

No. 12 of 2003

**RODRIGUES**

**FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Debate No. 12 of 2003**

**Sitting of Tuesday 15 July 2003**

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

*(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)*

**The National Anthem was  
played**

**Debate No.12 of 15 July 2003**

**ANNOUNCEMENT  
CHAIRPERSON - RULINGS**

**Mr Chairperson:** Respected Members, I refer to my decision to order a Member to withdraw from the Assembly House. A lot has been said including a reference to me as an ex-magistrate. I wish to put on record that I resigned as a magistrate in order to be here. During the time I have been on the Bench, I have delivered hundreds of rulings, judgments and sentences. None of them has been quashed on appeal if at all any of them was ever subject to an appeal. Lastly, I wish to add that my future decisions will not be different if the same sequence of events happens to repeat itself. I stand before the House with the same frame of mind, save amends, of course. The dignity of this House rests upon the dignity of all its Members; and no Member is allowed to use unbecoming words or expressions or use offensive language about other Members.

I thank you.

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS  
COMMISSIONERS - OFFICIAL VISITS ABROAD**

**(No. B/273) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether he could inform the House -

- (a) of the number of official visits he and the other Commissioners have had abroad (including mainland Mauritius) since the setting up of the Executive Council;
- (b) about the outcome of each visit and how Rodrigues has benefited therefrom; and
- (c) table the total expenses incurred thereon.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the number of official visits which members of the Executive Council have effected to Mauritius and overseas since the setting up of the Executive Council is being circulated **(Appendix I)**. There have been nineteen (19) official visits to Mauritius and three (3) official visits overseas. This includes visits of all Rodrigues Regional Assembly's members as well as Commissioners and visits on familiarization tours of National Assembly.

With regard to part (b), Members of the Executive Council go on official mission especially to Mauritius to discuss with stakeholders on matters concerning the implementation of policies at their respective Commissions. It is difficult to quantify the outcome of each visit, but I can inform this Assembly that many important decisions have been taken at Commission level following the visits effected by members of the Executive Council.

Concerning the three missions overseas, we were invited by United Nations Agencies to form part of the delegation of the Republic of Mauritius attending the international fora. We had the occasion to expose the case of Rodrigues Regional Assembly whenever the occasion presented itself to us.

With regard to part (c), the expenses incurred for any mission can be broken down into three components -

- (i) air tickets;
- (ii) hotel accommodation or subsistence allowance if no hotel accommodation is required; and
- (iii) Per-diem allowance and entertainment allowance (allowable only for Chief Commissioner and Deputy Chief Commissioner).

The total expenses incurred for all the above missions are being compiled and a statement will be tabled later.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Chief Commissioner inform the House about the number of planned visits to the mainland and abroad on receipt of invitations and secondly whether during these visits there has been any meeting with investors and, if so, could he give a statement thereon?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all the visits of Commissioners to Mauritius have been decided by the Executive Council and a programme has been prepared for meetings with different stakeholders in Mauritius. I remember I was on a mission with my colleague, the Deputy Chief Commissioner. The member was talking about investors. We did meet the Board of Investment there and we met also the people who have projects in Rodrigues especially hotel projects. That's all I can say about the visits. As for the visits financed by UNDP it was on invitation to the international forum because we have here various projects financed by the UNDP.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson Sir, there is one Commissioner who has been going abroad for two (2) consecutive missions. Could the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether that Commissioner is still on mission abroad; and secondly whether the Executive Council has planned other visits until the end of this year?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Yes, Commissioner Arlette Perrine-Bégué went on mission twice to UNESCO, as I said and as you will see in the annex; and the second meeting was in Morocco and she is back and now she is in Mauritius for treatment and no other mission has been planned till now.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, when the members of the Executive Council have to travel overseas, that is, outside Mauritius, can I ask the Chief Commissioner what is the procedure? Can they act independently, that is, leave Mauritius officially by themselves or do they need the advice or authorisation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we can't go officially abroad without having the authorisation of the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is the procedure we have to take into account; and we did receive a few weeks ago the visit of the Minister of the Foreign Affairs just to share with us all the procedures when we go abroad. Every visit abroad - even my participation in the MDG's forum in Johannesburg - should be approved by the Prime Minister's Office.

### STRAY ANIMALS - ROAD USERS

**(No. B/274) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether as regards stray animals in Rodrigues, more particularly dogs, he was aware of the danger they represent to road users and, if yes, inform the House of the measures he intended to take to remedy same.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the problems of stray animals in Rodrigues and, more particularly dogs, is indeed of much concern to all of us. I am informed by the "*Police de l'Environnement*" and the Police Department in Rodrigues that several complaints have been registered by their respective office and have been attended to and that legal actions are being and have been initiated against the contraveners. I am further informed that more than 200 contraventions in 2002 and 95 contraventions up to June 2003 have been taken by the police under the offence "Allowing animals to stray". PAWS (Protection of Animals Welfare Society) were contacted by the Executive Council of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and they have visited Rodrigues in the month of May 2003. During their stay, they have held sensitization seminars with different NGOs and school children with a view to starting a mass sterilization programme for dogs in Rodrigues. Follow-up action is being carried out to ensure that the sterilization programme starts at the earliest.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given that most of the people living around the coast in Rodrigues are farmers, one can see at many places domestic animals like cows, sheep, goats and even pigs roaming everywhere; this can hinder the normal

traffic flow on our roads and very often these animals cause accidents. Could the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether measures like warning signs specifying danger of animals in certain locations could be placed in a conspicuous way as a matter of urgency?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Yes, I agree with the respected member that this is a matter of urgency. We have set up a Road Safety Committee and are looking into the matter. Specific signs will be placed to warn road users where animals roam.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has mentioned PAWS which is going to initiate a mass sterilization programme in Rodrigues. This is as far as PAWS is concerned. Under his Commission, especially at the Veterinary Services are there any services provided to the public in the long-term and on a permanent basis to owners of dogs and other animals?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Discussions held in the past between the MSPCA and the Rodrigues Administration to set up a branch of MSPCA in Rodrigues have not materialized for unknown reasons. My Commission will shortly re-start negotiation with MSPCA with a view to setting up a local branch in Rodrigues, in conjunction with the Veterinary Services.

### **BAIE MALGACHE - PLANTERS**

**(No. B/275) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the planters of Baie Malgache, he could say -

- (a) how many planters are now actively involved in planting activities; and
- (b) what water facilities are offered to them.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that there are 34 planters that are involved in the valley of Baie Malgache, out of whom 15 are actively involved on a daily basis. I am further informed that out of 15 active planters, only 10 of them are provided with water. The whole network is being redesigned and upgraded; it is expected that all planters will be connected by mid August, 2003.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House why is it that more than half of the planters of Baie Malgache are not actively involved in planting activities? Is this caused by the lack of water or is it a problem of leases? Could he please inform the House about the procedure for renewal of leases in the valley of Baie Malgache? Because formerly much money had been spent there so that this valley could produce agricultural items for Rodrigues.

**Mr Chairperson:** This question is a bit far from the original question. Unless the Commissioner concerned wishes to reply.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** My Commission is not concerned with leases. It is the Commission for land which approves agricultural leases through the Executive Council. I've taken note of what the Member has said and I will look into this.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether there is in the pipeline, by his Commission, any construction of dam in that valley in order to help these 34 people to cultivate their land? Because it is not good to see that only ten (10), that is 1/3 of the total number of planters are now actively involved in planting activities.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is working on the feasibility study for the construction of a dam at Pavé la Bonté so as to give the Northern inhabitants water for domestic and irrigation purposes.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Furthermore, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the 10 people who are active have managed to dig the river bed so that when water stops flowing, water which used to be stagnant can now be used by them for irrigation purposes. Everyday we can see lorries and tankers come there and pump this water. This causes lots of problem to these planters. Could the Deputy Chief Commissioner find other ways and means to help both planters and tankers?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** To prevent frustration among planters and tanker owners at St. Gabriel and Mangues, we are now telling the owners of tankers to go there to have water. If this is causing much frustration, advice will be given to them to follow their courses to St. Gabriel and Mangues and not to Baie Malgache.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the valley of Baie Malgache, there is a water tank; I want to know how many times it has been filled.

**Mr Chairperson:** Be more precise please by specifying dates or periods.

**Mr Agathe:** Has the tank ever been filled?

**Mr Chairperson:** I can't understand the question. Is the Commissioner going to reply?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't have the information with me. But as I said the whole network is being re-designed and planned

and if we are re-designing it, it is in order to fill the tank if ever it has never been satisfactorily filled.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner is aware that there are water tanks on lorries that fill their tanks there, mainly for construction purposes. Are there regulations governing pumping of water in Rodrigues by these tankers and, if yes, what are these regulations and are they applied?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** There are no regulations governing pumping of water by lorry tankers.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Therefore, if I understand well, anybody who owns a tank can pump water anywhere from any river in Rodrigues at any time. I'll rephrase my question; maybe you have not understood my question, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Chairperson:** I have not said so.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Normally, we advise lorry tankers to pump water from dams like St. Gabriel and Mangues because there are access roads leading to these dams. But before they go there, we give them a special authorization. My Commission will work shortly on water regulations for Rodrigues. We shall ensure there are specific regulations made for the pumping of water.

### **PIGS – SALE ON LOCAL AND MAURITIAN MARKET**

**(No. B/276) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade whether, as regards, the sale of pigs on the local and Mauritian markets, he would inform the House -

- (a) of the average Rodriguan annual production and export;
- (b) if the prices of pigs on our markets had decreased and the reasons therefore; and
- (c) of the measures he intended to take to ensure a guaranteed market, as far as pigs are concerned, to farmers.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** With your permission, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I'll answer Question B/276. I have been informed that the average annual production of pigs is about 3000 heads and the average annual export is about 1950 heads.

The prices of pigs on the local market are subject to several factors such as -

- (a) production trends in Rodrigues;
- (b) production trends in Mauritius, and
- (c) seasonal variation.

Any fluctuations in above will result in an increase or decrease in price. I have been informed that the demand for pigs for export have decreased significantly due to surplus production on the Mauritian market. The Agricultural Services have recently worked out a strategic plan for the pig sector in Rodrigues. The plan will be exposed to the public in the coming weeks. The plan aims at ensuring a guaranteed market and guaranteed production for pigs. Moreover, the Executive Council has approved the request for the setting up of a “Charcuterie” in Rodrigues. It is felt that this will stabilize the demand potential for pigs, thus ensuring a guaranteed price for pigs. Meanwhile, the situation as regards supply and demand of animals is being closely monitored. It is also reiterated that the policy of the Commission is to ensure that local production is not affected while at the time ensuring that the interests of all the parties, including butchers and consumers are safeguarded.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner will agree with me that pig rearing in Rodrigues is one of the most widely spread activities. When these farmers cannot export their products, this causes a lot of difficulties in their monthly budgets as many of them have contracted loans with DBM. Therefore, they cannot refund in time and this causes a lot of problems to them. Could the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether his Commission could look into the question of the price of imported pig feeds which are sold on the market? Could these be subsidized so as to compensate their losses as a result of market imbalances?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, to have a guaranteed market the Commission of Agriculture is working on a strategic plan to promote the transformation of finished goods in Rodrigues such as yam. *C'est pour cela qu'on met en place une charcuterie pour pouvoir exporter des carcasses vers Maurice.*

Concerning the price of animal feed on the market, there is already a subsidy on animal feed of about Rs100 per bag. But I would like to inform the respected member that my Commission will always be on the side of the animal rearers so that the subsidy remains as it is or increases.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as a result of the decrease in the price of pigs, for export, it has been noted that the price of pork here has not decreased. This is not to the advantage of consumers. Could the Deputy Chief Commissioner see to it that whenever the price of pigs goes down, the price of pork as well goes down. So everybody *sort gagnant*.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Je comprends l'inquiétude du membre de la minorité. Mais c'est une question de l'offre et de la demande. Même si le prix de la

viande reste à R 60 la livre, les gens achètent. Si les gens n'achètent pas c'est automatique que le prix va baisser.

