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ANNOUNCEMENTS**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC - MESSAGE**

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members we have on Friday 17 October 2003, after the issue of the Order Paper, received a message from Sir Anerood Jugnauth, GCSK, KCMG, PC, QC, President of the Republic of Mauritius. I will now proceed to read the message -

“As newly appointed President of the Republic of Mauritius, I wish to present to the Chairperson, the Chief Commissioner, the Commissioners, the Minority Leader and Members of the Rodrigues Regional Council my compliments. You may recall that on the 12th October, 2003, I was present in Rodrigues to participate with you and with our Rodriguan brothers and sisters in activities marking the first anniversary of your accession to the status of self Government. On that occasion I seized the opportunity to re-iterate our faith in your capacity to lead the Rodriguan population towards greater self-fulfillment.

As President of the Republic, it will be my duty to uphold our Republican Constitution and safeguard our democratic institutions. Rodrigues, being part of the Mauritian nation, I re-assure the Rodrigues Regional Assembly of my continued support and commitment for the upliftment of the standard of living in Rodrigues through sustainable development while safeguarding its specific nature and its identity.

Before ending I wish to convey to you all and through you to the Rodriguans my renewed support in your task of building a modern and developed country in a spirit of unity and solidarity. Together we will fulfil our goals for a prosperous and unified republic”.

(Applause)

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is with deep gratitude that on behalf of the Chief Commissioner and myself and on behalf of the majority side, we welcome the first message from the President of the Republic to this Assembly. We re-iterate our thanks to the President of the Republic for his usual support and commitment for all the Rodriguan people.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move that our best wishes be sent to the President of the Republic of Mauritius and Lady Jugnauth.

Thank you.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would wish to thank the new President for his words of encouragement. We all remember that Sir Anerood Jugnauth is one of the fathers of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. We do hope that he has a lot of success in his new functions and we hope that he will be here for the next swearing in of Members after the next election of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

(Applause)

PRIME MINISTER - REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS –

ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE

Mr Chairperson: Members of the Assembly, further to the letter of congratulations sent on the instructions of the Assembly, we have received a letter from Mr Paul Raymond Bérenger, GCSK, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius. The Clerk will now read the letter-

"Dear Sir,

Thank you for your kind message of congratulations on my assumption of office as Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius. I avail myself of this opportunity to extend my best wishes to the Chairperson, the Chief Commissioner, the Commissioners, the Minority Leader and Members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Yours faithfully,

Sd (Paul Raymond Bérenger),GCSK

Prime Minister"

(Applause)

Mr Chairperson: Next item on the Order Paper, please.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

RODRIGUES DAY - CAMP DU ROI STADIUM –

PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

(No. B/326) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner for Arts and Culture whether, as regards the activities held at Camp du Roi Stadium for the Rodrigues Day on Sunday 12 October 2003, she would state -

- (a) whether she was satisfied with the public address system used;
- (b) if yes, whether she could explain what went wrong with the system and who was responsible for the provision thereof and the amount paid to him/them, and
- (c) what measures she envisaged to take to prevent a recurrence of this problem.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a fact that, during the ceremony at Camp du Roi Stadium on 12 October 2003, the public address system became irregular for some seconds at frequent intervals much to the inconvenience of one and all.

As the only two-sound system units available at the Commission were being used at two of the four events that had been organised on 12 October 2003, we had no alternative than to hire the services of one of the very rare private units available on the market, the others being taken up at festivities organised in Rodrigues.

The offer of Island Beat Co. Ltd. for Rs5,000 had, therefore, been retained. Payment has not been effected and negotiations are still being carried out with the supplier for a reduction of the price on account of the deficiencies, which occurred.

The frequent interruptions were caused by a technical failure in the power amplifier, which was subsequently repaired on site. Strict measures to test similar equipment on hire will have to be resorted to.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to know the government officer who was supposed to monitor any problem that might arise on that day?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have only one video operator at our Unit and that person was on the site during the ceremony at Camp du Roi Stadium.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the contract for the provision of the public address system, can the Commissioner tell us whether the company which supplied the services also supplied their technicians? Because one public

officer is not sufficient to cover the important ceremony of the first anniversary of problems on that day.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, they provided all their technicians for that service and I think there were at least 3 persons in addition there was our officer who, whether we hire or not, is always there.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there were negotiations which have been carried out to see to it that the price that will be paid goes below the agreed one. Could the Commissioner inform the House if that negotiation fails what measures will her Commission adopt then?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, we are negotiating and the attitude is positive. They are conscious that there were technical problems, which were beyond their wish, but however they know that they have not provided the service, which we hired for correctly. So, we are negotiating and the attitude of the supplier is correct.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner tell us what initial amount was negotiated with the Supplier for that service?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, I have already said that the sum which we agreed upon was Rs5,000 and we are negotiating now for them to lower their price.

Mr Emilien: Can the Commissioner tell the House if there is a contract document between her Commission and this company?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: We have, of course, followed all the necessary procedures that are found in the Financial Management Manual. I can assure the Member that we followed all the regulations that are found there.

Mr Chairperson: Well, it is properly in order for the Commissioner to refer back to his or her officers to obtain the relevant information if the questions are really pertinent. Proceed, please.

Mr J. Roussety: If the Commissioner would like to confer with anybody...

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes.

Mr J. Roussety: We shall wait.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am of the opinion that the Commissioner has not replied to my question.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, put the question again.

Mr Emilien: I wanted to know if there is a contract document between her Commission and the company?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Well, I have already answered the question by saying that all the necessary procedures are followed. We do not generally go to tender below Rs20,000; there is no necessity for tendering as such. So, what we do is that we contact people. All the other private units were taken up. As I said in my answer the only unit which was available was the Island Beat Co. Ltd. So, we agreed upon the price.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is it a verbal or an official contract?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: The contract may not need to be in the form of a formal document, but an exchange of letters.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there were two units mentioned in the original answer. The two units were available at the Commission. I would like to know if there are more or less efficient than that which was hired?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: I would not talk about efficiency; it is a question of power. And I will say that all the private units have more powerful systems than those we have in our Commission. For this type of activity where we are expecting more than 1,000 people, it is better to hire these private units.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether she will continue to hire sound units for other festivities in the future?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we will continue to hire because we have no other alternative than to do that. In exceptional circumstances like this anniversary we had no other way, as I said in my answer than to hire. As far as sound equipment is concerned, at least, two hours before, everything has to be completed. For example, at Camp du Roi, we could not take the risk to bring our units there and then back to Passenger Terminal, because the time limits between these two activities were too short.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner tell the House, if in the exchange of letters between her Commission and the Company, there is a special clause which states that if there is a deficiency in the system, there will be renegotiations of the price?

Mr Chairperson: Yes, strictly speaking, this question is a little far from the original one, unless the Commissioner would answer the question.

No answer. Next question, then.

Mr Agathe: When the Commissioner has contacted Island Beat, has she sent a list of equipment required in order to know what equipment Island Beat has?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: I'm sorry. I did not understand the question.

Mr Chairperson: Can the question be asked again?

Mr Agathe: Did the Commissioner send a list of the requisites for that day?

Chairperson: Put your question, properly, do not hurry.

Mr Agathe: Yes, has the Commissioner sent a list of requisites in order to know what equipment Island Beat has for the Rodrigues Day?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we asked for a public address system to cater for thousands of people. These people are professionals. They have sound units. The problem was not a lack of equipment. There was a deficiency in the equipment.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, now, we are talking about the deficiency of the sound equipment at Camp du Roi on that day. But at another function, it was observed that the sound equipment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is of poor quality showing signs of defectiveness and failure, especially when Ministers were addressing the crowd. Will the Commissioner then see to it that the two sound equipment that exist are fully serviced by qualified technicians so as to avoid such inconveniences in future?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I take note and I will say that I agree with the Member as far as sound equipment in general is concerned in Rodrigues whatever the private units maybe, even for our own system because we do not have sound engineers in Rodrigues at all. So, that is why we are trying to recruit in Rodrigues. One must realise there is no qualified ones. I have been aware of this since I took office, but we cannot be magicians and achieve miracles. We will have to make do with what we have. I will tell you that Rs500,000 have been paid in the past in Rodrigues to hire equipment from Mauritius. We do not want to do this. We try to bear with our weaknesses. The problem does not arise at equipment level, but at professional level. We went to Mauritius last week. My Departmental Head and myself have discussed with the French Embassy some projects which were sent through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We have sent papers and documents. We have asked for funding for training purposes.

We have already taken measures and we shall continue to try and get Rodriguans to be trained.

***JEUX DES ILES DE L'OCEAN INDIEN 2003 – MAINLAND MAURITIUS –
OFFICIALS, SPORT COACHES, ETC.***

(No. B/327) Mr J.C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports whether, as regards to *Jeux des Iles Océan Indien* 2003 held in mainland Mauritius, he could state –

- (a) the name of all officials who travelled to Mauritius;
- (b) the reasons some Sport Coaches and Sports Officers did not have the opportunity of attending the games;
- (c) why some of our sportsmen who travelled to mainland Mauritius did not see their disciplines featured in the games.

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

- (a) The names of officials who travelled to Mauritius are: Azarias Baptiste, Wills André, Ronald Jolicoeur, Anthony Louis and Jean Noel Lisette.
- (b) The sport coaches were involved in the preparation of the judo competition which was to take place on 04 September in Rodrigues.
- (c) I have been informed that all of our sportsmen who travelled to Mauritius saw their discipline featured in the Games.

Mr Agathe: Can the Commissioner say whether each of the officials who was selected had a discipline featured in the games?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, all the officials who were selected by my Commission have been very active in the training of athletes in Rodrigues itself. My Commission has considered it essential that these officials could give a strong psychological back up to these athletes who are moving from Rodrigues to Mauritius.

Mr Agathe: I heard one name. Did handball feature in these games?

Mr Lisette: One member of the Handball Committee went as guest to Mauritius.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if handball was not featured in the games, what was the reason for sending someone from Handball Committee whereas for other disciplines, other areas of sport in which some persons could have gone there.

Mr Chairperson: The Commissioner means it was the Commission that sponsored that person to go to Mauritius.

Mr J. Roussety: He said that somebody from Handball went

Mr Chairperson: Yes, as guest but not that this Commission paid for him.

Mr J. Roussety: Can I ask him why somebody from handball which was not being played in the *Jeux des Iles de L'Océan Indien* was sent there, whereas other persons disciplines were being played, *par exemple, la boxe ou d'autres domaines encore ces gens n'ont pas participé, alors que quelqu'un qui est dans le handball qui ne figure pas aux jeux, a participé, pourquoi?*

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think the member is wrong because there was a representative of boxing in the delegation to Mauritius. Second thing as regards the representative of the handball Committee, this was a decision of my Commission to award a ticket to each and every regional Committee, which had been active since my coming into office. Therefore, irrespective of whether the discipline featured in the games or not, it was a decision to award a ticket to each regional Committee depending on whether they had been very active since my coming into office.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner assure the House that other members who could have been chosen have deprived of their rights?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't think any person has been deprived of his rights. Nobody has been deprived.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, has there been any official protest, through letters or requests, for meetings with officials of his Commission or other persons involved in sports regarding that matter of tickets? If yes, what was the nature thereof and what actions were taken?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, before the award of any ticket, my Commission has met all the regional committees. Unfortunately, some of these committees, which were to come to a meeting at my Commission, did not turn up. So, the decision was taken that since some were not active, no ticket would be awarded to them.

