

No. 04 of 26.11.02
2002

RODRIGUES

FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 04 of 2002

Sitting of Tuesday 26 November 2002

The Assembly met in the Assembly House, Port Mathurin at 10.30 a.m.

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

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RODRIGUES

FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 26 November 2002

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ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FOOTBALL – LEAGUE MATCHES

(No. B/14) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner of Youth and Sports whether, as regards football activities here, he will –

- (a) state the last date of the league match for the first, second and unclassified divisions;
- (b) say why such activities have not been launched since;
- (c) state the measures he is taking to remedy the situation.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), I have been informed that –

- (i) the first division league known as the Mauritours League ended on 28 October 2001 with a final between Boysters team and Barbados team;
- (ii) the second division league ended on 21 September 2001 with a final match between Albatros team of Grand Baie and Flamingo team of Trois Soleil;
- (iii) the zone tournament, previously known as the unclassified division league, held its last match on 04 November 2001. The opposing teams were Chelsea of Tamarin and Ramblers of Anse Quitor.

As for part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the two leagues of first and second divisions are interlinked as far as promoted and relegated teams are concerned. The league matches of the present year could not be organised because of the problem faced by the present *Comité de Gestion* for the holding of first division league. No handing over of documents and gate money was effected by the previous *Comité de Gestion* to the present one. Consequently, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the clubs have not benefited from the gate money collected to meet their expenses. Hence, the present *Comité de Gestion* could not hold any match until and unless the teams are given their due of gate money.

As regards part (c), Mr Chairperson, Sir, the OPR regional government knows very well that football remains '*le sport roi*' of Rodrigues. This is why since my coming into office, no effort is spared to give this discipline all its due –

- (1) Firstly, grass cutting is being done on a rotational basis as regularly as possible on the different playgrounds so that the players may train in better conditions.
- (2) A consensus has been found following consecutive meetings with members of the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee and the *Comité de Gestion du Stade Camp du Roi*. Consequently, I am pleased to announce to this House that football will start anew as from the month of January next year thus giving a full month's time to the teams for their training sessions. This will be in anticipation of the National Day celebration. On the other hand, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Sports Commission will take all necessary measures to review the physical and environmental conditions of the existing infrastructural facilities and, in respect of the Camp du Roi Stadium, the following will be looked into –

- (1) Public toilets
- (2) Shelters for substitutes
- (3) Referees' room
- (4) Surface of the field
- (5) Cloak-room
- (6) Repairs to the gate

Mr Agathe: Can the Chief Commissioner say which club will represent Rodrigues in the MFA cup next year?

Mr Chairperson: The Member should give notice of that question.

ACCACIA – WATER SUPPLY - CHLORINATION

(No. B/15) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the quality of water supplied for domestic purposes, he will –

- (a) state whether the water distributed to houses from the reservoir of Fond Accacia and feeding mainly Accacia is treated according to appropriate national or international standards before being distributed to the villages;
- (b) if not, obtain information as regards the quality of that water;
- (c) describe the situation regarding the quality of water for the rest of domestic water consumers in Rodrigues, and
- (d) say whether there is any facility for chlorination or water treatment at Fond Accacia, and if yes, give a list of sites where similar facilities exist in Rodrigues, their original date of inception or installation, the total cost involved the contractor, and the state of same.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed as regards parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question that the village of Accacia is being supplied with water from Accacia dam. A filter plant and a chlorination plant have been installed at about 500 metres downstream for the treatment of the water. However, due to the low yield of the spring, both plants have been bypassed so as not to disrupt the water distribution in the village. Presently, laboratory facilities exist at the Health Services for the testing of only the bacteriological aspects. The water unit is equipped only to carry out residual chlorine test. It is to be noted that the presence of residual chlorine is a clear indication of the potential absence of contamination of the water. I am further informed that despite the availability of such equipment at all chlorination plants, no regular water testing have been carried out for the past two years due to the lack of chemicals. The setting of a mini lab to undergo basic test will be undertaken soon. In the absence of water quality tests, it is difficult to ascertain whether the water satisfies national norms. The setting up of a water testing laboratory will be effected soon.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is a clear indication of how the Water Unit was managed for the past two years. In order to remedy to the chaotic situation of the management of the Water Unit, I am setting up a Water Steering Committee whose main function will be to overview, coordinate and follow up the management of the Water Unit as well as the implementation of all programmes in the water sector.

As regards part (d), thereon I am tabling a list of sites where chlorination plants have been installed in Rodrigues and the actual state of same. The plants were commissioned in March 1999. The total costs of the

contract for the supply, installation and commissioning of the chlorination plants which was awarded to DDS Irrigation Ltd amounted to Rs16,130,522.00.

Mr J. Roussety: Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Chief Commissioner especially to part (b) of my question wherein I asked him to obtain information as regards the quality of that water. But I did not say to obtain information in Rodrigues. I live in that village and there are persons present here also who live in that village. Babies drink that water, take their bath with that water.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr J. Roussety: May I request the Chief Commissioner to obtain information as regards the quality of that water, whether the information comes from Rodrigues, Mauritius or elsewhere. Government has put funds at our disposal.

Mr Chairperson: The Minority Leader should put his question, please.

Mr J. Roussety: Can the information be obtained even if it is ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: There should be no interruption from a sitting position, please!

Mr J. Roussety: Can I ask the Chief Commissioner to obtain information even if it is from elsewhere? We can send the water to Mauritius or elsewhere to obtain information as to the quality of that water.

The Chief Commissioner: Sir, as I have said, during the past two years, no chemical test has been done on water due to lack of chemicals. We are now setting up a Water Steering Committee to look into the matter.

CAMP DU ROI TO HAUTEUR ACCACIA – ROAD ACCIDENTS

(No. B/16) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the road going from Camp du Roi to Hauteur Accacia, he will –

- (a) obtain information as to the number of accidents that have occurred since January 1999 on that road;
- (b) say whether anybody died or was injured as a result thereof and on which dates;
- (c) state what is the minimum width of that road, and
- (d) ascertain whether any complaint has been received regarding that road, the date or dates on which same was made and by whom.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed –

As regards part (a), by the Police Department that six accidents have occurred since January 1999 along the road from Camp du Roi and Hauteur Accacia.

As regards part (b), I am further informed that as a result of the above six accidents, one person died on 15 April 1999 and three persons were injured, viz. one on 03 June 2000, one on 14 April 2000 and one on 05 January 2002.

For part (c), the minimum width of that road is 3.8 metres extending over a stretch of about 150 metres. Appropriate traffic signs in line with international and national regulations have been installed to inform the road users.

In regard to part (d), complaint regarding the road has been received to this office on 21 March 2001 by a group of villagers of Camp Du Roi. I have instructed the Public Infrastructure Division to submit a complete report on the state of the road and to carry out as a matter of priority the enlargement of the road including all footpaths, handrailings and drains.

EDUCATION SERVICES – EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES – THEFT

(No. B/17) **Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether he will, for the benefit of the House, state –

- (a) whether there has been any case regarding theft or disappearance of equipment or supplies in the Government Education services since the year 2000;
- (b) if yes, give a detailed account of the nature of the theft and the name of the officers who have been involved;
- (c) whether the matter has been reported to the Police; and
- (d) what actions have been taken against the faulty officers.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that a case of disappearance of supplies in the Education Division of the Rodrigues Administration occurred in October 2000.

On 26 October 2000, the Education Division informed the office of the Island Secretary that 192 packs of cheese, which had been purchased, did not subsequently reach the stores of the Education Division. In line with the regulations of the Financial Management Manual, the Island Secretary appointed on 14 November 2000 a Board of Survey to carry out a hundred per cent check of all commodities in store at the Education Centre. Subsequently, the Board of Survey reported the following shortages –

- (a) 3828 packs of cheese amounting to Rs105,270
- (b) 1201 kg of butter amounting to Rs72,060
- (c) 192 kg of jam amounting to Rs7,584

The Board of Survey further called into question the direct responsibility of one storekeeper at the Education Division. On the basis of the recommendation of the Board of Survey, the storekeeper concerned was interdicted on 05 December 2000, and was informed that the matter was being referred to the Police for further inquiry.

On 15 August 2001, the Chief Officer of Police informed the office of the Island Secretary that four persons had been arrested, namely –

- (i) the storekeeper;
- (ii) a watchman;
- (iii) one labourer; and
- (iv) one co-ordinator

As a matter of ethics, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it would be pertinent to not disclose the names of the persons involved.

(Interruptions)

The matter being *sub judice*, no names can be mentioned.