*(Interruptions)*

Non, ils ne sont pas forcés de le faire. C'est cela la règle de l'offre et de la demande. Je comprends que les éleveurs achètent *animal feed* à un prix élevé et parfois que le prix de la viande est trop bas. C'est pour cela qu'on prépare le plan stratégique sur l'agriculture pour que les éleveurs puissent avoir un certain profit dans leur métier.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner is venturing in unknown territory. He was speaking of water last time. I'd like to tell him that demand and supply are not the only determinants. Whenever a price exists, it does not mean it is the right one. There are market failures, and in this particular market for pigs and secondarily, the market for pork, we have the case of primary products with highly volatile prices. This is true everywhere. But there is one mechanism which we call "Price Stabilisation Mechanism" which can be put in place to support the pig breeders.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are at question time, not the time for speeches.

**Mr Chairperson:** I understand that the member wanted to take on what the Commissioner has said. The Minority Leader is aware that this is question time. He should be brief.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I am asking him whether he will study the possibility of setting up a price stabilization mechanism to help pig rearers. Sometimes they sell at high prices, sometimes at low ones. This causes great distortions in production. When prices are low, most people leave the industry and when prices are high they enter it. So, will the Deputy Chief Commissioner examine the possibility of introducing a sort of price stabilization mechanism to help these pig rearers?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, everyone is expert in his field. I will take into consideration the explanation of the Minority Leader who is an economist from Paris, Sorbonne.

**Mr Chairperson:** Next Question.

**ST. GABRIEL BREEDING CENTRE - DEATH OF CATTLE**

**(No. B/277) Mr F. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to cattle at St. Gabriel Breeding Centre, he could state –

- (a) if any death had been recorded among same during the past two years, and if yes, and
- (b) give their number per sex and age.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, Sir I have been informed that the number of cattle death recorded during the past two years as well as the respective age and sex of the cattle are as follows -

**Year 2002**

| <b><u>Date of Death</u></b> | <b><u>Sex</u></b> | <b><u>Age</u></b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 03.02.2002                  | Female            | 14 months         |
| 04.02.2002                  | Female            | 1 year            |
| 01.11.2002                  | Female            | 14 months         |
| 23.11.2002                  | Female            | 18 months         |

**Year 2003**

| <b><u>Date of Death</u></b> | <b><u>Sex</u></b> | <b><u>Age</u></b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 28.03.2003                  | Female            | 8 years           |
| 23.06.2003                  | Female            | 8 years           |

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner the reasons for these deaths?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Most of the animals died of stunted growth, recumbency and pneumonia.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether it is a question of adaptability? Because last time I asked a question on the

transfer of animals from Baie Topaze – beef cattle meant for meat production which do not adapt to conditions in St. Gabriel. Those reared at St. Gabriel are dairy cattle, i.e. reared for milk. Could the Chief Commissioner state whether these deaths are because of nonadaptability or delocalisation?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is working on the delocalisation of cattle in Rodrigues. But I want to inform the respected Member that there are deaths also in the other agricultural centres, not only in St. Gabriel.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, would the Deputy Chief Commissioner say whether deaths also include animals slaughtered after sustaining injury or animals found dead by themselves?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Yes, the figures include both.

**Mr J. Roussety:** In this case, out of the figures how many died naturally and how many were slaughtered as a result of injury?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of the question. I don't have the information in front of me.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Of course, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we'll give notice of the question. As regards the animals which were slaughtered and those found dead, we do not know how many of them. We understand the figures include both categories. How were they disposed of? Were they buried? As regards those which were slaughtered, were the meat and by-products sold?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, all deaths are certified by the Veterinary Officer. As from May this year all deaths are now certified by the Officer in Charge of the Livestock Centre, the Veterinary Officer and the Officer in Charge of the Station. All dead animals are buried whereas injured animals are killed to prevent undue suffering and, if recommended for slaughter by the Veterinary Officer for human consumption, are sold at concessionary rates. A committee comprising the Agricultural Services and the Finance Section work out the prices for the sale of agricultural products. As regards cattle, the prices vary from Rs15 to Rs40 per kg.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House how St. Gabriel Breeding Station is being administered? Because in the recent past there was a question of privatization in the pipeline. Is it still in the pipeline or will it remain a government property under the administration of his Commission?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is another issue. We were talking about deaths of cattle, now we are talking about the administration of St.

Gabriel Breeding Station. I shall come later with a statement on the whole picture of agriculture in Rodrigues, including the modernisation of St. Gabriel Centre.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the animals which were slaughtered and found fit for sale to the public within the range of Rs15 to Rs40 a kg - I remember somebody was saying that the price of pork would come down to Rs10 - can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner, when the animal was slaughtered by government labour, how was it sold and to whom? Was it through advertisement or whether officers of the station phoned their relatives? Or was it sold to passers-by or were tenders invited? This is my first question.

**Mr Chairperson:** This question is not allowed. I have given you a lot of latitude concerning this question. It has no link at all to the main question. You undertook to give notice this question. If you can proceed by asking a question which is linked to the original question.

**Mr J. Roussety:** My question is: how the meat was sold on the market, by themselves? Was it sold at the agricultural station?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, You cannot premeditate the death of cattle. So, no tenders can be invited for the sale of meat.

*(Interruptions)*

Yes, it is the cattle of Government. But there is a technical committee on that. They know their work, they have been trained to do it; and the meat is sold at the agricultural station and any passer-by can buy it.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask him...I don't know whether you will allow me this question...

**Mr Chairperson:** You are right. No more questions on the sale of meat. Reserve your questions when you give notice.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner instead of selling the meat, why not provide it to the hospital or prison.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally if there is a surplus, we provide it to the hospital or the prison. We do not take six to eight hours to sell the meat. Any passer-by can buy it.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Would the Commissioner say whether the injuries which these animals have sustained prior to being slaughtered, are provoked or genuine?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, there is a Veterinary Officer who looks after all this. What the Minority Leader is doing, he is imputing motives on the capabilities of the Officer.

**MTE PLATE (CAMP PINTADE) - PARC DE TRANSIT**

**(No. B/278) Mr F. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the “Parc de Transit” found at Mte. Plate (Camp Pintade), he could state -

- (a) when it was constructed and its total cost; and
- (b) what was the purpose of same.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the Parc de Transit at Montagne Plate became operational on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2001. An amount of Rs229,888.00 was disbursed for the purchase of materials for its construction. The building was constructed using government labour. The park was constructed prior to the destocking programme for the fattening of cows before their transfer to Mauritius. In line with the governing executive council policy to encourage farmers to move to cattle walk areas, the Agricultural Services are looking into the possibility to move all the cattle presently at St.Gabriel.

The area will become a properly managed pastoral area and will be used to show to Rodriguan farmers the benefits of adopting new techniques in pasture land management and cattle rearing.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I welcome the decision of the Deputy Chief Commissioner. I hope this will be a reality very soon. I would like to request him...

**Mr Chairperson:** Not a request, a question, please.

**Mr Grandcourt:** I would like to ask him whether he intends to introduce new breeds of goat, sheep and other animals in the “Parc de transit”.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we can say that the strategic plan on agriculture that we have conceived will be disclosed to the public soon. The Member will know soon.

## AGRICULTURAL LAND LEASES

**(No. B/279): Mr F. Grandcouert (First Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the agricultural land leases in Rodrigues, he could state -

- (a) the number of applications for such lease up to now; and
- (b) the number at leases delivered to farmers during the last six months.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson Sir, I am informed that the Land Section has received 3451 applications for agricultural purposes from year 1989 to 30 June 2003.

As regards part (a) of the question, it has been decided to grant an agricultural permit to applicants recommended by the Agricultural Services. After one year of monitoring by the extension services, the planters who cultivate their land are recommended by the Agricultural Services and, in accordance with the condition of the agricultural permits, are granted ten (10) year leases. To date, 806 agricultural permits have been issued.

During the last six months forty (40) letters of intent have been issued to lessees for agricultural purposes. Of these 40 persons, ten have received their leases; 27 have paid the required rentals and their leases are under preparation. The other three persons have not yet turned up.

Last month, I have granted approval for the issue of another 138 agricultural permits, 78 leases for agricultural purposes and 11 leases for farming purposes.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, Chief Commissioner said that there are 3451 applicants. Can I ask him about the applicants who received their letters of intent some months or one year before the setting up of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly? Will he consider these cases or whether their leases will be granted early as a matter of course?

**The Chief Commissioner:** As I have said, those who have even received a letter of intent are being monitored by the Agricultural Services. Sometimes there are people who receive leases and do not cultivate the land. It is not possible for us in Rodrigues to let agricultural land go uncultivated. That is why, according to the Anti Erosion Programme of the EDF, in the first instance an agricultural permit will be allocated and those planters are monitored by the Agricultural Services. If the person cultivates the land, then he is granted a ten-year agricultural lease. I do not know whether the respected member can submit the names of these persons. We shall find out. The Agricultural Services will investigate and then, leases will be delivered.

**Mr Grandcourt:** The Chief Commissioner has been talking of agricultural permits followed afterwards by agricultural leases. Can I know by how much time does the lease follow the permit?

**The Chief Commissioner:** It is usually one year. During the year the planters are followed to see whether they are cultivating the land; a decision is taken on the basis of the Agricultural Services' report. That is why we are now preparing a plan at the level of my colleague, the Deputy Chief Commissioner, so that cultivation can be done all the year round. This is a good thing. Crops such as maize, beans, peanuts and fruits can be grown. If after one year it is seen that the farmer has planted regularly, then he will be granted a ten-year lease.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask what is the legal or cadastral status of an agricultural permit as compared to an agricultural lease? Because if you ask somebody to cultivate the land he needs funds and he has to borrow. Without a lease there is no access to credit. Can the planters have access to credit with this agricultural permit?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Yes, the permit is granted by the Agricultural Services not the Cadastre. The latter deals with leases. With this permit, as we saw after Kalunde, people go the Development Bank of Mauritius where there are special schemes for planters. With this permit, they can obtain a loan for this special scheme in agriculture.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether, as regards these agricultural permits or leases, there are enough agricultural machines to help these people? Because at one time there is a problem of water, at another there is a problem of manpower. That's why agriculture cannot give the required outcome.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Yes, I think that for this agricultural permit in the context of the EDF Project, there are lots of advantages concerning fencing. With the loan from the Development Bank of Mauritius, they can also buy duty-free water tanks and tools. There is a lot of financial schemes. We have the Rodrigues Venture Capital Fund, the "*Anou Deboute Ensam*", "*Nou Levé Deboute*" the Trust Fund, IFAD, etc. of which planters may not be aware or sometimes because they cannot provide guarantees. In this country planters have a lot of facilities to cultivate their land. My colleague has announced the forthcoming strategic plan. I hope this will come very soon. This will help the planters.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the idea of granting agricultural permits before granting leases is very good. I don't know whether you will allow this question. If you don't, a proposal is being made. Can the Commissioner examine the possibility of

extending this policy to residential leases? I know that it takes a long time before some people are granted leases. This is causing problems as far as accommodation and social life is concerned. Can he consider the possibility, under specific conditions, of granting residential permits prior to the granting of residential leases?

**The Chief Commissioner:** This is already being done. They have the letter of intent and they pay. With the letter of intent they can have the building permit.

**Mr J. Roussety:** But the letter of intent, Mr Chairperson, Sir, does not have the same status. It is just a letter of intent. This does not mean it is going to proceed. I think we should provide a residential permit. It is more important than one of intent.

**The Chief Commissioner:** If the Minority Leader comes with a substantive question, then I may provide an answer.

### **CAMP PINTADE - RESERVOIR**

**(No. B/280) Mr F. Grandcourt: (First Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the reservoir at Camp Pintade, he could state:-

- (a) when it was last cleaned, and
- (b) if he intends to construct an access road to the reservoir.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the reservoir at Camp Pintade is a concrete reservoir of a capacity of 350 m<sup>3</sup>. The reservoir is covered with a concrete slab in which an access manhole has been provided for maintenance purposes. Since the water feeding the reservoir is already filtered and the reservoir is covered, the necessity of cleaning it is not felt. Should the need arise for the cleaning of same, necessary action will be taken.

