising, in fact, I was not necessarily restricting myself to the press I was thinking of television, that was when I first mentioned Question 43.

HON A J CANEPA:

The scheme involves a definite number of young people, it is only applicable to apprentices who were successful in their exams and who have not been offered an apprenticeship, they can be identified. The Youth and Careers Officer knows who they are and they can be readily contacted and encouraged to participate in the scheme. In my view it does not need notices in the press, television or what have you.

NO. 210 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, with regard to the answer given to Question No. 45 of 1982 will Government state the areas in which it considers there is a need to train young people to make Gibraltar less dependent on foreign labour and will Government further state if these areas have recently been extended by the Industrial Training Board?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

Sir, Government is awaiting the recommendations of the Industrial Training Board on this matter. The Board has still to process the results of a Questionnaire circularised to schools.

NO. 211 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government not consider it advisable to commence a Youth Opportunities Programme?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

Sir, as indicated in this House in March 1982 (Question No 44 of 1982 refers) whilst there are no detailed plans for such a programme, Government is continuously looking at areas likely to offer employment opportunities for young people.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 211 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

Since, Mr Speaker, we seem to come up again to the unemployment situation particularly with juveniles and we have a trend I think year by year at this time it seems to increase particularly after the summer holidays and they register as unemployed and then after a month they have found some work, but the unemployment figure as far as juveniles is concerned within a period, say October/November, annually, we do have a rise and every time I ask this question we seem to get the same answer. Doesn't Government consider that it is time for it to seriously think on the implementation of such a programme before it is too late?

HON A J CANEPA:

Sir, on the first point made by the Hon Member, the figures available on the 31st August, 1982, as against the 31st August, 1981, do not seem to bear out his contention. The comparative figures are that last year, August 1981, there were 104 young persons unemployed and this year there are 86. I do not know whether that is indicative of any trend or not but I think it is better to find that there are 86 rather than 126. As regards the general question about the implementation of a Youth Opportunities Programme which I understand has been implemented in the United Kingdom under the aegis of the Manpower Services Commission, I regret that I myself am not in a position to answer that question, I think this is a matter really for my colleague who is absent to go into, I am not in a position to answer that or commit him in any way. For one thing I do not know enough about the Youth Opportunities Programme, I gave up responsibility for Labour 21 months ago and I had to ask for some information which I got from the Employment News of July, 1982, because I was a little bit at sea about the matter, I must confess.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

12.10.82

NO. 212 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Will Government consider making an ex-gratia payment to the widow of the late Mr Manuel Borge, a former employee of the Gibraltar Government, equivalent to the gratuity that would have been payable?

ANSWER

THE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the representations made on behalf of the person concerned were well found worthy of merit and have been acceded to on an ex-gratia basis.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Was the Gibraltar Government consulted by the MOD on its decision to sack those apprentices who completed their training in the Dockyard this year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

No, Sir.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 213 OF 1982

HON J BOSSANO:

Does the Gibraltar Government consider that it should be consulted in a decision of this nature?

HON A J CANEPA:

We would very much have preferred to have been told, yes.

HON J BOSSANO:

Has the Gibraltar Government therefore told the Ministry of Defence that they would like in future to be consulted?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Chief Minister has discussed the matter with the General Manager of the Dockyard.

HON J BOSSANO:

On the basis that in future there should be consultation?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

On the desirability of giving information.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government state whether there is an implied assurance of employment at the end of the period of training in the case of individuals engaged as indentured apprentices by the Official Employers?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

(In the absence of the Hon the Minister for
Education and Labour and Social Security)

Sir, in essence the deeds of indenture signed by Gibraltar Government apprentices provide for:

- a. the employer to give training to the apprentices;
- b. the apprentice to diligently learn the skills of the trade; and
- c. the parents or guardians of the apprentice to undertake certain obligations.

There is no commitment written or implied to the effect that on termination of the indentures the employer has to provide employment or that the newly qualified craftsman is required to remain in the employment of the employer who trained him.

Nevertheless, Government has always considered that it had a moral obligation to offer employment to its apprentices, a practice which other official employers have also followed, and which one would hope that they will continue to do.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 214 OF 1982

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, would the Hon Member not agree that the impression that has existed in Gibraltar is that there is an implied assurance of employment which goes beyond the moral obligation and that this impression is reinforced by the fact that the Government itself seems to make a distinction between the training facilities it is offering those who fail to get an apprenticeship where they stress the fact that there is no job at the end of the training, where if there is no job at the end of the apprenticeship either there would be no need to stress it. Would they not agree that by emphasising that those who do not get an apprenticeship are being offered training under this new scheme at the Construction Training Centre and they put in the advertisement that that does not mean that there will be an offer of a job, that it is reasonable to assume that if one gets the apprenticeship there will be an offer of a job?

HON A J CANEPA:

I would agree that that impression has been fairly current having regard to the practice now for decades that invariably a successful indentured apprentice has been offered a job.

HON J BOSSANO:

Would the Minister also not agree that since the UK Departments and the Gibraltar Government in the Official Employers Apprentices Training Board in arriving at the level of apprenticeships they have offered have always maintained that they do so in order to satisfy their projected needs, there is a clear implication that there is a need to employ a qualified person otherwise if it was purely training for training sake the ceiling which the Trade Union Movement has accepted in the past would not have been justified?

HON A J CANEPA:

I have no doubt that that is the case and I am able to base that on my very close involvement over $8\frac{1}{2}$ years as Minister for Labour with the Official Employers Apprentices Board and also between 1972 and 1976 as Minister with responsibility for the Productivity and Training Unit.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

12.10.82

NO. 215 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how many seats were there available for the Miss Gibraltar show this year and how many of these were complimentary?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, there were 701 seats available this year for the Miss Gibraltar show. Of these 119 seats were complimentary.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 215 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would not the Government agree that considering how costly it is to stage the Miss Gibraltar show, it would be preferable to cut down the number of complimentary seats to the barest minimum as is the case with the Song Festival?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The number is cut down to the barest minimum, Mr Speaker, and I will explain why. Complimentary seats were made up of people who give voluntary service like 18 usherettes, the contestants are each given two complimentary seats which comes to 26, 75 VIPs including Ministers, the Hon Leader of the Opposition, the press, etc, comes to a total of 75. I have not got a breakdown with total accuracy but people who have given free service, directors wives, producers wives, musicians and the lot. I assure the Hon Member that I have in fact received complaints about people who I think ought to be invited and who we do not invite, VIPs for that matter, whom we do not invite purely to keep the number down to its bare minimum.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I am surprised that the Minister has received complaints considering there were 119 complimentary seats. I would urge the Minister to further prune the list of complimentary tickets that are going out, one-seventh of the total seats available to me seems an extraordinarily high number of seats to be given away free.

HON P J ISOLA:

Would the Minister not consider, having regard to the very high cost of the Miss Gibraltar show, inviting people but asking them to pay for their seats? As far as the contestants, for example, are concerned they already receive, do they not, some substantial sums for entering the competition and is it so unreasonable to ask people to pay for seats in view of the fact that there are 600 who do so willingly?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am quite surprised at the Hon Leader of the Opposition's view on this. The people that are invited are invariably people who have offered freely their services to the performance otherwise we would have to pay for very simple things. People who help during the rehearsals, people who work until midnight driving people up and down and charging the Tourist Office absolutely nothing, electricians who may not charge us, some of them do not, Mr Speaker, some people particularly those who do the loudspeakers offer their services free of charge. There are an enormous amount of people who help the Tourist Office and I think that I cannot prune the list further.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 216 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Sir, how many people were invited to the reception after the Miss Gibraltar show and what was the cost of the reception?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, a total of 184 persons, in the main those participating in and involved in the production of the show, were invited to the reception after the Miss Gibraltar show. Approximately 150 turned up. The total cost of the reception was £200.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 216 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I cannot quibble with the £200 reception but I can quibble again with the 184 invited to the reception. Already we are given to understand that the 119 who were invited is a reasonable number. Mr Speaker, can the Minister say how the 119 converted to 184?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I can. Contestants, the dance group, that is the people like the Eastern Promise, 42 people, orchestra, the artists and musicians, production staff including producer, coach, etc, 48, the GTO staff 40, the VIPs and may I say that it is the first time ever that we have given a reception after the show brought about by the specific request of the producer who thought that all these helpers ought to be entertained to a drink at the end of the show and for the first time ever the Chief Minister and myself attended this party.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state what is the outlook for tourism this winter season in connection with tourists from the UK, other European countries and Morocco?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the pattern of Inclusive Tour winter holidays for Gibraltar appears to be the same as last year. Little increase is forecast in disposal incomes for 1982/83. As regards Europe and Morocco there is no evidence to suggest that there will be a significant change in the strength of the £ sterling over the next twelve months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 217 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Since the Minister has the experience of what happened last year, wasn't he able to gather some information as to the reasons why we were not so successful last year and has done something effective to try and improve the situation this year?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I am afraid I did not meet Margaret Thatcher when I was over there to make the pound a little more favourable. I think it is no good kidding ourselves and asking questions of which we all know the reasons why, Mr Speaker. We are not competitive within this area and the pound sterling and the recession in Britain and late booking pattern and people investing their money till the very last moment it all works at this stage against us. I think subsequent questions may reveal something more illuminating to the Hon Member but there are a number of facets which we just cannot skip over and they are very, very important.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

So what the Minister is saying is that there is nothing really that he can think of doing to improve the situation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Of course I am not saying that, Mr Speaker. We demonstrated that earlier this year by increasing our advertising campaign, by increasing our trade promotions, by reminding people of Gibraltar permanently and trying to get as many people as possible to come and visit us.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if they are carrying out any special campaign to attract more visitors from Morocco?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the Tourist Office has continued with its Sales Visits to Tangier and stepped up its advertising in Tangier in an effort to attract more visitors. A series of regular advertisements have been placed in the Journal de Tanger to encourage visits to Gibraltar. These were inserted at peak periods when more holiday-makers both Moroccan and European were in Tangier. We aim to carry out another similar campaign at Christmas. A visit to the South of the country is also planned.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 218 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Why is it that there has been no visit at all to Rabat and Casablanca and the Tourist Office is merely concentrating on Tangier?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, we have been to Rabat, not that I have been to Rabat but the Tourist Office has been to Rabat and Casablanca. As I explained in the July meeting and as the Hon Member may know, a foreign country is not allowed to carry out a sales promotion in Morocco as such and we had to do it under another veil in accordance with Moroccan laws but I would not like to go into that any further, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Could the Minister say if the time of arrival of the Mons Calpe and other links with Morocco have anything to do, are their times of arrival and departure reasonable and could something be done in that respect to make coming over to Gibraltar for a day more attractive proposition?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, although it has nothing to do with this question in particular or directly I can inform the Hon Member that only this morning before I came to this House I was looking at a document which showed an increase in arrivals through Mons Calpe, Hydrofoil and Gib Air from Morocco so I do not think there is any particular difficulty on the time of arrival or departure.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how tourism fared this summer generally and provide figures of visitors and hotel occupancy if available?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, there has been a slight improvement in tourism generally this summer. Figures for tourist arrival and sleeper occupancy in hotels for the months May, June, and July (latest available figures) as compared with the same months last year are as follows:-

| | <u>Tourist Arrivals</u> | <u>Tourist Sleeper Occupancy</u> |
|------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| May | + 10.6% | from 30.4% to 35.2% |
| June | + 1.3% | from 32.7% to 42.2% |
| July | + 9.5% | from 28.5% to 40.5% |

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 219 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister agree with me that notwithstanding he blames Mrs Thatcher

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. Ask a question if you wish to but do not make a comment.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't it indicative that notwithstanding the difficulties there might be with currency and all the other things, it is possible to increase tourism in Gibraltar?