The Police Department further informed the Island Secretary on 20 August 2001 that the watchman, the labourer and the co-ordinator had been released on bail on 16 August 2001. I am now informed that the Police have completed their inquiry, and the matter has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for advice.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it will be worth noting on both sides of the House that, in line with paragraph 34(i) of the Public Service Commission regulations, it is stipulated that no disciplinary proceeding against an officer involved in a criminal charge shall be taken until the conclusion of the criminal proceedings and the determination of the appeal.

Mr J. Roussety: Can I ask the Commissioner whether he is aware that one of those persons involved in the theft of supplies was, in fact, present at the opening ceremony of the *‘Festival Créole’*?

(Interruptions)

Mr L. Roussety: Sir, I would like to reiterate the last paragraph of my reply, namely –

“in line with paragraph 34(i) of the Public Service Commission regulations, it is stipulated that no disciplinary proceeding against an officer involved in a criminal charge shall be taken until the conclusion of the criminal proceeding and the determination of the appeal”.

WHITE FLY – CONTROL PROGRAMME

(No. B/18) **Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the massive problem of “*mouche blanc*” attacking plants and adversely affecting agriculture, he will examine the possibility of an island-wise action to eliminate that problem.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that spiralling white fly was first noticed in December 2001 in the northern part of Rodrigues, from where it rapidly dispersed to the rest of the island. The insect feeds on more than 30 plant species ranging from weeds, vegetables, ornamentals, fruit and forest trees.

According to usual practice, when a new pest is observed, the technical advice of the Ministry of Agriculture was sought and planters are being advised to have recourse to chemical control recommended by the said Ministry.

However, being given the wide range of host plants which are infested by the pest, chemical control is not effective. This is why the Ministry of Agriculture has decided to implement a biological control programme against the white fly. The Ministry of Agriculture has indicated that natural enemies are being reared and will be ready for release in both Mauritius and Rodrigues early next year.

TRUST FUND FOR THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS – HOUSING PROGRAMME

(No. B/19) Mr J.R. Emilien (First Local Member for Marechal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the housing programme under the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups in Rodrigues, he will –

- (a) state the types and number per type of houses completed so far under this programme;
- (b) table the criteria for the allocation of these houses;
- (c) state the number and locations of houses actually under construction;
- (d) state the locations time frame and number of housing units to be built shortly; and
- (e) state the total amount of money disbursed so far under the programme and that earmarked for financial year 2002-2003.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups is a body operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance. The Fund undertakes projects for the Republic of Mauritius, and there is no specific fund allocation for Rodrigues. According to regulations under the Finance & Audit Act, establishing the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups, the Minister responsible for the Trust Fund is the Minister of Finance. As such, the Minister of Finance is answerable to the National Assembly for matters pertaining to the Fund.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Trust Fund is operating in Rodrigues. I have in hand the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act – I cannot recall the specific provision – which says that Government bodies operating in Rodrigues thus act in co-operation with the Regional Assembly. So, the reply to my question is wrong.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: The Member has to comply with the Standing Orders. There has been a reply made by the Chief Commissioner.

The Chief Commissioner: As I have said, it is the Ministry of Finance that deals with the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups. The Members of the Regional Assembly have representatives in the National Assembly. They can ask them to put questions on this issue.

Mr J. Roussety: Can I ask the Commissioner whether the Island Secretary or the new Island Executive Secretary, has ever given his advice or his approval to any Trust Fund project? If the Commissioner does not have the information, he can table it late on.

Mr Chairperson: The Member should come with a substantive question. The question is not allowed. The Minority Leader has to come with a new question and give notice.

GOVT. VEHICLES - NUMBER, PARKING AREAS, ETC.

(No. B/20) Mr A. L. Emilien (First Local Region for Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to Government vehicles in Rodrigues, he will state -

- (a) the number of Government vehicles actually in use in Rodrigues;
- (b) the places where these vehicles are kept at night during weekends and public holidays;
- (c) the number of vehicles with faulty odometers and, if any, steps taken or to be taken to remedy the situation; and
- (d) whether any Government vehicles are regularly kept at some drivers' place and used as private vehicles.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that -

- (a) The present fleet of Government vehicles amount to 183 including pick-up van, lorries, ambulances, tractors, motorcycles, rollers, excavators, dumpers, minibuses and cars.
- (b) The official list of parking areas for Government vehicles are as follows -

- Public Infrastructure yard Baie Lascar

- Mechanical Workshop yard, Port Mathurin
- Agricultural Compound, Citronelle
- Petit Gabriel Health Centre
- Rivière Coco Police Station
- La Ferme Wate Unit Compound
- Roche Bon Dieu Govt. School
- Malabar Water Unit Compound
- Ste Famille RCA School
- St Gabriel Agricultural Station
- Petit Brulé Water Unit Site

(c) The number of vehicles with faulty odometer amounts to 24. I am informed that the Mechanical Workshop is taking action to have the odometers repaired where possible.

(d) In line with existing regulations, no Government vehicles are authorised to be kept at the drivers' residence nor any driver has been authorised to use Government vehicles for private use. This House must be aware that in line with PRB recommendations, a certain category of officials and officers are entitled to a chauffeur driven Government vehicle for both official and private use.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner stated in his answer that there are 24 vehicles with faulty odometers. Can I ask him what control does Government have on these vehicles, that is, their movements and how long they are on the roads?

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I regret that such matters as raised by a respected Member are none of the business of the House. The use of official cars attached to the Commissioners is left at their entire discretion.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not talking about official cars; I am talking about the 24 Government vehicles with faulty odometers. What control does Government have on these vehicles? That was my question.

The Chief Commissioner: I have been informed that the Mechanical Workshop is taking action to have the odometers repaired where possible. If they cannot be repaired we cannot repair them.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(No. B/21) Mr A.L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Transport whether with regard to public transport in Rodrigues, he will state -

- (a) why no steps have been taken to replace at least one of the two buses, out of a total of four, operating on route Mourouk-Baie du Nord which were not in running condition for many days recently;
- (b) the number of applications which have reached the office of the National Transport Authority to operate new buses;
- (c) the number of new licences that will be issued and when.

Mr Sooprayen: Sir, as regards part (a) I am informed that there are actually five buses which have been licensed to operate along Rte 213, Mourouk-Baie du Nord. The registration numbers are as follows: 9RMR98, ROD1156, ROD 1525, 46 RSP98 and 3RZK88. However, since 08 December 2000, Bus 9RMR98 has been redirected to Rte 224 (Port Mathurin to Baladirou). Bus ROD 1525 has undergone heavy repairs since August 2002, and is expected to be in operation by the end of this month. However, the three remaining buses have continued to operate along the said route 213, except for a short period between 14 to 28 October 2002, when bus 46P98 off of the road for repairs as it met with a road accident. It was only for this short period that two buses were in operation on the said route. I have been informed that two buses were in operation on the said route. I have been informed that, with the coming in operation of bus ROD 1525, there will be four buses along the route at the end of this month.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the last invitation for application for road service licence was published on 15 December 2001. I am also informed that 34 applications were received in relation to this last invitation. A decision was subsequently taken by the

National Transport Authority to grant two road service licenses to operate thereof.

With regard to part (c), according to the office of the National Transport Authority, it is not being foreseen for the time being to invite applications for new road services licenses as it is considered that the fleet of buses along all routes is sufficient to cater for the needs of commuters. However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, breakdowns of buses in Rodrigues occur quite often given the poor state and the steep gradient of some of the public roads. In addition to that, buses are off the road at regular intervals for preventive servicing. The office of the National Transport Authority will continue to carry out inquiries on buses which are not able to provide services for long periods and will take the appropriate action.

Mr Emilien: The Commissioner said that breakdown of buses occur quite often in Rodrigues because of the state of the roads. Actually there are only two buses operating on this road, wherever there are buses.

Concerning part (a) of my question, I wanted to know why not steps have been taken. Whenever there is a breakdown of a bus on a road there is a replacement. At the time I am speaking, there are only two buses operating on this road. Why no steps have been taken?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is partly because of availability of buses ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: No interruptions, please! Proceed Commissioner Sooprayen, please.

Mr Sooprayen: As I have already said, repairs have been carried out for the other buses and by the end of this month, everything will be all right.

Mr Emilien: No, steps have been taken for this route because actually we have only two buses operating on this route and one is replacing elsewhere. The Commissioner told the House that there are five buses on this route, but we have only two right now. I don't know whether it is because the buses go through regions Nos. 1 and 2.

Mr Chairperson: This question has been asked twice and has been answered twice.