There is presently an earth access road leading to the reservoir. The maintenance of this access road will be effected shortly by the Public Infrastructure Division.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has said that the reservoir is covered, but I would like to inform him that the cover has been damaged by the cyclone; therefore, it is not now covered. I would like to ask him what he intends to do. This is a very simple matter, but what does he intend to do to cover it and have it cleaned?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Yes, Mr Chairperson Sir, I know that the cover of the reservoir was broken during cyclone Kalunde and we are taking necessary

action to have it replaced. But we are now working on other reservoirs. In due course it will be repaired.

**Mr Chairperson:** Next question, please.

### **DISABLED PERSONS**

**(No. B/281) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member For Maréchal)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security whether he could state -

- (a) the number of disabled persons per category in Rodrigues to date;
- (b) if they are visited regularly by specialists and at what intervals;
- (c) what is being done, be it financially or otherwise for their inclusion in society.

**Mr Mercure:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to the records available at the Social Security Division of my Commission, the number of disabled persons per age group is as follows -

- (i) Children up to 14 years - 97
- (ii) Between 15 to 60 years - 495
- (iii) 60 years and above - 440

I would like to point out that these figures only reflect disabled persons with at least 60% incapacity, as certified by a Medical Board, and who are in receipt of a disability pension under existing regulations. We are not in the presence of figures of persons with less than 60% of disability, especially for children up to the age of 14 years for whom a disability pension is normally awarded on an income-tested basis.

However, to address this issue, the Ministry of Social Security with the collaboration of my Commission, will undertake a survey shortly to determine the exact number of children with disabilities. The outcome of the survey will be communicated to the House.

As regards part (b), according to Government policy, doctors pay monthly visits only to those who are 90 years old and above to assess their state of health and prescribe the necessary treatment where necessary. There are 45 such cases for the time being. I have discussed with my colleague, the Commissioner for Health, and we have agreed to extend domiciliary visits by doctors to all bedridden irrespective of their age.

With regard to part (c), Government provides financial assistance to the disabled as follows -

- (i) Children under the age of 15 years suffering from a disability of at least 60% and who need constant care and attention as certified by a Medical Board and where the income of the household does not exceed Rs150,000 annually, receive Rs1270 per month as carer's allowance.
- (ii) The second category of financial assistance is provided to disabled persons between the age of 15 and 60 years and who are either permanently or substantially incapacitated to work, to a degree of at least 60% as certified by a Medical Board. These persons are entitled to a Basic Invalidity Pension of Rs1790 per month.
- (iii) Persons who are between the ages of 15 and 60 years, who are drawing a Basic Invalidity Pension and who need constant care and attention of another person as certified by a Medical Board receive a carer's allowance of Rs1100 per month.
- (iv) Those aged 60 years and above, who are drawing a Basic Retirement Pension, are bed-ridden and who need constant care and attention as certified by a Medical Board, receive a monthly grant of Rs1270.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in addition, Government and other international funding agencies provide support in terms of grants and funds to NGOs to assist them in the running of their organisations and to fund projects which promote the reintegration of the disabled persons in society. The following are some examples -

- (i) The "Association des Aveugles de L'Ile Rodrigues" has received the sum of Rs 303,000 from the Trust Fund for an Integrated Farm Project at Saponaire, Rs 184,000 from the Canada Fund for the purchase of musical instruments, Rs 260,000 from the "A Nou Diboute Ensam" programme, again for the purchase of additional musical instruments.
- (ii) The National Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled, under the support of my Commission will provide a funding of Rs17,500 for the conversion of a garage into a classroom to be used for training and the purchase of equipment for the promotion of hand sports among the disabled persons. In addition, this Association is receiving a yearly grant of Rs190,000 from Government.
- (iii) The Trust Fund Programme for the Integration of the Vulnerable Groups has earmarked a sum of Rs775,000 for the "Association pour Les Handicapés Mentaux de L'Ile Rodrigues" for the running of the school for the deaf children at Citronelle.

- (iv) Government also provides a yearly grant in aid to the Federation of the Senior Citizens.

I avail myself of this opportunity to thank these NGOs for their support and endeavour for the integration of the disabled.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the reintegration of the disabled in society needs a constant service of accompaniment to help them in their everyday life to better their access to other social services. In this perspective, a project funded under the Lux-Development Programme is being implemented in Rodrigues with a view to setting up a networking system of services to accompany the disabled persons and the elderly.

The structuring and the functioning of this system will be looked into by my Commission and other partners with the technical assistance from the Lux- Development programme. For the time being, a Higher Social Security Officer is on a nine-month training course on network services in Mauritius and will be back in Rodrigues in November, 2003. This officer will be the desk officer of the networking system that will then be set up.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I refer to part (a) of my question. By category I mean auditive, visual, mental and physical. *Je n'ai pas eu de réponse concernant cette partie.*

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, but did you specify in your question?

**Mr Agathe:** Yes, per category.

**Mr Chairperson:** This is what you have in mind. Yes, would the Commissioner answer this question?

**Mr Mercure:** The question is quite vague. The member asked "by category". What I mean by category, it can be age or anything else and I have my answer to it in terms of age.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, under 14, 15 to 60, 60+ this is age group, not category. If the Commissioner does not know, he should ask the Head to look after this. These are age groups not category, my friend.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Next question. Yes, I understand that you are not happy with the answer. But he has answered.

**Mr Agathe:** What has his Commission done up to now for the disabled persons to get access to the government buildings.

**Mr Mercure:** Mr Chairperson, Sir we try to make these disabled persons have the same rights as we have. But let me tell the members of the minority that I have assumed the position of Commissioner this year itself and all the buildings were already there; and it was under the responsibility of the administration of the Social Security. But it is a good idea, we'll take it into consideration for the new building that will be built.

**Mr Agathe:** For the information of the Commissioner, Mr Chairperson, Sir...

**Mr Chairperson:** No, put your question, please.

**Mr Agathe:** Yes, in Mauritius the Training and Employment of Disabled Board has made the acquisition of a bus in order to facilitate travelling "*par les personnes autrement capables*", *c'est-à-dire les personnes voyageant dans les fauteils roulants. Est-ce que cette même possibilité peut être accordée à Rodrigues?*

**Mr Mercure:** Yes, Sir, we shall look into the matter and see if there is any such possibility.

**Mr Agathe:** I refer to part (c), of my question: are the disabled persons given the facilities for handisport in Rodrigues?

**Mr Mercure:** Yes, the facilities do exist.

**Mr Agathe:** What are the facilities, please?

**Mr Mercure:** There is the committee which we just set up and together with the Commission of Sports we'll work on the facilities.

**Mr J. Roussety:** We did not ask whether there is a committee; we asked whether these are facilities for handisports for these 932 persons. Are there such facilities?

**Mr Chairperson:** Are you going to repeat your question? Yes, please do so.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Are there facilities at present? We are not talking of committees. There is a lot of committees for many matters. Are there facilities at present for these persons?

**Mr Mercure:** There is no specified playground for disabled persons, but the gymnasium is there, the playgrounds are there, so the facilities do exist.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, since there are facilities in Rodrigues, can we know how many disabled persons have used them?

**Mr Chairperson:** Facilities for what? Do you mean sport facilities?

**Mr Agathe:** How many Rodriguan disabled persons are taking part in the *Jeux de L'Océan Indien*?

**Mr Mercure:** As far as the question of sportsmen or disabled who practice sports is concerned, the question should be addressed to the Commissioner for Sports not to the Commissioner for Social Security.

**Mr Agathe:** But the Commissioner is responsible for the disabled. Is there a disability unit in Rodrigues for the disabled persons?

**Mr Mercure:** There is one at Malabar. Yes, there is a technical committee.

**Mr Chairperson:** I understand that the Second Local Region Member for La Ferme wanted to ask a question. You can put your question.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have forgotten what I wanted to ask, but I can come with a new question. When the Commissioner says that there exists one centre at Malabar, does he mean the centre for the "*Association des Aveugles*" or a centre for all disabled persons in Rodrigues? Could he please specify?

**Mr Chairperson:** You mean a centre for sports?

**Mr Jabeemissar:** The Commissioner talked about a centre for disabled at Malabar. For what category of disability is the centre? Is it physical disability, mental disability, what type of disability does the centre cater for?

**Mr Mercure:** Any person who has a disability can integrate the centre. There is no specific law here which says that this is for those who have a mental or physical disability.

**Mr J. Roussety:** We asked for the name of the centre. Can we please have the name of the centre from the Commissioner?

**Mr Chairperson:** Who asked this question?

**Mr J. Roussety:** My Friend.

**Mr Chairperson:** Put the question?

**Mr J. Roussety:** Can I know what is the name of the centre, the supposed centre which is caring for the disabled? Is it under his Commission or an independent association outside his Commission?

**Mr Mercure:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, they just said, I am responsible for the disabled. The centre here is for "*L'Associations des handicapés*", any disabled person. I don't see why they are asking me if I am responsible for them. Of course, I am.

**Mr Agathe:** Does "*l'Association des handicapés*" bring together all the categories of handicapped.

**Mr Mercure:** It is clear. If it is called "*Association des handicapés*", c'est pour tous les handicapés, M. le President.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, when the Commissioner said that this centre is meant for all disabled persons, it is not clear which type of disability. There is the need for specialised units. For example, can we put persons suffering from mental disability together with those suffering from physical disability? Is there a unit specially equipped to cater for all these types of disabled persons? This is the question.

**Mr Mercure:** This is a technical question that we have to discuss with Medical Officers. Then, we can decide whether we will integrate these persons in the Association.

**Mr J. Roussety:** As regards part (c) of the question what is being done financially or materially? We know that these persons may need wheelchairs, "*cannes blanches*", etc, what is being done at the level of the Commission? Have these items been budgeted for this year and are they being provided regularly?

**Mr Mercure:** It is a fact that the Ministry of Social Security provides us with a quota of all these materials every year.

**Mr J. Roussety:** The Commissioner talks of a quota; a quota is limited. There are 932 disabled persons...

**Mr Chairperson:** I understand you will ask a question. But you should bear in mind that the Commissioner could answer questions on the administration of Social Security only.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Yes, there is a quota. As regards the disabled persons' requirements, does this quota meet them annually?

**Mr Mercure:** Of course, if somebody is making an application for a wheelchair, he will get it depending on the demand. But we have each year an additional number of

wheelchairs which are sent and they remain there. For the auditory materials and spectacles, they are given by doctors depending on the demand.

**Mr J. Roussety:** This is not a quota; it is based on demand. A quota is fixed by supply. Does he mean that anybody who is disabled and who applies for some specific equipment – wheelchair, etc, will get the necessary equipment?

**Mr Mercure:** Yes.

### ***ZONE EDUCATION PRORITAIRE (ZEP) PROJECT***

**(No. B/282): Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether, with regard to *Zone d'Education Prioritaire (ZEP)*, the Commissioner for Education could state -

- (a) whether a study had been carried out to ascertain the reasons for the school's low performance;
- (b) whether all facilities regarding the projects would be provided in Rodrigues, and
- (c) what his Commission was proposing to do to arouse the interest of the children attending the school concerned and all the inhabitants living in the catchment areas of the school.

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, yes, indeed a study has been carried out by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research for the ZEP project in Rodrigues before its implementation. Only one school in Rodrigues, namely the Ste Thérèse de L'enfant Jesus RCA School, has been identified for this project. The school's performance declined in the past years mainly due to the non-participative attitude of parents in the school life of their children and their non-awareness of the value of education. Other reasons which have been attributed to the low achievement are poverty and mono-parental families.

As regards part (b) of the question, all facilities will be extended to Rodrigues.

Regarding part (c) of the question, my Commission is working with the *forces vives* of the locality to arouse the awareness of parents and enlist their collaboration. On the other hand, the RCEA has organised an open day where parents and the community at large come to spend one day at school and are given all necessary information.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I refer to part (b) of the reply. Can I know what facilities the Commissioner intends to give to the ZEP School?

**Mr L. Roussety:** All facilities in terms of school materials to allow the children to express themselves are given. We are speaking here of single parent families or where children have been abandoned by their mothers into the care of single grandmothers, it has been established that those children are improperly fed. Another most important facility in a poverty-stricken area is that a meal is going to be provided to these children by the Ministry of Education. That's amongst other things.