Mr J. Roussety: My question was: whether there have been protests, letters after the award of the tickets, requests for additional tickets, for meetings and, if yes, what was the nature of these protests of meetings and action taken?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we obtained a request from the badminton federation to pay tickets for those who went to Mauritius. But my Commission will not pay because the badminton federation was organising the game in Mauritius, I believe it should be for them to pay for the officials they need.

Mr Agathe: Has the Commissioner received letters from the *Association Mauricienne de Handball* regarding the participation of their representative in handball?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I said I met the regional committees. All the members were present and it was agreed they were to select a representative each, so I don't see the point of the question.

Mr Agathe: I asked whether the Commissioner has received letters from the said Association for their participation in handball?

Mr Lisette: I need notice of this question, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I'll ask the same question for basketball. Has the Commissioner received letters from the federation of basketball?

Mr Lisette: Nobody went to Mauritius for basketball?

Mr Agathe: As far as badminton is concerned, has the Commissioner received letters, for example, from the President or the Secretary?

Mr Lisette: Yes, I did receive; and I have said that my Commission will not pay tickets for these particular disciplines, because they have not been active since I took office.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner makes as if sports started in Rodrigues when he came into office.

Mr Chairperson: Your question, please!

Mr J. Roussety: My question is: what does he mean by active? Does he mean that when he swore in as Commissioner for Sports, it is then that sports started in Rodrigues?

Mr Lisette: Active, Mr Chairperson, Sir, means a Committee, which is able to organise competitions at regional level, a committee that meets regularly.

Mr J. Roussety: If some committees have not been active, is it not his fault? Why have these committees not been active? What has he done to make them active? He is saying as if sports started when he swore in! Shame on him!

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Do not scream!

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is one thing which the members on the other side do not know. The Regional Committees are accountable to the federation. But I, as the highest authority concerned with sports in Rodrigues, I have to see that every discipline remains active. So, if I give tickets to people who are not active, it is as if I am saying they are doing their best and should be encouraged. Our decision is right.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir...

Mr Chairperson: I have allowed the last question because we are dealing with the main topics, but it is very far from the main question.

Mr Agathe: There is something surprising, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the badminton Federation has sent a letter to ask for two (2) representatives. The Commissioner has not sent anyone. But the President and the Secretary have gone to Mauritius on their own. How is it that for handball where there is no letter, the Commissioner has paid tickets?

Mr Lisette: Everything seems surprising to him! I have been clear and I shall repeat myself. The JOIC were taking place in Mauritius. Every federation was taking responsibility for its activity. So, if the Badminton federation feels that it needs officials, it should have paid for both persons to travel to Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: We have spent more than half an hour on two questions. I am not going to stop supplementary questions, but I shall appeal to all Members that we have more than thirty questions today.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, the Commissioner informed the House that his Commission wanted to pay tickets for all officials who had been active. He also said

that, at a meeting – I don't know whether it is prior to the issue of tickets - some people did not turn up. I'd like to ask the Commissioner if this is the criterion to conclude they are not active for not turning up to one meeting.

Mr Lisette: I've already defined what is meant by not being active, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Emilien: I am asking him if this is the criterion. I don't think my question has been answered.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, I have already defined what is meant by active.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS - GRANTS

(No. B/328) Mr Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner for Education, whether he could state -

- (a) the objective of the various grants made to primary schools, and
- (b) if all primary schools, in Rodrigues had got their respective matching grants and, if not, why.

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

Sir, the following schemes are available whereby grants-in-aid are paid to registered Parents/Teachers' Associations -

- (i) Per Capita Grant Rs3 is paid for each pupil on roll as at 01 July. Its purpose is to meet expenses in connection with Independence/Republic Day celebrations.
- (ii) Basic grant: The purpose is to meet minor repairs and a sum of Rs2,000 is paid for a one-stream school. Rs2,500 for a two-stream school and Rs3,000 for a three-stream school.
- (iii) In addition to the above, a matching grant equivalent to the amount of funds raised by the PTA during the preceding financial year is paid subject to a ceiling of Rs10,000 for a one-stream school, Rs12,000 for a two-stream school and Rs15,000 for a three-stream school.

The purpose of this matching grant is to meet the cost of minor repairs/maintenance and improvement of the school and its facilities.

Sir, all the above grants that I mentioned were last paid in April this year for the financial year 2002/2003. As regards provisions for this year, an exercise is being carried out by my Commission before any disbursement is made, the more so, the purposes for which the grants are meant for are already being catered for from other items of expenditure.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to know if all the primary schools received the matching grant for the year 2003-2004.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I did say that this matter was being looked into. The respected Member on the minority side surely could not have missed the information I gave in my written answer.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether this delay in giving matching grants does not put these schools in serious financial difficulties? Because I have worked in schools and have been actively involved in Parents/Teachers Associations (PTA) in schools and I know how difficult it is for schools when they don't get their matching grants in time to meet their different expenses. Does this not affect the smooth running of these schools?

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, all these matters have been closely looked into. I shall say that, in several cases, repairs, for example, instead of being met from Parents/Teachers Association funds, that is, from the matching grants, have been borne by my Commission. In the case of Grand La Fouche Corail, for instance, we awarded small contracts in order to expedite repairs and replacement of windows and not only there, but in Port Mathurin and Batatran as well.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I can assure my colleagues on the minority side that everything possible is being done to remedy the situation.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I thank the Commissioner for his decision. But, can he assure the House that this decision also applies to RCA Schools? Because all the schools in Rodrigues formerly obtained their matching grants directly from the Ministry of Education. But now that the Commissioner has taken the decision to help Government schools, is this help extended to RCA Schools too?

Mr L. Roussety: I am very proud to say, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that this help exceptionally extends to RCA Schools. I will add that the Executive Council took the decision to extend to RCA Schools the facilities of stationery and other requisites. Our budget did not make provision for that so that we are a little bit off balance. I can assure the respected Member on the minority side that, yes, every

consideration is being given to RCA Schools. In fact, our aim is to place them in that regard on the same footing as Government schools.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I refer to the *per capita* grant for children. Now, the pupils of Standard VI are having exams. They will leave schools soon. But, was not the capital grant payable meant for these children?

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the respected Member on the minority side, I think, is going into a question which I can't answer off the cuff. If he will kindly give notice, I shall be pleased to give all the details required.

VANGARD - VOLLEYBALL PITCH AND BASKETBALL FACILITIES

(No. B/329) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports, whether, as regards the construction of a volleyball or basketball facility at Vanguard, he would -

- (a) give an indication as to when same was built, by whom, at what cost and under what contract specifications, and
- (b) state whether that facility was presently convenient for use by the villagers and, if not, why, and measures envisaged in the immediate future.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question about the volleyball pitch at Vanguard, I have been informed that the contract was awarded on 14 May 1997 to A. & J. Maurel Construction Limitée for a sum of Rs267,729 after a tendering exercise. The final cost of the project amounts to Rs243,390 and was completed on 27 June 1997. The work was to be carried on a full contract basis and comprise the following works -

- (1) clearing of site;
- (2) excavation to required level;
- (3) construction of tarmac;
- (4) manufacture and fixing of volleyball posts;
- (5) fencing works;
- (6) painting works, and
- (7) other related works.

With regard to part (b), I have been informed that the surface is convenient for use by the villagers for sports function. Recently, my Commission in collaboration with the Commission of Public Infrastructure has remarked the surface. However, my Commission intends to upgrade the ground further by providing all the necessary equipment for the opening of an “*École de Volley*” in the village in the coming weeks.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand that the contract was a full one and that the site was remitted on 27 June 1997 and it is only recently that the pitch has been marked. How does he explain this?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the pitch was marked formerly, but with time these marks have faded. So, when I took office, I have seen to it that the pitch be marked afresh.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have information that I can substantiate that the pitch was never marked until recently.

(Interruptions)

I visited the pitch; it has never been marked; unless, as the Commissioner said, it was only recently marked. Will he look into the matter?

Mr Lisette: Which matter, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, it would seem that they don't understand anything today.

(Interruptions)

They don't understand anything! *Ils sont toujours dans les fêtes! C'est peut-être à cause de ça!*

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Hon. Minority Leader, please proceed.

Mr J. Roussety: M. le président, le Commissaire pourrait-il voir pourquoi le terrain n'a pas été marqué depuis 1997? Ce n'est que récemment que cela a été fait. Je vous le dis, je vous l'assure et je peux vous le prouver que le terrain n'a jamais été marqué. Le commissaire dit que cela a été fait récemment.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I shall look into the matter.

AGRICULTURAL SERVICES – PIGLETS - PRODUCTION & SALE TO PUBLIC

(No. B/330) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the production and sale of piglets to the public by the Agricultural Services, he would -

- (a) give an indication of the number of applications received or the demand since January 2003;
- (b) the quantity produced by the services and the places where they were produced and sold, and
- (c) the selling procedure and the average selling price per piglet.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the total number of applications received for piglets since January 2003, from local pig breeders for piglets, amount to 166 for a total demand of 652 piglets.

The number of piglets produced since January 2003 is 317 piglets. The piglets are produced and sold at the Bay Topaze Agricultural Pig Production Unit.

I am, further, informed that the selling procedures are as follows –

- (1) The breeder must submit an application on the official form obtainable from the Agricultural Extension Office of their respective section. The purpose of the demand, i.e. whether for breeding or fattening purposes, must be clearly stated.
- (2) The Extension Officer of the region will then submit his recommendation on the request form as to the genuineness of the breeder and whether the breeder possesses the required infrastructure.
- (3) Based on the recommendation of the Extension Officer the beneficiaries are selected on a first come first served basis. Moreover priority is also being given to unemployed persons.

The selling prices of piglets are as follows: -

- (i) Piglets for breeding - Rs32/kg

- | | | |
|--|---|---------|
| (ii) Piglets for fattening | - | Rs30/kg |
| (iii) Runts (deformed or retarded animals) | - | Rs18/kg |

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner about the criteria he has just mentioned “first-come-first-serve”, but, at the same time, priority must be given to the very poor income-earners. We know that, in Rodrigues, more often *gros requins mange petits requins*.

Mr Chairperson: Is it only a sweeping statement or do you have proof of this?

(Interruptions)

Order, please!

Mr Jabeemissar: Yes, Mr Chairperson, there are proofs that, on many occasions, some people have the opportunity to buy as many as their money can afford, whereas the very poor income earners will have to wait until they have the means although they have made applications since a long time. Will the Deputy Chief Commissioner review the strategy in order to give priority not to those who possess but to those who can’t afford although they have submitted their applications since a long time ago?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is always criticism from the other side, but if they know of people who have obtained as many pigs as they wanted they can go and make a statement to the Police or elsewhere. There are never declarations; there is always hearsay – this one has got 20 the other one has got 50. The question has already been answered. The criteria will always be observed. We are making our best to increase the production of piglets so as to satisfy the demand at an acceptable level.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the piglets - it is surprising that in 2003, the ex-President, Mr Karl Offmann encouraged the production of pork - only at Baie Topaze that there are piglets. What, if any, transport or delivery facilities are available to farmers who have succeeded in obtaining piglets from there?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The question of transport is another question. I shall request the Minority Leader to come with a substantive question. His question does relate to the original question on the Order Paper.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we cannot ask a question and be limited to only one aspect of a problem. I shall repeat my question. Are there any

transport facilities available to buyers, that is, those who have obtained piglets from there? Because Mr Chairperson, Sir, I asked about the selling procedure and delivery as included in the process. If the Deputy Chief Commissioner does not want to answer, he is showing disrespect to farmers as usual. Are there, Mr Chairperson, any delivery facilities available to those who have purchased piglets at Baie Topaze?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has never been any complaint on the part of the beneficiaries who have asked to buy pigs or piglets at Baie Topaze. Therefore, the question of providing transport does not arise.