RESIDENTIAL LEASES - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/22) Mr A. L. Emilien (The First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether as regards residential leases, he will state -

- (a) the number of applications for a residential lease received year by year from 1995 to 31 October 2002.
- (b) the number of applications actually under consideration; and
- (c) the number of applications already processed and to be granted shortly.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) the number of applications for residential lease received year by year are -

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total</u>
1995	408
1996	412
1997	468
1998	644
1999	895
2000	888
2001	1215
2002	1289

As regards part (b), 2,731 cases are actually being considered.

As regards part (c), 764 cases have already been processed. Letters of intent have been issued to the approved lessees and lease agreements will be finalised soon.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I know from the Chief Commissioner why only 764 applications have been processed out of 2,731 cases?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, prior to the coming into operation of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, cases approved by the Task Force for State land lease were being referred to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for approval. It has been decided to set up a new State Land Committee to accelerate the allocation of State land and legal advice is being sought on the appropriate course of action with respect to the granting of leases in accordance with sections 26, 32 and 54 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act.

CASCADE JEAN LOUIS/PLAINE CORAIL - HOUSES - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/23) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether in regard to the construction of houses by the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups, at Cascade Jean Louis/Plaine Corail she will state -

- (a) if construction works on any of the houses have been interrupted as at today;
- (b) the name of the beneficiaries to whom these houses were destined; and
- (c) the reasons for this stoppage of works.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed that in March 2001 the Rodrigues Administration ordered that the construction of one house which was being constructed at Cascade Jean Louis be stopped.

As regards part (b). the beneficiary of that house is Mrs Zacheleine Collet.

As to part (c), the work was stopped as it was considered that the site was not appropriate for the construction of a residential building.

BAIE DU NORD/ANSE NICOLAS - SPORTS FACILITIES

(No. B/24) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner for Sports whether he will, for the benefit of the House, state -

- (a) if any sports amenities are available in the villages of Baie du Nord and Anse Nicolas, and if not,
- (b) the measures he will take therefor.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), no sports amenities are available to date in the villages of Baie du Nord and Anse Nicolas.

With regard to part (b), Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is well aware of the lack of sports facilities in some villages, like Mt Tonnerre, Jardin Mamzelle, Nassola as well as Anse Nicolas and Baie du Nord. Before the setting up of any sports infrastructure in these villages, my Commission will normally consult the villagers to have their views as we rightly mentioned it in our electoral manifesto - *une participation democrative*. At this stage emphasis is being given to upgrade and renew existing sports infrastructure around the island. The construction of new infrastructures will constitute the second phase in the development of sports of my Commission and I want this House to rest assured that every possible effort will be made to reach those villages which are deprived of sports facilities.

Mr Grandcourt: Can we know when will the Commissioner give these villagers their sports facilities?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, before the implementation of any sport infrastructure, there are certain factors that need to be looked into, especially availability of funds; and I am not here in this House to fulfil any promise made during the electoral campaign.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that...

Mr Chairperson: Well, this is question time. Your question, please!

Mr Grandcourt: The Commissioner for Sports has not given any reason as to why there have been no sport facilities in that area.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please! There is a question before this House. I understand that the First Local Region Member for La Ferme has actually asked a question.

Mr Lisette: I have already answered the question. It is a question of funds availability.

Mr Johnson Roussety: There is a list of priorities that the Government is going to deal with...

Mr Chairperson: Your question, please!

Mr Johnson Roussety: Can the Commissioner tell us what promises he is referring to?

Mr Chairperson: This question is disallowed.

BAIE TOPAZE - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/25) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member of La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, for the benefit of the House, he will state -

- (a) the number of water distribution main pipes feeding the villagers of Baie Topaze; and
- (b) the frequency of the supply of water therefor.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that for the purpose of water distribution the village of Bay Topaze has been

divided into two zones. The upper part of Baie Topaze is being served by a 90 mm polyethelene main pipe from Citadelle reservoir whereas the lower part of Baie Topaze is being served by a 50 mm galvanized pipe which is fed by Camp Pintade reservoir which in turn is being fed by Grand La Fouche Corail reservoir.

I have been further informed by the Water Unit that the normal frequency of water distribution at upper Baie Topaze is once fortnightly and once every 20 days for the lower part of Baie Topaze.

Mr Grandcourt: Can I ask the Chief Commissioner the number of times the villagers are supplied with water?

The Chief Commissioner: The question has already been answered.

FISHERMEN CARDS – NUMBER, GENDER, ETC.

(No. B/26) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member of La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the issue of fishermen cards, he will state -

- (a) the number of fishermen possessing a card by category and gender and trades;
- (b) the number of cards delivered to fishermen from the beginning of January 2002 to date, and
- (c) the criteria required to obtain a card.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), there are 1,964 registered professional fishermen in Rodrigues, out of which 787 are women and 1,177 are men. Their modes of fishing are as follows -

	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
Harpoon fishing	569	269	838
Basket trap, harpoon & line	218	612	830
Shrimp net	-	12	12
Large net	-	97	97
Off lagoon (line)	-	187	187

With regard to part (b), during the period of January 2002 to date, the registration of 16 fishermen whose registration was cancelled due to non-involvement in fishing has been restored when they restart their fishing activities. Their registration was restored after monitoring of their activities during two months.

As far as part (c) is concerned, the criteria required to registration of fisherman as prescribed by the Ministry of Fisheries are as follows -

The fisherman should -

- (i) land his catch at a prescribed fish landing station;
- (ii) be of 18 years of age or more, but under 50 years on the date of application, and
- (iii) have a monthly attendance of 50% on the number of fishing days.

PETIT GABRIEL TO MALABAR VIA MALARTIC - LOOSE BOULDERS

(No. B/27) Mrs J. Prosper (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he will, for the safety of the road users from Petit Gabriel to Malabar *via* Malartic, state what measures have been taken given that there are lots of rocks hanging up the hills threatening to fall at any time.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed by the Road Development Authority that the contractor working on the Port Mathurin/Grand La Fouche Corail road has been instructed to remove all loose boulders laying up the hills between Malabar and Petit Gabriel. However, those remaining are either firmly embedded in the natural ground or difficult to remove due to existing terrain condition.

I have further been informed that a masonry wall, which will act as a barrier against the possible falling of any loose rocks, will be erected next to the drain. The works are still ongoing and have not yet been completed.

Mr A. L. Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner why the rocks which could not be removed are not broken to facilitate their removal?

The Chief Commissioner: As I have said, there are some rocks which are firmly embedded in the natural ground and as there is also a lack of equipment, we cannot have these rocks removed for the time being.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

CRAFT AID, CAMP DU ROI – ACCESS ROAD TO BRITISH HONORARY CONSULATE – IMPROVEMENT

(No. B/28) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he will consider the possibility of immediate improvement of the access road leading to the British Honorary Consulate at Craft Aid, Camp du Roi.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to refer once again the respected Member to my reply to her question reference B/6 of last session, whereby I pointed out that the Commission will now carry out road construction/road repairs on the basis of a priority list which is presently being established after taking due accounts of funds available and in line with the electoral programme of the OPR party.

The possibility of tarring the access road leading to Craft Aid will be given consideration in establishing the priority list.

SOCIAL AID - VULNERABLE GROUPS

(No. B/29) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, she will, for the benefit of the House state -

- (a) the criteria for the allocation of social aid in Rodrigues, and
- (b) whether there are any cases of people who have been deprived of social aid during the present financial year and the reasons therefor.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the allocation of social aid in Rodrigues is made in accordance with the criteria prescribed in Section 3 of the Social Aid Act 1983, which specifies that a person shall be qualified to claim social aid if, he/she is temporarily or permanently incapable of earning adequately his livelihood and has insufficient means to support himself and his dependants as a result of –

- (i) any physical or mental disability;
- (ii) any sickness or accident certified by an approved medical practitioner;
- (iii) abandonment by his spouse; or
- (iv) any sudden loss of employment which has lasted continuously for not less than six months.

With regard to part (b), during this financial year, from July 2002 to date, 164 claims were received at the Social Security Office out of which 89 has been approved 33 were disallowed. However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have instructed the Officer-in-Charge, Social Security to ensure that the criteria and procedures are being followed as prescribed by the Social Aid Act. I am informed that the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions is in the process of reviewing the criteria and rate of social aid.

During my recent visit in Mauritius, I had a working session with the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions on the situation in Rodrigues. It is a fact that many deserving cases do not fall within the present criteria for social aid. I was advised by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions that the Social Aid Act is being reviewed so as to make it more responsive to the needs of the beneficiaries.