**Mr Agathe:** When will the project duly start in Rodrigues?

**Mr L. Roussety:** The programme was scheduled to start on the 17 July. But I can assure my colleague on the minority bench that it has already been started at St. Thérèse Rivière Cocos. It's already in operation.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, when the Commissioner speaks of facilities provided to these children, there is I think a fundamental facility. These children have been deprived of their natural parents. Being given that they are left to grandmothers - and the parental link is missing - does he not think that the children need to be seen by specialists like psychologists and so on? Is his Commission prepared to give such assistance?

**Mr L. Roussety:** We are indeed prepared to go all the way, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to provide psychological support. There is already the *accompagnement scolaire* in place and the ZEP is a matter which has been very closely studied by educationists and educational psychologists in order to remedy a situation which we think can be cured socially. So, I can give the assurance that everything humanly possible is being done to make sure that those children overcome the problem they are facing at the moment.

**Mr Agathe:** I refer to the circular dated 10 January 2003. It refers to the recruitment of a parent mediator. Can we know the name of the parent mediator recruited for the St. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jesus School?

**Mr Chairperson:** Does the circular refer to the substance of the ZEP?

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am caught unawares by this question and I would ask the respected member to kindly table the question at the next sitting of the House so that I can provide all the necessary information for the benefit of the House in general.

**Mr Agathe:** This refers to facilities provided under the project. There are many Rodriguans who have applied for the post of parent mediator. I want to know whether a Rodriguan has been recruited for that post.

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am being asked a question whose answer is not in my possession. The member will certainly be aware that Rivière Cocos is an

RCA School, so my Commission will have to obtain the necessary information. If the member will be so kind as to give notice, we shall seek the information.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand that the ZEP is not working correctly, because *d'après les réponses...*

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** No interruptions from a sitting position, please.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Je comprends qu'il y a un manque de motivation. Il y a des élèves qui ont un seul parent et ont été abandonnés à leurs grand-mères. Ce sont des problèmes sociaux. Ils sont en dehors de l'école et hors de la communauté de Rivière Cocos. Je voudrais demander au Commissaire à l'éducation, qu'est-ce qui a été fait avant le lancement du ZEP à Rivière Cocos pour impliquer la communauté dans ce projet. On voit que d'après lui le projet ne marche pas assez bien. Qu'est-ce qui a été fait avant pour préparer la communauté afin que le ZEP soit une réussite?

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have never insinuated that the project was not working satisfactorily. I said that the school's performance declined in the past years due to the non-participative attitude of the parents. That does not mean that the project is not working satisfactorily. These are the ills. The project is the remedy that we intend to bring in order to cure the problem. A number of meetings are being organised in order to get the parents involved in the school life of their children. As a matter of fact, children who suffer from certain problems at home are affected when they come into the classroom. It is a matter of making sure that the problems at home are alleviated in order to create a better classroom environment.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, everybody knows that the ZEP is a national policy. It has always been seen that the problems of Rodrigues are not the same as those of mainland Mauritius as far as education is concerned. We know that the ZEP is based mainly on performance at the CPE. Therefore, I am sure that the Commissioner will agree with me that although the other schools in Rodrigues did better than Rivière Cocos, there are many *poches de pauvreté à Rodrigues*, where the same situation as at Rivière Cocos prevails, that is to say that even in the better performing schools there are small ZEPs. Does his Commission have any intention of looking into these cases, and, if yes, can he say what intention he has in respect of these cases?

**Mr L. Roussety:** We have certainly been made aware of this problem that in every school in Rodrigues there is a pocket of ZEP. We are going to look at this and our Committee on education will look at this very closely and see what measures can be taken to remedy the situation.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we know that the ZEP concerns mainly primary schools. Can I ask the Commissioner whether he intends to extend this to colleges?

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the ZEP is a government policy which is applicable only to primary schools. So, my Commission cannot pretend to extend this to the secondary level. This has to be decided at the national level through the Ministry of Education. And I thank the respected member for raising the question. I shall bear this in mind when I have the opportunity to raise the matter.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I refer to part (c). Has there been any meeting between the stakeholders and the Commission for Education regarding the project?

**Mr L. Roussety:** Yes, indeed there have been two meetings with stakeholders. We are due to meet again probably next week.

**Mr Agathe:** Have all the NGOs in Rodrigues been invited?

**Mr Chairperson:** I think the member is referring to what is being done in a Committee. He can't do this.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I refer to the catchment area of the school.

**Mr Chairperson:** The member should put his question; he should not refer to the Committee.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, on a point of order, each time we are standing up to ask a question there are back voices which are disturbing the proceedings of the House. I will request the Chair to see to it that these voices are more silent.

**Mr Chairperson:** You are making a request.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Yes. I am inviting you to see to it that when somebody asks a question, we can hear what he is saying.

**Mr Chairperson:** The member should rest assured that I have witnessed that interruptions from sitting positions are from both sides of the House. This has to stop. The member can proceed.

**Mr Agathe:** I refer to the catchment area of the school. We have what we call CLAC in Rivière Cocos. In CLAC we have a *Centre de Lecture*. What about the *activités culturelles*?

**Mr Chairperson:** This question is not allowed, unless it is linked to the ZEP.

## RECURRENT BUDGETARY PROVISIONS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2003

**(No. B/283) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the recurrent and capital budgetary provisions for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the financial year ended 30 June 2003, he would -

- (a)** circulate to members, for the benefit of the House, a detailed account of budget out-turn per vote or Commission and per item giving the initial estimates, or revised estimates, as the case may be, and realised expenditure plus any committed expenditure, as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003;
- (b)** give an indication as to what percentages of monies appropriated have been spent.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson Sir, the information requested for cannot be released for the time being as all expenditure needs to be re-assessed and cross-checked against the Vote items. The auditors are presently in Rodrigues for their annual verifications; and I shall keep this Assembly informed on final status in due course.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I would like the Chief Commissioner to enlighten the House more, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We are today the 15<sup>th</sup> of July. The financial year ended on the 30 June. It is true that, as regards manpower and logistics they have here, it is a bit difficult. Can we know when our Assembly will have the detailed information circulated to members?

**The Chief Commissioner:** As I said the auditors are presently in Rodrigues for the annual verifications. We can't table the accounts without their being verified by the auditors. Usually they take three weeks or one month; I don't know exactly. But whenever they complete this work, we shall table the accounts.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I am aware that each month the finance department prepares a breakdown. Can he table the last breakdown either at 30 June or 30 May?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Everything has changed since October 2002. Each Commission has got its own funds or its own finance services. All this has to be verified

by the auditors. I don't know whether we are going to table accounts which have not been verified. I maintain my reply.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, even though it seems that figures are not coming very soon, I would like to know how have the monies which were appropriated been spent. What percentages of the available funds have been spent?

**Mr Chairperson:** Leader of the Minority, you still insist on your question?

**Mr J. Roussety:** No, I am not insisting for figures. I would like to know how monies have been appropriated. Have they been appropriated fully? Or have they been appropriated at 50% or less than 50 of their value? I know that the Chief Commissioner is also responsible for finance. This is very important, because money has been appropriated; and from the Minority we want to know whether these funds have been used judiciously.

**The Chief Commissioner:** When all the Finance Officers of the different Commissions have finalised their accounts, there will be a global account at the Central Administration. Then, I shall come forward with a reply.

**Mr Chairperson:** The answer is not forthcoming. We move to the next question.

### **RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – PURCHASE OF CARS**

**(No. B/284) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the purchase of all types of vehicles by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since the beginning of the year 2003, he will –

- (a) give a detailed account of all vehicles purchased, specifying the number purchased per model or make, their engine power, their showroom price, and
- (b) the persons, Commissions and Services to whom/which they have been allocated and for which purposes and under which conditions, if any.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson Sir, as regards parts (a) and (b), since the advent of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in October 2002, the following vehicles have been purchased and allocated as shown on (Appendix II). The vehicles for the Commissions will enable more efficient implementation of decisions at Commission level.

I wish to inform this Assembly that all Commissions are now autonomous with their own transport section.

For the members of the Executive Council and the Chairperson of the Regional Assembly, the purchase of the vehicles is in line with the Second Schedule of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Allowances and Privileges) Act 2002 whereby they are granted a Government vehicle with the services of a driver for official travelling. They are also authorised to drive the vehicles provided they have a service licence. I am tabling the Annex (appendix II).

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the cars, I see that they are duty free, we asked for showroom prices. We know they had old vehicles, they had to buy new ones. Could we know why?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, those cars belonged to the Police pool. So, we were requested to return them to the Police. We had to ask them to wait for some more time until we had our own cars. These cars did not belong to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Therefore, new cars had to be purchased for the Commissioners.

**Mr J. Roussety:** This is justified. As regards vehicles attached to his service - it is a very important service - can I ask him which vehicle was attached officially to him as Chief Commissioner before he purchased a BMW Executive jeep 5.3 at the cost of Rs1,362,750?

**The Chief Commissioner:** The Minority Leader said that I was travelling in an old car. Then I obtained a new car. This was by decision of the Executive Council in line with the privileges of Commissioners by law. I must say that the Minister of Finance had agreed to the purchase of those vehicles.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we know that a very harsh cyclone hit the Island recently and that there was *un élan de générosité envers la population de Rodrigues*. When they placed their orders, did they take into account the fact that Rodrigues was facing serious financial constraints as regards reconstruction before buying Mitsubishi Pajero, etc., etc.

**Mr Chairperson:** This question is not allowed. I fail to see any link with the main question. It is a pertinent question which needs notice.

#### **CIVIL SERVICE DRIVERS - TRANSFER**

**(No. B/285) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether there had been any transfer of civil service drivers during the last three months, including drivers attached to VIPs and, if yes, whether he would give their names and individual reasons for transfer, the dates on which the transfer letters were issued, the respective service to which they were attached and whether all orders for transfers had been complied with, and if not, by whom and measures envisaged.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson Sir, transfer of employees of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly from one Commission to another for grades common to all the Commissions is a dynamic process which takes place from time to time. There have been transfers of drivers effected during the last three months. I am informed that it is not in the interest of the public service to give the names of such employees transferred.

However, I can report for the drivers attached to the members of the Executive Council. All the drivers have remained in post with their Commissioners for the past three months.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I asked whether any driver had been transferred and, if yes, whether this driver complied with the instructions from his superiors and, if not, why not. So, I'll repeat my question: has any driver from any department in Rodrigues whether attached with Commissioners, the Clerk or anybody was transferred and whether he refused? Has there been any such case?

**The Chief Commissioner:** When the Executive Council decided to allocate vehicles and drivers to every Commission, there was a transfer of drivers to and from those Commissions; and some drivers have made protests. I have been told that transfer is an internal administrative matter. There was one driver with Commissioner Robertson Mercure who protested against his transfer. The Commissioner has taken the responsibility to retain his driver who has not been transferred.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Could I ask the respected Chief Commissioner who transferred that driver from the Commissioner? Was it the Island Chief Executive or was it politicians at the level of the Executive Council?

**Mr Chairperson:** In the light of the answer given by the Chief Commissioner, you would address the question to the Chief Commissioner or the Commissioner concerned?

**Mr J. Roussety:** No, I am asking the Chief Commissioner who made the transfer.

**The Chief Commissioner:** It is the privilege of the Island Chief Executive to transfer public officers. In the case of the Commissioner, he has the right to look for his own driver as is the case in very country and even in Mauritius. Every Minister looks for his own driver and bodyguard; we don't have bodyguard here. This is a privilege of the Commissioner.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is right. A VIP has a right to his driver. The driver falls under the rules of the Civil Service. Has a letter been issued asking the

driver of Commissioner Mercure to go and work somewhere else? Has he been asked to leave his service and move to another?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Yes, the request of the Commissioner was that he wanted to retain his driver. It is all a question of privilege whenever a decision is taken by administration, the Commissioner can make a request. If the Island Chief Executive sees that the request can be accommodated, this is done.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Is there any reason why the driver was issued with a letter of transfer? *Est-ce que ce transfert était motivé par une raison spécifique et ensuite Monsieur Mercure a demandé qu'il reste ou c'était la routine ?*

**The Chief Commissioner :** Il y a eu une raison spécifique pour laquelle la décision fut prise. On a fait une enquête sur une question d'accident que le chauffeur avait fait. Le chauffeur n'avait pas compris qu'il avait fait un accident du fait qu'il était stationné dans la cour de l'éducation quand quelqu'un est venu le heurter. Dans sa déclaration il a nié avoir fait un accident. C'était une question d'interprétation. C'est pourquoi on l'a appelé pour qu'il s'explique. A partir de là, la décision a été prise.