MR SPEAKER:

No, order. Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how many yachts called at Gibraltar this summer and how it compares with 1981?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, during the period May to September this year a total of 3834 yachts called, as compared to 3526 during the same period in 1981, an increase of 308.

The monthly totals are as follows:-

| | <u>1981</u> | <u>1982</u> |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| May | 516 | 532 |
| June | 680 | 610 |
| July | 687 | 838 |
| August | 955 | 1139 |
| September | 688 | 715 |
| | <u>3526</u> | <u>3834</u> |

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 220 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Does the Minister agree that this is very encouraging and that perhaps we should reinforce success with more effort by perhaps advertising or whatever may be required?

HON A J CANEPA:

I agree that it is encouraging, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how many cruise liners called at Gibraltar, how it compares with the previous year and how much is being done to attract more of these liners?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, up to the end of September this year 85 cruise liners called at Gibraltar. This compares with 55 which called here during the same period last year.

Contact is maintained with operators and obviously any advertising for Gibraltar stimulates all modes of traffic including cruising. We also give hospitality service to selected journalists who have visited Gibraltar on cruise liners. This type of specialised editorial is in our view the most cost effective.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how many meetings the Tourist Advisory Board have held and if any major recommendations have emanated that are being implemented by the Government?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, the Tourist Advisory Board has held ten meetings to date since its inception on 9 February, 1982. There have been no major recommendations as such, since it has mainly concentrated in follow-up action on the recommendations made in the Tourist Seminar held on 17/18 March, 1981. All recommendations made by the Board, however, have been followed up by the Gibraltar Tourist Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 222 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What does he mean by followed up, are they being carried out?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, at the regular meetings we review the situation and see in fact what has been done, are we satisfied with what has been done and if not we certainly write to the departments concerned and try and get them to pep up.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister mention some of those recommendations?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, there is the cleaning of the Piazza, reduction of import duty on small motor cycles and mopeds, beautification of Europa Point, removal of refuse to be re-cycled, collection of trade refuse to be incorporated in the refuse collection duties, cash grants to employers, training locally unemployed and I could go on, it is quite a list, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Nothing really major it appears?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I have said that in my answer to the question.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 223 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state that if necessary air capacity UK-Gibraltar route is not met by the existing operators, the Government itself will take direct action to meet the requirements?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Mr Speaker, the Government is conscious of the need for an adequate air seat capacity on the United Kingdom-Gibraltar route. Whether the Government should become involved in direct action depends largely on the ability or otherwise of airlines to provide a sufficiently adequate service.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 223 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would he agree that at present the complaint that one hears from people concerned in the tourist trade is that there is not sufficient capacity to bring the tourists to Gibraltar?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I agree entirely, Sir.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

If this has been going on for some time when does the Government intend to take some action to correct this very fundamental issue?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I think that his leader may have other views, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

I am not concerned with what my leader's views may be, I am talking now about direct action. My leader may have other views on other matters concerning how one particular operator might operate but I am talking about the general issue. Cannot the Government do something as they are responsible and they should not blame the Leader of the Opposition for this unless they want us to take over Government. Can the Minister state what the Government intends doing to correct this very serious situation?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

The Government has always encouraged more air communications to Gibraltar on both situations, both charter and schedule and at the moment, as the Hon Member may know, there is an application for further schedule services to Gibraltar.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state how long it takes on average for air mail letters and air parcels to reach their destination to and from the UK, if it is satisfied with the service and if not what effective action is being taken to put it right?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, letters and parcels sent by air mail take an average of three and four days respectively to reach their destination. Government is satisfied with the service.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 224 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Isn't it a fact that in most cases it takes much more than that?

MR SPEAKER:

The Government has given you the estimated time.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, he said it took an average of three and four days, I think in practice it is much more than that.

MR SPEAKER:

The Minister said that letters and parcels sent by air mail take an average of three and four days.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

What I am saying is that it takes more, that is what I am trying to say. Is he satisfied that in many cases it takes much more than that?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Yes, Mr Speaker, letters can and do take as little as 24 hours from time of posting to delivery. They can also on occasions take seven or eight days. All mail posted in Gibraltar is despatched within 24 hours at the latest except for mail posted after 10 am on Fridays which does not leave until Sunday. Similarly, all mail received in Gibraltar is delivered within 24 hours except that received on Saturday which is delivered on Monday. Letters addressed to PO Boxes are placed therein on the day of the receipt. The Gibraltar Post Office cannot interfere in the internal affairs of other administrations. Areas covered by these internal affairs include the regularity with which post boxes in those countries are cleared and the time taken to get letters from the Post box to the mail bag being flown to Gibraltar. The Gibraltar Post Office can and does query the short shipment and non-arrival of mail.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

If the Minister is so certain that the fault does not lie with Gibraltar couldn't he take it up with the Postal Services in the United Kingdom because normally in England when you drop a letter any time before, say, 5 o'clock in the evening, it is received on the following morning, the first mail the following morning.

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, I can assure the Hon Member that because of the friendly contact that exists between the Director of Postal Services it is quite easy for him possibly through giving people a free ticket for the Miss Gibraltar Show, that we can ring directly and get things put on the bag and he all too well knows the situation we have recently encountered in England between Gatwick and Heathrow on some industrial action being taken there by the Post Office. We have extremely good relations with the GPO in London.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government now in a position to make a statement on the legalisation of Citizen's Band in Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR TOURISM AND SPORT

Sir, I regret that the Government is not yet in a position to make a further statement on the legislation of Citizen's Band in Gibraltar. The investigations being carried out in the United Kingdom have not yet been completed. In order to help speed up the investigation the Wireless Officer has taken advantage of his visit earlier this month to the United Kingdom to pursue the matter with officials there.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 225 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, has the Minister any idea when he will be in a position to make a statement to this House?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

Mr Speaker, all I can say is that there are quite a number of problems that we did not foresee vis-a-vis the different channels and rates and concern with our country next door but what I can say is that consequent upon the visit it will be possible to speed up the situation.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does not the country next door work its Citizen's Band as the rest of the European countries, that is, on medium wave and what I was specifically asking, Mr Speaker, was for the VHF wave, this is a follow-up from the last House of Assembly?

HON H J ZAMMITT:

I am afraid I cannot be that technical, Mr Speaker. Whether it is VHF or medium wave or short wave I am afraid that that is left entirely to the technicians. What I can say is that on the frequency there are some complications that we did not foresee and that is what is holding back the situation at the moment.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 226 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will Government consider altering the law as regards mopeds to bring it in line with the law as it applies in the United Kingdom?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

No, Sir. In UK a person aged 16 may ride a moped. Because of our traffic problems it would not be advisable to lower the age limit from 17 to 16 years. At the present the number of motorcycles in Gibraltar has increased tremendously (1053).

Under the present legislation in Gibraltar a "moped" needs to be registered and insured and drivers must wear crash helmets, as in UK.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 226 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I am aware of the law in Gibraltar but is the Minister aware that the law in Gibraltar by not differentiating between mopeds and motorcycles has a loophole whereby any person can take a test on a moped which is considered a motorcycle in Gibraltar law and subsequently can drive around on a 1000cc engine?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, and we are going to block that loophole in the near future.

12.10.82

NO. 227 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, when will the "Pelican" traffic lights in Queensway for the new Girls' Comprehensive be installed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, quotations for Pelican Crossings at Queensway and Winston Churchill Avenue together with prices for traffic lights at various sites have been received. My reply to Question 151/82 refers.

No funds have been voted for these works and it is hoped to make provision in the 1983/84 Estimates.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government make it compulsory for trailers to be parked at the "Place in Devil's Tower Road" referred to by the Minister for Public Works in reply to my question 145 of 1982?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the place referred to in answer to Question 145 of 1982 is no longer available to be converted into a trailer car park as it is required for other Government purposes.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 228 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, will then Government make another place available as a trailer park?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, the difficulty of finding a suitable place must, I am sure, be understood very clearly by my Hon Questioner. I would comment that a good number of trailers are being parked at the container berth at North Mole.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does this mean that the Government has given up the idea of finding a suitable area for the parking of containers?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, if we can find a place then we shall try and use it but the difficulty, as the Hon Questioner must know, is that space is very limited in Gibraltar and I cannot easily foresee a big enough area to take all the trailers that are lying around. However, if more trailers are parked at the container berth this will remove much of the congestion.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, if it is not possible to find room for the trailers would it not be a good idea to reduce the number of trailers, couldn't that be looked into?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That could be looked into, Sir, but it would perhaps be putting restrictions on the transporters, however I am willing to consider it.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, the other thing is to make the transporters responsible for its parking place and then perhaps the Government can restrict it.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister what is the place in Devil's Tower Road which he referred to in Question No. 145, what is that going to be used for?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I was expecting that, Sir. As my Hon Questioner may be aware we have cleared the area where the Romney Huts were at Queensway but there were a number of garages in the same vicinity and it was part of the agreement with the MOD that we would remove these garages. They are now going to be used in this place at Devil's Tower Road.

NO. 229 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, can Government say why two uncovered $1\frac{1}{2}$ cu yd rubbish containers are allowed to stand permanently in Fish Market Road?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, these refuse containers are provided by the Market Authorities for the use of a wholesale establishment at Fish Market Road. They were kept in the small enclosed area beside this establishment, but it has proved very difficult to manoeuvre them down from the pavement there.

A small ramp was put in by the owners of the establishment, but this was not considered satisfactory as it was on the Public Highway and obstructing the street gutter, consequently it had to be removed.

It is now proposed to build a proper ramp inset into the pavement to enable the containers to be removed. When this ramp is built the containers will be located off the road.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 229 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, whilst the Government build the ramps could not these containers be (1) covered, and (2) the area around them flushed down regularly because I can assure the Minister that the place is filthy?

HON M-K FEATHERSTONE:

I am willing to look at both these possibilities, Sir.

NO. 230 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, how often are the streets, steps, etc in Gibraltar hosed down?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, most streets, steps, etc are hosed down once a week unless there are problems such as obstruction by vehicles to the street water valves.

However, the flushing programme cannot be carried out whenever there is a shortage of labour, especially during Moroccan Feasts as priority during this period is given to refuse collection and sweeping.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 230 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister aware that Main Street has only been flushed down twice in the last two months, and that is Main Street which is in public view all the time, and is the Minister satisfied in fact, that if this is the case with Main Street it is not even worse in the other areas of town, in fact, streets and steps and alleys are not hosed down at all?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I would take issue with the Hon Questioner that Main Street has only been flushed twice in the last two months, maybe some sections of Main Street have missed out but on average Main Street does get flushed once a week, from my knowledge, at least in the area around where I live. Perhaps in the area around where he lives he has been unlucky but I will do my best to see Main Street is also flushed in his area as well.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I am not so concerned with Main Street although it is a matter of concern but I am concerned about the whole of Gibraltar. There was a time when all streets were hosed down and will the Government ensure that this practice is again revived regardless of whether or not there are Moroccan holidays going on?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Perhaps the Hon Member will bear with me at estimate time when I come for more money for this.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, can I just get confirmation from the Minister, he has said, I think, in his answer that all streets are flushed once a week. Can we have confirmation of that, is he really seriously asking this House to believe that all the streets of Gibraltar, I am not talking about Main Street, all the streets of Gibraltar are hosed down once a week? Is he seriously asking us to accept that statement?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I am not sure if there is any aural pollution in this Chamber, I never said all streets were hosed down, I said most streets.