BAIE LASCAR - LAND LEASE

(No. B/30) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he will state why some of the citizens who have obtained land leases for commercial sites on the reclaimed land facing Works Division at Baie Lascars are not authorised to run their business.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that in July 2001, the Rodrigues Administration was instructed by the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues not to issue building permit to some of the lessees in view of the creation of the waterfront at Port Mathurin. Subsequently, it was indicated that some of the businesses could be accommodated in one commercial block to be constructed by the SPDC within the waterfront project while others cannot be located on the site.

In December 2001, a joint team from the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues visited the site and recommended that some of the sites allocated be repossessed against payment of compensation as appropriate.

A final decision will be taken on the matter shortly.

MT. LUBIN AND LA FERME HEALTH CENTRES - PERSONNEL

(No. B/31) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health whether -

- (a) he can state the number of Nursing Officers posted to Mt. Lubin Health Centre and La Ferme Health Centre during the night, and
- (b) the Nursing Officers are posted to the same wards for day and night duty. If not, can he state the reasons therefor.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), I am informed that the number of Nursing Officers posted to Mont Lubin Area Health Centre and La Ferme Area Health Centre during the night are as follows –

- (i) one male Nursing Officer
- (ii) one female Nursing Officer
- (iii) one Midwife for each Area Health Centre

With regard to part (b), during day duty, that is, from 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., four Nursing Officers are posted in each of the Area Health Centres to cater for the wards and outpatient department whereas at night, that is, from 6.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m. the next day, only two Nursing Officers and one Midwife cater for the wards and OPD in each centre due to lack of personnel. The Nursing Officers are entrusted to look after the wards day and night on a roster basis.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has just mentioned the lack of personnel. What measures does he intend to take to remedy the situation concerning the lack of personnel?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, training will be done in due time.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner for Health state the number of Nursing Officers recruited during the year 2001-2002?

Mr Chairperson: You have to come with a substantive question.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL – OPERATING THEATRE

(No. B/32) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health whether he can state if the operation theatre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital operates on a 24-hour basis and, if not the reasons thereof.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the operating theatre at Queen Elizabeth Hospital does not operate on a continuous 24-hour basis. I am informed that the nursing staff works normally from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. on week days and from 8.00 a.m. to noon on Saturday. The staff is then on call, on Saturday afternoons, Sundays and Public Holidays for any emergency.

The reasons for the non-operation of a continuous 24-hour service in the operating theatre is due to the lack of adequately trained nursing officers to carry out the job. However, I have been informed that one Charge Nurse has been sent by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to train nursing officers so that they can be assigned to work in the operating theatre soon.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning adequately trained staff to work on a 24-hour basis in the operating theatre and the training programme he has just mentioned, does that include adequately trained staff?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think the question has already been answered.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Health said that the staff is on call, can I ask him if there is a serious accident involving severe cases of injured persons, what will be the response of the staff in such a situation?

Mr Chairperson: This question is not allowed. It involves a hypothetical case.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Health mentioned that training will be carried out in due course. Does the training consist of what he considers as adequately trained officers?

Mr Chairperson: The question has been put and answered. The Standing Order clearly stipulates that when an answer is given, this is final. Next question, please!

HEALTH SERVICES - DAY/NIGHT DUTY

(No. B/33) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health whether he will state the grade of officers who in their scheme of duty have to perform day as well as night duty in the health service in Rodrigues.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the grade of officers who have to perform day as well as night duty in the health services are as follows-

1. Officers that have to stay on call are –
 - (a) Specialist/Senior Specialist
 - (b) Medical Officers
 - (c) Medical Laboratory Technicians
 - (d) Radiographer
 - (e) Dispenser
2. Officers working on a roster basis are –
 - (a) Nursing Supervisors
 - (b) Charge Nurses
 - (c) Nursing Officers
 - (d) Midwives
 - (e) Medical Records Clerks/Assistants
 - (f) Hospital Attendant
 - (g) Hospital Servant
 - (h) Ambulance Drivers
 - (i) Ambulance Attendant
 - (j) Telephonist/Receptionists

AMBULANCE ATTENDANTS & DRIVERS

(No. B/34) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member)
asked the Commissioner for Health whether he can state the number of –

- (a)
 - (i) Ambulance Drivers;
 - (ii) Ambulance Attendants in the Rodrigues Health Services;
and
- (b) whether he intends to fill the five posts of Ambulance Attendants which were vacant in order to solve the problem of shortage of Ambulance Attendants;

- (c) (i) whether he can state the conditions of ambulance vehicles;
- (ii) whether he intends to increase their number; and
- (iii) improve conditions of existing ambulances for the comfort and well being of patients.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the number of officers as requested in part (a) of the question is as follows -

(i)	No. of Ambulance Drivers on establishment	20
	No. of Ambulance Drivers in post	20
(ii)	No. of Ambulance Attendants on establishment	15
	No. of Ambulance Attendants in post	15
	No. of Acting Ambulance Attendant	03

With regard to part (b), according to the existing establishment there is no vacancy for the post of ambulance attendant. However, you will note that arrangements have been made to have three acting ambulance attendants, in the meantime, to cater for shortage of staff. The necessary will be done to create five additional posts of ambulance attendants.

As regards part (c), I am informed that there are eight ambulances available and that they are all in good running condition. Five ambulances are attached to Queen Elizabeth Hospital. One ambulance is attached to Mon Lubin Area Health Centre, one at La Ferme Area Health Centre and another one at Plaine Corail Airport.

Provision will have to be made for the purchase of additional ambulances for the coming years in order to replace those that are becoming old. A request has already been made in the capital expenditure proposals for the financial year 2002/03 for the purchase of two additional ambulances.

I am informed that the ambulances available are sufficiently equipped to provide the necessary support.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, the Commissioner for Health stated that no vacancy exists for the post of

Ambulance Attendants and he informed the House that necessary action will be taken to create five additional posts, is he just not trying to....

Mr Chairperson: Put your question, please!

Mr Emilien: Is it not the reply that the Commissioner for Health should have given to part (b), that is

Mr Chairperson: You should not put a question in order to correct an answer. Put your question properly, please.

Mr Emilien: Can the Member tell the House whether ...

(Interruptions)

Mr L. Roussety : On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir. It would appear that Members are forgetting that they have got to address their questions to the Chair and not directly to the Commissioners responsible for giving an answer.

Mr Chairperson: These remarks are founded. Please, I ask Members to take note.

Mr J. Roussety: M. le président, je comprends la difficulté à répondre aux questions. Puis-je attirer votre attention sur le fait que pour pouvoir rendre intelligente une question, les membres de la minorité ont besoin d'introduire un minimum d'élément avant de poser leur question. Est-ce-que je peux donc demander votre indulgence sur cela? Nous voudrions, dans un premier temps, *introduce the matter. Do you understand my point?*

Mr Chairperson: Yes, I have always acted like this. Of course, there may be some cases where introductory elements are needed for the questions to be understandable, but it should not be a speech.

Next Question, please.

CORAIL RESERVOIR - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/35) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the supply of water to the reservoir at Corail (Known as Agnaires reservoir), he will -

- (a) state the reason(s) why this is done by means of water tankers, and
- (b) say since when and for how long such practice has been carried out and whether this practice will continue.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the reservoir at Corail (Known as Agnaires reservoir) has always been fed by water from Grand La Fouche Corail reservoir. As a result of the shutting down of Baie Topaze borehole due to high salinity content, water from Grand La Fouche Corail reservoir is being partly diverted to Camp Pintade reservoir.

To avoid undue hardship to the water consumers served by Agnaires Reservoir, the reservoir is now being supplemented with additional water by lorry water tankers.

I am informed that such practice has been going on since November 2001 following the shutting down of Baie Topaze borehole for reasons already stated.

The possibility of linking Montagne Cabri Sud reservoir to Agnaires reservoir is being looked upon. Should this option be technically feasible, then the supply of the reservoir by water tankers will be discontinued.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, does the Chief Commissioner not agree that it would be more appropriate to take immediate measures in order to stop this practice going on for long? I am of the opinion that this has cost ...

Mr Chairperson: I draw the attention of the Member that he must not give his opinion. Put your question, please.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said we are looking into the possibility of linking the Montagne Cabri Sud reservoir to Agnaires reservoir. If the study is technically feasible, then the supply of water by water tankers will be discontinued.

Mr Jabeemissar: Sir, may I ask the Chief Commissioner to incorporate in the study the possibility of transferring water from other parts of Rodrigues (from Malabar, Le Chou) to the western part (La Ferme)? There is a serious problem there. *Est-ce que cette possibilité peut être envisagée?*

Mr Chairperson: This question is outside the scope of the original question.