**Mr J. Roussety:** M. le Président, on est en train de créer un précédent dans le sens qu'une lettre de transfert a été émise à un fonctionnaire. Quelqu'un est intervenu pour qu'il reste. Alors que je sais que des chauffeurs d'ambulances, d'autres chauffeurs ont conduit tous les véhicules de Rodrigues pendant 3 mois, ils ont été transférés 3 ou 4 fois. Je voudrais demander au chef commissaire si ce privilège de contester ou de refuser son transfert pourrait être étendu à tous les chauffeurs et inévitablement à tous les membres du service civil. Si un employé du service civil à travers son employeur s'arroge le privilège de refuser son transfert émis par son supérieur sur la base d'indication qu'il y aurait eu un accident, n'est-ce pas un précédent ? Est-ce qu'il peut, vu que le cas a été examiné, s'arranger pour que chaque chauffeur qui est transféré ait au moins l'occasion de s'expliquer avant qu'il ne soit transféré *so that justice is done* ?

**The Chief Commissioner:** This is done in the Civil Service. If a person has a letter of transfer, he can make representations to the Island Chief Executive. That is what happened with Mr. Robertson Mercure's driver. I think every public officer has the opportunity to expose his problem to the Island Chief Executive.

**Mr J. Roussety:** The fact, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is that he has been transferred and he has not complied with the instruction. Can this practice become a general one? When somebody receives a letter of transfer, will the Chief Commissioner allow this person to give explanations?

**The Chief Commissioner:** I have already replied to the question, Sir.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as far as the drivers attached to Commissioners are concerned, could the Chief Commissioner inform the House how many of these drivers were heavy mechanical drivers before being attached to Commissions? Since their current appointment, has there been a shortage of heavy mechanical drivers in their former departments?

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

### **SENIOR CITIZEN GROUP/ASSOCIATION - VEHICLE**

**(No. B/286) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security whether as regards the welfare of our senior citizens in Rodrigues, government or any other agency, under government arrangements -

- (a) had donated or put at the permanent disposal of any senior citizen group or association any vehicle and, if yes;
- (b) the name of the person or officer of the group/association under whose control the vehicle had been placed;
- (c) the registration number of the vehicle;
- (d) the date on which same was granted, the type of vehicles, for what purpose, under which conditions, the place where any vehicle granted was kept when not in use, and
- (e) how any operating costs are met; and
- (f) whether he would obtain information for the benefit of the House, as regards activities that had been carried out using any vehicle granted and the number of senior citizens involved to date.

**Mr Mercure:** As regards part (a) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg under the Project MAR/708 of the Lux-Development Programme, has donated, through the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizen Welfare and Reform Institutions, one minibus to the Federation of the Senior Citizens' Associations of Rodrigues.

As regards part (b), the vehicle was given to the Association represented by its executive members, Mrs. Mary Gontran, President and Mr Dickson Collard, Secretary. The control of the vehicle has been put under the supervision of the President, Mrs. Mary Gontran, by the Association.

With regard to part (c), the Registration number of the vehicle is 44 RAG 01.

As for part (d), the vehicle was handed over to the Association on 16 August, 2001 by the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity & Senior Citizen Welfare and Reform Institutions during his visit to Rodrigues in connection with the International year of volunteers.

The vehicle is a 12-seater minibus, make Hyundai, Model H 100-M/Bus, 12S GL, Rating 2607 C.C. The purpose of putting the vehicle at the disposal of the Association was –

- (i) to enable the Federation to pay frequent visits to the bedridden, the sick and the physically handicapped old persons at their place of residence;
- (ii) to enable the Federation to hold regional meetings with old persons who cannot travel long distances;
- (iii) to help Community Health Service Officers effect their visits;
- (iv) to convey the handicapped old persons to visit places of common interest on recreational tours, and
- (v) for any activity in line with the welfare of the Senior Citizen.

The conditions relating to the donation of this vehicle are as follows -

- (a) le véhicule à usage unique, pour les activités ayant trait à la prise en charge des résidents. Il ne sera pas utilisé à des fins personnelles par la direction ou le personnel de l'établissement.
- (b) l'établissement s'engage à tenir à jour un registre des déplacements du véhicule, avec date, horaires, kilométrage de départ et d'arrivée, nom du chauffeur, motif du déplacement.
- (c) un planning des déplacements réguliers programmés par l'établissement sera affiché dans l'établissement.
- (d) l'établissement s'engage à couvrir à ses frais, le véhicule de toutes les assurances et frais de mise sur route nécessaires, selon les lois en vigueur dans le pays.
- (e) l'établissement s'engage à respecter le nombre de places autorisées par le type de véhicule.
- (f) l'entretien du véhicule sera à l'entière charge de l'établissement
- (g) l'établissement s'engage à faire l'entretien, durant la période de garantie par le fournisseur du véhicule selon ses prescriptions et selon le rythme de maintenance proposé par lui.
- (h) Le véhicule sera gardé dans l'établissement durant ses périodes de non-utilisation et le soir, dans un endroit garantissant sa sécurité.
- (i) l'établissement s'engage à prendre à sa charge les frais d'emploi d'un chauffeur.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that for the time being the vehicle is kept at the President's place when not in use for security reasons.

As far as part (e) is concerned, all the operation costs of the vehicle are met by the Association.

With regard to part (f), to date, I am informed that the Association has been using the vehicle to carry out medical visits, to organise gatherings of senior citizens at the seaside on the International Day of the Elderly, to convey members to Committee meetings, organise visits to bedridden and convey handicapped children to and from schools. The number of senior citizens involved to date is 2000.

### **BRIGARADE AND PAVE LABONTE – VILLAGE MARKET - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/287) Mr L. P. François (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the villages of Bigarade and Pavé Labonté where the inhabitants are facing many difficulties to obtain fresh vegetables on market days, he intends to build a village market there.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, following a request by the Village Committee of Bigarade and Pavé La Bonté, a request has been made to the IFAD Project for the construction of a village market in that locality. The clearance of the Cadastral Unit is being obtained on the appropriateness of the proposed site. The plan of the market is also being finalised by the Public Infrastructure Division. I am, further, informed that the matter has been referred to the next steering committee of the IFAD Project for consideration.

### **OYSTER BAY DISPENSARY - REPAIRS**

**(No. B/288) Mr L. P. François (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to the Oyster Bay Dispensary, which is found in an old and damaged concrete building, he intends to repair same or build a new one as a matter of security.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the Capital Budget estimates 2003/04 approved by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, provision has been made for the construction of a new Community Health Centre at Oyster Bay. However, pending the preparation of the preliminary designs, some upgrading and rehabilitation works would start shortly.

### **BOOKS/ DOCUMENTS - PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

**(No. B/289) Mr L. P. Francois (First Local Region Member for Baie Aux Huitres)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether, with regard to the last purchase of books and other documents for public libraries in Rodrigues, he would state -

- (a) if some books and other reading materials might be provided to all community centres found in Rodrigues;
- (b) whether a “caravane de Lecture” could be made available to remote villages as it is Government policy to educate the people with a view to eradicating poverty.

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), all the books purchased for public libraries are meant for libraries and cannot be sent to community centres for practical reasons and accountability. All the reading materials are available for public reading.

Regarding part (b) of the question, as the respected member is aware, there is no *Caravane de Lecture* which is available in Rodrigues.

However, my Commission is aware of the people’s needs for reading in the community and has already raised this question with UNESCO, which is considering the gift of two mobile libraries for Rodrigues.

#### **ACCACIA - LES CARDINALES PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL - REPAIRS**

**(No. B/290) Mr L. P. François (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether, with regard to the “Les Cardinales Pre-Primary School” found in the village of Accacia where the pupils have been asked to vacate as a matter of security, he would state, if he intends to repair same or build a new one, and if yes, when.

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, les Cardinales Pre-Primary School is privately owned and falls under the responsibility of the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues.

Public funds cannot be used to finance the repairs of privately-owned buildings. It would, therefore, not be lawful to finance such repairs. The construction of a new pre-primary school will have to be considered in line with the forthcoming reforms in this sector, where standards and norms will be observed. The functioning of sub-standards schools will be reviewed.

**The Minority Leader:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have been informed that, as a matter of security, small children under the age of 5 in this country have been asked to

vacate their school because the building has been in a bad state for a long time. Can I ask the Commissioner whether these small children have been sent somewhere, and, if yes, since when?

**Mr L. Roussety:** This is a question not having a direct bearing on the main question. So, I would kindly ask the respected Minority Leader to give notice of his question and I shall be pleased to furnish the supplementary information he is asking for.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is surprising that the Commissioner has not tried to find where these children have been sent to. They have been sent to a very old building. He says that *l'association des écoles maternelles* de Rodrigues is privately owned.

**Mr Chairperson:** No, he said that the pre-primary school is privately-owned, not the *association des écoles maternelles*.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Yes, the infrastructure is privately-owned. I am asking a question. I am tempted to say that he is wrong. It is not privately owned. It is owned by the community. So, how is it that we can finance markets for two village committees, but we cannot finance the repair of a pre-primary school? I would like to ask him whether, in the light of the explanation, he would review his policy towards this association, because it is an association which is working for the benefit of the whole community and recommend this project to the IFAD, the Trust Fund or other financing agency. Why does he adopt this negative attitude to say that it is privately-owned? So, my question is: whether he will come forward with proposals for greater help for this association?

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, facts are facts. This school is owned by the *Association des écoles maternelles* which do not fall under my Commission and which does not a government-funded body. But we are looking at the difficulties, as the respected Leader of the Minority will be aware. IFAD is already looking at the problem and is prepared to finance some major repairs. But there will be reforms affecting pre-primary schools, *les ecoles maternelles* later on, but in the meantime the finance laws do not allow us to look at this matter. But IFAD and other agencies which have funds can come to the rescue.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I would like to ask the commissioner if all the pre-primary schools are managed by the association. If yes, whether at the level of his Commission there is anything to help schools like the one at Accacia? Or he will say they are privately-owned and this is not his problem!

**Mr L. Roussety** There is nothing at the level of my Commission or at the level of the Ministry of Education to help a private pre-primary institution. At the moment the Government gives a grant to children who have reached the age of four for one year. It is

Rs200 a month. But there is nothing else for which provision is made in the Education Act which allows my Commission to come to the rescue of these schools. But everything is being done; and I can assure the respected member of the minority party that my Commission, in particular, has written recently to a number of organisations to seek funds to help these pre-primary schools to bring their infrastructure up to standard.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Can I invite the Commissioner to come forward with a statement later on to inform the House what is the present state of the building and what are the present conditions in which these pupils, who have been transferred, are being educated?

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I very wholeheartedly accept the invitation of the Leader of the minority party.

### INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS GAMES - JUDO COMPETITION

**(No. B/291) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports whether, as regards the judo competition to be held in Rodrigues in the context of the Indian Ocean Islands games, he would state -

- (a) the measures he was taking to welcome the flame of the games;
- (b) the steps taken to accommodate spectators in the gymnasium at Malabar and those who might not find a seat inside.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), in order to welcome the flame and make it a national event, the following has been done –

- (i) an itinerary of about 26 km from Plaine Corail Airport to Port Mathurin has been worked out. The route has been worked out in such a way as to include the maximum number of primary schools and secondary colleges on its way. The flame will be carried by a Rodriguan athlete from Reunion Island and is expected to arrive at the airport at about 1:30 pm.
- (ii) a list of participants comprising athletes, sports leaders, youth leaders, students of secondary schools, ex-athletes and disabled persons has already been prepared as “*porteurs de la flame des jeux*”;
- (iii) The ceremony will end up with a concert at the Millennium Square.