MAURITIUS/RODRIGUES – ATR 72 FLIGHT

(No. B/331) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards Air Mauritius commercial flights to and from Rodrigues, he could obtain appropriate information from relevant parties as to -

- (a) whether there had been any recent flight problems during the operation of the ATR 72 or any other aircraft and, if yes, the nature thereof;
- (b) what was the number of cases involving cancellation or delaying of flights from Mauritius and from Rodrigues during the last three months and if any, the dates on which same occurred, the reasons thereof and how the passengers were treated as a result of the cancellation or the delaying of flights.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, this question concerns a public company listed on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius and I am informed that it may not be in the interest of the company to release information of a commercially sensitive nature.

Nonetheless, Air Mauritius Ltd. has informed that there was a problem on flight MK 131 of 13th October 2003 when the ATR 72 aircraft was delayed by 7 hours 45 minutes on the return leg Rodrigues to Mauritius due to a technical problem caused by a faulty recirculation fan.

During the last three months, there has been no cancellation of flights and there have been 15 cases of delays of which 13 delays pertained to ATR 72. The

Fleet Dispatch Reliability, that is, percentage of flights which have departed on time, for both ATR 42 and ATR 72 is well within the acceptable norms of the industry.

Mr Agathe: We know, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that this is a private company, but how about the security of passengers?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have already replied I cannot give any other information on Air Mauritius as it is a public company.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, my question has been misinterpreted. When I said Air Mauritius commercial flights, I did not ask question on internal matters pertaining to management or organisation at Air Mauritius; I was concerned with Civil Aviation and it is known that Air Mauritius has a monopoly. I was addressing that monopoly. If there were other flights - I would say commercial flights - I would not have mentioned Air Mauritius. We don't want to target Air Mauritius, but I want to know as far as the administration of civil aviation is concerned, what measures have been taken to ensure that, at least, passengers get their flights on time. Many persons, who have been travelling recently, have experienced a number of delays. This is very inconvenient for travellers to Mauritius and elsewhere. Since the administration of the Civil Aviation falls within the preview of the Regional Assembly, what is being done to prevent a recurrence of these problems?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question put is with regard to ATR 72 and cancellation of flights. Whenever the Minority Leader comes with a question on Civil Aviation, he should put a substantive question.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question is here. The Chief Commissioner could obtain appropriate information. If the ATR 72 is being delayed each and every time, Rodrigues's reputation will be.....

Mr Chairperson: One second, please. The answer given is that the question is not directly related to Civil Aviation Administration over which the Assembly has jurisdiction. In other words, if there is any question related to the Civil Aviation Act, notice has to be given.

RESIDENTIAL LEASES - ISSUE

(No. B/332) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the issue of residential leases to members of the public, he would table and comment on the list of all applicants whose applications

have been considered favourably at least once by the State Land Committee in the past (including those examined prior to the setting up of the Regional Assembly), but who still had not been issued their lease agreements, giving details per applicant of the application date, the portion and location of lease considered and the status of the application.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, it should be noted that the State Land Committee has an advisory role and its decision is, therefore, not final. Indeed, according to the State Land Act, the decision to grant a lease or not rests exclusively with the Minister.

With the setting up of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the power of the Minister of Housing and Lands regarding the grant of leases over State land has now devolved over the Chief Commissioner, who is now responsible for State land matters in Rodrigues.

It was noted that some of the previous recommendations of the State Land Committee did not take into account the future housing requirements and the long term planning requirement of Rodrigues. It has, therefore, been decided to review all cases in the light of new recommendations laid down in the National Development Strategy Report. The Cadet Planner is currently visiting all cases which have been retained by the State Land Committee in accordance with the prescribed criteria of eligibility to ascertain whether from a planning point of view, the sites identified are appropriate for residential purpose.

The State Land Committee has recommended that approval conveyed in one case be withdrawn as the beneficiary does not satisfy the prescribed criteria.

Mr J. Roussety: I asked whether the Chief Commissioner will table the list of all applicants whose applications have been considered favourably at least once by the State Land Committee in the past, including those examined prior to the setting up of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, but who have still not been issued their lease agreements giving details to applicants, etc. On a consultative basis, the State Land Committee did make some favourable recommendations in some cases. I asked for this information to be tabled.

The Chief Commissioner: The information will be tabled, Mr Chairperson, Sir, when the Cadet Planner has done his work according to the National Development Strategy report. We are also preparing an outline scheme which will be presented to the President and I think this work must be done so that the outline scheme include human settlement. Sometimes, we have noted, that there are some recommendations outside this outline scheme. Once the Cadet Planner has finished his work, the list will be finalised and it will be tabled.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is not serious at all. Some people have been waiting since 10 and 20 years. The leases have been finalised, sent to Mauritius, approved by the State Land Committee. *Leurs sorts maintenant restent entre les mains d'un Cadet Planner. Combien de demandeurs de bau - il y a, plus de 10,000 - ont été approuvés ? Maintenant, un seul Cadet Planner, va travailler dessus. Je demande au Chef Commissaire, combien de temps ça va prendre et quand est-ce qu'il va donner les baux à ces jeunes qui attendent pour avoir un emprunt pour pouvoir construire quelque chose, réaliser un projet, alors que lui, il donne le travail à un seul cadet planner ? Combien d'années cela va prendre maintenant. La liste était finale. D'ailleurs, M. le Président* I wish to ask you as Chairperson, is it correct for the Chief Commissioner to come here and not to table the information required ?

Mr Chairperson: Yes, the answers are not within my jurisdiction to monitor. It is up to the Commissioner to come up with any answer.

Mr J. Roussety: The question is when the information will be tabled and second, when will the Cadet Planner complete the assignment ascribed to him?

The Chief Commissioner: There are many lists which have been approved by the Ministry of Housing and Land and those lists are being worked out by the Cadastral Office. They are preparing the leases. What I am talking about are two lists which have not been sent to the Ministry of Housing and Land. Those sent there, which were approved by the Ministry have been sent back. There are about eight hundred (800) cases and these are being processed by the Cadastral Officers and they are preparing the leases. What I am talking about is a list of persons which was not sent to Mauritius. They are being examined by the State Land Committee. These lists are being examined – there are 200 to 300, not 1000 – these are being looked into. But those approved in Mauritius are being processed at the Cadastral Office and leases are being signed everyday. We can't go against that. About 50 to 75 leases have been released out of some 800 which have been approved. What I am talking about is the list which has not been sent to Mauritius. This is the one being handled by the Cadet Planner; it concerns about 200-300 applicants.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wanted this list of 800, to be placed on the Table of the Assembly. When is the list going to be tabled? Mr Chairperson, on a point of order, I am speaking and another member is standing at the same time. Let me speak at least.

Mr Chairperson: Order, please! So you don't want to put any question?

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, when is the list going to be tabled here as requested? Tell me when? The list exists for the cases sent to Mauritius?

The Chief Commissioner: I'll table the list at the next sitting.

Mr Emilien: As regards residential leases to members of the public, I would like to quote from question B/245 at the sitting of 1st July, 2003 where the Chief Commissioner said I quote: "my Commission is looking into the possibility of contracting out the Cadastral Survey for the whole island. This will ensure a quicker and more rational way for the granting of leases, thus avoiding any undue hardship to the population." Can I ask the Chief Commissioner if he still envisages this possibility?

The Chief Commissioner: We had a meeting on that question. Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question is to look for finance either from the European Union or from the Ministry of Finance in order to contract out this exercise. If the survey is done, it will be easier to allocate a plot of land. This is a must for the future.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner said that the legal authority to issue leases has devolved on the Chief Commissioner from the Ministry of Housing and Land and whether there has been any amendment to the State Lands Act.

The Chief Commissioner: I don't have the exact information. Could the respected Leader of the Minority put a substantive question?

Mr J. Roussety: But he says Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: He said it in his reply, but he does not have the precise information and that's why he wishes you to come with a substantive question?

Mr J. Roussety: So, he says he has the power, but he does not know how.

Mr Chairperson: I can't answer for him. So, we move to the next question.

WASTE AGRICULTURAL STATE LAND

(No. B/333) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards waste agricultural state land especially found in the rainy area in the centre of the island, he would:

- (a) state the measures he was taking or intended to take to have these lands occupied;
- (b) state the incentive already offered or to be offered to encourage people, especially the youth, to work the land.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that a large percentage of agricultural State lands have been left uncultivated for different reasons after the prolonged drought period of the mid 80s. Very little of the existing agricultural land is being occupied year after year. According to the agricultural services, a slight increase is being noted in the area of cultivated land since the beginning of this year. This is probably due to the different measures that have been initiated especially with funding under the Anti-Erosion programme in collaboration with the Commission of Agriculture. These main measures are -

- A cattle de-stocking programme which has been carried out not only to reduce overgrazing but also to reduce access of cattle to occupied agricultural lands thus reducing crop destruction.
- Fencing of agricultural sites in the three catchment areas of Rivière Banane, Papayes and Mourouk;
- Construction of track roads and footpaths for easy access to agricultural sites;
- Construction and rehabilitation of drain canals and terraces in catchment areas to cater for the problem of erosion;
- Construction of water retaining structures on different sites in catchment areas to provide water for irrigation;
- Fruit trees have been and are being distributed to selected planters located in catchment areas (e.g pine apple, suckers, banana plants);

Moreover, the Extension Officers are fully engaged in the promotion of new techniques of production through the setting up of irrigation network in different agricultural sites; provision of mechanisation facilities; chemical weed/pest and disease control and the provision of technical backup and technical leaflets to planters.

The following long-term measures are also being envisaged –

- (1) Eradication of fruit flies;
- (2) Continuous on farm training for farmers as well as exchange with foreign farmers;
- (3) Encouraging farmers group and construction of farming;
- (4) Marketing study of agricultural products;
- (5) Setting up of a mechanical pool;

- (6) Setting up of an *Institut Agricole* à St. Gabriel;
- (7) Implementation of the Agricultural Plan for Rodrigues; and
- (8) The setting up of the farmer's Welfare Club and the granting of Farmer's Card to genuine farmers.

The following incentives that are being offered to encourage agricultural land occupation will be strengthened –

- (a) the soft loan facilities offered by the DBM;
- (b) the training given to planters locally, in Mauritius and abroad;
- (c) registration of professional planters and farmers as I said earlier;
- (d) low cost seedling as well as subsidised small animals;
- (e) subsidised animal feed as well as pesticides;
- (f) free technical advice to planters.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner, as the question deals mainly with agricultural wasteland found in rainy areas - and we all know that most agricultural land in Rodrigues are found elsewhere - whether he can assure the House that the measures he mentioned will extend to all agricultural projects in Rodrigues? Secondly, what facilities does he intend to give to people living in very dry places?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said these facilities will be provided everywhere in Rodrigues. But the question deals with rainy area in the centre of the island. I am replying to the question asked. But I shall tell the respected member that my Commission will extend these services to other places in the island.