HON G T RESTANO:

I would like, Mr Speaker, a bit of clarification on this question of most, what exactly does he mean by most streets?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am not going to say that the nethermost regions of Chicardo's Passage or Richardson's Passage may be included but the majority of streets do get a wash down once a week subject to the limitations I have said of flushing valves not being accessible because a car has parked against them etc. I will try and increase the amount of flushing but I would possibly have to increase my labour force to be able to do so and this is something I cannot do at the moment, it will have to wait till estimate time.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, would the Government not agree that it would be advisable to have these streets washed down as regularly as possible if only to help the Keep Gibraltar Tidy campaign into which a substantial amount of money has already been injected?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I am not quite sure how the washing down of the streets will help too much with the Keep Gibraltar Tidy campaign of which there is a question later and I shall be saying other points. It will only possibly remove the rubbish that is in the gutters from one place to another. Unless the rubbish is actually picked up afterwards it is not going to do all that good.

12.10.82

NO. 231 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Why have two containers been allowed to park in Varyl Begg Estate?

The Hon A T Loddo withdrew this question.

NO. 232 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, seeing that already two cars have taken up permanent parking at the parking site opposite The Torpedo Camber, does Government have any plans to prevent this becoming generalised?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Police regularly check for possible abandoned cars. Any such cars will be moved, and at present there are two under investigation. These will either need to be removed by the owners or be disposed of by Government subsequent to being Gazetted.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 232 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does the Government intend to take any further action on the question of cars being parked on a permanent basis?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, following the example of my Hon Friend on the left I have only been two weeks in office as regards traffic. I do have some ideas, I would not like to say bright ideas, but one of them is to have a purge on parked cars which are obviously if not derelict at least cars which are parked on an almost permanent basis and I hope results from that will come out in the next month or two.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would the Minister care to take up the suggestion of parking time limits?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That is also one of the ideas that I do have in mind.

NO. 233 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will the Minister for Public Works confirm that the surfacing work on Tank Ramp has finally been completed?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Regretfully not yet, Sir. As stated in reply to previous questions on this matter, a considerable backlog of resurfacing work has built up due to resources being diverted, for a time, to the Frontier and Tourist car parks.

Several major schemes in the Development Programme have also stretched the capacity of the PWD Asphalt Plant. These include the West Side Comprehensive School Playgrounds and Car Parks, St Jago's and St Joseph's Housing Estates and the new Power Station.

The work at Tank Ramp will be completed once these major schemes are finished, hopefully before the end of the year.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 233 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, at the risk of asking the Minister to fall into the trap of the frontier date giving, can he give this House a date, yet another one?

MR SPEAKER:

He said before the end of the year.

HON A T LODDO:

It could be December the 30th.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, it will probably be December the 31st.

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, has Government considered the recommendations of the Chief Restorer of the Department of the Environment's Conservation Studio in London and when will it be implementing these recommendations?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Chief Restorer of the Department of the Environment's Conservation Studio in London made recommendations on the restoration of:

- (a) the murals at The Convent
- (b) the Bacarisas Painting at the City Hall, and
- (c) the mural at the Collection and Billing Section at John Mackintosh Square.

It is not considered that there is anyone in Gibraltar with the necessary expertise to undertake the restorations recommended by the Chief Restorer. The implementation of these recommendations, which will require the engagement of an experienced practitioner from UK to restore the murals as well as sending the Bacarisas painting to UK, is still under consideration.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 234 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, has the Minister any idea when the deliberations of the Government on this subject will be through?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would hope, Sir, that we will have some decision within the next three months.

NO. 235 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, will Government provide protective iron grills for windows of Government houses overlooking the Hargraves Playing Area?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, presumably the Hon Member is referring to Hargraves Barracks and/or the new St Jago's Housing Estate. Hargraves Playing Area is protected by a 12 ft high wire fence which has recently been repaired. This should, in normal circumstances, prevent ball playing games from annoying residents in the area. However, to avoid the possibility of breakage of glass in the event of a ball being kicked over the fence I am willing to protect the windows by providing an expanded metal mesh over the frame.

12.10.82

NO. 236 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Will Government either repair or demolish the stone bench in the Public Markets?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND HOUSING

Mr Speaker, provision has already been made in this year's Estimates for the repair of the stone bench at the Public Market and work will be effected by the Public Works Department according to their works schedules.

NO. 237 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, has the Minister for Public Works taken any action with regard to the wholesale tipping of rubble at King's Lines from works in Road to the Lines?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the area referred to is being converted into an amenity area, at the General Contractors own expense, which will give facilities for residents for play and relaxation in a part of town where such facilities do not exist. The project is due for completion by the end of 1982.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 237 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I do not think this is quite the answer that I am looking for. Has the Minister been up there to see that most of these old walls pertaining to the Moorish Castle have been practically covered over with rubble which now extend into King's Lines? Is nothing going to be done to prevent this very historic part of our heritage from being lost?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I understand that the area is in a pretty bad mess at the moment but the contractors do inform me that when they have finished it will preserve the wall and will provide this amenity area. It is at the moment rather what appears to be a general tipping area and then they will then get to work and smooth it out and make it into a proper amenity area at the end of the contract that they are working on at British Lines Road.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, have we any idea when this contract will be coming to an end?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, by December.

HON A T LODDO:

December, 1982?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

1982, Sir.

12.10.82

NO. 238 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government give the figures and costs for Water Production from available sources for the months of March, April, May, June, July and August, 1982, and state what the stocks were at 31st August, 1982?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the information required is contained in the paper which I am circulating. I shall of course be happy to answer any queries.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 238 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

Whilst we are waiting for that paper perhaps it might be a convenient moment, Mr Speaker, to ask the Government whether instead of me asking this question every time the House meets, whether at the end of the month I might be circulated with the monthly figures?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will do my utmost to give you them within fifteen days after the end of the month.

NO. 239 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government give the reasons why there has been flooding during the summer months in a number of blocks in the Varyl Begg Estate?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, it is difficult to give a concise and factual reply to such an ambiguous question. The flooding that has occurred at Varyl Begg during the summer months has been due to the following causes.

Firstly, there has been at least one reported instance of a burst salt water pipe. Secondly, there was a heavy downpour of rain on the 27th August, which affected blocks whose roofs were not yet completed. In one instance there was a blocked rainwater downpipe which backed up and caused water to spill on to one of the interior dewatered roofs and thence into the flat below.

Although in the normal course of usage it is unusual for water pipes to burst, there have been cases where tenants have carried out their own water heater installation or plumbing alterations in a manner which has resulted in the spillage of water on to the ceiling of the flats below.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 239 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

I am rather concerned, Mr Speaker, with the flooding that occurred of the blocks' drain. Was this drain in a block the new roof of which had been completed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, they had not completed it but following that I gave instructions that all downpipes should be checked to see that there was no blockage in any of them pending the forthcoming rains which we hope will come near the end of this month but the one that was actually blocked was in a roof that was still being worked on and they had not checked the drain itself.

HON W T SCOTT:

Is the Hon Member now able to inform this House whether all the drains have been unblocked?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

All the downwater pipes have been checked, yes, Sir.

NO. 240 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, is Government now in a position to take legal action against the Consultants on the Winning of Sand Project on the East Side?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government have appointed independent technical advisers who have produced a first report which indicates that Government have good grounds for claiming against Messrs Robertson's Research Ltd.

An initial meeting has been held with Robertson's Research Ltd at which both legal and technical advisers were present, and Government's case was clearly stated. Messrs Robertson's Research Ltd are now considering the Government statement of intention to sue, and a response from their Board is awaited.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 240 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

We first had indication, I think, Mr. Speaker, some time in February of this year on the appointment of technical consultants and here we are again in October. Are we to wait for another never ending saga like the Varyl Begg Estate at the cost of the public? I am asking the Government what form of priority are they putting to this because that project which was totally funded at least 95% by ODA funds puts us in a virtually bad situation.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not say it puts us in such a bad situation as it puts the consultants who advised us and devised the scheme. We are, as I said, awaiting their reply, we are not going to wait forever. The meeting was held on the 2 September, I think it is not unfair to give them six or eight weeks but if by the end of this month we have no reply that is of any value to us, then I think we shall have to take absolute action.

HON P J ISOLA:

Is the Minister promising the House that if there is no reply by the end of the month, at the next meeting of the House when we ask a question about it he will announce the institution of legal proceedings?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That, Sir, of course, is subject to the advice I get from my legal advisers.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, is the Minister not really following the same path that was done in the Varyl Begg Estate when independent consultants were appointed, the whole process went on for years and in the end it cost the Gibraltar Government £1m? Can we have assurances that we are not going along the same course?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I think there is no parallel in this instance to the Varyl Begg Estate.

HON P J ISOLA:

Can we have the assurance that we are not going along the same course where in the end in order to finish with the matter and give the tenants of Varyl Begg new roofs, a very bad settlement was done by the Government? Are we going to have the same situation here?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not agree, Sir, that a very bad settlement was made in the Varyl Begg case but this case has no parallel with it and we are pursuing completely different lines all the way through.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, might I ask a supplementary that if in the opinion of the new technical consultants further financial outlay has to be expended precisely to abstract sand from the top slopes, who is going to pay for that extra money?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

That would be part of our claim against the Robertson's Research company.

HON P J ISOLA:

Has the Minister any idea of what the cost of the independent consultants is to the Gibraltar Government, he has been quoted a fee?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I should say between £10,000 and £15,000.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can the Minister say whether the winning of sand project is one of those which Government classify as not only desirable but essential for Gibraltar?

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to go into that now.

HON G T RESTANO:

Might I ask a question, Mr Speaker, which I do not think has been clarified in the House yet. What is the explanation by Robertson's International for the non-functioning of the sand project?

MR SPEAKER:

No, we are not going to go into that either.

HON G T RESTANO:

I think it is relevant, if I may say so, Mr Speaker, because the question relates to the legal side.

MR SPEAKER:

The question is, is Government now in a position to take legal action?

HON G T RESTANO:

It refers to the legal action and I would like to know what the other side is saying.

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to get involved in the intricacies of the legal action itself. All we are interested in this question is what is Government doing to enforce its rights. We are not going to discuss under this question the intricacies and the merits of the claim.

HON G T RESTANO:

I entirely agree. I wanted to know in broad terms what Robertson's argument has been.

MR SPEAKER:

I would allow a question as to whether there has been an indication by Robertson's as to whether they are going to accept liability, no more than that.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, at the meeting with Messrs Robertson's Research in which the case for Gibraltar was very strongly put, even if I say it in all modesty, Robertson's Research only commented that they would be replying to all our allegations shortly. Until I get their reply I cannot really say what is their opinion.

NO. 241 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, does Government not consider that the existing state of the sand slopes West of Sir Herbert Miles Road and South of the Caleta Palace Hotel to be in a dangerous condition and what measures is Government taking to minimise this danger?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, landslides have occurred on the sand slopes referred to and there is always the possibility that further slips could occur in the future. Sand slopes, by virtue of their structure, have an inherent degree of instability and minor land slips, triggered off by extraneous actions, must be expected to occur from time to time.