With regard to part (b), the gymnasium can accommodate about 800 spectators. However, as the population would like to live that memorable event, necessary arrangements are under consideration for the installation of a giant screen on the podium outside the gymnasium. The MBC/TV will also be requested for an eventual live coverage.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Commissioner for Sports, what is the name of the athlete who will welcome the Flame from Reunion Island?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairman, Sir, this is being worked out by a Committee. I will be informed at a later stage.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, étant donné que la flamme des jeux va traverser plusieurs villages, est-ce-que les présidents des villages ou bien les *local region members* ont été invités à des rencontres pour en discuter ?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, a massive campaign even broadcasting on T.V and radio will be made at the right time.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Commissioner inform the House, as far as the welcome of the flame is concerned, what protocol and security members have been taken?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Committee comprises a member of the police, a member of the National Transport Authority. So, everything concerning the route to be taken by the flame has been discussed with them.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, que propose le Commissaire au public qui va assister aux matches de judo. Est-ce qu'on va crier « allez Rodrigues » ou « allez Maurice » ?

*(laughter)*

**Mr Chairperson :** This question is not allowed

**Mrs Prosper:** What arrangements have been made for Rodrigues to participate as an island because it is the *jeux des iles*.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is one of the policies of this government. But discussion will have to be initiated probably after the *jeux des iles*.

**Mr J. Roussety:** May we know what is the policy exactly? I have read somewhere that they want to set up a *Comité Olympique*. I am not very well versed with this.

**Mr Chairperson:** Put your question.

**Mr J. Roussety:** What is the specific policy the commissioner is speaking about?

**Mr Lisette:** I am referring to the policy which will see that Rodrigues participates in the years to come as an island not as part of the team from Mauritius.

**QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL - MEDICAL RECORDS - 07 JULY  
2003**

**(No. B/292) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to medical records on Monday 07 July 2003 at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Commissioner would inform the House of -

- (a) the number of patients, attending same to be seen by a doctor;
- (b) the number of doctors on duty in the consultation rooms that day;
- (c) the reason patients who called at Q.E.H. at 07.00 am had to wait up to between 16.00 and 18.00 hours before being seen by a doctor.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), the number of patients who attended the Accident and Emergency Department up to 6 p.m. on Monday was 142.

With regard to part (b), the number of doctors on duty in the consultation rooms on the 7<sup>th</sup> July was as follows -

|     |                                  |           |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----------|
| (1) | From 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.            | 1 doctor  |
| (2) | From 9 a.m. to noon ( peak hour) | 2 doctors |
| (3) | From noon to 1 p.m.              | 1 doctor  |
| (4) | From 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.            | 2 doctors |
| (5) | Night                            | 1 doctor  |

As for part (c), I am informed that at no time, the Accident and Emergency Department was left unattended without any Medical and Health officer and there is no record that a patient calling at 7.00 a.m. was seen after 4.00 p.m.

**Mr J. Roussety:** From 7.00 to 9.00 a.m. there was only one doctor. In the afternoon between 1.00 to 4.00 p.m. there were two doctors. Why is it that in the morning at peak hours the number of doctors is less than during off-peak hours in the

afternoon? Is the Commissioner sure that nobody waited until late to see a doctor on that day or on the following day?

**Mr Chairperson:** Minority Leader, as far as the last part of your question is concerned, it should be on 7<sup>th</sup> July, not on the following day.

**Mr Sooprayen:** May I ask the Minority Leader to repeat the first part of his question, please?

**Mr J. Roussety:** Can he confirm that nobody waited until late on that day? Why is it that the number of doctors is smaller in the morning when there are more patients than in the afternoon?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I said in the morning from 9.00 to noon there were two doctors and from 1.00 to 4.00 p.m. there were two doctors, that is, from 7 to 9 altogether there were doctors there. The emergency department was not unattended.

### **HOSPITAL/HEALTH CENTRES - PHYSIOTHERAPY FACILITIES**

**(No. B/293) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether he could state -

- (a) the number of physiotherapists posted to our hospital and Health Centres;
- (b) the number of patients who had followed physiotherapy since October, 2002 to July, 2003;
- (c) why these patients had to follow physiotherapy; and
- (d) whether they received a psychological support as well.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the answer is as follows –

- (a) There is no physiotherapist in post within the Rodrigues Health Services. Current services are provided by three Physiotherapy Assistants.
- (b) The number of patients who have followed physiotherapy during the period October 2002 to July 2003 stands at 4733.
- (c) Patients follow physiotherapy upon recommendation of the treating doctor. It is used to relieve physical stiffness of joints to restore muscle strength; it reduces pain and brings strength after stroke or nerve injury.
- (d) Psychological support is provided to the patients by both the consulting doctors and the Physiotherapy Assistants. The treatment dispensed by the Physiotherapy Assistant aims at reinforcing their confidence. Moreover,

patients following treatment due to cerebro-vascular accident are advised not to worry and they are informed of the process of recovery.

**Mrs Prosper:** Will the Commissioner inform the House whether there will be decentralization to reduce the burden on these patients?

**Mr Sooprayen:** At present we do not find it a burden. As I have just said 4733 patients attended the physiotherapy. When you take it daily, it comes to 16. If need be, we shall do it latter.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have learnt that there is no physiotherapist posted in Rodrigues and I don't know whether there is any visiting physiotherapist. There are three assistants who, I know, are doing a very good job. I am not saying that they are not doing their job correctly. Being given that there is no physiotherapist and there is a high number of patients, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether this does not have any incidence on the type and effectiveness of service given at the hospital.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I said, we don't have a physiotherapist, but we have visiting orthopaedic teams coming; and when there are serious cases, they are sent to Mauritius. Otherwise, there is no problem.

### RODRIGUES - ILLITERACY

**(No. B /294) Mrs. J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether, as regards illiteracy in Rodrigues, the Commissioner would say -

- (a) what was being done to fight this problem, in the age groups:
  - (i) 12 to 15 years;
  - (ii) 16 to 20 years; and
  - (iii) 20 to 35 years
- (b) what he intended to do to help illiterate people to overcome that handicap.

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I will reply to parts (a) and (b) of the question concurrently.

I would rather speak of missed opportunities rather than illiterates. However, my Commission is aware of the problems faced by these people, who for one reason or another cannot read or write. Education up to the age of 12 is compulsory and with the

reforms in the education sector, by year 2006 it will be compulsory up to the age of 16. The problem will then be alleviated. Youngsters falling in the age group of 12- 15 and who do not succeed at CPE Examination have the pre-vocational schools at their disposal. So, no child is left abandoned to fend for himself. When he has failed his CPE examination there is an automatic recruitment of everyone into the pre-vocational stream of these schools.

Various training schemes are available such as the Atelier de Savoir, BEFA, (Basic Education for Adolescents) and job skills launched to curb down the illiteracy rate. These schemes will be extended to other age groups.

I am, of course, fully aware of the fact that when the pre-vocational stream was launched in our secondary schools, there were some children who had missed the boat. There were children who were already aged 13 who had left school for a year. We are certainly looking at the possibility of offering them something, and at the moment through the Atelier de Savoir and there is also the IVTB.

My Commission, with the assistance of UNESCO, is considering the introduction of adult education at community level to enable people to read and write at least at basic level, What they call in French "*l'alphabetisation fonctionnelle*". We have seriously been looking at this when the BEFA was dropped. The youngsters for whom that project was meant were recruited by the secondary schools and missed the boat. We are also looking at the possibility of having adults acquire reading and writing abilities. We will find means to cater for them.

**Mrs Prosper:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner say if all pupils who fail CPE go to the pre-vocational schools?

**Mr L. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, everyone is supposed to join the pre-vocational stream in colleges. There have been 1 or 2 isolated cases in the past where the parents were not interested for lack of financial support or the child did not show any interest. But we used a lot of persuasion. But, as I said earlier in my reply, the respected member will have noted, of course, that secondary education will become compulsory by the year 2006 until the age of 16.

#### QUEEN ELISABETH HOSPITAL – INCIDENT – 08 JULY

(No. B/295) **Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether on Tuesday 08 July at Queen Elizabeth Hospital –

- (a) there had been any incident between 12.00 o'clock and 1.00 p.m. and, if yes;
- (b) the nature thereof;
- (c) whether he would confirm that the Police had to intervene; and

(d) whether as a result, he called there and if not, why.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that there was no incident between 12.00 o'clock and 1.00 p.m. on Tuesday 08 July 2003.

As implied by the reply to part (a) of this question, parts (b), (c) and (d) do not arise.

**Mr. J. ROUSSETY:** Sir, the Commissioner will allow me to tell him that there has been a slight mistake, it is not 1.00 p.m, it is in fact 7 pm and you would allow us, dans le bon sens parlementaire, would the Commissioner consider the whole day whether on that day we are speaking of the day, whether any incident involving police intervention happened on that day.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Well, there is a procedure for such cases. Well if the Commissioner has the information. Yes, of course.

**Commissioner Sooprayen:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the question was formulated twelve to one.

**The Chairperson :** You don't have the information. It is all right.

**Commissioner Sooprayen:** Between 12 to 1 there was nothing.

**The Minority Leader:** I am sure I will come... with no frame next time.

**The Chairperson:** So we move to the next question. Yes, it seems that member cancelled. It was initially from 7 pm to 1 pm, 7 am to 1 pm and then the member cancelled it, so next question, please

#### **BAIE AUX HUITRES – PLAYGROUND - UPGRADING**

**(No. B/296) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member)** asked the Deputy Commissioner whether, with regard to difficulties faced by footballers in the village of Baie aux Huitres because of the slippery playground in rainy season, he would state -

- (a) if he intends to upgrade the drain around the playground and, if yes, when;
- (b) what temporary action might be taken or would be taken to remedy this situation.

**The Commissioner for Youth & Sports (Mr Lisette):** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to answer this question. My Commission has included in the budget of this financial year the upgrading of the Oyster Bay football ground, including the provision of a proper drainage system around the playground, the construction of a cloakroom and stands.

Given the fact that the rehabilitation is to be carried out shortly, no temporary action may be taken as digging of the earth drain may entail damage to the road boundary wall. Such state of affairs was evidenced in the past. However, in order to solve, the problem of slippery ground temporarily, we are looking into the possibility of leveling the ground which has been damaged during the last torrential rains so that rain water may flood out of the ground.

### **CYCLONE KALUNDE – FISHERMEN – CASIERS - LOSS**

**(No. B/297) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to difficulties faced by fishermen who lost all their “Casiers” during cyclone Kalundé, he would state -

- (a) how many fishermen had declared their loss to the police station;
- (b) what measures had been taken to assist or aid these fishermen.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that 21 fishermen have declared the loss of 224 basket traps to the Police. Eight of these fishermen are not registered as basket-trap fishermen.

With regard to part (b), since the statement made by the fishermen as regards the loss of basket traps could not be verified, it was decided not to provide any assistance for the loss. Twenty (20) rolls of galvanized wire were received in donation from J. Kalachand to be distributed to fishermen who lost their basket traps due to cyclone Kalunde. After discussion at the last meeting of the Coordinating Committee on Fisheries and Marine Resources, it was found out that there are different views on the impact of basket traps made of galvanized wire on marine environment. More information will be sought on the real impact of such basket traps on marine environment before taking the decision as to whether the galvanized wire may be distributed to fishermen. The possibility of registering basket traps will be envisaged.

### **CEMENT - LACK**

**(No. B/298) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible, *inter alia*, for Commerce whether, with regard to the current lack of cement in the island, he would state -

- (a) how many wholesalers of cement there were in Rodrigues and state their names and their locations;

- (b) the number of 50 kg and 25 kg pockets of cement carried by the Mauritius Pride and Trochetia for year 2003;
- (c) and, if this is not adequate, what action is being taken to remedy this problem?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the answer is as follows -

- (a) I have been informed that there are 3 wholesalers of cement in Rodrigues namely Citronelle limited, Quincaillerie Commercial and State Trading Cooperation and all are situated in the region of Port Mathurin.
- (b) The number of 50-kg pockets of cement carried to Rodrigues since January to date is 250,700.
- (c) Mr Chairperson, Sir, since last year, there has been a sharp demand of cement in Rodrigues. The two vessels operated by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd replenished cement at a smooth and regular rate. However, the demand may rise consequently within a short period of time and this exceeds the capacities of these vessels. I have been informed that the number of trips of Mauritius Pride and Mauritius Trochetia is constantly being adapted to the needs of Rodrigues. Another possibility that will be considered is the construction of a proper warehouse so that cement may be imported in advance and a buffer constituted.