FIBRE WATER TANKERS – VILLAGES - INSTALLATION

(No. B/36) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the installation of glass fibre water tankers under the Rainwater Harvesting Programme, he will -

- (a) say how many of them are already operational and where, and
- (b) table a list of villages which benefit from same and the latest available progress report on their installation.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that ten fibre glass tanks are now fully operational. With your permission, Sir, I am tabling a list of places where the tanks are operational as well as a list of villages/places which have benefited from same, including a status report on their installation.

I have been informed that materials (i.e. pipes and fittings) for the outlets have been ordered and is awaiting shipment. I have given instructions to the Water Unit to arrange for the immediate installation of same upon receipt of the fittings.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, since we are now in a period where we are about to face severe drought, in certain villages where these fibre glass tankers have been installed, these people are still facing serious water problems, for example, Ste. Marie Village, Baie du Nord Village. Why not take necessary steps now in order to provide these people with an adequate water supply?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I know that we are in the dry season; I will look into the matter.

WATER SUPPLY (DOMESTIC) – BORE HOLES, RESERVOIRS, ETC

(No. B/37) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to domestic water supply in Rodrigues, he will state -

- (a) the number of sources (including boreholes and reservoirs) where such water is obtained; and
- (b) if the water obtained satisfies the national and international norms when distributed to households.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that main domestic water supply in Rodrigues presently originates from the following sources -

- 5 springs
- 8 small dams
- 17 boreholes

As regards part (b) of the question I am referring the respected member to the last part of my reply to question B/15.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, Rodrigues is now facing a new era of its history and more and more people from abroad are visiting us. Does the Chief Commissioner not agree - though we, in Rodrigues, have not always been provided with good quality water – that it is an urgency to have a good supply of water of national standards?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this question has already been answered.

CITADELLE AND GRAND LA FOUCHE CORAIL – STONE CRUSHER

(No. B/38) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he is aware that the inhabitants of Citadelle and Grand La Fouche Corail have in the recent past made representations concerning the problems of air and noise pollution caused by stone crusher of Grand La Fouche Corail; and if so, what measures have been taken in order to solve the problem.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, a verbal complaint on dust pollution from Welcome Industries was received on 25 October 2002 from one person living in the vicinity of Welcome Industries. The complaint was attended on the same day jointly by the officers of the Environment Division and the *Police de l'Environnement* and was not found justified at the time of visit.

No representation has been received concerning noise pollution caused by the stone crusher.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner say whether an EIA monitoring work is done frequently on that site?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of the question.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, would the Chief Commissioner say how much notice he needs?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

PTE L'HERBE – LAND LEASE

(No. B/39) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards to State land leases at Pte L'Herbe (North) of Rodrigues, he will –

- (a) state the number of State land leases issued annually since 1990 to date;
- (b) table the list of the holders of State land lease and the total area involved for the same period.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the information asked for is as follows –

STATE LAND LEASES AT PTE L'HERBE (NORTH) OF RODRIGUES 1990 TO NOVEMBER 2002

Year	Number of State Land Leases
1990	15
1991	4
1992	Nil
1993	11
1994	4
1995	5
1996	5
1997	24
1998	4
1999	1
2000	1
2001	4
2002	1

I am submitting lists of lease holders year wise to the Clerk.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether State lands are being sold in that region?

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry, this question is not allowed.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner say if criteria are being abided by as far as the State land lease is concerned?

Mr Chairperson: This question falls out of the scope of the original question.

Mr J. Roussety: M. le président, est-ce que le Chef Commissaire peut dire s'il y avait au préalable un plan d'aménagement pour la région de Pte L'Herbe?

Mr Chairperson: The Commissioner needs notice of the question. You can come with a substantive question. The question is clear and precise. Next question, please!

QUATRE VENTS – MARKET – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/40) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of a market at Quatre Vents, he will –

- (a) state who is the promoter thereof;
- (b) state the number of Public Officers attached there, their grades and their salaries;
- (c) state the total amount in terms of salary paid up at the end of October 2002 to the workers; and
- (d) the cost of materials used;
- (e) the number of months the workers have been working on that site, and
- (f) state the date of the opening.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the construction of the village market of Quatre Vents is a project identified by the villagers and funded under the programme “Fight against Exclusion in Rodrigues” financed by the UNDP and the

Government. The project is being implemented by the “*Comité de Gestion*” of Quatre Vents.

As regards part (b), as the case for the construction of the market of Marechal, a team of workers from the Environment Unit is posted on and off at Quatre Vents market to help village volunteers to complete the project. The team comprises the following –

Grade	No.	Salary (Rs)
Gangman	1	8300
Mason	3	8515
Carpenter	1	8515
Ag. Tradesman Assistant	1	6225
General Field & Office/ Premises Worker	3	5850

The construction is supervised by an Assistant Inspector of Works.

In regard to part (c), the salary paid to the workers at the end of October 2002 is as follows –

Grade	No.	Salary (Rs)
Gangman	1	8300
Mason	3	25545
Carpenter	1	8515
Ag. Tradesman Assistant	1	6225
General Field & Office/ Premises Worker	3	17550

		66135

As regards part (d), the cost of materials supplied to Quatre Vents as at end of October 2002 is Rs67,987.46.

As for part (e), the team has been working on the site on and off since September 2002.

In regard to part (f), it is expected that the project will be completed by next month.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the Chief Commissioner has said, *il y a eu un gaspillage de fonds publics*. Will the Chief Commissioner inquire into the matter?

Mr Chairperson: I do not remember the Chief Commissioner saying that.

Mr Agathe: Yes, Sir, the amount which has been

Mr Chairperson: This is the Member's opinion.

(Interruptions)

Mr Agathe: The amount for salaries ...

Mr Chairperson: It's Questions Time. The Member should put his question.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, would the Chief Commissioner say why so many public workers are being involved in such a project?

The Chief Commissioner: As I have said, there were only 9 workers on the site. The Work Division has supervised the work and it seems that only 9 workers were required for the construction work.

Mr J. Roussety: If I had listened well, there is need for clarification. The *Comité de gestion* was entrusted the project, but it has not done its work correctly. I understand this is why Government workers were then involved. It is a case of fraud and corruption.

Mr Chairperson: The Member should put his question.

Mr J. Roussety: Is there going to be an inquiry to know when the amount of money was disbursed, for what purpose and to whom? Funds were provided for the construction of a market at Quatre Vents. Now Government funds have to be put in this project. Where are we going in this country?

Mr Chairperson: What is the Member's question. I did not get his question.

Mr J. Roussety: I would like to know whether the Chief Commissioner intends to go ahead with a detailed inquiry.

Mr Chairperson: For what?

Mr J. Roussety: For what has happened there. The project was entrusted first to the *Comité de Gestion*. Money was disbursed from international funds. But Government funds are being used. We are losing our credibility in this island. We have to find out what has happened. Is he going to set up an inquiry?

The Chief Commissioner: An extensive level of work has been carried out by volunteers, because of the nature of the site. The works...

(Interruptions)

A member: If the Member has a problem with someone, he cannot come...

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

The Chief Commissioner: He cannot do that! *Il peut venir avec des questions, mais sans rancune contre qui que ce soit.*

Mr Chairperson: I will not allow any more interruption. Proceed with your answer.

Mr AGATHE: May I ask the Chief Commissioner whether or not he is going to go ahead with an inquiry in that matter? I am insisting...

Mr Chairperson: I wish to point out that the Standing Orders are clear on this issue. I will have to quote Standing Order 21(4), which says that –

“An answer to a question cannot be insisted upon if refused by the Commissioner”.

(Interruptions)

A member: The Member has to study the Standing Orders.

Mr J. Roussety: I abide by your ruling, Mr Chairperson.

FESTIVAL KREOL - EXPENDITURE

(No. B/41) Mr J.C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the “*Festival kreol*” held in Rodrigues, she will state –

- (a) from what item money was disbursed for the financial years 2000/2001 and 2001/2002;
- (b) from what item money was disbursed for the financial year 2002/2003 and the total amount;
- (c) the names of the people on the committee and to what specific group they belong and their status;
- (d) the names of the people who intervened at Escale Vacances on the second day of the opening and their status;
- (e) the reason why Jean Marc Volcy did not attend the Festival, and table any letters sent to him with the specified conditions; and
- (f) the total amount of money paid to Rodriguan and other artists.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I would like to inform the Assembly that, as soon as I assumed office, I reactivated the organising committee which was in abeyance, and which had only a few days to prepare the activities. The Festival was organised during period 30 October to 03 November and attracts massive participation at all level. During the last two years, and this year also, the activities were financed under Capital Item “Promotion of Tourism”.

As in previous years, this year also the Indian Ocean Commission has contributed in the payment of air tickets for foreign artists from Comoros Islands and Madagascar. This year, a sum of Rs150,000 was allocated for this purpose.