In the area to the South of the Caleta Palace Hotel, a contract will soon be awarded to replace an old masonry retaining wall. To the West of Sir Herbert Miles Road little physical restraint can be instigated at the source of any slip owing to the elevation and location.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 241 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

Does the Government not agree that the frequency of the sandslides has been substantially increased because of the abstraction of sand at the lower level by the Gibraltar Sand Quarry Company?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, Government would not agree to that. There is the possibility that it may have accelerated a possible slip but I would not agree that it has been the cause of any such slip. The whole question of the sand slope from the very top of the catchments down to sea level is such that there are continually small slips at all times and depending on the weather situation, especially when we have very hot fine and dry weather for long periods, minor slips are always occurring.

HON W T SCOTT:

Does Government therefore not agree that by abstracting the sand from the lower slope at road level, it is greatly increasing the danger of there being a substantial slide?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The abstraction at the lower slope was done on the advice of Messrs Robertsons Research which has been one more thing which we have laid at their door in any possible action but from what I understand from persons who are knowledgeable in this, the actual extraction has been done in such a way that it would make only a limited possibility of an increase of a slide.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

12.10.82

NO. 242 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, when will the new Desalination Project Contract be awarded, what will be the contract period and what annual capacity will it have?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the tender validity period expires at the end of October, 1982. It is hoped that Government will be in a position to place a contract for the new Desalination Plant by that time.

The contract period for one plant is 78 weeks.

The capacity of the Desalination Plant will be $1350M^3$ /day. Annual capacity will depend on the number of days it is used.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state if they have exhausted their capability to make Gibraltar clean and tidy and if not what plans have they got to put this matter right once and for all?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government continues in its efforts to make Gibraltar cleaner and tidier. With the cooperation of the Keep Gibraltar Tidy Committee many measures to improve the situation have been implemented. These include advertising campaigns which are still in progress, provision of extra litter bins, increase in penalties for littering and vandalism to trees, new regulations governing the placing of refuse on Public Highways. The cleaning up of specific areas also continues.

There is unfortunately no easy and permanent solution to the problem unless there is cooperation from all sections of the community. Unfortunately public cooperation is not as great as one would wish.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 243 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I notice that one of the measures taken is increased fines for littering and vandalism to trees. How many people have been prosecuted and eventually fined the maximum of £100 since the introduction of the new Litter Law, would the Minister be in a position to answer that?

HON M-K FEATHERSTONE:

Sir, I cannot give details as to the number of the people that have been fined etc. I know a number of people have been fined and I personally and also the Chairman of the Gibraltar Keep Tidy Committee have been pressing the Police to take increased action. Perhaps I might use the privilege of this House to make the comment that certain sectors of people feel that when people are taken to Court they are treated perhaps a little lightly by the Magistrate and I do not think any of the maximum penalties have so far been imposed. I believe the maximum fines that have been imposed so far have been £10, £25 and I think one or two instances of £50.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, would not the Minister agree then that the law is only useful if it is enforced and would the Minister give the House a list, not necessarily the names, but the number of people who have actually been fined?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes, Sir, I can find the list of offenders that have been prosecuted. I will also continue pressing that the Police should take more stringent action and I would hope that the judiciary may note the comments that it is felt in some quarters that if action is taken substantial fines might be the result.

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I take it that the Minister is saying yes, that he will let us know?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Yes.

HON G T RESTANO:

I hope he lets my Hon Friend Mr Loddo know rather better than he let me know in a previous question when he promised to give an answer and find out information which he did not know

MR SPEAKER:

Was the answer in connection with this particular question?

HON G T RESTANO:

Well, I think it is essential.

MR SPEAKER:

You were promised an answer in connection with another question which you have not got, fair enough, but it is not the time to ventilate it.

HON G T RESTANO:

I am just saying that I hope that the Minister will in this case give an answer and not just forget about his promise when he makes a promise.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I think it would be helpful if Hon Members ask questions and answers are promised and they are not given, which should not happen, they should not wait until the next meeting. If they are really interested in the subject they should ginger up the Minister and write a note saying: "You promised an answer at the last meeting of the House of Assembly, what about it?" If they do not do anything and they come back here with a letter like that then we shall take a much serious view but sometimes files and so on slip away from offices and sometimes it is not even the Minister's fault if the matter is not brought up. There is a rule which I have given that every undertaking given by a Minister in this House when we get the record it is followed up.

Sometimes they may fail but it certainly would be helpful if Members, very rightly, should remind Ministers. I would like to take this opportunity of saying something else about the question of the penalties. We take a very serious view on this question of the cleanliness of Gibraltar and in fact I propose to instruct the Legal Department when there is a particularly blatant case to send somebody from the Law Officers Department to prosecute and to bring to the notice of the Court the importance that the Government gives to the enforcement of the increased fines.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, one more question to the Minister. Since he says that everything that they have done does not seem to be productive in making Gibraltar tidier and cleaner and we are still getting a very bad name both locally and abroad on this and he said that public cooperation is required, could he concentrate his efforts 100% in trying to get public cooperation?

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister whether he has ascertained from the Commissioner of Police what instructions are given to Policemen on the beat as to the infringement of litter laws because one sees them walking past rubbish outside houses or outside shops quite unconcerned. Are there any instructions given and if not why not? The law is there, what is the Police doing about it, this is what we would like to know.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am very glad for that question, Sir, I will place it in front of the Commissioner of Police and ask him to give me his comments on it. I have commented very strongly to the Commissioner of Police that I feel in many instances there are opportunities for the Police to use their endeavours less on looking for parking offences and perhaps more on litter offences.

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Sir, I would like to add something if I may. I am sure every Member knows that any law officer, any Constable, has a responsibility to enforce the law. I am sure there is scope for the Police administration to indicate to individual Constables what is considered to be a matter of priority at any time and if I may I will also make sure that this is a matter which the Commissioner of Police is aware but I would also like to stress that the responsibility does rest with each Constable to execute that himself according to his own judgement.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Chief Minister explain or clarify what he said about Members who ask questions and are not given answers?

MR SPEAKER:

No, it has been said, it is on record and you can read the Hansard in due course. The Chief Minister most certainly said that he has given strict instructions that all undertakings given by Ministers in this House will be followed up but that on the other hand if they are not followed that the Members of the Opposition should not wait until the next meeting to call their attention to the fact but should write a memo and ask them for the answers, that is all the Chief Minister said.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, it is a matter for us how we conduct our affairs but I would like to ask

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

For God's sake, Mr Speaker, will he give way?

HON P J ISOLA:

No, I won't. I would like to ask

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

This is most improper.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, order.

HON P J ISOLA:

I would like to ask the Minister for Health what instructions are given to the Environmental Health Officers about these rubbish dumps, are there instructions given?

HON J B PEREZ:

Strict instructions are given, Mr Speaker, they have been given for quite some time, in fact, on certain occasions even overtime has been given to members of the Department to try and bring prosecutions.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Mr Speaker, I would like to withdraw the offer that I have made in view of the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition who seems to be such a prima donna with his party. I withdraw the offer that they should write to Ministers, unless they want to. This was done in good faith but it appears that it is taken as a reflection of how they ought to conduct their business. If that is the childish way in which an attempt is made here and is received, then it is worth nothing really.

MR SPEAKER:

Order, I will not have anything more said on this question. The Chief Minister has made a statement and the Leader of the Opposition has replied and that is the end of the matter.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I just made a passing comment, I did not think it was going to arouse the ire that it has done.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 244 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, why are parts of the Alameda Gardens, our only park, allowed to remain unkempt and dirty?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the Alameda Gardens are cleaned regularly, but whenever there is a shortage of staff only the more important sections can be done.

Unfortunately, most of the staff has been away for the past two weeks during the Moroccan Feast of the Lamb.

The staff is now returning and the backlog of work is being tackled.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 244 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, I cannot accept that. As a regular user of the Alameda Gardens I know areas which have not been cleaned for the last six months, not two weeks. Will the Minister ensure that the Alameda Gardens which are visited regularly by residents of the Hotel on the Upper Rock as well as by local people wishing to make use of the park, will the Minister ensure that these areas are cleaned and not just the entrance to the Alameda Gardens?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I shall pass your remarks to the Alameda Gardens authorities.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 245 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO.

What are the criteria for the collection or non-collection of refuse placed in cardboard boxes?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, although the Litter Rules 1981 allow only for refuse to be placed in covered dustbins or sealed plastic bags some householders continue to place refuse in cardboard boxes. For the present this is also collected providing the boxes do not contain any debris or other building materials.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 245 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

May I know the reason for that particular regulation, Mr Speaker? Why should rubbish not be collected in cardboard boxes?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Because the Government in its wisdom thought fit that refuse should either be placed in a proper dustbin or in sealed plastic bags. The difficulty of cardboard boxes is that very often moist waste is put into them and when one goes to pick them up the bottom falls out and the whole lot spreads all over the pavement and causes a considerable delay if the refuse collector is going to get a shovel and pick it all up and carry it to the refuse vehicle. Therefore Government felt that it should either be in the proper dustbin which can be carried to the vehicle or in a plastic bag which can also be carried to the vehicle. I mention this because very often the refuse is placed forty or fifty yards from where the actual refuse vehicle is.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I recognise the problem but on the other hand I think the problem itself of having moist waste put in these cardboard boxes can only be, surely, a small percentage and I think it is bad for the image of Gibraltar and I would ask the Minister, would he not agree, I have seen the refuse lorry going up Main Street picking up plastic bags and leaving hosts of cardboard boxes. Would he not agree that this does not give Gibraltar a very good image and would he not within the problems that the bottoms might fall out get his Department to try and clear those boxes on a daily basis because people do put them out, or else fine people who put them out?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am glad he made the last remark about fining people for not putting it into plastic bags. The whole question of cardboard boxes is to be deprecated partly, as I said, that wet refuse is

put in them and also on days when it rains the box becomes completely soggy and unmanageable. As far as the refuse lorry going up Main Street and leaving cardboard boxes not containing refuse then that is not what they are told to do, they are supposed to pick up eight cardboard boxes from each establishment, if there are twenty-eight then they would be justified in leaving the other twenty. The situation is that this collection of eight cardboard boxes as trade refuse is a privilege if there is more than that then it should be either taken by the person who creates the refuse or paid for to Government to take it away.

HON G T RESTANO:

Would the Minister investigate or have instructions given so that cardboard boxes, not twenty-eight, nothing like that, I have seen one or two just left there and the plastic bags collected and I do not think it is good for the image of Gibraltar and I would ask the Minister would he give instructions for those cardboard boxes, they are few in number, to be collected?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I am willing to instruct the refuse collectors to pick up, as I said, the requisite number of trade refuse cardboard boxes but I would make the point that traders could assist if they would flatten up the boxes into a small quantity rather than leave great big empty boxes lying all over the place.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Would Government consider having morning refuse collection in Main Street carried out somewhat later than at present so that it takes place after shops open thus eliminating the problem of non-collection?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the present refuse collection service with the last collection from the town centre commencing at 9.30 am was set up in order to remove all unsightly refuse bins, bags, boxes, etc from the centre of the town as early as possible in the morning and also to minimise traffic problems caused by refuse vehicles in our narrow streets.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 246 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I did not quite catch the earlier part of the answer, he said by 9.30 am?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, it commences at 9.30. Unless you happen to be at the very commencement of the pick-up area, the refuse lorry will get there at quarter to ten or even ten o'clock. I would be willing to consider, perhaps, a slightly later commencement of the rounds but I would bring out the point that the Chamber of Commerce were very strong in not desiring the refuse lorry to be travelling up Main Street at eleven or twelve o'clock in the morning when they considered it interfered with tourism etc. This is one of the reasons why we felt that the latest time for commencement should be 9.30 but in most instances the lorry will get to the premises concerned sometime before half past ten.