FISHING (ILLEGAL) - PATROLS

(No. B/334) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he could state the measures he has been taking to stop illegal fishing, if any.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, there are two mobile squads of Fisheries Protection Officers stationed at Pointe Monier and Petite Butte Fisheries Posts who carry out regular patrols both on land and at sea to detect and control illegal fishing activities. The patrols are effected both at night and during day time according to tide. The Fisheries Protection Services have also been instructed to control the sale of undersized fish.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner - since he has been talking of two mobile squads working day and night - whether he intends to recruit in the future more Fisheries Officers? Because sometimes when we meet them they say *pas capave faire ça lors la mer*. I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he intends in the near future to recruit more Fisheries Officers.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, at the Fisheries and Marine Resources meeting we have talked about the problem of fisheries guards who spend their time just taking the presence of fishermen at fish landing stations. We are looking at how we can manage so that those fisheries guards can be deployed over a greater area of the sea for more control of the sea and illegal fishing. I thank the respected member for this question and we are taking measures. I don't know whether we are going to recruit more, - this will be in the next budget - especially for taking presence at the fish landing stations so that about 23 Fisheries Guards can be deployed for greater control of the lagoon.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, many Fisheries Protection Officers are working on a roster basis at each fish landing station. Is it the case for all Fisheries Protection Officers?

The Chief Commissioner: Well, I need notice of the question as to whether they are working on a roster basis or not. I can't reply. But since the Member says so, I shall check.

Mr Emilien: I don't know whether I missed part of the answer of the Chief Commissioner, but if such is the case, I'd like to apologise. I know we have measures to control illegal fishing for those using nets and traps. What about those using crooks and lances? Is there some control over the size of the fish or catch or is it being envisaged?

The Chief Commissioner: They have also received instructions to control undersized fish, baskets, nets and so on. I must also inform the House that in January 2003, 9226 metres of illegal fishing nets were burnt at Petite Butte and 3536 metres of nets will be destroyed shortly. From January 2003 to date 21 contraventions have been established against illegal fishermen. We don't say that illegal fishing is completely out, but we know there are still illegal fishers. We need more control but our Officers need more equipment. There is a group of young recruits who have received training at the Police Training School and continuous training will be carried out. The SMF Headquarters at Caverne Provert will be transformed into a sort of training school for Enforcement Officers. The next training session will take place with another group of fisheries guards.

Mr Emilien: The Chief Commissioner mentioned a considerable amount of illegal nets that they have seized and destroyed. We all know that here in Rodrigues, officers get the nets but not the fishermen. Can the Commissioner table a list of fishermen who have been involved in illegal fishing?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, at the next sitting of the Assembly. I shall come up with a statement.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, thank you, next question?

“THE RESIDENCY” - RENOVATION

(No. B/335) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the renovation of the Residency, he would inform the House –

- (a) of the amount of money spent thereon;
- (b) of the details of all items purchased specially paintings, and
- (c) give a list of paintings and their respective artists together with prices paid.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the total amount of money spent with regard to the renovation of the Residency is Rs4,966,346, out of which Rs2,864,171 has been spent for the purchase of materials and the remaining represent labour costs involved. The cost caters both for the renovation of the main building as well as the Kitchen block and the upgrading of the front yard.

I am further tabling a list of all items purchased in connection with the renovation works at La Residence.

No paintings have been purchased so far.

Mr J. Roussety: If no paintings have been purchased, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will again use my personal knowledge. I was there on the 11 October. We saw a number of paintings there, *tableaux d’art*, if these have not been purchased, were they donated or were they somewhere and were brought there?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will say that if someone has a painting at home, it may not have been purchased. Mr Pierre Argo, a well-known artist, requested that his works be exposed on the occasion of the first anniversary of the RRA and during the re-opening of “La Residence.” Four (4)

paintings were exposed during that period. Being given that the paintings match very well with the architecture, a quotation has been requested for the purchase of the paintings. A decision is being taken by the Executive as to whether to acquire the paintings or not. However, the possibility of buying paintings from local artists is also being looked into.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, first, is Mr Pierre Argot specialised in Rodriguan art? Is he a Rodriguan-based or a Rodriguan artist? Secondly, are there other paintings of Rodriguan artists at “La Residence”, and third, has “La Residence” been renovated for exposition of paintings?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, Mr Pierre Argot is a well-known artist as I have said. He is well known in France, in Australia and in England and he has made many photographs, which have appeared in many well-known magazines.

If the Minority Leader does not know Mr Pierre Argo, I shall invite him to buy some books and read a bit more. However, we have had only the request of Mr Pierre Argot to expose his paintings in “La Residence”. If there were requests from Rodriguan painters, they would have been given the same opportunity. I think there were no paintings available and nobody came forward. Pierre Argo has done this painting exhibition for decorative purposes on the occasion of the re-opening of the Residency.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have no lesson of art to receive from the Deputy Chief Commissioner. I read what I want and I look at what I want.

Mr Chairperson: So your question is?

Mr J. Roussety: My question is, Mr Chairperson, Sir, if you go to the Residency, you will see that it has been renovated. I want to know whether there are works of art of Rodriguan artists and other works of art related to Rodrigues. We don't know whether Pierre Argo's works are related to Rodrigues, *un bateau, une montagne de Rodrigues*? Mr Chairperson, Sir, we understand Mr Pierre Argo suggested that his works be exposed there. But the Commissioners who hold the office of government of this island, must strike the right balance. So, are these works at art from local artists or artists who have worked on Rodrigues scenery, Rodrigues art, etc?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think the Minority Leader has not understood my reply. I have said the Executive Council is looking into the possibility of having the paintings of local artists and perhaps afterwards buying them. But at the time of the re-opening of the Residency, there were no

paintings available from them and we, therefore, exhibited Pierre Argo's works. There has been a request from Mr Argo.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner explain why - when so much money has been spent on the renovation of the Residency - is it that, on the day of the inauguration it had trained for a small while and the roof was leaking like a basket? Can he explain why?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, last time in the Assembly, the Minority Leader mentioned that historical buildings are being eaten by rats and when these historical buildings are being repaired, they always have comments. Which is which? They are in contradiction with themselves. Sometimes they forget what they say. Leaks that occurred on the verandah were due to slight damage caused by workers to the shingles. They have already been repaired. You can go and take a bucket of water and splash it on the roof. However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it would be interesting to know that, according to information, the renovation of Le Réduit cost no less than Rs225 m and the Treasury House Rs500 m. Here, we have spent less than Rs5 m.

Mr J. Roussety: Prior to the renovation, I understand there were other objects of historical nature for Rodrigues. There were paintings, photographs and other historical objects there. They are no more there. *Quelle a été leur sort? Où sont-ils passés?*

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not in a position to list all different specific objects, but I know they have been restored to Central Administration and now we are doing our best to renovate same. There are books and other objects which are being repaired or refurbished before being exposed in Central Administration.

RODRIGUES DAY – DONATION TO EACH ZONE

(No. B/336) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture whether she would state for the benefit of the House the amount of money donated to each zone for Rodrigues Day

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, a grant of Rs100,000 has been made to each of the four zones of Rodrigues to celebrate Rodrigues Day at regional level.

Of the total of Rs400,000 earmarked for the four zones, payment of Rs120,000 has already been effected and the balance of Rs280,000 will be paid out in due course.

It must be noted that all payments made by way of such grants will be supported by documents justifying expenditure incurred.

However, I would like to point out that the enthusiasm of the people was so outstanding that in some zones the sum earmarked was insufficient to meet the cost of their events. Consequently, the excesses have been supported by private funds.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, how was the Rs100,000 each zone received donated? Was the money disbursed to them and, if yes, can she give the names of all those who received these monies?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said in my answer, a sum of Rs120,000 has already been paid out of the Rs400,000. So, we are still awaiting for receipts/invoices to pay for the other expenditures.

Mr J. Roussety: I think she misunderstood. Has the money been credited to the accounts or given cash to these zones? How about the names of the persons who were responsible for making the expenditures?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have in my Commission a Senior Finance Officer and my Departmental Head who is also an expert in this area are working on that as is requested in his scheme of duty.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is expected that the Commissioner has appropriate staff. It is the zones that made the expenses; and for each zone there is somebody responsible. You don't pay money to a group of persons that you don't know. Who is the chairman, the treasurer accountable to sign, to certify the bills

submitted to her Commission? Can she give the name of, at least, one person per zone?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, you would agree that this is a completely separate question. The question was about the amount. Anyway, as I said, we have zone leaders and they were, of course, responsible on the Central Committee on which the minority group was invited to, but they did not come or else they would have had all the answers. Naturally, the zone leaders bear responsibility for all the invoices they sign and submit to the Commission for payment.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said Rs100,000 was given to each zone. Can she inform the House, how was the money – the Rs100,000 - used?

Mr Chairperson: It seems the questions are still on how much has been paid up to now and on what items. But I understand that only Rs120,000 have already been paid. The remainder is still to be ascertained.

Mr J. Roussety: Was there a submission of a draft estimate from each zone about what they would wish to purchase for each zone?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, of course, each zone had its own programme which was reviewed by the central organising committee; and I shall come forward when all the facts have been compiled and submit a paper transparently to this House.

Mr Emilien: Can the Commissioner tell the House out of the Rs120,000 already paid, how much has been paid to each zone?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I regret I don't have this information.

Mr Emilien: If the Commissioner would kindly table the answer at the next sitting.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't understand the Member. I have already said that I shall give a breakdown of all expenditures for each zone. So, the Member's question does not arise.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make it clear that the Commissioner will give a breakdown of the whole expenses. I am talking about the Rs120,000 already paid, not about the total payable.

Mr Chairperson: Is the Commissioner answering this question? No. Next question, please.

IDENTITY CARDS – PROCEDURAL CHANGES

(No. B/337) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security whether, with regards to Identity Cards, there was any procedural changes to obtain same.

Mr Mercure: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has not been any procedural change for the issue of identity cards in Rodrigues. The Assembly may wish to note that a National Identity Card Unit is located at the Social Security Office at Port Mathurin and operates one day per week on every Thursday. The existing procedure for the issue of National Identity Card is as follows.

Every citizen attaining the age of 18 should compulsorily apply to the Identity Card Unit of the Social Security Office at Port Mathurin for an Identity Card. The applicant must call in person and produce his/her birth certificate; the applicant is then issued with an identity card on the same day free of charge. But he must produce his/her birth certificate. In case of a civilly married woman, she has to bring her civil marriage certificate. The applicant in this case does not receive her duplicate identity card on the same day as the application form has to be sent to the National Identity Card Unit in Mauritius for approval. After 3 weeks the claimant is requested to call at the office in Port Mathurin to collect his/her card. For a second application the applicant has to pay a fee which has been increased from Rs50 to Rs100 as from September 2003. In case a lady gets civilly married and wishes to have a change in name, she has to put up an application to that effect. Approval is against sought from Mauritius and the applicant will have to wait for a period of three weeks.

Where a lady marries a foreigner a citizenship certificate of the latter is required to apply for a change of name on the identity card against a fee of Rs100 is payable. In case someone marries a foreigner and the latter applies for an identity card, he has to produce his/her certificate of Mauritius citizenship and although he is applying for the first time, the application has to be sent to the Identity Card Unit in Mauritius for approval. She will have to wait for three weeks again.