From the budget of Rs1.15 m. earmarked for the Festival, an amount of Rs480,000, representing expenses for opening ceremony, regatta, cultural and youth activities and activities organised by Centre Carrefour, has already been paid. An outstanding balance of about Rs500,000 remain to be paid in respect of –

- (a) air tickets, board and lodging of foreign artists;
- (b) musical concert.

With regard to part (c) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the organising committee comprises the following –

No.	Name	Status	Specific Group/ Association
1.	Mrs Arlette PERRINE BEGUE	Deputy Chief Commissioner (Chairperson of the Committee)	
2.	Mr Louis Ange PERRINE	Co-ordinating Officer of the Rodrigues Administration	
3.	Mr Jean Cledino EDOUARD	Officer in Charge, Arts & Culture	
4.	Mr François d'Assise SPEVILLE	President of Regroupement des Auteurs/Compositeurs de Rodrigues	
5.	Mr Karl ALLAS	President of RCSS	
6.	Mr Luis LAROSE	Leader of Alpha Omega Traditional Group	
7.	Mr Helio ETIENNE	President "Association des Artistes Peintres de Rodrigues	
8.	Mr Laval AZIE	Social Worker	
9.	Mr Maxi ANDRE	President of ARTO	

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|---|
| 10. | Mrs Danielle MARTN | Choreographer at Youth Counselling Centre/Leader of Modern Dance Group “GOLD” |
| 11. | Mrs Noella PIERRE
LOUIS | Senior Probation Officer Responsible for hostesses |
| 12. | Mr Noel ALLAS | Writer/member of “Association littéraire de Rodrigues |

As regards part (d) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, among other activities organised on the second day of the Festival Kreol, a “*colloque*” was held at Escale Vacances. Most of the 31 persons from various organisations who attended the “*colloque*” intervened either by questioning the resource persons or by sharing their own opinion on the subject.

The following four persons intervened as guest speakers –

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|---|
| (i) | Mr Noel ALLAS | Chairman of the organising committee of the “ <i>colloque</i> ” |
| (ii) | Mr George LEGALLANT | Representative of “ <i>Ledikasion pu travayer</i> ” |
| (iii) | Mr Marcel POINEN | Representative of “ <i>Centre Culturel Africain</i> ” |
| (iv) | Mr Jean Marie RICHARD | Director of Imagine Agency |

At its first meeting, held on 19 October 2002, the organising committee approved the list of artists who were to be invited to participate in the concert “*Ambiance Ocean Indien*”.

Mr Volcy was contacted by phone and he agreed to come after 31 October. An official invitation was addressed to him on 22 October. I am tabling a copy of that invitation for the information of the House.

With regard to part (e) of the question, unfortunately on 29 October 2002, Mr Volcy, in a telephone conversation, informed the organising committee that he was unable to travel to Rodrigues on 01 November 2002, as he has not obtained his release from his client prior to 02 November. As the only available flight from Seychelles to Mauritius on Sunday 03 November was to reach Plaisance at 20.00 hours, after the departure of all flights to Rodrigues, Mr Volcy was unable to participate in the concert “*Ambiance Ocean Indien*” on 03 November 2002 at Malabar.

Regarding part (f), no performance fee was paid to artists from other islands. However, a stipend of Rs500 per day was paid to them, amounting to a total of Rs93,600.

An amount of Rs45,500 has been paid to local artists. Performance fees for cultural group and individual were Rs1,500 and Rs500 respectively.

Mr Emilien: The Deputy Chief Commissioner said that a budget of Rs1.15 m. was earmarked for the “*Festival Kreol*”, but that there was an outstanding balance of Rs500,000. Will this amount be spent, apart from the Rs1.15 m. earmarked for the “*Festival Kreol*”?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I think the Member has not got my answer clear. I said that out of Rs1.15 m. earmarked, Rs480,000 have already been paid and that a sum of Rs500,000 remain to be paid. We are still awaiting for bills to come.

RODRIGUAN STUDENTS – EDUCATIONAL TOURS TO MAURITIUS

(No. B/42) Mr J.C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner for Education whether, in regard to the participation of Rodriguan students to Mauritius for educational tours, he will state –

- (a) the names of primary schools involved, the number of children, teachers (per school) and parents participating this year;
- (b) their addresses in Mauritius, with telephone numbers, if any, and the conditions of their sleeping accommodation;
- (c) if the parents are duly informed about their daily visits and by what means;

- (d) the total amount of money disbursed per participant;
- (e) what he proposes to do in future for needy children who want to participate, but who are unable due to lack of funds from their parents.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the following primary schools are involved in educational tours to Mauritius this Year –

(a) Port Mathurin Govt. School

Date of stay	-	09 to 23 November of this year
Pupils	-	30
Teachers	-	3
Parents	-	3

(b) Don Bosco RCA School

Date of stay	-	10 to 25 November
Pupils	-	32
Teachers	-	3
Parents	-	8

(c) Mangues Govt. School

Date of stay	-	24 November to 08 December
Pupils	-	23
Teachers	-	6
Parents	-	11

I am further informed, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that their addresses and contact numbers in Mauritius are as follows –

Port Mathurin Govt. School Jean Roland Delaître Sports
4652749

Complex – Quatre Bornes

Don Bosco RCA School
4544350

Beau Sejour Govt. School -
Belle Rose

Mangues Govt. School
4652749

Centre de Loisirs – Quatre
Bornes

Sir, I have no information regarding the conditions of their sleeping accommodation. I have been informed, however that a programme of visits has been prepared by the Organising Committee of each school and has already been circulated to all parents. On the other hand, the parents are not informed about the daily visits by their children, but if the parents so wish, they may enter into contact with the responsible parties on the aforementioned phone numbers. It goes without saying, Sir, that outings with those children will depend on the vagaries of the weather; sometimes it rains and the children cannot go out to a particular place which is being planned for the day.

I have also been informed that the amounts of money disbursed vary from school to school. My Commission will look into the possibility of funding the participation of needy students who wish to participate, but who are unable to do so due to lack of funds.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am aware as I have seen that there are children sleeping.....

Mr Chairperson: Do you have a question?

Mr Agathe: Yes, Sir, pupils are sleeping on mattresses on the ground. So, will the Commissioner for Education take the remedial measures in the near future?

Mr L. Roussety: I thank the Second Member for Maréchal for his concern concerning the welfare of the children. I will take necessary measures as warranted on future educational trips to Mauritius to ensure that the children are properly accommodated.

SCHOOLS (SECONDARY) - ADMISSION

(No. B/43) Mr L.P. François (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether, with regard to the admission of secondary students next year, he will state -

- (a) whether the Mont Lubin College, which is at present under construction, will be completed in time for the admission of Form I students next year.
- (b) whether a college will be constructed at Songes.
- (c) how many seats are actually available for new secondary students.
- (d) what measures are being/will be taken for those students who will not be able to secure a seat in the secondary schools.

Mr L. Roussety: Sir, I have been informed that construction work at Mont Lubin College will not be completed in time for admission of Form I students in January 2003.

In line with the educational reform, one college will be constructed at Songes. I have been given to understand that the project is at design stage at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure in Mauritius and that tender for the construction of the college will be floated shortly. Any delay occurring in the floating of tenders cannot be laid at our door.

The number of seats available for admission in January 2003 will be 608 for Form I and 175 for pre-vocational admission.

My Commission has taken all necessary action so that all students without exception will be able to secure a seat in a secondary school next year.

COTTON BAY HOTEL - HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES

(No. B/44) Miss M.L. Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Labour & Industrial Relations whether, in relation to health and safety measures taken by the Cotton Bay Hotel for the benefit of its employees, he will state -

- (a) whether there has been any complaint concerning health and safety hazards existing on the premises of the hotel;

(b) whether there is a regular monitoring by the Labour Inspectorate to ensure compliance with health and safety legislation.

Mr L. Roussety: Sir, I am informed that no official complaint has been recorded at the Labour Office concerning health and safety hazards at the premises of the Cotton Bay Hotel.

As there is no officer from the Occupational Safety & Health Inspectorate posted yet in Rodrigues in spite of the fact that there are provisions for the employment of such officer, the Labour Officer from the Labour Inspectorate has been entrusted to enforce few provisions of the Occupational Safety, Health and Welfare Act amongst others -

- To register all factories operating in Rodrigues
- To operate an accident reporting system
- To ensure examination of all machineries
- To enforce only certain provisions of the Act namely first-aid, welfare facilities, fire-fighting measures and equipment, mess rooms, etc.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the other provisions of the Act which are of more technical and complex nature, same are dealt with during regular visits of the Senior Occupational Safety and Health Inspectors from the parent Ministry (at least twice yearly) for full inspections and follow-up of previous inspections.