HON G T RESTANO:

Mr Speaker, I am sorry, I must question that answer. I walk every morning down Main Street and it is round about nine o'clock that the lorry reaches Cathedral Square, it is much earlier than what the Minister has said. I would ask the Minister to consider this, not to start on Main Street and after all that is supposed to be the showpiece of Gibraltar for tourism and so on, not to start the collection before shops open, in other words, if it is 9.30, let it be 9.30, let it be enforced at 9.30 and let them not start collecting at the beginning of Main Street at 8.30. Would the Minister consider ensuring that that is done?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I will see that that is done.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 247 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has Government completed its examination of the scheme for pedestrianisation of Main Street and Cornwall's Parade area and if so can a statement be made as to how the scheme is to be implemented?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, Government has completed its examination of the scheme for pedestrianisation of Main Street and the Cornwall's Parade area.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in the Consultant's Report on the feedback obtained from the general public following the public exhibition last May, have been published.

It is Government's intention to invite tenders for the development of the Command Education Centre in Cornwall's Parade early in 1983. This will include pedestrianised area proposals for part of Cornwall's Parade, Bell Lane, Cornwall's Lane and Horse Barrack Lane.

The re-submission of the Development Programme to ODA includes the total pedestrianisation scheme presented at the exhibition, the first phase of which would be that part of Main Street from its junction at Bell Lane and that at City Mill Lane, as well as proposed improvements to the Piazza at John Mackintosh Square.

NO. 248 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, would Government not agree that the state of the fountain at the Piazza on the occasion of the presentation to Admiral Woodward was a disgrace to Gibraltar and is it the intention to leave the fountain as it is?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Regretfully, yes, Sir. The fountain at the Piazza was out of order and undergoing repairs at the time. These repairs have since been completed and the fountain is now working.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 248 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Why didn't the Minister consider putting plants for the actual event?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Perhaps somebody in my Department might have thought of it but they did not.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 249 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A. J HAYNES

Sir, will Government make enquiries to locate the sections of the Old John Mackintosh Square fountain giving an approximate indication of the cost involved in replacing the missing parts?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, four sections of the Old John Mackintosh Square fountain are with the Public Works Department. These consist of the main bowl and three parts of the octagonal base.

The other five sections of the base, the upper smaller bowls and the ornate central sculptured column were destroyed as a result of bomb damage whilst stored at Victoria Battery during the war years.

Inquiries have been made regarding the possibility of restoring the fountain by replacing the missing parts and the advice has been that it would be impossible satisfactorily to match new marble to the old. It would therefore be a more practicable proposition to construct a replica.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 249 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Does the Minister have any idea of what the cost involved in making a replica will be, I think it will be substantial?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, not from the top of my head but there are plans for a refurbishing of the Piazza and a new fountain is part of the idea.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am very glad to hear that, Mr Speaker.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, regardless of cost I think the Minister has probably agreed that it would be nice to have part of the old fountain there even if it is only part, it would certainly enhance the fountain even if it entails a little extra cost.

MR SPEAKER:

No, with due respect. The Minister has not referred to the question of cost but to the question of the impossibility of matching the marble.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Perhaps I would even ask that that be done even at the expense of not being able to match the marble.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

I would not like to use part of the old fountain if it sticks out like a sore thumb from the new part. We might then get questions in the House why did we make such a hotchpotch of the whole thing.

HON A J HAYNES:

Undoubtedly, Mr Speaker. Is this information recent information, Mr Speaker, or is it sort of acquired wisdom from the ages?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Fairly recent, we were actually looking at the fountain about two months ago.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 250 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government state the latest position on the development of the Woodford Cottage Site?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the position has now been reached that, following planning approval by Government of the outline drawings submitted by the Housing Association, the latter have commissioned a private architect to prepare more detailed drawings with a view to inviting tenders for the construction of the housing scheme.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 250 OF 1982

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, has Government set a time period to the Tenants Association by which time that site should be fully developed?

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

Government has not specifically stated any time period as such but I am sure it is going to be in the tenants own interests because of inflation to get it done as quickly as possible.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

12.10.82

NO. 251 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON G T RESTANO

Has Government any knowledge as to whether the Garrison Library is up for sale?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, Government has no knowledge to the effect that the Garrison Library is up for sale. The administration by the Committee of the Garrison Library Property is regulated by Statute.

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, will Government make a further comprehensive statement as to why it awarded the tender for the land in the multi-storey car park project to the lowest tenderer?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the reasons for awarding the tender of the development of a multi-storey car park at Casemates to the lowest tenderer were explained in some detail in a recent Press Release.

Four tenders were received in the following sums:-

£605,000

£200,000

£168,500

£105,000

When the tenders were first considered by the Development and Planning Commission it was found that, although the schemes conformed generally to the main concept of the proposals, there were certain deficiencies in all four schemes which were mainly related to the permitted density of development and other design considerations.

The Land Board then considered the tenders in detail and in addition to these planning and architectural considerations, found that further clarification was required in respect of the financial and contractual details submitted with the tenders. It was accordingly decided, in the interest of fair tendering, to inform the four parties of the deficiencies pertinent to each case in order to give them an opportunity to rectify their tenders. The four parties responded within the period allowed for rectification.

In two cases amended plans were submitted and the financial information requested was also submitted although some of this was couched in qualified terms and had to be carefully analysed in relation to the tender conditions. These stipulated, inter alia, that the successful developer would have to reprovide the present seven MOD quarters at an estimated cost of £300,000 before vacant possession of the site could be granted. The tender sum would, however, be payable within fourteen days of acceptance and not upon vacant possession as purported by the highest tender. This qualification was unacceptable to the Board as it was contrary to the conditions of tender. A detailed analysis then revealed that the next two highest tenderers had underestimated their costs of construction to an unrealistic level, putting the economic viability of their schemes into question.

The Board recognised that in the short term the other tenders were more attractive in monetary value but in the longer term the Board felt that the award should be made in the light of the wider economic, environmental and financial characteristics of each scheme. Points were accordingly awarded to each tender on the basis of the following criteria:-

- (a) The sum tendered
- (b) The economic viability of the scheme (eg estimated building and rental costs per square)
- (c) The record of the tenderers in completing development schemes and their standard of development
- (d) Environmental and architectural aspects
- (e) Compliance with the tender conditions.

On this ranking the Board unanimously decided that the tender submitted by Pall Mall Ltd, although the lowest, was the most advantageous.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 252 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Minister confirm that in this question of the tender there is something misleading insofar as one of the criteria which is stipulated which is the environmental side is not a feature in the tender document, will the Minister confirm that that is so? I have seen in the press that it has been alleged that it was and when I read the tender document it did not seem to me

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not prepared, Mr Speaker, to enter into any controversy about the exchange of correspondence that there has been in the press. That is not what the question is about.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if I can clear the Minister's mind, I do not want him to come into the controversy, but will he indicate whether this further period to rectify the tender had anything to do with the environmental aspect?

HON A J CANEPA:

No, that had to do with the deficiencies that were found in respect mainly of density considerations and design considerations, angle of light, that sort of thing, under the Building Regulations and in fairness they were all given the same period of time to rectify the various deficiencies. They were all written to separately and they were all informed as to the deficiencies in each particular case and they were given an opportunity to rectify which they were all I think quite happy to meet.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Minister say whether the other tenderers indicated that they were going to demolish rather than preserve certain parts of the building?

HON A J CANEPA:

I do not wish to get involved, Mr Speaker, into the question of the wall which is the subject of correspondence.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, am I right in assuming that the successful tenderer must have been enormously above the others on the question of economic viability, environmental and architectural aspects and compliance with the tender conditions?

HON A J CANEPA:

The Hon the Leader of the Opposition is quite correct. Obviously, in respect of the sum tendered they were bottom of the list but they scored very heavily in respect of the other criteria.

HON P J ISOLA:

No, but I have left out one criteria, Mr Speaker, the record of the tenderers. As I understand the position, Pall Mall Ltd is a very recently incorporated company with no record of development.

HON A J CANEPA:

There is the development of the Arcade in Main Street.

HON A T LODDO:

Is that the only development?

HON A J CANEPA:

That is not a great deal to be said for some of the others, I am afraid, some of whom have been hanging on to land undeveloped for very many years.

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, as I understand it, I have been informed Pall Mall Ltd has no record of development at all.

HON A J CANEPA:

A company may have been formed especially for that purpose.

HON A J HAYNES:

Was it not the Minister who inquired into the background of the company?

HON A J CANEPA:

I did not inquire, no.

HON A J HAYNES:

I thought you were part of the Land Board. Mr Speaker, is the Minister for Economic Development part of the Land Board?

HON A J CANEPA:

He is the Chairman of the Land Board, I do not carry out the inquiries.

HON A J HAYNES:

Did the Minister not say that the Land Board inquired into the tenders?

HON A J CANEPA:

Of course.

HON A J HAYNES:

Why don't you know the answer?

HON A J CANEPA:

Of course we inquired and we got the information that we were seeking.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 253 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government state what other site were considered before deciding on a multi-storey car park at Casemates?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the concept of a multi-storey car park at Casemates was first mooted in 1977. Since then the Development and Planning Commission has considered two other outline proposals for a multi-storey car park on the USOC grounds and also in the Landport Ditch area.

In both cases the applications were turned down on planning grounds owing to the close proximity of the City Walls and other historical fortifications.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 253 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, did the Government not consider at all the possibility of building the multi-storey car park in Alameda Grand Parade?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am going to be completely straight with the Hon Gentleman. The Government no, it had not considered building a multi-storey car park at Alameda Grand Parade. The proposal was made at a meeting of the Development and Planning Commission held perhaps a year ago or eighteen months ago by one of the MOD representatives and it was discussed by the Development and Planning Commission purely on planning grounds. More recently the Director of Public Works himself has been giving some thought to the possibility of underground parking, I think he would have in mind in Alameda Grand Parade, but this is just very much in the initial stages of consideration.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, has the Government considered two other potential sites which I certainly have thought would be appropriate, one is Bayside and the other is inside the Rock, using the tunnels inside the Rock and providing a service?

HON A J CANEPA:

Bayside has not been considered. Tunnels inside the Rock I do not think have been, what has been considered has been an ARP Shelter not for a multi-storey car park but for car parking there are problems with regard to fire safety precautions which would make it fairly expensive.

HON A J HAYNES:

Could I ask the Minister to clarify

MR SPEAKER:

We are not going to look round Gibraltar to find a site for a car park just because there has been a question as to whether other sites were considered when that particular one was selected. Next question.

NO. 254 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A T LODDO

Mr Speaker, is Government now in a position to make a statement on the Old Shell Petrol Station at the junction of Landport and Corral Road?