Mrs Prosper: On pensait qu'avec l'île Rodrigues autonome les choses iraient plus vite. Mais malheureusement deux mois de cela une certaine personne avait fait la demande pour avoir une carte d'identité, mais après trois semaines la personne est repassée, elle n'a pas eu sa carte. Trois semaines se sont déjà écoulées. Mais je me

demande, M. le président, qu'est-ce-que le Commissaire concerné compte faire pour que les choses aillent plus vite.

Mr Mercure: One must not forget that for Social Security we have only the administrative part. We do our job. Whenever we send the cards to Mauritius, they process it; we can't do anything.

Mr J. Roussety: In an autonomous Rodrigues, Mr Chairperson, Sir, for the issue of identity cards for how long applications will continue to go to Mauritius? *Combien de temps encore?*

Mr Mercure: I said we have only the administration for Social Security. We can't do otherwise than to send the applications to Mauritius. For the first application, it is obtained on the same day. Otherwise, approval has to be sought from Mauritius.

Mrs Prosper: Mais M. le président, tous les livres, toutes les données se trouvent à Rodrigues. Pourquoi faut-il aller à Maurice pour avoir sa carte? Pour les mariages, les naissances, tous les livres sont à Rodrigues; pourquoi aller à Maurice?

Mr Mercure: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we must not forget that the Identity Card Unit is no more under the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Security, it has been transferred to the Prime Minister's Office. This is why we continue to process the application, but have to send it to the Prime Minister's Office for approval. What can I do?

GOVERNMENT LIBRARY SERVICES - OPENING HOURS, ACQUISITION OF BOOKS, ETC.

(No. B/338) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Library Services whether, as regards Government Library Services, he would state -

- (a) the opening hours of each Library during the week;
- (b) the frequency of the acquisition of books, magazines and other reading materials, and
- (c) whether these materials are dispatched to all libraries of the Island and within how many days of acquisition.

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the public library and all the *Centres de Lecture et d'Animation Culturelle* (CLAC) are open

from 09.00 hours to 15.30 hours on weekdays and from 08.30 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. on Saturdays

Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, prior to the advent of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, books were purchased once yearly.

However, since I assumed the duties as Commissioner for Education and Training, I have seen to it that books are purchased more regularly. The last books' acquisition was effected in May of this year. It is now proposed to effect purchases at least three times a year, that is, in November, February and May.

On the other hand, the House would probably be interested to know that new subscriptions have been made for magazines and these are available in all libraries, so I am informed.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am further informed that all reading materials for libraries are dispatched within a few days of their arrival in Rodrigues.

Mrs. Prosper: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to information, I have learned that magazines and other reading materials are left in the Central Library for days. I want to know what does the Commissioner intend to do to dispatch all these reading materials just after their acquisition.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is an indication that there is something wrong and that the procedure is not being followed. I am grateful to the respected Member for bringing this to my attention and I can assure her that I shall do everything possible to see that things are put into their right perspective.

STREET LIGHTING

(No. B/339): Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner -

- (a) whether all the streets lights over the island were in good running condition; and
- (b) if not, would he say -

- (i) for how long they had been defective; and
- (ii) what measures he intended to take to repair same?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that after cyclone Kalunde about 60% of the street lights all over the island were not working and need to be repaired. More than 70% of street lamps have been repaired and the remaining 30% need to be replaced. Tenders have already been launched for the supply of additional street lanterns. A pre-selection has been carried out and samples of street lanterns from the pre-selected suppliers are being examined. An order will be placed once the technical committee would have submitted its recommendations and shipment will be done shortly.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner will recall that immediately after Cyclone Kalunde this question was raised here and things went on very quickly, that is, most of the street lights were repaired. But after a few days, they all went bad again. Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether this is due to lack of specialised technicians and who in Rodrigues are specially trained to cater for this situation? Is it the Central Electricity Board or officers from his Commission, and if so, whether he could ensure that repairs are more effective.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally the Electrical Division of my Commission together with electricians from the Central Electricity Board perform repairs on streetlights. But after Kalunde there are sometimes some electrical parameters that cause deficiencies in the electrical conduction of street lanterns. However, the matter is being looked into and the Electrical Section of my Commission will be reinforced with other specialists from IVTB in line with the PRB Report to look into the matter afterwards.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can we know how are faulty streetlights detected?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Can the Minority Leader repeat the question?

Mr J. Roussety: With pleasure. Can the Commissioner tell the House how are faulty streetlights detected?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the technical knowhow to know how faulty street lanterns are detected. But normally a faulty light is detected when there is no light.

Mr. J. Roussety: *Très bizarre, M. le Président, très très bizarre! M. le Président, la lumière qui n'allume pas, qui la détecte? Il est logique que faulty lights won't light, there is no light, there is blackout. What is the inspection procedure?*

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please! Put the question again.

Mr J. Roussety: When there is no light, like in front of my house, who detect these faulty lights?

Mr Chairperson: You mean whose officers?

Mr J. Roussety: Is there an Inspection Unit?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are being advised by qualified technicians from the Central Electricity Board who detect the fault. The repairs are effected at the level of my Commission.

Mr J. Roussety: I understand that it is his Commission who pays for this equipment. There is no inspection of faulty lights. I want to confirm whether there is no inspection of faulty public lights.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are electricians who can detect faults. But the Central Electricity Board technicians are being involved because it is not my responsibility to provide electricity to street lanterns. It is the Central Electricity Board. They know the voltage load and their network distribution. This is why a technician from the Central Electricity Board accompanies the technician from my Commission so as to be able to undertake all the repairs to the street lanterns.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, at night public light is a serious matter. Visitors will have a bad impression when they are not available. If there is no inspection, how does he come to know that lights are defective? Therefore, a light may go off, may be faulty for a number of years and there is no inspection. Then how are these lights repaired? The CEB works during the day. Are there inspections

during the night to see whether they are operating correctly, at least, in the big villages?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said there are inspections. But at the level of my Commission, we register complaints from villagers and other citizens of the country. These complaints are being looked into and remedial decisions are taken to have some repaired in those areas.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, will the Commissioner ensure the House that in dangerous areas, for example, at the radier of Rivière Cocos, these lights are repaired quickly to reduce risks of accidents?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, we are waiting for shipment of these street lanterns from Mauritius and as soon as they are delivered in Rodrigues, we shall do the necessary so that these street lanterns are installed at these dangerous places.

Mr Emilien: The Deputy Chief Commissioner informed the House that faulty lights are detected when there is no light. How does he consider those lights, which remain on throughout the day? Are they faulty or not?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I am not aware of lights, which remain on throughout the day. I shall look into the matter.

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, we are having also a technical problem. Some of our recording apparatuses are overheated. So, I shall suspend the sitting for some fifteen minutes.

At 12.25 hrs the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 12.45 hours with Mr Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, next question, please!

PORT MATHURIN - BUS TERMINAL

(No. B/340): Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, he would state -

- (a) the nature of the work being carried out at the bus terminal of Port Mathurin under the iron sheet structure next to the snacks;
- (b) which companies or individuals had obtained the contract for this work; and
- (c) the cost of the work being done.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the house that the construction of stalls at the Bus Terminal involves the following works –

- (i) Manufacture, supply and fixing of twenty counters and cabinets to allow the sellers to sell their goods as well as to store the goods overnight;
- (ii) Manufacture of “grillage” and partitions to delimitate all stalls, and
- (iii) Other associated finishing works such as painting etc. The contract was launched through local and Mauritian press and was awarded to the lowest bidder, namely PROCIVIL Works Ltd for the total sum of Rs 661,250.00 inclusive of VAT.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, would the Deputy Chief Commissioner enlighten the House on the categories of traders who would obtain these stalls?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the criteria has not been worked out. It will be done in the short term jointly by the Commission of Trade and Commerce and my Commission through the Executive Council.

PORT MATHURIN - FRUITS & VEGETABLES – SEIZED BY THE POLICE

(No. B/341) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Commerce -

- (a) whether the fruit sellers working in the town of Port Mathurin had their fruits seized by the Police recently;
- (b) the reasons therefor; and
- (c) table a list of fruit sellers involved.

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

- (a) I have been informed that fruits and vegetables were seized by the Police in Port Mathurin on Monday 06 October, 2003.
- (b) The fruits and vegetable sellers who are holders of hawker's license were contravened for exposing their goods for sale other than in the market place and some were trading without a licence.

Part (c) is being tabled, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL - MEDICINAL DRUGS

(No. B/342) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health whether he would state -

- (a) why there has been a serious lack of medicinal drugs at Queen Elizabeth Hospital during the last month;
- (b) the names of these drugs;
- (c) what measures he intends to take to prevent such a situation from occurring again.

Mr Sooprayen: 1Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that there was no serious lack of medicines at Queen Elizabeth Hospital during the month of September 2003.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I'd like to ask the Commissioner for Health to clarify the words "no serious lack". Could he be clearer?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am just replying to PQ No. B/342 which asked whether there had been "a serious lack" of medicine. I replied to the question on the wording.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, has there been a lack of any medicine during the period under consideration?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I just said there has neither been serious lack nor any lack of medicine or drugs as far as I know.

Mr Grandcourt: Can the Commissioner tell us whether this “no serious lack”, as he said, extends to the Health Centres as well. If the Commissioner wants to answer.

Mr Chairperson: If the Commissioner wants to answer!

Mr Sooprayen: I don't want to answer, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The question was on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to information, a month ago, there was a serious lack of ...

Mr Chairperson: If the hon. Member says: 'according to information', she has to substantiate the information now because there has been an answer.

Mrs Meunier: There was a serious lack of antibiotics at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, could the Commissioner inquire into the matter, please?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, again I repeat there has not been any lack of drugs. All drugs are ordered from the Central Supplies Division of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life on a quarterly basis well in advance. For example, at this very moment we have already finalised orders to meet requirements for the period January to March 2004.

Mr J. Roussety: *L'attitude du commissaire vis-a-vis de cette question est décevante.* They are playing on words. This is not serious. Mr Chairperson, Sir, what does the Commissioner have to say if I tell him, I know persons who went to Queen Elizabeth Hospital and did not get their drugs? What does he have to say? Why did they not get their drugs? I have the names of the persons.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there have been no complaints.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there have been no complaints, but the fact is that there has been a lack. Does the Commissioner sit in his office and wait

for complaints? I have the names of patients who went to Queen Elizabeth Hospital and for whom doctors prescribed medicine, but who could not get them from the pharmacy and were asked to come back after some time as the medicine was not available. This is true, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The attitude of the Commissioner is deceiving.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that it would be right if the Minority Leader would table the names of the persons.

Mr Emilien: The Commissioner said that there have been no complaints. We all know that hospitals ...

Mr Chairperson: The question is not on complaints, but on lack of medicine.

Mr Emilien: He said that there has been no complaint about lack of drugs. I would like to ask the Commissioner, being given there is a complaints box at the hospital, how often is this box being checked if there are complaints?

(Interruptions)

Mr Sooprayen: This matter concerns the Health Director. If ever there were complaints, he would have told us.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in which Commission is the Health Director located?

Mr Chairperson: I fail to see the connection with the substantive question.

Mr J. Roussety: The Commissioner said that the matter should have been dealt with by the Health Director. I would like to know in which Commission is the Health Director located?

Mr Sooprayen: The Health Director is obviously in the Commission for Health.