I have requested the Labour Inspectorate to effect a regular monitoring of the above hotel so as to ensure that the management of the hotel is fully complying with health and safety regulations.

COTTON BAY HOTEL - WORKERS - DISMISSAL

(No. B/45) Miss M.L. Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Labour & Industrial Relations whether, in relation to demand for workers by the Cotton Bay Hotel, he will state -

(a) whether some workers have been dismissed as a result of a reduction of the workforce there;

(b) whether, in this connection, there has been compliance with the Labour Act; and

(c) whether due compensations have been paid to the workers who have been dismissed.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I was personally made aware of the case of one worker, who had been made redundant by the management of Cotton Bay Hotel. I immediately met the management of the Hotel who confirmed that the person involved, namely a typist, had been made redundant as a result of a reduction in the workforce.

I would like to recall this House of the provisions of Section 39 (2) of the Labour Act which stipulates that an employer who intends to reduce the number of workers in his employment shall give written notice to the Minister together with a statement of the reasons for the reduction in the workforce. The management of the hotel has given no notification of such an intention on her part.

It appeared from the discussion with the management that the employee has been paid 120 days remuneration together with severance allowance at the normal rate.

I have therefore requested the Labour Office to carry out an investigation and to deal with the case as per existing provisions of the Labour Act.

Mr J. Roussety: The Commissioner has said that according to provisions of the Labour Act, notice must be given to the Minister, I believe it is the Minister of Labour. Is he sure that no notice has been given? He is answering on behalf of the Minister of Labour. *Quelque temps de cela on a eu la réponse du Commissaire. Il a dit que si on veut poser une question sur le Trust Fund, the question should be addressed to Mauritius.*

Mr Chairperson: Yes, but the question has already been answered.

Mr J. Roussety: Is the Commissioner sure that notice has not been given?

Mr L. Roussety: Sir, I would say that perhaps in the interpretation of Minister, it is Commissioner. But no notice was given to the Commissioner here. We have full administration of the Labour Act.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, but does the Commissioner have full administration over the Ministry of Labour?

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it would appear that that is so within the Island of Rodrigues and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - FUNDS

(No. B/46) Miss M. L. Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether in view of the low utilisation rate of funds available under the Community Development Programme (Rodrigues component) of the "Rural Diversification Programme" financed by IFAD Loan -

- (a) she proposes to take some specific measures to speed up the process of identification, conceptualisation and eventual approval of community development projects;
- (b) and, if in the affirmative, state the measures, and
- (c) if not, state the reasons therefore.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Sir, since I took office I have given a special consideration to the poverty alleviation programme. In respect to the IFAD Community Development Programme, I have already taken the following measures in consultation with the National Co-ordinator of the Programme with relevant stakeholders on factors hindering projects implementation.

- (a) The Programme Management Unit (PMU) which is staffed with a single programme co-ordinator will now be reinforced with the posting of additional staff. In the meantime, the co-ordinator will carry out more field activities. Appropriate office space would also be provided.
- (b) The Planning Cell will ensure better co-ordination between all the IFAD funded programmes in the island, that is, the Community Development Programme (CDP), the Micro Credit

Scheme and FADS fishery development which are under the responsibility of different Ministries.

- (c) The Executive Council has already approved the establishment of a Poverty Alleviation Co-ordinating Committee for Rodrigues. The Committee will comprise representatives of all poverty alleviation programmes, the civil society and relevant Government Departments. This will ensure, *inter alia*, better co-ordination and exchange of views on their activities.
- (d) I observed that the programme is not well-known among the population. So, in order to disseminate information on the programme full use will be made of all the available media including the radio. Arrangements will be made to publish pamphlets and posters for circulation in the villages and posting in public establishments.
- (e) It is felt that the Community Based Organisations and groups are not being able to take full advantage of the Programme. The RCSS being the representative of the villages committees throughout the island has agreed to offer its service in the identification and eventual monitoring of approved projects. In this context, a draft Memorandum of Understanding has already been prepared and will be signed between IFAD Community Development Programme and the RCSS shortly. The RCSS will, *inter alia*, be able to recruit 2 social facilitators for its field work.
- (f) The next Programme Steering Committee for Rodrigues chaired by the Island Chief Executive will study ten community projects.
- (g) I have myself visited villages during the past few weeks and I am fully convinced that the lack of social infrastructure such as access and leisure activities is a major hindrance to human development. These projects fall well within the mandate of IFAD Community Development Programme and efforts would be made to identify and execute such projects as a priority.

I wish to assure Members of the Assembly that the IFAD Community Development Programme will enjoy the special attention of my office and I will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the programme gain additional momentum in the weeks to come.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, low utilisation of rate of funds very often - and I know in this case - is due to bad management. Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner tell us, from the beginning until to date, what is the name of the officer who was in charge of that programme?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Well, I don't think it is good for me to come and mention the name, but I will say that we had one single programme co-ordinator. The programme was understaffed; that is the problem. There are many procedures which are being imposed by the funding organisation for that matter. This person cannot be the co-ordinator, the clerk, etc. and go on the field and look for people to come and ask for funding under this project. That is the main hindrance to the implementation of this programme. We have found this problem and we have already discussed the matter over with the representatives of funding organisations as well as people coming up to Rodrigues.

Mr Emilien: Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform this House whether a Committee chaired by the Island Chief Executive will study 10 projects? Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House about these projects? If she doesn't have the information, she can table it later on.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I will table the information later on. There is no problem about that.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I know that the name of the officer I was asking for has not been given, but the Deputy Chief Commissioner has just said that there were problems at the beginning with the implementation. So, is she going to ensure that funds are spent according to budget, so that at the end of the financial year, we don't hear that Rs 100 m. or Rs 200 m. are left on projects? Now that we are autonomous, is she going to ensure that - she mentioned recently in this Assembly that we are the poorest region of the Republic - necessary measures are taken so that these funds go to those who are poor, to those who do not have water and to those who are walking in the mud. This is what should be done.

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The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The Minority Leader makes me laugh! As regards this question, I can't go on answering questions on water. You know well that I don't have any answer as far as water is concerned because it does not fall under my area of responsibility.

As regards this programme, I have just mentioned that at least eight measures have been taken to reactivate this programme. I think you have heard about it. We are coming up with more staff. We are coming up with better co-ordination. We are going to recruit field officers. We are contracting out with other NGOs to come and work with us. What do you want us to do more?

Mr J. Roussety: As regards the appointment of the RCSS, I heard the Deputy Chief Commissioner say there is a Memorandum of Understanding which is going to be signed with the RCSS. Can I ask her what has been the procedure of selection of the RCSS, whether she should not have considered the possibility of inviting other associations, AMRO for example?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Proceed with your question, please!

Mr J. Roussety: I am waiting for some order in the House. Can she review the procedure for selection? Why is RCSS selected all the time? We have all sorts of institutions and NGOs in this island, why doesn't she go towards them? My question is: why have the other associations and NGOs not participated in such programmes? Their rights have been biased. I am personally aware of this problem.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, I thank the Minority Leader for this remark, but I would like to say that the RCSS are very representative of Rodrigues...

(Interruptions)

It has nothing to do with political affiliation!

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, it has nothing to do with political affiliation. If the hon. Member says they are OPR, I would

say that that the AMRO also is connected to them! What I can say is that the RCSS is very representative, because all the villages are affiliated to the RCSS.

Mr Chairperson, I would like to point out that the "*Levé debout*" programme is also on its part sending 100 projects to be looked into and eventually approved under this scheme.

There is only one IFAD project with which I am concerned and it is the community development; we all know that the RCSS are represented - the presidents of all villages, not the OPR. If the hon. Member has any information...

(Interruptions)

If the hon. Member is saying that all the presidents of all villages are OPR, then he is saying that we are very, very great...

(Interruptions)

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, we never say that all presidents of villages in Rodrigues are OPR.

(Interruptions)

We never said that!

Mr Chairperson: No more challenges, please! This is Question Time. Next question, please!

BOOK LOAN SCHEME - NEEDY STUDENTS

(No. B/47) Mr R. Mercure (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Education whether, in regard to the Book Loan Scheme for needy students in secondary schools, he will state -

- (a) what measures he will take to avoid delay in the distribution of books to needy students so that they receive books on time, that is, at the beginning of the year 2003;

- (b) what mechanism he will put up to ease the acquisition of books and to facilitate book loans in the future.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, having myself in the past been the witness of the tremendous inconvenience caused to needy students due to the huge delay in the distribution of books to needy students, I have requested my Commission to arrange for the timely launching of quotations for the purchase of all the required books for the needy students. The quotations have effectively been launched and the offers are currently being evaluated. An order will be placed by the end of this week to enable the receipt of all books by the end of December 2002, so as to enable their delivery to the respective schools early in January 2003.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make a small comment. We hope sincerely that the delivery of schoolbooks will take place in January.