ANSWERTHE HON THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL

No, Sir. The matter continues to be the subject of arbitration.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 254 OF 1982

HON A T LODDO:

Mr Speaker, does not the Government consider that it is about time that a decision was arrived at considering that this is prime land, a prime site which has been undeveloped for years and the question that I am raising today I have raised on a number of other occasions in this House? Does not the Government think it is about time that something concrete and definite was done?

HON ATTORNEY-GENERAL:

Sir, all I can say is the matter is subject of arbitration, the arbitration proceedings are continuing.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

12.10.82

NO. 255 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, when does Government intend to put out the tenders for the Unstuffing Shed?

ANSWER

THE HON THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS

Sir, the invitation to tender was published in the Gazette on 12th August, 1982.

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government make a statement as to the progress of projects in respect of which British Government approval has been granted out of the £4m tranche of Development Aid promised in December last year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, to date four projects amounting to £2.14m have been approved by the Overseas Development Administration. These are the Viaduct Causeway, Renewals of the Salt and Potable Water Mains, the Sewerage Pumping Station at Catalan Bay and the Container Unstuffing Shed. Progress on these projects is as follows:-

(1) Viaduct Causeway (£1,400,000)

A letter of intent for the appointment of consultant structural engineers has been issued and it is expected that the detailed design drawings, specifications and association studies will commence shortly. A start on construction work is not expected until the middle of next year. At the same time the Gibraltar Government is negotiating the detailed conditions for the handover of the Bridge and the North Mole with the Ministry of Defence. It is expected that these negotiations will be finalised shortly to enable strict adherence to the construction programme.

(2) Salt and Potable Water Mains Renewals (£335,000)

Design work on this project is almost completed. Quotations for the supply of materials (which account for a substantial part of total expenditure) will shortly be invited and an order should be placed by the end of the year. The date for commencement of works will depend on the timing of delivery of materials and the availability of direct labour. It is hoped that a start can be made before the middle of next year.

(3) Catalan Bay Sewerage Pumping Station (£90,000)

The preparation of contract documents and bills of quantity is nearly completed. Tenders are expected to be invited in November, 1982. Work should commence in December, 1982, and be completed in September, 1983.

(4) Container Unstuffing Shed (£311,000)

Approval was given in principle on the 24th September, 1982. A formal letter of approval is expected. Tenders for this project closed on the 22nd September, 1982. Work is expected to commence in November, 1982, and should be completed within nine months.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 256 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Could I ask, Mr Speaker, as far as the balance of the £4m tranche is concerned, have projects been put in for spending and what is holding up approval of them?

HON A J CANEPA:

Two main projects, Mr Speaker. We have put in an application for reimbursement in respect of the funds spent on work connected with the abortive opening of the frontier, that is quite a sizeable sum of money, and we are asking for the balance to be held back pending a decision on the distiller.

HON W T SCOTT:

Mr Speaker, some of these projects in fact have risen substantially in value from the approved estimates, for example, the Causeway which was originally estimated at £1m in April of this year is now £1.4m, I think that is the one that strikes me most there are others of £80,000. The new Pumping Station at Catalan Bay has risen from £80,000 to £90,000.

HON A J CANEPA:

I have not got the estimates with me, Mr Speaker. I am not sure whether the figure in the estimates applied to the, what is the page?

HON W T SCOTT:

Page 103, Head 107 dealing with the Causeway.

HON A J CANEPA:

At the time when the estimates were prepared this was more of a rough estimate, not a calculated estimate. The latest figures that I have given are much more up-to-date, much more accurate.

HON W T SCOTT:

Perhaps, Mr Speaker, I might understand the difference in the Unstuffing Shed of £ $\frac{1}{4}$ m to £311,000 and the Catalan Bay Pumping Station, but the Causeway seems to have jumped up by a factor of 40%, this is really bad estimating.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

The actual figures for the Causeway were a very rough estimate. On looking at it closely there is far more in the actual work than was originally envisaged, there is a fair quantity of extra rock over the amounts that were estimated by PWD engineers, the consultants have given a considerably higher figure of the amount of armoured rock and fill required and there is also a certain measure of altering pipes for MOD etc which has also got to be taken into consideration.

HON W T SCOTT:

I do not want to labour the point, Mr Speaker, but surely all these things seem simple enough to have been taken into account originally.

HON M K FEATHERSTONE:

No, Sir, the question of the Causeway has not been really worked out to a finer figure until consultants were actually appointed. The PWD engineers who did it were not experts on this sort of thing and they only gave what they considered to be a reasonable order of costs but of course the consultants come up with more accurate figures.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Minister for Economic Development about these negotiations that he mentioned regarding the Causeway for the handing over of the bridge and the North Mole. I think he said at one stage in the House that in fact the Ministry of Defence was linking the handing over of the North Mole to the closure of the Dockyard. Has there been a change of policy on the Ministry of Defence part in that respect?

HON A J CANEPA:

Well, we certainly do not accept that.

HON J BOSSANO:

I know that he does not accept it, Mr Speaker, but what I want to know is whether the Ministry of Defence still maintain the same position or whether it has changed because if it has not changed and he does not accept it then he may not be able to build the Causeway in the middle of next year, is that right?

HON A J CANEPA:

I hope that it should not come to that.

HON J BOSSANO:

I hope so as well, Mr Speaker, but I want to know what the position is.

HON A J CANEPA:

We could probably proceed with the Causeway without prejudice to the actual negotiations on the lands memorandum. The fact is that we have not accepted the linkage that has been made I think, but the Minister for the Armed Forces on the matter and since then the Ministry of Defence have been silent.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 257 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that in the current financial year they will be spending less than £1m of the £4m of development aid which the British Government granted in December last year?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Yes, Sir. The House should note however that this is a direct result of delays on the part of the Overseas Development Administration both in agreeing to discussions on the allocation of aid funds and the granting of approval to individual projects. As the House is aware, the Government forwarded its 1981/86 Development Programme submission in February, 1981. Since agreement was reached on the £4m tranche of development aid funds in December last year, a total of twelve project applications have been sent to the ODA. Projects for housing and other social development, which were not approved, would have generated a much higher level of expenditure during the current financial year.

NO. 258 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Can Government confirm that it has agreed not to permit hotel development at Parson's Lodge?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, at the last meeting of the House I gave an account of the position regarding the development of Parson's Lodge, this was at the time of the Third Reading of the Museum Antiquities Ordinance. I explained that the option given to the Company interested in developing the site as an hotel expired on the 30 June and since they failed to submit their feasibility study and other details within this extended time limit, the option was no longer valid.

It is unlikely that a hotel development of the magnitude envisaged will materialise at this point in time. The Development and Planning Commission, therefore, feels that rather than allow the site to fall to waste, a more modest development would be acceptable and in this connection the Commission is pursuing the idea of a tourist orientated development which could retain and exploit the military and historical character of the Battery.

This does not mean that the Government has agreed not to permit hotel development. Should there be a sudden change in circumstances which would revive interest in the hotel development, the proposals would be considered in the light of the economic climate and the overall needs of the community.

The Government has in fact invited outline proposals for the development of an hotel in Engineer Battery and although the site is somewhat smaller than Parson's Lodge the reaction will be indicative of potential interest in hotel development. The closing date for submission of proposals is 12 November, 1982.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 258 OF 1982

HON J BOSSANO:

I am grateful for that answer, Mr Speaker, in fact, am I right then in deducing from that that the report that the Government had given some sort of undertaking to the conservationists that they would not permit hotel development are inaccurate, it is just that at the moment there is not anybody trying to develop it as a hotel which I understand perfectly but it is not that the Government under pressure from the Conservation Society has taken a policy decision on this matter?

HON A J CANEPA:

The understanding of the Hon Member is correct.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Mr Speaker, has the Minister for Economic Development taken into account the views of the present hoteliers who fear very much that their occupancy is certainly not above 40% and that they feel that with the lack of capacity in air travel and so on the development of more hotels would only produce even more adverse effects on them which as the Minister knows are very clear in the way they are not paying the bills to the Government?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am aware of that, Mr Speaker, not because the views have been communicated to me personally as Minister for Economic Development, but I understand that the matter has been raised in the Tourist Advisory Board and in the same way as the Hon Member is kept in the picture as to what goes on in the Tourist Advisory Board I from time to time do manage to glean some information as well as to their deliberations but I would like him to bear one thing in mind. What is a Minister for Economic Development expected to do if there is somebody willing to come forward and invest £5m on an hotel that will generate a lot of employment for the construction industry, that will get money moving into an economy that needs that money and that will also provide perhaps upwards of 100 jobs for the tourist industry.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Would the Minister take into account, of course, the possibility of hotels which are open now closing down?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, hotels sometimes are able to generate their own traffic. For instance, in the case of Engineer Battery that is an hotel which is intended to cater for the up-market which other hotels perhaps are not catering for that so they would tend, I think, to take the necessary steps to be able to attract the necessary number of visitors to ensure viability.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Is the Minister saying that if the hotel that is envisaged would be built would not compete with the existing ones but would bring more trade, it would be in agreement but otherwise it would not or would he still go ahead even if the hotel is going to produce wasteful competition?

HON A J CANEPA:

Ultimately, I would leave that to the commercial judgement of the people concerned.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 259 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON A J HAYNES

Sir, will Government outline the proposed improvements in the £4m project for facilities for cruise liners and ferry services and will Government undertake interim measures to improve facilities?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the development scheme recommended in the 1981 Port Study Report, accepted in principle by the Government, for the improvement of cruise passenger and ferry services involves reclamation of the Waterport Basin and rationalisation of facilities along the Western Arm. The reclaimed area would provide facilities to cater for passenger and freight roll on/roll off traffic, including the construction of additional berths, a passenger terminal building, a vehicle inspection shed and adequate parking and marshalling areas. A new cruise passenger terminal is planned alongside the north jetty adjacent to the new Port Office. Provision will be made for toilet facilities, parking bays and associated services. The development of these facilities will depend on the outcome of consultations both on the 1981/86 Development Programme and on the proposals for the commercialisation of the Dockyard. At this stage therefore the Government considers it is better to defer expenditure on interim measures to improve facilities.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 259 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, I notice the change of Minister in answering the question and I was rather hoping that the change of Minister would mean I would get a favourable response and he stonewalled all over again. If my memory serves me correctly, Mr Speaker, and will the Minister confirm or deny, as I understood the position if Government took the view that the £4m were not going to be made available to them then they would undertake their own interim measures. Are they now saying that they are not going to take interim measures regardless of whether or not the £4m is coming their way?

HON A J CANEPA:

If ODA are not forthcoming with the necessary millions that are required for the major schemes we would have to look and consider interim measures particularly at the north jetty. In respect of the north jetty there is a difficulty because there is a degaussing station there which I understand that the Ministry of Defence would like to hold on to and I told Mr Blaker when he was here in Gibraltar recently that we wanted that and that they should resite the degaussing station but we require that area because that is where we intend to have the passenger terminal. I have mentioned the commercialisation of the Dockyard but I would rather not pursue that here in the House and I could inform the Hon Member confidentially in the Lobby of the House as to the linkage that I make on that one.

HON A J HAYNES:

I am very grateful to the Minister and I will take him up on that one. Notwithstanding, Mr Speaker, will the Minister consider investing really paltry sums like even borrowing the shed and not taking it over fully, for the interim and putting a small bar there?

HON A J CANEPA:

What shed?

HON A J HAYNES:

This degaussing shed.

HON A J CANEPA:

It is not a shed, it is a station with equipment in it.