**Mr Agathe:** Is the Commissioner contemplating the building of a silo in Rodrigues?

**Mr Lisette:** This may be considered with the private sector, Mr Chairperson.

**Mr Agathe:** Have the trends in the consumption of cement in Rodrigues been noted? How many pockets are used per day?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, at present this is the problem. We don't have a constant rate per month. The information given to me is as follows –

| <b>Pockets of 50 kgs</b> |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| January                  | 46,400 |
| February                 | 51,900 |
| March                    | 14,000 |
| April                    | 41,200 |
| May                      | 18,000 |
| June                     | 43,000 |
| July                     | 36,000 |

So, we see there are fluctuations and no constant rate for construction purposes in Rodrigues.

## CORE HOUSING UNITS

**(No. B/299) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the 1000 core housing units planned to be built on a self-help basis over the period 1995-2000, he could say -

- (a) how many such houses had actually been completed;
- (b) how many had been started but not completed;
- (c) the amount disbursed on these houses;
- (d) the total amount initially earmarked for the project;
- (e) whether the residue of the funds earmarked could be used for the houses which have not yet been completed and for the construction of other houses.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that with regard to the 1000 core housing units planned to be built on a self-help basis over the period 1995- 2000 that -

- (a) 304 houses have been completed;
- (b) 61 houses have been started but not yet completed;
- (c) the total amount disbursed on those houses is Rs34,719,279.04;
- (d) the project value of the Housing and Rehabilitation Programme was Rs80 m. and includes the rehabilitation of the 286 Cité houses; it is to be noted that only Rs40 m. have been provided in the different budgets for the five financial years; and
- (e) with the failure of this methodology of constructing the houses on a self help basis, the project has been reconceptualised and the government in consultation with my Commission is now constructing the houses on a full contract basis. These will then be handed over to the beneficiaries upon well defined criteria.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask why is it that out of 1,000 houses scheduled to be built, only 304 have been completed, 61 have been started and not completed, less than ¼ have been completed? How is this low rate of completion to be explained, taking into account that we have here somebody who is famous for the suggestion *“la case genoux, la case zétoiles”*?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** As I have said, it was the methodology used that was not good. Now Rodriguans are involved in other activities and sometimes there has been a long lapse of time in the construction of houses; and this has sometimes caused a deterioration of materials such as cement and iron bars.

M. le Président, beaucoup de bénéficiaires n'ont pas pu gérer l'utilisation des matériaux. Il y a eu des gens malhonnêtes qui ont construit les maisons de ces gens là et ils ont abusé des matériaux. M. le Président, on n'est pas là pour porter le chapeau de l'ancien gouvernement ; même à Maurice la question a été posée au Ministre du logement en 1995.

But the Vote/Item for building has already been allocated to other housing programmes. We have not spent all the money which represented the project value. Only Rs40 m. have been spent; 304 houses have been completed, 61 houses have had their slabs cast and only 1 beneficiary has not been able to cast her slab.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, is it 204 or 304 which have been completed?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** 304, more than ¼.

**Mr J. Roussety:** The Deputy Chief Commissioner spoke about methodology. Can I ask him which methodology it was? Was it the methodology of self-help whereby materials are delivered and construction is carried out by the villagers, etc. Is it that methodology? If it failed, which one is being adopted?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Yes, it is the self-help methodology where construction materials are given to beneficiaries and they find labour for construction. The new methodology is that we are constructing new houses on a full contract basis before giving them to beneficiaries. *Parce que parfois les projets de logement qui ont été conçus par le gouvernement mauricien ne sont pas appropriés pour les rodriguais.*

On est autonome maintenant. C'est un projet qui tombe sous un secteur dont nous sommes pleinement responsables sous le Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act. On peut changer les modalités de certains projets qu'on a hérités. Par exemple, il y aura des changements dans les 108 maisons type NHDC qu'on est en train de construire. D'après le contrat, ces maisons ne sont pas crépies et les dimensions sont trop petites. Ma Commission a décidé de diminuer leur nombre en leur donnant des dimensions plus raisonnables pour les usagers. On est aussi en train d'envisager la possibilité d'installer des *septic tanks* collectifs.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is good that we learn here that the methodology of self help has failed. This has failed for a long time in Rodrigues since 1995 – 2000. This methodology, we have been saying is wrong. Can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he would consider the possibility of eliminating this methodology, on all housing projects in Rodrigues, since he has said for the 108 houses, the methodology will not be continued? Other agencies are using it. Will he authorise this practice to go on or will he stop it and propose others?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I know that the Minority Leader has a hidden agenda. But I will not go into the trap. I will authorise a change in the methodology of construction if the Vote/Item falls within my purview. But concerning other rehabilitation programmes which do not fall within my purview, I am not going to change the concepts adopted by others who have responsibility for their own projects.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner is always misleading the House. Now...

**Mr Chairperson:** The member should come up with the proof, please.

**Mr Agathe:** I have the proof. In the Director of audit's report it is mentioned that there are 365 houses. Now, he says that there are 304

**Mr Chairperson:** For which period?

**Mr Agathe:** From 1995 – 2000. The housing units amounted to Rs41,236,745. Here, he says Rs40 m. Which is which?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the respected member has not understood my answer; 304 houses have been completed, 61 have started, but they have not yet been completed: 304 plus 61 make 365. The total sum is Rs40 m provided for the five financial years plus an amount which has been used for the rehabilitation of "cité" houses.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know which hidden agenda the Deputy Chief Commissioner was imputing to me? Because I have none.

**Mr Chairperson:** This is not a question; it is an explanation.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I would like to ask him.

**Mr Chairperson:** No, you can't do that by way of a question. You can ask for more explanation about the hidden agenda.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Yes, I would ask more explanation about the hidden agenda the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned.

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, of course. The Deputy Chief Commissioner talked about a hidden agenda of the Minority Leader. The Minority Leader wants to know what he meant by it.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** No, each time we have a question on housing it is in the mind of the Minority Leader that we are responsible for the Trust Fund. We are not responsible for their houses, but we co-operate with the Trust Fund concerning the forthcoming Kalunde houses.

**Mr Chairperson:** So, this is clear, now.

**Mr J. Roussety:** It is surprising to me...

**Mr Chairperson:** We can't have a debate on this.

**Mr J. Roussety:** It is not a debate; I have another question. As regards the methodology which failed - I insist because this is a big problem. Some people are laughing. *Zotte reste dans chateau, c'est normal!* If the methodology failed for one programme; and the Commissioner said that the Vote-Item is not under his purview...

**Mr Chairperson:** Which Vote/Item?

**Mr J. Roussety:** I don't know; he said that he is not responsible for Vote/Items which are not under his responsibility. Therefore, if something is wrong in Rodrigues and he is not practicing it, will he allow other agencies using government funds, will he not intervene and advise them to ensure that methodologies which have failed should stop? Will he tolerate that other agencies continue to do things badly, even if he is not accountable for them? This is bias! This is paradoxical!

**Mr Chairperson:** As far as I remember, the Deputy Chief Commissioner never said that.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I am deducting that this is his conclusion, just as he imputed that I have a hidden agenda. Will he tolerate that, on one side, he is implementing a policy for housing and on the other side other agencies which do not have Vote-Item under his responsibility continue to do things badly?

**Mr Chairperson:** This question is not really linked to the main question. The Deputy Chief Commissioner talked about methodology. Can he give more information, please?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Yes, I was saying that we have reconceptualised the housing projects which fall under our purview in Rodrigues and my Commission will construct the houses on a full contract basis. No labour will be required by the users; funds will be given for labour and the houses will be handed over to the beneficiaries on well-defined criteria.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we had a thousand of houses to build on a five-year basis and we have built only 304, and nowadays Rodrigues is called "*la case*"

*genoux, la case zétoiles*”. Will the Commissioner cater for the residue? What will happen to the houses not yet built?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, government has given a project value, but the sum that was allocated per year was Rs8 m, 8 x 5, this does not mean that Rs40 m. is available in our coffers. It has been replaced by another Housing Programme with the NHDC.

*(Interruptions)*

We have an Economist here who can explain to you what is a project value!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Order! Order, please! Next question, please.

### NEW VIRUS IN RODRIGUES

**(No. B/300) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether he could state -

- (a) if a new virus had recently made its appearance in Rodrigues, and, if yes, have the Mauritian authorities been informed as well as WHO;
- (b) and, as a result, if any surgical operation had been postponed;
- (c) what steps were being taken to cope with the situation.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I have been informed that no new virus made its appearance in Rodrigues recently.

Parts (b) & (c) do not arise.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner sure of what he is saying?

**Mr Chairperson:** There is no need for the Commissioner to answer this question.

**Mr Agathe:** How is a virus detected here? How soon is it detected after its appearance?

**Mr Chairperson:** I fail to see the relevance of this question to the original question.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question is about a new virus. I have replied to this.

**Mr Agathe:** Has any experiment been carried out to show that there is no new virus?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, I understand there is a question.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I repeat my answer; there is no new virus.

**Mr Chairperson:** We move to the other item on the Order paper.

## STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

### CHIEF COMMISSIONER/DEPUTY CHIEF COMMISSIONER – OFFICIAL MISSIONS

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, with reference to supplementary question to Question B/273 from the respected Member of the Minority concerning further missions up to the end of December 2003, I am reminded that we have a mission tomorrow. I shall proceed to the Seychelles with my Deputy Chief Commissioner and the Departmental Head to the Republic of the Seychelles in the context of the bilateral agreement between Mauritius and Seychelles in connection with the desalination project. We also envisage a mission to Reunion Island to explore possibilities of cooperation between their Regional Assembly and ours and build up links between the two islands. There is also a mission to attend the *Salon du Tourisme* in Reunion Island in September. The dates are not yet known.

### RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – BUDGET ESTIMATES – FINANCIAL YEAR 2003/04

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have pleasure to inform this Assembly that the National Assembly has approved the following budget estimates for Financial Year 2003/2004 -

- Capital Budget Estimates - Rs400.0 m
- Recurrent Budget Estimates - Rs708.0 m

For the Capital Budget Estimates, the same amount as approved by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly during its sitting of the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2003 has been voted.

For the Recurrent Budget Estimates, there is a difference between the amount (Rs720.0 m) approved by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly during its sitting of the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2003. The difference of Rs12.0 m was for payment of interim allowance (5%) to

all public officers, excluding teaching staff and expenses for Postal Services which have now been privatised.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir

### **HOSPITAL SERVICES – BLOOD COLLECTION AND TRANSFUSION**

**The Commissioner for Health (Mr S. Sooprayen):** Mr Chairperson Sir, I am making a statement on the issue of blood collection which was raised by Mr Allan Ladd Emilien, First Local Member of the Assembly for the region of Riviere Cocos/Marechal at the last Assembly meeting.

In his statement the Respected Member of this Assembly alleged that he had to keep on waiting for quite a long time for a Nursing Officer in order to donate blood and was surprised to find three Nursing Officers calling simultaneously at the laboratory after a long delay.

I consider that the evolution in the Rodrigues Health Services should be viewed over a period of time and not at one point of time and this applies to the hospital services, including blood collection and transfusion.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, all blood is collected at the laboratory where three beds are available at any one time. All blood samples are then sent for all kinds of tests to the laboratory in Victoria Hospital, Candos, twice weekly compared to the past when it was sent only once a week; and transfusion is only done upon receipt of a positive report. In the past, blood samples were airfreighted only once a week. Adequate refrigeration facilities now exist at the laboratory in Creve Coeur for the storage of blood of different types separately.

At present, there is no Blood Bank Officer in Rodrigues and Nursing Officers are, therefore, requested to bleed donors as and when required. Formerly, blood donors were requested to attend Queen Elizabeth Hospital on only 2 specific weekdays for blood donation. However, since November last with the advent of autonomy, blood collection has been done on any weekday between 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Normally, blood donors have to wait for a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes prior to the bleeding exercise, the time for the Laboratory Technician to do the preliminaries such as haemoglobin test.

Mr Chairperson Sir, a total number of 468 pints of blood have been collected from 01 January 2003 to date, representing an average of 2.6 donors per day, a figure which does not entail the presence of a Nursing Officer on a full-time basis for this purpose. To put it straight, it is not feasible to have a Nursing Officer posted on a full-time basis there as there is not sufficient work over there for him. Whenever the service

of such officers is required, they are sent to do the job. In case, there are several donors, more than one Nursing Officer are sent to the Laboratory to do the bleeding.