(No. B/343) Mr A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports whether, he could state -

- (a)** if any football match was postponed or cancelled on the 06 September 2003 and the teams involved;
- (b)** if yes, where that particular football match was scheduled, the reasons for the postponement and steps taken, if any to avoid recurrence of such a situation; and
- (c)** the measures taken or envisaged to make good the financial loss sustained by the football teams concerned due to the postponement?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (a), a football match opposing Ramblers team and Fire Out was postponed on the 06 September 2003.

In regard to part (b), the match was scheduled to be played at Maréchal and was postponed due to non-marking of ground.

As regards part (c), as stated in answer to PQ No. B/187, if a team is not informed on time about the postponement of a match, a request has to be forwarded to the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee which will ensure that necessary arrangement be made for the replay of the match.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner mentioned PQ No. B/187. I have the reply to this question here. The Commissioner said -

"An inquiry had been initiated to find out the causes of the problem. In order to avoid such a situation from recurring, my Commission and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Committee have already set up a subcommittees in each region which will be responsible for the smooth running of the competition".

PQ No. B/187 dates back to 27 May 2003. This football match was to be held on 06 September. Since May, committees have been set up in each zone to cater for these problems, may I ask the Commissioner what has been done so far?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as a result of the reply to PQ No. B/187, I should say that I am very satisfied with the work that is being done by the Rodrigues Football Committee. As proof, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it may happen that, once in a while, a match has to be postponed, but as proof of effectiveness, the subcommittees

set up in the different regions are working well. Since January 2003, 240 football matches have been played. Only nine football matches were cancelled, four due to weather conditions, two because of non-marking and three because of non-availability of referees. So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, out of 249 matches played, only five have been postponed. Is this not a sign of effectiveness?

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not questioning the effectiveness of the committees. If they have been set up, it is because there have been problems. Part of my question concerns expenses met by the teams. I do not think the Commissioner has replied to this part. In Rodrigues, we don't have gate money because the matches are not played in a stadium. The clubs encounter financial difficulties when they play matches. For bad weather, it is understandable. What has been done to remedy the situation as far as the absence of markings, non-availability of referees are concerned?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, only five (5) matches have been postponed since January 2003 out of 249 which were scheduled to be played. In my reply to PQ No. B/187, I stated that expenses incurred by any team have to be forwarded to the Rodrigues Football Committee for refund.

Mr Emilien: In reply to PQ NO. B/260, the Commissioner informed the House that his Commission was envisaging to have referees to undertake their duties in a professional manner and it would be proposed in future tournaments that referees enter into a contract with the committee beforehand. Is it the case now?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, all current referees were appointed at the start of the different tournaments. I am well aware of the reply that I gave to question B/260. I said that in future – when I said “in future”, I mean when new tournaments are going to start.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS – ZEP PROJECT

(No. B/344) Mr A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner for Education whether, for the benefit of the House, he would say -

- (a) which primary schools in Rodrigues fell in the ZEP category;
- (b) what measures had been taken for those schools, if any, since the implementation of the ZEP project in mainland Mauritius, and if none, the reasons thereof; and

(c) whether any funds had been allocated under the ZEP project for any particular school in Rodrigues and if yes, state the amount thereof, details of their intended use and, if not used, why?

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to refer the respected Member to the reply I made to Parliamentary Question No. B/282 in which I mentioned that the Ste. Thérèse de l' Enfant Jesus RCA has been identified as a ZEP school.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, again with your permission, I will reply to parts (b) and (c) of the question concurrently.

Sir, I am informed that funds are disbursed by the Ministry of Education & Scientific Research directly. No funds have yet been disbursed to this effect and this issue is being raised with the Ministry of Education & Scientific Research.

However, I am informed that the management of the school has already undertaken the other aspects of this project which is counselling of the parents and follow-up of pupils in their environment.

The nutritional aspects are being worked out with the Ministry of Education and this will be implemented once the procedures have been completed.

Mr Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he knows that with the ZEP Project in mainland Mauritius, meals are given to the students of the ZEP Schools. We know what happened about yogurts, etc. Has this been implemented in Rodrigues insofar as the Ste. Thérèse de L'Enfant Jesus RCA School is concerned, which falls under the ZEP project?

Mr L. Roussety: This is meant to be implemented in Rodrigues. The children will get a yogurt, bread and cheese which is nutritional and contain calcium for the growth of bones, but unfortunately, as I said, the matter is still being pursued with the Ministry of Education as far as the implementation of the project here in Rodrigues is concerned. But regardless of that the normal school feeding programme is still being implemented in all schools.

Mr Agathe: Last time I asked a question about the parent mediator. In Mauritius in these schools we have a parent mediator. What about Rodrigues? I have sent a copy to the Commissioner.

Mr L. Roussety: This is what they call parent mediator. This is what I would call “*accompagnement scolaire*”. I will inquire and give more precise information at the next sitting.

RIVIERE COCO & CITRON DONIS – WATER DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

(No. B/345) Mr A.L Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources whether, he could inform the House –

- (a) how things stand as far as the water distribution network for upper Rivière Coco was concerned;
- (b) the total length of polyethylene pipes connected to the Citron Donis network so far and the date same was done;
- (c) the total length of polyethylene pipes presently lying by the side of the road at the above-mentioned place and since when same has been lying there, and
- (d) the reasons why those concerned had not yet been connected to the network and when same would be done.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the delivery of polyethylene pipe is now being effected by the successful supplier and that the extension of the network to Upper Rivière Coco is scheduled to be completed by the end of November 2003.

The total length of polyethylene pipes that have been laid at Citron Donis amounts to 3.8 km. The laying of the pipes was completed in February 1998.

I am, further, informed that there is presently no pipes lying by the side of the road at Citron Donis and that those concerned could not be connected for the time being to the network, as there is presently no network. As stated in the beginning of my reply, action is being taken to complete the extension of the network by the end of November 2003 and, thereafter, any person in the upper part of Rivière Coco wishing to have a water prise will be connected.

Mr Emilien: I would like to inform the Deputy Chief Commissioner...

Mr Chairperson: No, the Member should not inform, but should put his question directly.

Mr Emilien: Those people in the upper part of Rivière Coco have paid for water rent since 03 March 2003. How come that up to now they have not been connected? Is this normal?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: As I said, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I understand the hardship caused to the villagers. But extension of the network depends on the availability of pipes. Moreover, there has also been some delay in the shipment of pipes owing to the fact that the supplier considered it was more practicable to ship in bulk. But the necessary will be done at the end of November this year to connect the villagers.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, how is it that people pay for a Government service for March to November, some six months have elapsed and there are no pipes available? This is something I cannot understand. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether this is normal practice in his Commission.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is the people themselves who want to pay for connections even though the pipes are not available. We have a priority list of regions where there is no network and as soon as pipes are available, these regions will be connected; and these persons are told whether they want to pay or not; they always pay just before they are connected to the network.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner what are the procedures when people are in arrears with the water rents. Now your Commission is in arrears with water supply? Will the procedure be the same?

Mr Chairperson: No, this question is not allowed. Next question.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES – OPENING HOURS

(No. B/346) Mr A. L. Emilien (The First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Libraries, whether, he could state –

- (a) the present opening hours of each of the “*Centre de Lecture et d’Animation Culturelle*” in the island;
- (b) if there had been any change in the opening hours of these centres and if yes, as from when and the nature of such changes, and

(c) if newspapers in these centres were still available and if not, why not and as from when?

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to refer the respected Member to the reply I have just made to question B/338 in which I mentioned the opening hours of all libraries in Rodrigues.

Sir, as regards part (b), I am informed that no change has been made to the opening hours of the library services. The respected member would like to know that extended hours which were previously operational had to be stopped in view of the heavy financial burden which had to be catered for with the implementation of the PRB report regarding overtime rate. So, my respected colleagues on the minority benches will certainly bear me out on that by acknowledging the fact that there has been goodwill on the part of my Commission to try and do something regarding the extension of library opening hours.

But as I have just said we have personnel of about no less than ten in public library and, following the PRB Report regarding overtime rate, this represents a very heavy burden on our budget and no provision had been made for that. To remedy the situation, in accordance with the recommendations of the PRB Report, my Commission is seriously looking into the possibility of adjusting the opening hours of public libraries to better serve the reading public.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am further informed that newspapers and other magazines are available in all libraries.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, concerning part (c) of the question regarding availability of newspapers, it is a fact that at Rivière Coco those papers are no more available. So, I would like to know if the Commissioner would inquire into this matter.

Mr L. Roussety: I thank my respected friend of the minority for bringing this to my attention and I promise him that I shall have the matter investigated with a view to having a good solution.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we all want our population to be literate and primary schools close at 3.30 p.m. and these centres close at 3.15 p.m. On Saturdays, of course, public officers would have liked to borrow books and magazines from these libraries. I thank the Commissioner for his proposal to adjust the opening hours. This will be highly profitable for the population to adjust the time

and I would like to ask the Commissioner what is the extension of opening hours he envisages.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the first instance, this is a subject to negotiation. The adjustment of working hours cannot be unilaterally decided, even if we talk of flexible hours. Ideally it would be to the benefit of one and all that the libraries open one hour later and close one hour later. Now it is 8.30 a.m., it would then be 9.30 a.m. and they would close at 4.30 p.m. That would be the ideal solution, but this can only be a proposal on our side. We have got to anticipate some opposition. There is one difficulty though, there is in most cases one Library Clerk and one Attendant. So, it is very difficult or impossible to work out a shift system. Otherwise, we could have done that. I can assure the member that we are doing our level best to get something positive.

FISHERMEN - BAD WEATHER ALLOWANCE

(No.B/347) Mr D. L. Guillaume (The Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the bad weather allowance payable to fishermen, he could state -

- (a) how many professional off-lagoon fishermen have been certified as such by the Fisheries Protection Service and their names forwarded to the Commission for Fisheries for the year 2003;
- (b) the date and month his Commission has received the list of qualified fishermen and their names;
- (c) if all these fishermen have received their cards, and, if yes, when, if not, why, and
- (d) if these fishermen will receive the bad weather allowance for the whole period since they were certified to be professional fishermen by the Fisheries Protection Services.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, with regard to parts (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed that in a letter dated 22 May 2003, the Assistant Controller of the Fisheries Protection Service has recommended 28 applicants who have satisfied the prescribed criteria for registration as off lagoon professional fisherman. I am tabling the names of the 28 persons.

As regards part (c) of the question, it has been decided that for safety reasons, the 28 fishermen should be issued with life jackets at the same time as their professional fishermen cards. The Ministry of Fisheries has been requested to provide 28 life jackets.

I am informed that the Ministry of Local Government has already collected the life jackets from the Ministry of Fisheries on the 15th October for shipment to Rodrigues. As soon as the life jackets are received, same will be handed over to the fishers along with their fishermen cards.

With respect to part (d) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, these persons will be eligible for bad weather allowance after their registration as professional fishermen. The Fisheries Protection Services have recommended their registration, which will become effective on the receipt of their fishermen cards.

LATE ARCHANGE CATHERINE – REPATRIATION OF CORPSE

(No. B/348) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health in the case of the late Archange Catherine who was involved in road accident at Mourouk and who died during treatment in Mauritius upon referral by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, could the Commissioner explain why his corpse was transferred to Rodrigues only thirteen days after his death.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, late Archange Catherine was involved in a road accident and sent to Mauritius for further treatment on 16 September 2003.

He, unfortunately, died in Mauritius on 19 September 2003.

All patients sent to Mauritius for further investigations and treatment and who happened to die there are repatriated to Rodrigues, and as soon as possible after completion of all necessary formalities.