HON A J HAYNES:

Can he not do anything like sort of instal some lavatories

HON A J CANEPA:

I cannot do very much more than tell Mr Blaker that they have got to move and that they must move because Gibraltar requires that, that is going straight to the horses mouth, as it were.

HON A J HAYNES:

I take the point, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 260 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON W T SCOTT

Sir, what projects does Government now have which are not subject to ODA funds?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the eligibility of development projects for ODA funding depends on the agreed level of capital aid and the criteria applied by the ODA for project selection. At this stage, the Gibraltar Government is still awaiting final consideration by Her Majesty's Government of the 1981/86 Development Programme as a whole. A revised aid submission was recently sent to Her Majesty's Government, reiterating inter alia the case for housing and social development projects which, under the £4m aid tranche, were recently rejected. I would therefore prefer to await the final outcome for a comprehensive reply to the aid submission before listing projects which might not qualify for ODA funding. I can inform the House however that the 1981/86 Development Programme comprises a total of some forty projects for the development of infrastructure, the port, tourism, housing and other areas of social need.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Has Government considered giving visitors to Gibraltar an incentive to shop as suggested previously at various meetings of the House of Assembly by myself?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

The Government is very conscious of the need to stimulate trade and agrees that visitors should be given every incentive to spend as much money as possible in Gibraltar. With this aim in mind at a meeting with the Chamber and representatives of the Tourist Industry on 5.7.82, I also invited suggestions from the trade which Government would consider and attempt to match on a quid-pro-quo basis.

Some ideas, including those proposed by the Opposition, have had to be discarded as impractical. Thus, as stated in reply to Question 131 of 1982, the question of negotiating fare reductions with tour operators, or the suggestion to reduce the £2 landing tax for day trippers from Morocco, have not been pursued because there is no guarantee that the benefits would be passed on by foreign tour operators to the passengers.

Likewise, the Government does not favour the introduction of VAT in Gibraltar. The questioner favours this duty, perhaps because it is possible to refund, on departure, the tax paid by visitors on their purchases. The case against VAT, however, was stated in the House in the Budget debate and rests on the high cost of administration and the unacceptable cash flow problems it would pose to the Government. Under the present system the Government draws its revenue immediately on the importation of the goods and not when the taxpayer decides to pay.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 261 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

The Hon Minister has made a remark or has replied on the question of VAT but if he remembers rightly I also suggested that it could be done by refunding the duty paid on the goods which meant that that would overcome all the problems particularly of not getting the money immediately on the introduction of goods into Gibraltar and therefore it could be done under the existing form of duty at the moment being recovered from the goods.

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not all that well versed on the question of the mechanics, Mr Speaker, and the administration of duties. We found one difficulty in drawing up an answer to this question. First of all, the Hon Member had referred to various meeting of the House of Assembly and one had to pick up the Hansards and look back over various meetings to try to identify questions that had been put, let me say, not only by the Hon Member but also by the Hon Mr Loddo when the Hon Member was unfortunately, I think, absent at a particular meeting and not only did we have, therefore, questions on the same

matter being asked by different people but they were also answered by various Government Ministers including the Financial and Development Secretary and the Minister for Tourism. It was not easy, therefore, Mr Speaker, to try and collate something into a reasonably comprehensive answer which in the event it was decided that I should answer and which I did not have with me, apparently, but on the question of duties that he is asking I do not feel qualified to answer. It is a matter that I can look into but I do not feel qualified to answer here and now.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Are we not in a very sorry state that realising the period of depression that local traders are going through, that no apparent imaginative effort is being made to overcome this difficulty? I can see tourists coming to Gibraltar and seeing prices here which are almost the same wherever they come from.

MR SPEAKER:

No, let's ask questions.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Wouldn't it be, I think, a tremendous encouragement for them to come here and see that they could get something cheaper than in places they have come from and that would encourage many more visitors to come to Gibraltar? Couldn't the Minister apply more interest to this matter which is essential to the economic development of Gibraltar?

HON A J CANEPA:

Mr Speaker, I do not know whether he remembers what I said in the first paragraph. I said that I called a meeting on the 5th July at which there were representatives of the Chamber, of the Licensed Victuallers Association, the Gibraltar Hotel Association, the Shipping Association and other people involved in the travel trade and in the tourist industry. The meeting was also attended by my colleague the Minister for Tourism and the problems of the trade and of the tourist industry were discussed at that meeting in the light of the aborted opening of the frontier with a view to considering some measures that could be taken to attract tourism and so on. A number of suggestions were made by Government representatives, one or two suggestions came from the Licensed Victuallers Association on which action has been taken, the Government has committed itself to provide £60,000 odd more on advertising, some steps have been taken and I think the fact that one called that meeting was indicative of the interest which is taken and as I said I invited suggestions from the trade which the Government could consider and attempt to match on a quid pro quo basis. There has been, unfortunately, no follow-up to that meeting in respect of these suggestions that I wanted, mainly, I understand, because the people on the other side, as it were, in the private sector, cannot reach agreement or they are not agreed as to how to proceed. There is a certain element of controversy, I believe, between the Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association and so on.

THE HON G T RESTANO

Can Government state why Gibraltarian Registered or owned yachts are liable to the payment of a daily tax when in French Ports whereas such a tax is not liable for payment by yachts registered or owned in other EEC Countries and would Government take appropriate action to try to have the matter remedied?

ANSWERTHE HON THE FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY

Yes, Sir. In their 1982 Budget the French Government levied a tax of 3 francs per day per tonne on yachts calling at French Ports and flying the flag of a country which had not concluded a customs agreement with France or which were under the control of a resident of such a country. Yachts registered in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man were exempt from the new tax by reason of the United Kingdom's accession in 1973 to a Convention made by the EEC countries in 1967 providing for mutual assistance between their customs authorities. Gibraltar was not at that time asked whether it wished to accede to the Convention. The result of the new tax is that the registration of foreign yachts is being transferred from Gibraltar to the Channel Islands and elsewhere.

After protracted correspondence between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, HM Customs and Excise in the United Kingdom and the relevant French authorities it has now been confirmed that Gibraltar's accession to the 1967 Convention would resolve the problem of Gibraltar's registered yachts paying the "stop over" tax when visiting French ports.

The Government is at present considering the implications of Gibraltar's accession to the Convention and an early decision is expected.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 262 OF 1982

HON G T RESTANO:

I would ask the Hon Member to expedite the matter since trade loss is trade very difficult to re-attract to Gibraltar.

HON FINANCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT SECRETARY:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I take the Hon Member's point and we will certainly expedite matters. What is holding us up at the moment is that we are trying to find out in practice how the Convention is worked, it is a highly complex Convention with a number of requirements placed on the signatory countries and we are trying to find out from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office how in practice the Convention works.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 263 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government consider waiving port dues in respect of ships awaiting orders?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

No, Sir. Port dues at Gibraltar are very reasonable and permit a vessel to remain in the anchorage for 14 days without further payment. Considering that the maximum sum payable is £150 for vessels over 100,000 tons nett, the Hon Member will appreciate that port dues do not really cause any burden on a shipowner.

It should also be noted that port dues at Alegeciras are on a daily basis. A vessel of, say, 10,000 tons would pay £139,48 a day as opposed to £60 for a fortnight in Gibraltar.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 263 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am not actually complaining about port dues I am only asking that in respect of a particular kind of vessel, a vessel awaiting orders, they should be waived. Is it not a fact that despite the reasonableness of port dues there are ships anchored on the East side of the Rock for considerable periods of time awaiting orders and would there not be benefit to the economy if these boats could be encouraged to anchor on this side and thus use Port services such as coming ashore for shopping, using medical services and so forth? The idea is to encourage those boats on the East side to anchor on the West as long as they are genuine cases of ships awaiting orders.

HON A J CANEPA:

I tended over the last few months to monitor the situation and I usually find that whereas in the Bay, let us say on the Gibraltar side, there may be sixteen or seventeen ships awaiting orders, by comparison with that figure on the East side there are only three or four, very much fewer. I am not encouraged in respect of the waiving of port dues by the response that there has been so far where we have waived charges for ships calling at Gibraltar for bunkers, it has not led to any increase. The Shipping Association tell us that this is something that you have got to have in operation for about a year before the word gets around, as it were. We have had this in operation from the beginning of January and the fact is that the number of ships calling for bunkers at Gibraltar have hardly gone up in spite of that concession and I am not encouraged by it nor do I honestly think that the numbers are that great. Yes, you do see a number of ships on the East side but not very many, three, four, five, perhaps, hardly more than that, whereas it goes well into double figures on this other side.

HON P J ISOLA:

If these three, four or five could be encouraged to come on the West side surely that must mean a little boost to the economy.

HON A J CANEPA:

It is not a great deal but we would lose some of the revenue that we are getting in respect of the much larger number that do come.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state when the cranes at the Port were last serviced and will Government state whether or not they have the necessary certificates of fitness or are otherwise in proper working order?

ANSWERTHE HON THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Sir, the two cranes owned by Government and used by the Port Department were last serviced and tested in February, 1982. The cranes used by Port Operators are not serviced by Government.

Section 29 of the Factories Ordinance provides for the maintenance and regular examination of cranes and other lifting machinery, and all reasonable steps are taken to ensure compliance with the relevant safety provisions of the law.

I should also state that Certificates of Tests are only required when the crane is taken into use for the first time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 264 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

I am grateful for that information, Mr Speaker. Is the Minister aware that an accident, a serious accident, was only very narrowly avoided recently when a container fell onto another container and crushed it and had it been a winter event there would no doubt have been men sheltering in the empty container which was crushed? Can the Minister confirm that and can he give an explanation as to how that came about?

MR SPEAKER:

I will not allow the question of this particular accident to be discussed under this question under any circumstances. It has got nothing to do with cranes.

HON A J HAYNES:

Well, it was a crane, Mr Speaker.

MR SPEAKER:

We do not know.

HON A J HAYNES:

I know it was.

MR SPEAKER:

Perhaps you do but we do not. It is not part of the question. Your question asks: "Will Government state when the cranes at the Port were last serviced and will Government state whether or not they have the necessary certificates?". We are not going to investigate the reasons of an accident.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, if I may test your indulgence, can I put it this way. Will the Minister confirm that in spite of the servicing an accident has occurred with the crane?

HON A J CANEPA:

I am not in a position to confirm, Mr Speaker, I do not know.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Can Government state that if in their view the alternatives proposed to replace the economic activity of the Naval Dockyard will not be viable, they will make it known publicly?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, as made clear in the Press Release which was issued following my meeting with the Secretary of State in London on 24 September, further study will be undertaken as rapidly as possible, in full consultation between the British and the Gibraltar Governments, of the feasibility of a commercially operated Dockyard and, to this end British and Gibraltar Government officials will meet in London in mid-October. Whatever conclusions may emerge from this joint study and consultation will, of course, be made public at the appropriate time.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 265 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Yes, Mr Speaker, I know, consultations, but I think it is a very straightforward question and perhaps the Chief Minister could give a straightforward answer. If the Government feel that whatever is proposed will not result in a viability will they make it public?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

That is exactly what I said in my answer that it will be known when the results of the consultations are finished and that the consultations will lead precisely to finding out whether it is viable or not.