I am intending as from next year to set up a co-ordinating committee with representatives of the different colleges, officers of my Commission, as well as officers from the Social Security Division, to speed up the processing of application forms submitted by the students concerned.

PORT MATHURIN - WATER SUPPLY - DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

(No. B/48) Miss M. L. Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the connection of some dwellings to the main pipes of the water network, he will state what measures are being taken for those people especially owners of large surfaces in Port Mathurin, who have their water supply directly on the mains.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that a special water pipeline mains was laid in order to alleviate the water problem linked to the Passenger Terminal Building, the Port Mathurin Market and the Bus Terminal.

I have been informed by the Water Resources Division that the three water prises have been installed on that mains.

This is causing much frustration in the public in the sense that the above water prise owners are more favourably served with water than their neighbours next door who have their prise on the Port Mathurin distribution network.

I am giving immediate instruction to the Water Resources Division to remove all prises located on all primary networks at the above places as well as throughout the island. My Government will not tolerate any form of discrimination in the water distribution among people of the same locality.

**CAMP DU ROI - DANGEROUS ROAD SEGMENT
(NEAR LIM KIM SHOP) - DEATH OF MARINA LEVÈQUE**

(No. B/49) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the dangerous road segment near Lim Kim shop in Camp du Roi that caused the accident leading to the death of Marina Levèque, he will state -

- (a) when the road segment will be upgraded for the security of the inhabitants of the surrounding area, and
- (b) the measures which are being taken to improve the drains around that dangerous spot especially in view of the cyclonic season.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to refer the respected Member to the last part of my reply to PQ. No. B/16 concerning the road linking Camp du Roi to Hauteur Accacia which includes the road segment and the dangerous curve.

Pending the construction and enlargement of the roads, the Environment Unit will ensure that the contractor responsible for cleaning of the drains does maintain same regularly.

FISHERMEN (PROFESSIONALS) - END-OF-YEAR ALLOWANCE

(No. B/50) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in view of the difficulties fishermen face to buy books and uniforms for their children, he will state -

- (a) if professional fishermen could be provided with an end-of-year allowance for that purpose, and
- (b) what measures are being proposed to assist these vulnerable groups to support their children.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed that the condition prescribed by the Ministry of Fisheries for payment of bad weather allowance under the incentives scheme to professional fishermen does not provide for the payment of an end-of-year allowance.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance has authorised payment of end-of-year bonus only to public sector employees and pensioners.

As from July this year, the allowance is Rs125 per day excluding Sundays and Public Holidays and are paid when fishermen are unable to go out for fishing because of bad weather, that is, when wind speed exceeds 19.2 kms per hour or the sea is rough as determined by the Meteorological Services.

As far as part (b) is concerned, I have been advised that each year the Fishermen Welfare Fund is offering scholarships to children of fishermen as follows –

- (i) 10 scholarships for successful CPE students
- (ii) 3 scholarships for successful SC students
- (iii) 2 scholarships for successful HSC students

The Employees Welfare Fund has set up a loan scheme to assist families in the low income groups in Mauritius, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands for the purchase of textbooks and to encourage children in those families who are making efforts to acquire education.

FISHERMEN - BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

(No. B/51) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the bad weather allowance payable to fishermen, he will state –

- (a) if the allowance can be computed on a monthly basis;
- (b) if the fishermen could be sent a monthly statement (slip) stating the amount of bad weather allowance.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), bad weather allowance is already being computed on a monthly basis in accordance with a report of the Meteorological Services which is normally received in the first week of the following month.

As regards part (b), it has been decided that the fishermen will be informed of the number of bad weather days with respective dates through the communiqué issued by my Commission regarding payment of bad weather allowance for the month.

Mr Agathe: The question is how a pay slip....

Mr Chairperson: What is your question, please?

Mr Agathe: Will the Chief Commissioner give the fishermen a pay slip?

Mr Chairperson: The question has been answered. Next question, please!

(Interruptions)

I maintain that the question has been answered.

PLANTERS - PROFESSIONAL CARDS

(No. B/52) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in view of the difficulties faced by farmers in Rodrigues especially during the drought and cyclonic seasons, he will state -

- (a) if farmers will receive a professional card certifying their involvement in agriculture;
- (b) if farmers could benefit from a bad weather allowance, and
- (c) if not, what measures are being proposed to support these farmers.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that after the proclamation of the Small Planters Welfare Fund Act 2002 in May 2002, the agricultural services have undertaken a survey of all planters in July/August 2002 to update the list of planters. After the processing of the survey data, a decision will be taken regarding the necessity to register professional planters, that is, to issue professional cards to planters.

After natural disasters like cyclone and flood, planters were granted a rehabilitation loan by the Development Bank of Mauritius at 3% interest rate. To benefit from such loans the agricultural services have to certify that the applicant is a *bona fide* planter giving details of his agricultural services.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is not considered that bad weather allowance which is payable to professional fishermen in compensation of days when they are unable to go out for fishing due to bad weather can be applied to farmers.

However, with respect to parts (b) and (c) of the question, the issues fall under the purview of the Small Planters Welfare Fund. The objective of the Small Planters Welfare Fund is to advance and promote the welfare of small planters and their families while its function include *inter alia* the setting up and development of schemes and projects including schemes in respect of loan and other financial assistance, for the welfare of small planters and their families.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a planter from Rodrigues will be nominated to sit on the Small Planters Welfare Fund.

Furthermore as indicated in my statement on the first sitting of the Assembly, a Rodrigues Farmers Welfare Fund will also be set up specifically for Rodrigues to cater for the welfare of planters in Rodrigues.

STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

STATE LAND LEASES - RENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a statement with respect to the reply I made to Question B/1 addressed to me by the Minority Leader at the sitting of Tuesday 05 November 2002. I am informed by the Principal Surveyor that, in fact, Mr D. Bégué & Cie Ste de Filaos; Dr William Auguste; Mrs Hung Sik Yan Marie Aline; Mr Hung Sik Yan Tat Yuen have effected payment for the period 30 June 2002 to 30 June 2003.

It has been noticed that the erroneous information tendered to the effect that those four lessees have not settled their rent was obtained from their respective rent cards which were not updated.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am handing over a list of leaseholders for tourism purposes to the Clerk as requested in part (b) of Question B/1.

NAVIGATIONAL AIDS - INSTALLATION - TENDER

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a statement in reply to the supplementary question to Question No. B/3 addressed to me by the First Local Region Member for Maréchal at the sitting of 03 November 2002. I am informed that the tender for the installation of navigational aids has not been cancelled. The tender documents are being reworked according to the specifications of Rodriguan needs and a new tender will be refloated soon.

DA FLORENCE EDOUARD - ATHLETE - OBITUARY

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is with much regret that, with your kind permission, I would request this House to observe a minute's silence in memory of the late Miss Da Florence Edouard who suddenly passed away last week.

On behalf of the Governing Executive Council, of all Members of this House and on my own behalf, I pay special tribute to the deceased athlete for her outstanding performances in athletic fields in Rodrigues, in the regions and at international levels.

Her determination and perseverance at attaining excellence as an athlete should be an example for her friends, schoolmates and the Rodriguan youth in their aim to attain higher level professionalism in the respective disciplines and I trust that the high professionalism reached by our local sportsmen in the future will be the best tribute made by late Da Florence Edouard in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, on behalf of the Governing Executive Council, it is our policy in the future to give the names of our elite in various fields to important public infrastructures around the island and you will agree that late Miss Da Florence can be one of the elite.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg this House to observe one minute of silence in memory of late Miss Da Florence Edouard.

Thank you.

(At this stage one minute of silence was observed)

The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety): M. le président, je souhaiterais au nom de l'opposition joindre nos condoléances à celles qui seront transmises à la famille de mademoiselle Da Florence Edouard que j'ai connue personnellement et dont le père est assez proche de moi.

Nous sommes profondément désolés et nous joignons nos condoléances à celles adressées par le Chef Commissaire à la famille Da Florence Edouard et à toute la communauté sportive de Rodrigues.

C'est en fait une très grande perte pour Rodrigues. Nous saluons la volonté qui a été exprimée de donner le nom de l'athlète décédée à une des aménités sportives de Rodrigues.

Merci.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 20 December 2002 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

At 12.15 hrs? The Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 20 December 2002 at 10.30 a.m.