The remains which should be placed in a hermetically sealed coffin and placed in another wooden coffin should not exceed 1 metre 80 centimetres. In Air Mauritius ATR plane, the coffin is normally placed in the front hold (soute).

As the coffin of late Archange Catherine measured more than 1 metre 80 centimetres, it could not be transported to Rodrigues by Air Mauritius, ATR plane.

As is done in such cases, the office of the Commissioner of Police was contacted right on 19 September 2003 to have the remains repatriated by the Dornier Aircraft as the Commission for Health has agreed to bear all the repatriation costs estimated at Rs57,000.

Unfortunately, the said aircraft was undergoing its annual check. ground run and check flight was tentatively scheduled for 29 September 2003.

I am tabling a correspondence from the Commissioner of Police on the issue of repair to Dornier.

Meanwhile, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd. was contacted for the repatriation of the corpse by the Mauritius Trochetia. The next available ship scheduled to sail to Rodrigues on or about 30 September 2003. The total repatriation costs were Rs41,790 of which Rs31,790 represent the sea freight and Rs10,000 expenses on the coffin.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given that in this case the Catherine family - to whom I address my condolences - had to wait for 13 days and high costs by sea of the carriage of the remains and the high costs by Dornier, what does the Commissioner envisage for the future in cases where the coffins exceed a length of 1 m 80? This is a matter of death and a matter of sufferings by families here in Rodrigues.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been thinking about this and very soon I shall come to the Executive Council with a paper for discussion.

CORAIL, PETITE BUTTE - BRICKMAKERS

(No. B/349) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Industrial Development, whether as regards the brickmakers "*Les Débrouillards*", of Corail, Petite Butte, he could obtain information as to -

- (a) whether the workers had stopped their activities, and if yes, since when and the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether these workers were being assisted financially or otherwise and, if yes, by whom?

Mr Mercure: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have no information on the brickmakers '*Les Débrouillards*' of Corail, Petite Butte as it is a private entreprise.

However, as regards part (b), the Executive Council on its sitting of 09 September 2003 has approved to pay a sum of Rs62,000 from the Chief Commissioner's Relief Fund following a request received from "*Les Débrouillards*" for a permanent CEB supply to their block making factory.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, although, as the Commissioner said, it is a private enterprise, but we all know the history behind the setting up of this enterprise. At the beginning can the Commissioner say whether these people started their company by their own means or whether they were at the very start having assistance from public funds and if so, by whom and, if yes, whether these funds should be monitored by his Commission as to their uses?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the point raised by the respected member, I think the matter has already been dealt with by my colleague, the Commissioner for Social Security to Question B/247.

CAMP PINTADE - WATER DISTRIBUTION

(No. B/350) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could inform the House of the present state of water distribution for domestic use to the village of Camp Pintade.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that due to a fall in the water production, the frequency of water distribution for domestic use in the village of Camp Pintade will have to be decreased. My Commission has taken the decision to devote Mourouk and Mont Lubin boreholes exclusively for water distribution to the southern region. However, these two boreholes have registered a significant decrease in yield over the past weeks. The total daily production of these two boreholes as well as the dug well at Mourouk has fallen from 1086 m³/day for the week ending 22 August 2003 this year to 737 m³/day for the week ending 19 September 2003 and 676 m³/day for the past weeks. The Water Unit is closely monitoring the situation and any further adjustment will be made so as to enable an equitable water distribution in that region.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House at what frequency the existing fibre glass tanks located in different parts of this region are filled with water so as to ensure a frequent supply of water to these people?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the information in hand, but I'll look into the matter.

Mr Jabeemissar: In that case, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he is aware that when these people have waited for their supply of water sometimes for two months, they have to fetch water from a hole dug near the sea, which cannot be called a well because it is shallow and becomes salty at high tide.

Very often people use this water for domestic and other uses. Is he prepared to look into this matter?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I shall look into the matter.

RODRIGUES DAY CELEBRATIONS

(No. B/351) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner for Arts and Culture whether, as regards the different activities in connection with the Rodrigues Day celebrations, she could -

- (a) give an account of all the groups or associations which participated in the different events;
- (b) table the total expenses incurred therefor per group by
- (c) tabling the different items purchased or paid for.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the answer is as follows -

- (a) The groups and associations which participated in the different events are set out in a paper on Annex I (which is being laid on the Table of the Assembly).
- (b) Expenditure relating to groups or associations whose services had been hired by the Organising Committee of each Zone was met by the relevant Organising Committee out of the Rs100,000 donated by the Regional Assembly.

The Finance Division of the Commission has actually paid Rs394,259 as per details at Annex II also being laid on the Table of the Assembly.

A further amount of Rs592,000 has been earmarked to meet expenses at Annex III also being laid on the Table of the Assembly to meet payments for which no final invoices have been received, the suppliers are still discussing about an eventual discount by way of their contribution to the Celebration of Rodrigues Day, 2003.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have got a supplementary question, please. Can the Commissioner inform the House whether all the villages found within zones offer their full participation in these activities and whether she has made some sort of evaluation of each village's participation?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, he has asked two questions in one. Could he ask one by one? Then I shall answer.

Mr Jabeemissar: Yes, whether she has made a survey in the villages to see whether the villagers found in these zones benefited from the money provided and participated in the events, that is my question.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to whether all the villages participated and benefited from the sum given to the zones, I would like to say that money was given to the zones not the villages. But all the zones were asked to contact all the villages to ensure their whole participation. I am very happy with the outstanding participation of nearly all the villages. A few remote villages failed to organise events such as the *reflexion* on the theme "*Ensemble nous avancer, avec fierté, dans la solidarité*". Otherwise, the participation was beyond our expectations.

RRA - COMMISSIONER'S VEHICLE

(No. B/352) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, whether, as regards Rodrigues Regional Assembly vehicles purchased since the beginning of the year and which are attached to the Commissioner, whether he could -

- (a) give a list of accidents in which any of these vehicles had been involved;
- (b) give the causes of the accidents and the types of damage incurred, and
- (c) table a list of the expenses for repairs per vehicle.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have to inform the House that with regard to RRA vehicles purchased since the beginning of the year only one vehicle bearing No.2RRA03 is attached to me for my official use.

This vehicle has never been involved in accident.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I shall address you, because on a number of times, questions that we have submitted miss an "s" or some words. Here it should have been "Commissioners". We don't understand; we receive the Order Paper with errors. It should have been Commissioners. This is intolerable! We are doing our work and these things are happening. I am making a request that the Order Paper be checked properly before it is sent to us as it is given by the Member.

Mr Chairperson: I will look personally into this matter. Next question!

PISTACHES - MAIN ROAD - REPAIRS

(No. B/353) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, whether, with regard to the main road used by lorries at Pistache, he could state -

- (a) if the road was partly damaged, and
- (b) if yes, what measures he intends to take to repair same.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that with regard to the main road used by lorries at Pistache, that some 800 m² of road is partly damaged. Action has already been initiated and the works are scheduled to start shortly.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is with regret that I will say that, in fact, the work has already started. Yesterday, when lorries started using the road again, it started to be as it was before; that is, the repairs are what we call “*solutions panadol*”. Could the Deputy Chief Commissioner see to it that the road is well repaired, so that it can cater for those very heavy vehicles using the road everyday at all times? If things are not done properly, shortly we shall face the same problems.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, tendering for the purchase of materials was done two weeks ago. My Commission does not do the work that is being undertaken on this road. It is a temporary solution for lorries using that road.

Works will start shortly by the Commission responsible for public infrastructure and road constructions. But, I'll remain on my position, because there is no alternative than to repair the road afterwards.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he received a letter dated 13 August, from the villagers telling him that the road was damaged and, if yes, why is it that only now he said, two weeks ago, tenders have been sent to buy materials? Why so much time to repair the road?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not aware of that. I shall tell the respected Member that we have taken time to have the road repaired, because we cannot repair a road and at the same time have lorries using it. We are waiting for the completion of the main road from La Ferme to Port Mathurin to start the repair of the road.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the lorries using that road have done some repairs on that road; they have put in some macadam, '*ti pin*', etc. Is it the general practice for those who damage roads to repair them afterwards? Because the Deputy Chief Commissioner has said that those who operate the lorries have done some repairs to the road.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, every development on an island sometimes has temporary adverse consequences. All lorries have been diverted to Pistache Road. We are waiting for school holidays to have same repaired, so that this will not affect traffic at La Ferme and Pistache.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he is aware that on Friday 17, Saturday 18 and Sunday 19, a group of about 50 villagers, led by youth leaders there, blocked the road, put big rocks on it and prevented the traffic from passing as a matter of protest; and this action necessitated the intervention of the Police. I would like to ask him whether he is aware of these events and, if yes, whether he went there, at least, to listen to the persons who were protesting?

The Chairperson: This question is not strictly connected to the main question as you, yourself, said. These are incidents, which occurred on the 17th. The question was laid on the Table of the Clerk well before that. It is up to the Commissioners whether to answer this question or not.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: As I said, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I remain on my position. The road will be repaired afterwards.

Mr J. Roussety: Any question tabled will be complete.

Mr Chairperson: Of course, it stands to reason that you cannot ask questions for any future event. Next question, please.

LA FERME - SPORT COMPLEX - REPAIRS

(No. B/354) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, whether as regard to the repair of the sport complex at La Ferme, he could state -

- (a) the amount of money earmarked for the project, and

- (b) the types of work which are being carried out there.

The Commissioner for Youth and Sports (Mr N. Lisette): Mr Chairperson Sir, with your permission, I would like to reply to this question.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that for La Ferme Sports Complex, the contract value of the works amount to Rs498,824, inclusive of VAT and a contingency sum of Rs25,000.

With regard to part (b), the nature of works being carried out is as follows -

- (a) rehabilitation of existing walls;
- (b) rehabilitation of existing seats;
- (c) replacement of entrance door and rehabilitation of exit doors;
- (d) rehabilitation of existing concrete pitch;
- (e) rehabilitation and replacement of metal posts for games; this includes new metal posts for tennis, volleyball and a moveable metal post for basket ball;
- (f) provision of fencing above wall facing roads, and
- (g) rehabilitation of seats and walls for football ground and other minor works.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner to table the tender documents regarding the repairs which are being carried out at the La Ferme Sport Complex?

Mr Lisette: Same will be done, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

RODRIGUES -TUBERCULOSIS CASES

(No. B/355) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner for Health whether, with regard to tuberculosis in Rodrigues, he could state -

- (a) the number of cases, if any, registered each year for the last three years;

- (b) the total number of patients, if any presently suffering from tuberculosis in Rodrigues, and
- (c) what treatment is available for same.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I have been informed that the numbers of cases of tuberculosis registered each year for the last three years are -

Year 2000 : One case treated and cured

Year 2001 : Nil

Year 2002 : One case treated and cured

Year 2003 : One still under treatment

With regard to part (b), the total number of patients suffering from tuberculosis in Rodrigues is one (1).

With regard to part (c), the treatment available is Antituberculous drugs for a definite period and a regular follow-up and advice.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning T.B patients, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Health where are they kept, in the ward or in any special room reserved for them?

Mr Sooprayen: Normally, such patients are not hospitalised and treatment is dispensed once the disease is diagnosed. Those who are in close contact with the patients are tested regularly.