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

And if it is not viable the Chief Minister will say so publicly?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It speaks for itself, if it is not viable it is not viable.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, I feel sure the Government will recognise there can be differences of opinion as to whether something is viable or not. Is it a fact that the Government itself will take a decision on the matter or does it have to be a joint decision between the British and the Gibraltar Government? I think the question from the Hon and Gallant Major assumed that it will be the Government who would be stating their view, not necessarily the view of the British Government.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I made it quite clear when I saw the Secretary of State that the responsibility for presenting a viable alternative to the Dockyard was the British Government's responsibility and not the Gibraltar Government's responsibility. Equally, we cannot shirk the fact that as the Government of Gibraltar we must help in the study but that the responsibility is the British Government's responsibility.

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, was not the House told that the sequence of events was that the proposals would be looked at first by the Gibraltar Government and then subsequently by the British Government and that in fact the decision making was not necessarily a joint machinery but a separate machinery and what might be considered viable and acceptable by the British Government, using one set of criteria, might not necessarily coincide with the view of the Gibraltar Government using a different set of criteria? Is the Gibraltar Government saying that they will make up their own mind independently of the British Government as to what is viable and what is not viable?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The view of the Gibraltar Government will always be independent of the view of the British Government, if they coincide or not is another matter but the Gibraltar Government must have a view whether it is one way or the other and it will be made known (a) to the British Government when the matter is considered, and (b) to the people of Gibraltar when the time comes for taking the decision. I do not know what the reference to what has been said here is concerned but perhaps when the matter was referred here to which the Hon Member is referring, it had not been insinuated or the burden had not been attempted to be thrown at the Gibraltar Government to make a decision and then the Gibraltar Government when that was indicated made it very clear that it was not for the Gibraltar Government to decide the alternative but the Gibraltar Government had the responsibility to make its own point of view and help, if necessary, in looking at viable alternatives.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

THE HON A J HAYNES

Will Government state whether to their knowledge the Moroccan Government has in the past made any enquiries regarding the appointment of a Moroccan Consul for Gibraltar?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, according to Government records there have been no such enquiries at least in the last ten years.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 266 OF 1982

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, as a matter of interest, is it up to the Moroccan Government to ask for one or is it for us to suggest that they have one?

MR SPEAKER:

That is another matter, you have asked a question as to whether there have been any enquiries and you have been given the answer.

HON A J HAYNES:

Mr Speaker, will the Chief Minister state whether it is for the Moroccan Government to ask for a Consul to be appointed or whether it is for the Chief Minister to suggest that they appoint a Consul?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I can say without any hesitation that normally requests for Consular representation come from the country that want to send a Consul and we are getting into a sphere which is not our responsibility because it is a Foreign Affairs responsibility, but unless a particular territory thought that it was essential to have a Consul to look after the interests of particular minorities, thought it was very essential to initiate it, normally the request for Consular representation comes from those who seek to be accredited as Consuls to a territory outside their own sovereignty.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 267 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state whether administrative arrangements have now been completed so that those entitled to British Citizenship may register for the same in Gibraltar and can Government make a statement as to the likely cost of the same?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, arrangements to implement the provisions of Section 5 of the British Nationality Act, 1981 are well under way, and will be finalised before the Act comes into effect on 1st January, 1983. A fee of £5 per application is to be charged to cover administrative costs and may I add that there will also be provisions in the Regulations to waive the charges in appropriate cases of people on supplementary benefits or who are not able to pay.

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will the Chief Minister undertake to refrain from making statements such as the one he made to the Spanish press on independence which give rise to founded and unfounded speculations?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, statements made by people in public life often lead to speculation. I cannot give the Hon and Gallant Member any undertaking as to the kind of statements which I might find it necessary or desirable to make in the future. My position on the question of independence was fully set out in my letter to the Leader of the Opposition dated 12 August, 1982, copies of which were sent to the press.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 268 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

May I ask the Chief Minister if in his letter instead of being more objective to the question asked by my Leader, Mr Isola, he did not become too personal and therefore destroyed any argument that he put there?

HON J BOSSANO:

Mr Speaker, could I ask the Hon and Learned Chief Minister whether in fact he has made any statements to the press which have gone beyond the statements that he has made in this House on this particular subject to the effect that if independence were acceptable or respected by both the United Kingdom and Spain he would be happy to sign on the dotted line tomorrow, did he say anything more than that?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, much less in fact.

HON A J HAYNES:

Will the Chief Minister confirm that the letter being written on the glorious 12th was only 'grousing'?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The answer is no.

NO. 269 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON MAJOR R J PELIZA

Will Government reconsider making further use of the Gibraltar Tourist Office in London to promote the international political truth about Gibraltar which is so often distorted to Gibraltar's disadvantage in many quarters and in the news media generally?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. As I have made clear on a previous occasion, I do not consider that it would be appropriate for the Tourist Office to become involved in political matters.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 269 OF 1982

HON MAJOR R J PELIZA:

Couldn't we have within the Tourist Office an information section in the same way as the Government has it in Gibraltar to try and counter all unfounded news that come out from time to time and which I think is very damaging to Gibraltar in the United Kingdom?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

We do use the Tourist Office to help us in disseminating a considerable amount of material when it is required but it is a far different proposition to put somebody there with political responsibilities to deal with matters connected with this nature than just to disseminate information and the matter raises very wide issues which I have endeavoured to explain to the Hon Member in previous questions and on which I have not changed my mind.

NO. 270 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON J BOSSANO

Has the British Government confirmed that it no longer intends to proceed with the limitation on the opening hours of the Gibraltar airfield?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. The British Government (Ministry of Defence) have however said that the present hours will continue for the time being. Should any changes be proposed at a later date, the Gibraltar Government will seek to ensure that operations will be able to continue unaffected as far as possible.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 270 OF 1982

HON J BOSSANO:

So in fact the report that appeared locally to the effect that the thing had now been dropped is not accurate?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Well, that is different, I do not know what report it is, people can speculate on it and certainly there has been no mention since it was done originally and certainly since the South Atlantic crisis no mention has been made of that being resuscitated and I would rather leave things as they are than ask questions that might bring awkward answers.

HON J BOSSANO:

So the situation really would be correctly described as the matter having been left in abeyance rather than a definite decision having been taken one way or the other?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

It would appear that that is the case.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 271 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, has the Government now been able to obtain further information with regard to the agreement made between GBC and Airtime International Limited in relation to advertising and particularly on the point of exclusivity and will Government make a statement?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, the latest information I have available is that the Board of GBC would have been able to meet fully the point made by the Chamber of Commerce about exclusivity - in other words that local traders should have had direct access to GBC for the purpose of placing advertisements.

The Chamber however raised further points first in relation to canvassing with principals either by GBC or Airtime International which would have debarred either party from making any approach whatsoever without the written agreement of a local agent; and, secondly, in relation to confidentiality with regard to expenditure on advertising. They further required GBC to enter into a formal agreement with the Chamber to cover these points as a pre-requisite to lifting their boycott. Despite categorical assurances given by GBC in consultation with Airtime International in both these respects the Chamber were still not satisfied and insisted on a form of words in their draft agreement which the Board of GBC were unable to accept.

In these circumstances GBC and Airtime International after further consultation have come to the conclusion that the present agreement should be rescinded with effect from the 30th September, 1982, and that in lieu thereof Airtime International should be recognised as a Sales Agent on a non-exclusive basis. The Chamber have been informed accordingly in the expectation that the existing boycott for which the Board of GBC feel that there is now no reason will be lifted.

I am informed however the indications are that the Chamber are still not satisfied.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 271 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, it appears that the industrial action take by the Chamber has been successful but would it not have been better for negotiations to have taken place at an early stage on a realistic basis with the mediation of the Industrial Relations Officer of the Government if necessary and this might well have resulted, would it not, in an agreement between all the parties concerned that was fair and also profitable and is it not a pity that nothing was done until Airtime International Limited have found that the agreement does not work in their favour as they had originally thought?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

No, Sir, I cannot accept the last suggestion. The Board of GBC, from the information I have, have bent backwards to try and meet the Chamber of Commerce but the Chamber of Commerce perhaps having regard to the fact that they had initially won their point have tried to extract terms which I do not think any fair-minded and reasonable corporation could meet and I do hope and appeal to the Chamber because there have been plenty of efforts on both sides, appeal to the Chamber to try and come to terms because GBC now, whatever may have happened in the past, are not being anything but very reasonable.

HON P J ISOLA:

Sir, I have not spoken I must say to the Chamber since our last intervention at the last meeting of the House but could it possibly not be a case of once bitten twice shy and is the Chief Minister speaking merely from information given to him by GBC and has he heard the other side on these latest developments and if not would it not be a good idea to intervene or mediate or whatever word is appropriate to bring the parties together and save the taxpayer the considerable amount of money that I am sure this dispute is costing them?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

The information I have given is based on correspondence supplied to me by GBC of both sides of the question, it has not been just reported to me but I have here the exchange of correspondence between the respective legal advisers and the proposed agreement prepared on behalf of the Chamber so the answer is that I have made my reply on the basis of what has happened and not based on what one party has said. I do hope that it will not be necessary for me to intervene because as I have said many times I am reluctant to do so and I am told that perhaps there might be developments in the course of the next few days but certainly if it is the desire of both parties that there should be intervention I shall be very happy to be of help.

MR SPEAKER:

Next question.

NO. 272 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, will Government ascertain from GBC and inform the House whether there will be a need for a higher Government subsidy during the current year arising from the lack of commercial advertising on GBC and the amount this is likely to be?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

Sir, it is as yet too soon to say what the financial position of GBC at the end of the financial year will be. We know however that the adjustment of salaries because of parity will require supplementary provision shortly and that because Airtime International have met their obligations under their original agreement, the cash flow position of GBC is not as yet giving cause for concern. The Board of GBC however are keeping the position under close scrutiny and they will do everything possible to try and improve the Corporation's financial position.

The House will however appreciate that as a result of the rescission of the Airtime International agreement the Corporation will suffer a very substantial loss in guaranteed income.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 272 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Will that be taken into account in any further public subsidy of GBC? Will the Government take into account the situation and the reasonableness throughout this unhappy period of the Board of GBC?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

Certainly and of the attitude of the Chamber.

HON P J ISOLA:

Yes, but the Chamber, Sir, will not be paying for the subsidy, it will be the general taxpayer.

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

But we will be paying.

NO. 273 OF 1982

ORAL

THE HON P J ISOLA

Sir, can Government state whether any arrangements have been made with GBC for the broadcast of the proceedings of the House and if not will Government make arrangements so that at least parts of the proceedings of the House can be broadcast live?

ANSWERTHE HON THE CHIEF MINISTER

No, Sir. As the Hon Member is aware from previous correspondence exchanged between us, we agreed that I would ask him to come and discuss with me his proposals for the broadcasting of proceedings of the House. I regret that more pressing matters have hitherto prevented me from arranging a meeting for this purpose but I am prepared to meet the Hon Member next week at a time to be arranged to our mutual convenience.

SUPPLEMENTARY TO QUESTION NO. 273 OF 1982

HON P J ISOLA:

Mr Speaker, I am very glad to hear that because at the last meeting of the House the Hon and Learned Chief Minister did say he would arrange a meeting during July. I appreciate that there have been a lot of pressing matters but on the other hand would the Chief Minister not agree that it is important that the general public should hear first hand, if they wish, what is going on and the matters that are being discussed in this House and that it is very much a part of democracy that what happens in the parliament of a place is disseminated among the general public?

HON CHIEF MINISTER:

I thought he meant decimated but I do not disagree with this suggestion.