The Commission for Health is not excluding the possibility of recruiting a Blood Bank staff be it a Blood Bank Officer or a Blood Bank Auxiliary who will have the tasks of organising, motivating and do the blood collection in Rodrigues. To that effect, a Nursing Officer was sent to Mauritius by my Commission on 26 and 27 April 2003 to attend a workshop on 'Blood Donor Motivation' and he was among those who helped to bleed the donors who called on the laboratory on that same morning of 30 May 2003.

I wish to inform the House that there have been blood collections outside the hospital as well namely at La Ferme Area Health Centre, Mont Lubin Area Health Centre, Petite Butte Fisheries Post and Rodrigues College respectively, in order to encourage donors. At present, Non-Government Organisations like the Lion's Club are fully involved in the motivation campaign and Nursing Officers are made available to collect same.

The Commission for Health is so much concerned about Blood collection that recently, talks have been engaged with Dr. Bissoonathsing, World Health Organisation's representative in Mauritius, on a proposal for the setting up of a properly equipped and staffed Blood Bank. In the meantime, some new laboratory equipment have been ordered for which the procurement exercise is at tender evaluation stage.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is, therefore, unfair to say that donors had to wait for long hours on the morning of 30th May as this was never the case. It is time some people realise that the staff of the health services, be it doctors or paramedical, are doing their best for the care of the patients and should not be discouraged by erroneous statements made either in public or in the written press aiming at discrediting our health services. We will, of course, have to operate within existing resources and will accept positive suggestions for improvements of service made in good faith. I, therefore, wish to express my appreciation for the work being done by the staff of the Laboratory for organising and transporting the blood samples up to Mauritius and patiently awaiting the outcome of the analysis, the laboratory technicians in Candos and those who assist in this critical and crucial service; and credit should also be given to those Nursing Officers for performing blood collection while performing their routine duties.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 05 August 2003, at 10.30 a.m.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

## **MATTERS RAISED AT ADJOURNMENT**

### **FRUIT FLIES AND MOUCHES BLANCHES**

**The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr G. Jabeemissar):** M. le Président, merci de m'accorder le temps de la Chambre afin de faire part d'un constat, qui, à mon avis, doit nous interpeller tous. Il s'agit, M. le Président, de l'ampleur des dégats causés à notre agriculture par deux types de mouches, à savoir les mouches de fruits et les mouches blanches. Qui ne se rend pas compte aujourd'hui de l'ampleur des dégats causés à nos pêches, nos mangues, nos goyaves et même à nos fruits de bois, tels que goyaves de chine et jamerosas?

Pourtant, M. le Président, il y a quelques années de cela on pouvait déguster des fruits sains et de bonne qualité chez nous car ces insectes n'avaient pas encore fait leur apparition chez nous. Il faut se rappeler que ces mouches sont arrivées chez nous dans les années 70, où on avait de longues périodes de sécheresse. On importait alors fruits et légumes de Maurice. S'il y avait eu un bon contrôle phytosanitaire à l'époque on ne serait peut être pas en arrivé jusque là aujourd'hui.

Cependant, Kalundé oblige, on a du, comme dans les années 70, importer fruits et légumes de Maurice pour subvenir aux besoins locaux. Est-ce-que cette fois-ci, M. le Président, toutes les mesures relatives au contrôle phytosanitaire, ont été scrupuleusement suivies? M. le Président, on a noté une nette prolifération des mouches blanches ces derniers temps chez nous. Peut-on savoir si la Commission de l'agriculture a pris connaissance de ce problème? Si oui, quelles mesures a-t-elle prises jusqu'ici pour sensibiliser l'opinion publique vis-à-vis de cette menace?

M. le Président, il nous faut souligner les efforts entrepris par le Ministère de l'agriculture, quelque temps de cela à Maurice, pour venir à bout des mouches de fruits. Les mêmes mesures ont été prises à Rodrigues. Mais la question qu'on se pose aujourd'hui, M. le Président, est-ce que cette campagne durera jusqu'à l'éradication totale de ces parasites? Parallèlement, a-t-on fait une évaluation dans le but de déterminer l'impact des produits appliqués lors de cette campagne d'éradication sur les rendements et la qualité de nos productions agricoles et sur ses éventuels méfaits sur l'environnement? D'autre part, est-ce qu'on a une unité spécialisée en entomologie qui surveille toute attaque des insectes sur nos productions agricoles?

M. le Président, il va sans dire que valeur du jour, l'agriculture est un pilier, sinon le principal pilier de notre économie. Il nous faut donc avoir le reflex d'agir promptement avant qu'il ne soit trop tard!

Ironie du sort, M. le Président, en dépit de tous les dégats engendrés par Kalundé, une chose nous a été positive. Il a freiné de façon remarquable l'élan de ces bestioles

nuisibles. Pourquoi ne pas lui emboîter le pas en déclenchant une campagne tout azimuth afin d'en finir une bonne fois pour toute, d'autant plus que les mouches blanches n'épargnent rien, même pas les plantes décoratives?

Si j'ai attiré l'attention de la chambre aujourd'hui, c'est pour montrer combien les membres du côté de la minorité, nous nous sentons concernés par ce problème et que nous sommes prêts à collaborer à toute action visant à améliorer notre agriculture pour permettre la relance de notre économie.

M. le Président, membres respectables, merci de votre attention. Avant de terminer, je voudrais, avec votre permission, M. le Président faire une requête. Vous vous souvenez la dernière fois le Deputy Chief Commissioner avait promis de soumettre à la chambre une copie des registres concernant les *water prises* à Rodrigues du Water Unit. Malheureusement on n'a pas eu ces copies aujourd'hui.

Merci, M. le Président.

### BLOOD DONATION - FACILITIES

**The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety):** M. le Président, j'ai juste une petite intervention pour faire suite à ce que le Commissaire à la Santé a dit dans sa réplique à mon collègue, Allan Ladd Emilien qui malheureusement est souffrant et est à Maurice.

Mon collègue, membre de la chambre, a été à l'hôpital *and he can prove that he had to wait for long hours for him to donate his blood. That is why he made that statement.* Il n'a pas fait cette intervention pour nuire au service de la santé. Quand les membres interviennent ici, ce n'est pas qu'on invente des choses. Donc, les qualifications de M. le Commissaire sont infondées et surtout vis à vis de la presse. Dans un état démocratique, la presse a le devoir de dénoncer et d'informer tout ce qui se passe que ce soit dans le secteur de la santé ou ailleurs. Donc, j'inviterai le Commissaire d'être un peu plus ouvert aux critiques positives et de ne pas se renfermer et jeter l'eau avec le bébé. Les problèmes que nous évoquons dans cette chambre sont des problèmes réels qui n'ont pas été inventés par nous. Si mon camarade était là, il aurait été mieux placé pour raconter l'ampleur des problèmes dans ce cas précis. En agissant ainsi le Commissaire est en train de dire qu'il n'y a pas de problèmes et que nous nous attaquons injustement au personnel de la santé. Ceci est complètement démesuré et hors de propos.

Merci M. le Président.

*At 1.38 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 05 August 2003 at 10.30 a.m.*



\*\*\*\*\*

## **APPENDIX I**

### **OFFICIAL VISITS WHICH MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAVE EFFECTED TO MAURITIUS & OVERSEAS**

#### **♦ Missions to Mauritius**

1. **Chief Commissioner, Mr. Louis Serge CLAIR, G.C.S.K**  
 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2003  
 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2003  
 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003  
 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2003  
 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> April 2003  
 22<sup>nd</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> April 2003  
 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> June 2003
  
2. **Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr. Jean Daniel SPEVILLE**  
 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> January 2003 (as Chief Commissioner)  
 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2003  
 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003 - Budget 2003/2004  
 discussion
  
3. **Commissioner for Women's Affairs, Arts and Culture,  
Mrs. Arlette PERRINE -BEGUE**  
 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26 March 2003 - Budget 2003/2004  
 discussion  
 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2003  
 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2003 - Return same day  
 29<sup>th</sup> April to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2003
  
4. **Commissioner for Education and Training, Mr. Andre  
Lelio ROUSSETY**  
 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> April 2003  
 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003 - Return same day
  
5. **Commissioner for Health, Mr. Soopramanien  
SOOPRAYEN**

23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003

6. **Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Mr. Nicolson  
LISETTE**

16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> April 2003

7. **Commissioner for Social Security, Mr. Robertson  
MERCURE**

1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> June 2003

♦ **Missions overseas**

1. **Chief Commissioner, Mr. Louis Serge CLAIR, G.C.S.K**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> July 2003 - Johannesburg

**Mission organised by UNDP - MDG Forum**

2. **Commissioner for Women's Affairs, Arts and Culture,  
Mrs Arlette PERRINE BEGUE**

- 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> May 2003 - Paris

**Mission organised by UNESCO – “Petite Enfance et Education  
Familiale”**

- 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003 - Morocco

**Mission organised by UNDP - Global Summit of Women**

**APPENDIX II****LIST OF VEHICLES FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

| <b>Sn</b>  | <b>Vehicle</b> | <b>Make/Model</b> | <b>Engine Power<br/>(c.c)</b> | <b>Showroom duty-free<br/>Price (Rs)</b>       | <b>Allocated to:-</b>                                                                    |
|------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1.</b>  | Executive Jeep | BMW X 5.3         | 2726 (diesel)                 | 1,362,750.00                                   | Chief Commissioner, Mr. L.S.<br>CLAIR, G.C.S.K                                           |
| <b>2.</b>  | Executive Jeep | Mitsubishi Pajero | 2835 (diesel)                 | 970,485.00                                     | Chairperson, Rodrigues Regional<br>Assembly, Mr. C. LAMVOHEE                             |
| <b>3.</b>  | Executive Jeep | Mitsubishi Pajero | 2835 (diesel)                 | 970,485.00                                     | Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr. J.D.<br>SPEVILLE                                          |
| <b>4.</b>  | Executive Jeep | Mitsubishi Pajero | 2835 (diesel)                 | 970,485.00                                     | Commissioner Mrs. A. PERRINE-<br>BEGUE                                                   |
| <b>5.</b>  | Executive Jeep | Mitsubishi Pajero | 2835 (diesel)                 | 970,485.00                                     | Commissioner Mr. A.L. ROUSSETY                                                           |
| <b>6.</b>  | Executive Jeep | Mitsubishi Pajero | 2835 (diesel)                 | 970,485.00                                     | Commissioner Mr. S. SOOPRAYEN                                                            |
| <b>7.</b>  | Executive Jeep | Mitsubishi Pajero | 2835 (diesel)                 | 970,485.00                                     | Commissioner Mr. N. LISETTE                                                              |
| <b>8.</b>  | Executive Jeep | Mitsubishi Pajero | 2835 (diesel)                 | 970,485.00                                     | Commissioner Mr. R. MERCURE                                                              |
| <b>9.</b>  | 14-Seater Van  | Toyota Hiace      | 2985 (diesel)                 | 480,000.00                                     | Central Administration:- for official<br>visitors, etc                                   |
| <b>10.</b> | 4 x 2 Vehicle  | Toyota Hilux      | 2446 (diesel)                 | 388,700.00                                     | Commission for Arts & Culture,<br>Women's Right and Family Welfare                       |
| <b>11.</b> | 4 x 2 Vehicle  | Toyota Hilux      | 2446 (diesel)                 | 388,700.00                                     | Commission for Youth, Sports, Trade,<br>Commerce and Licensing                           |
| <b>12.</b> | 4 x 2 Vehicle  | Toyota Hilux      | 2446 (diesel)                 | 388,700.00                                     | Commission for Social Security,<br>Consumer Protection, Labour &<br>Industrial Relations |
| <b>13.</b> | 4 x 4 Vehicle  | Toyota Hilux      | 2779 (diesel)                 | 474,950.00                                     | Central Administration:- for official<br>visitors etc                                    |
| <b>14.</b> | Car            | Toyota Hilux      | 1296 (diesel)                 | 235,000<br>(purchased from<br>Malagasy doctor) | Central Administration:- for official<br>visitors etc                                    |