QUATRE VENTS/ LA FERME ROAD - ENVIRONMENT - TOPOGRAPHY

(No. B/356) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, in view of the topography of the environment of the road from Quatre Vents to La Ferme would the Deputy Chief Commissioner state whether -

- (a) handrail should urgently be provided alongside the road where it borders on steep slopes in order to avoid human casualties, and
- (b) a proper drainage system should be devised to drain the waters from the canals directly to rivers instead of to arable land as at Mangles.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that with regards to Quatre Vents/La Ferme Road, that handrails and guardrails have already been ordered by a contractor and are awaiting shipment in Mauritius. The installation of guardrails and handrails is now a matter of days.

As regards drainage, the policy is to divert the water into existing natural drains, which in turn will channel the water to the rivers. However, a joint collaboration is being effected with the Agricultural Services, so that existing drains on the roads could be used to channel water to "Retenue Collinaire". A pilot project has been carried out at Papayes, Nassola and Rivière Banane. Should it be successful, it will be replicated in other regions including Mangles.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER

ELDERLY - DOMILICIARY VISITS

The Commissioner of Social Security (Mr R. Mercure): Mr Chairperson, Sir, as this Assembly may be aware, the Government of the Republic of Mauritius has, since 1990, introduced the service of domiciliary medical visit to persons over the age of 90 in the context of its policy for the protection of the elderly. These persons receive monthly visit by a Medical Officer, who monitors and assesses their state of health and make appropriate prescription for medicine that can be obtained at the Health Centre nearest to the locality of the person's residence.

With time, this service has proved to be very useful and essential, especially for our most senior citizens who cannot any more travel to reach the health centres to have a medical examination and check-up.

However, although important, the domiciliary medical visit has been unfortunately restricted to the age group of 90 years and above. People who are severely handicapped and are bedridden, but under the age of 90, were not, until recently, entitled to such service.

Complaints received at my Commission have revealed that these cases do exist in Rodrigues. Great difficulties are encountered by these patients to travel to health centres for medical services, as they are not entitled to the domiciliary medical visit.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, protection of the disabled persons is one of the priority issues of the Executive Council of this Regional Government. While we are struggling to ensure the economic development of Rodrigues, we are also making sure that appropriate policy decisions are taken and implemented with a view to ensuring the social reintegration of the vulnerable groups and the disabled persons, irrespective of their age.

This is why, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the distinguished Members of this Assembly that the Executive Council, as a caring Regional Government, has recently taken the decision to extend domiciliary visits by a Medical Officer to all bedridden persons under the age of 90 years at the frequency of one visit per month.

I would like to thank my colleague, the Commissioner for Health, who has agreed that the Medical Officers at his Commission effect the visit that will be done after working hours so as not to affect services at the health centres. Necessary arrangement is being made to inform the public in Rodrigues accordingly and to invite parents of bedridden cases to notify the Social Security Centre of their locality, which will arrange for the medical visit.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would also like to inform this Assembly that following my recent mission to the Ministry of Social Security in Mauritius in June this year, there is now established in Rodrigues a Medical Appeal Tribunal, as provided under section 36 of the National Pension Act of 1976, and to which an appeal against a decision of a Medical Board regarding the disallowance of a pension may be referred.

The members of the Tribunal are nominated by the Minister of Social Security as per law. The Tribunal consists of one Chairman, who is the visiting magistrate; two medical specialists and a secretary. The Tribunal will sit as and when required according to the number of cases. It has already had its first sitting on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 September 2003 during which 48 appeal cases were heard.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the establishment of this Tribunal in Rodrigues is the result of the fruitful collaboration between my Commission and the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, Senior Citizen Welfare and Reform Institutions. I am very pleased indeed, for the short time delay during which this project has

materialised and I avail this opportunity to thank the hon. Minister Samioullah Lauthan and the staff of his Ministry in this respect.

With this Tribunal, the public in Rodrigues has now the same privilege as our brothers and sisters in Mauritius, to have recourse to appeal against a decision of the Medical Board.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move that the Assembly be now adjourned to Tuesday 11 November 2003 at 10.30 hrs.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Chairperson: I understand some of the minority members would wish to address the House at adjournment? Yes, proceed.

WATER SUPPLY

Mr Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme): M. le Président, avec votre permission, je voudrais attirer l'attention de la chambre sur un problème qui a le plus marqué certaines interventions ici durant l'année écoulée. Il s'agit du problème d'eau, plus spécialement dans la région de l'ouest de Rodrigues. Tout le monde se souvient combien de fois cette partie de la chambre a attiré l'attention du Conseil Exécutif sur ce problème. Combien de fois aussi, M. le Président, n'a-t-on pas apporté des suggestions en vue d'améliorer cette situation pernicieuse.

Il y a un an, M. le Président, j'ai parlé du problème d'eau auquel les habitants du village de Ste. Marie avaient à faire face parce que le réseau d'approvisionnement en eau avait été enlevé. On connaît les raisons avancées par les autorités responsables. Le forage d'Anse Quitor ne pouvait plus fournir de l'eau. Un réservoir construit à cet endroit ne servait plus à rien. Des bassins en fibre de verre servent de décor dans cet endroit sec. Pourtant des gens y vivent et y ont vécu depuis longtemps, ne dépendant que de leur volonté et de leur capacité de faire face aux aléas. Tout ce qu'ils demandent, M. le président, c'est que les autorités

responsables viennent les approvisionner régulièrement en eau à travers des bassins en fibre de verre en attendant qu'un nouveau réseau d'approvisionnement soit installé.

L'année dernière quand j'avais posé cette question, M. le Deputy Chief Commissioner avait dit qu'il allait faire le nécessaire le plus vite possible. Un an s'est déjà écoulé. Il en est de même pour les habitants de la région de Camp Pintade, M. le président. Tout à l'heure, je viens d'entendre les réponses données par les membres respectés à ce sujet. Espérons que les choses iront très vite. Figurez-vous que l'eau coule en moyenne après plus d'un mois mais la distribution n'est pas faite équitablement. Les habitants donc souhaitent que la structure du réseau actuel soit revue afin de pouvoir faire face à la période sèche qui s'annonce déjà. J'invite l'Assistant au Chef Commissaire ainsi que les techniciens de sa Commission à aller voir où ces gens puisent l'eau pour leurs besoins domestiques en attendant que l'eau coule de leurs robinets.

D'autre part, M. le président, il y a aussi toute la région d'Anse Quitar et de Dans Coco qui font face à la même situation. D'après un constat - et confirmé par les autorités concernées - le réservoir d'Anse Quitar plus connu sous le nom d'Agner, tout près de M. Agner, ne répond plus aux exigences actuelles. Ce même réservoir approvisionne aussi Cité Patate et Corail Petite Butte. Pourtant, M. le président, ce réservoir était approvisionné par le forage d'Anse Quitar. D'après les informations, ce forage aurait une nouvelle pompe mais il y a une pénurie de tuyau. La grande question que tous ces gens, qui souffrent, se posent quotidiennement est celle-ci -

'Pourquoi quand il s'agit de résoudre leurs problèmes, ça prend autant de temps, alors que quand il s'agit d'organiser des fêtes, ça va aussi vite'.

A bon entendeur salut.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, tender documents are being prepared for new network in the southern region by my Commission. The one to deliver water from Montagne Cabris reservoir to Bangelique has already been made. Moreover, pipes are now available and many works will be executed in the southern region to ensure an equitable water distribution in the region.

The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety): Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I wish to bring to the attention of the House events which have occurred in the village of Pistaches in local region No. 1, La Ferme.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, last Friday 17 October 2003, a group of villagers, mostly young people, independently gathered to protest against the bad state of the road. The road passing through Pistache has been severely damaged by heavy vehicles, which use it on a daily basis. The problem has worsened when there has been a diversion for heavy vehicles, which used to pass through La Ferme but now pass by Pistaches to reach Grand la Fouche Corail. As a result of heavy vehicles using the road coupled with inexistent maintenance of the infrastructure, there are large holes of about one foot deep on the street which make it extremely dangerous for passing traffic of all kinds and also for the villagers. The villagers made a number of representations to the authorities, but the latter did not respond. Last Friday fed up with that problem, they decided to go ahead with blocking the road with rocks and other materials. This act has been considered as being vandalism by some people speaking of law and order and which has been reported by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation. I don't want to justify acts or protests of any kind. But we believe that these villagers acted in their rights and wanted to call for awareness and for remedial action.

Other members of the House and myself were called upon to listen to the complaints of the protesters. But unfortunately, Mr Chairperson, Sir, those principally concerned with public infrastructure, even though they were called upon, did not dare to have a look at the road. This, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is a sign of disrespect and irresponsibility towards the people. The Police intervened at different times to remove the obstacles on the road.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, one of the basic roles of Government is to see to it that public infrastructure is maintained in good order. By acting like this, not repairing roads, the majority shows failure in their role of providing good and efficient roads to the people. And these inefficiencies in Government action, Mr Chairperson, Sir, open the way to creating justification for public protests and social unrest. It is not good to have young people blocking the roads in Rodrigues, preventing road users from passing. I just told you we believe it is their right. The question of legality can be examined separately.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, on the one hand, we see wastage of public funds whereas, on the other hand, we see the inefficient inspection and maintenance of public infrastructure. We don't have to wait that a road becomes so dangerous that people must come onto the street, block it and protest and there is need for a Police

intervention. Sufferings and day-to-day problems of people are not being taken into account, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Le peuple sait que le pouvoir lui appartient et revendique légitimement ce à quoi ils ont droit. Si le gouvernement refuse de satisfaire leurs aspirations, on ouvre la voie à l'irresponsabilité et à l'instabilité. M. le président, il serait bien si à l'avenir la commission d'infrastructure publique revise son système de maintenance, son système d'inspection des services publics qui touchent de près la population, les routes, les lumières la nuit parce que les gens ont l'impression d'être abandonnés.

Pour terminer, je vous cite, Victor Hugo -

'Les grandes révolutions naissent de petites misères
comme les grands fleuves de petits ruisseaux.'

Avec ces mots, M. le président, je vous remercie et j'espère que le message est passé.

Mr Chairperson: Would the Commissioner for Infrastructure intervene now or later?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le Président, comme je l'ai dit tout dernièrement, tout développement entraîne des conséquences temporaires. La Commission d'Infrastructures Publiques avait dans son programme la réparation de la route de Pistaches, *but it is a shame for the respected Member to promote the disruption of law and order in a certain village.*

Mr Chairperson: But you should not impute any improper motive.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I remove the words.

Mr J. Roussety: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: Is it on what I have said?

Mr J. Roussety: On a point of order, I didn't say, Mr Chairperson, Sir that I am encouraging people to block roads.

Mr Chairperson: If you have risen on a point of order, please make your point. If you want to reply, you can do so later.

Mr J. Roussety: The Deputy Chief Commissioner is imputing motives and I shall request him to remove his accusations.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I have already withdrawn.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is preparing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure in Mauritius concerning transport; and regulations will be made in this Assembly concerning weighing capacity of lorries in Rodrigues. There are many persons who are crying, but they, themselves, have lorries with a big weighing capacity, which is causing much damage to roads.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, order, please!

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The weighing capacity of lorries in Rodrigues will be looked into and I will ask every citizen of this country that we should have a dialogue together so as to repair damages done to the infrastructure. It is not the role of the Commissioner to remove obstacles such as rocks and stones on roads. It is the role of the Police to maintain law and order in this country.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

At 2.30 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 11 November 2003 at 10.30 a.m.