

No. 03 of 18.02.03

RODRIGUES

FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 03 of 2003

Sitting of Tuesday 18 February 2003

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

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

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STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

- (a) Seaweed farming projects in Rodrigues
- (b) Damage to fishing boats during the approach of cyclone Gerry
- (c) Workshop by National Assembly/Regional/Federica Ebert institute for members and staff of the Regional Assembly

ANNOUNCEMENT (NONE)

MOTION

“This Assembly resolves that, pursuant to Section 64 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, as subsequently amended, the standing Orders Committee be requested to examine and review the Standing Orders and Rules of the Regional Assembly as contained in Act No.28 of 2002 and to report on any amendments that may be brought thereto”.

PAPERS LAID

The following Paper was laid in the Library of the Assembly –

The Declaration of Assets Act 1991

The Chief Commissioner, Mr. Louis Serge CLAIR

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FIXING OF PRICES OF IMPORTED GOODS IN RODRIGUES

(No.B/75) The Minority Leader (Mr.Johnson Roussety) asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade, Commerce and Licensing whether, as regards the fixing of prices of imported goods in Rodrigues, he would state

- (a) The number of items whose prices are fixed;
- (b) The procedures and time involved for the fixing of prices of new products; and
- (c) Whether complaints have been received regarding same, the nature thereof and action, if any, taken?

Mr. Nicolson LISETTE: Mr. Chairperson, Sir

- (a) Forty –six items are under price control

(b) According to GN 108 of 1977, the importer of controlled commodities has 5 days after importation to submit his return of cost.

1. The clerks check the return of cost, invoices and other documents and issue counter receipts to the person or person delegated by the importer to submit his documents.
2. Samples are then entered in books and on sample form. The samples are submitted to the Consumer Protection Division for clearances as requested by the Acting Head, Consumer protection Unit of the Ministry of Commerce and Cooperatives.
3. After obtaining clearance from the Consumer Protection Officer, the clerks inform the importer to collect the sample. Clearance is obtained on the same day or the day after if there is no problem
4. The costing work is done by the clerks and examined by the Officer in charge of the Price Fixing Unit and the costing sheets are then faxed to the Ministry of Commerce for approval. From there, the costing sheets and copies of summary of costing are sent to a Higher Executive Officer of the Ministry who is in charge of the follow-up such as finding information on the purchase price of articles for verification on trade premises in Mauritius by the Consumer protection Officers.
5. After clearance from the Consumer Protection Officer in Mauritius, a draft Government Notice is prepared and submitted for approval to the Minister. After approval, a copy is sent to the officer in charge of the Price Fixing Division, Rodrigues for publication.

(c) No complaints have been received regarding fixing of prices at my Commission.

If returns of cost and other information are missing to enable costing work, a query form is issued to the importer (but most of the time it is reported that answer to query is obtained 15 days or more from the person and sometimes the Price Fixing Division does not obtain the required information).

- (c) Importers have raised the delay practice for fixing of prices by the Ministry of Commerce during a meeting held in Rodrigues. We are looking into the possibility of removing some of the items from the controlled list and put them under Mark-up system.

GOVERNMENT LIBRARY SERVICES

(No.B/76)The Minority Leader (Mr. Johnson ROUSSETY) asked the Commissioner responsible for Library Services whether with, regard to the government library services in the island, he would state

- (a) the opening hours of each library during the week;
- (b) the staff posted thereto per grade;
- (c) the last date on which books were purchased and the amount of money involved; and
- (d) whether extension of the opening hours could be considered with a view to helping students/readers from distant places?

Mr. L. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the public libraries are open between 9.00 and 15.00 hours during weekdays and between 8.00 h and 11.00 hours on Saturdays

Staffing

(i) Port Mathurin Public Library

Librarian	1
Trainee Library Clerk	1
Library Attendant	1
Binder (Acting Supervisor)	1
Trainee Binder	4

(ii) CLAC Malabar

Library Clerk	1
Library Attendant	1

(iii) CLAC Grande Montagne

Library Clerk	1
Library Attendant	1

(iv) CLAC Riviere Coco

Library Clerk	1
General Field & Office/Premises Worker	1

- (c) Books were last purchased on 20 May 2002 for a sum amounting to 100,00 rupees.
- (d) The possibility of extending the opening hours is being envisaged.

PROPAGATION OF THE ACCACIA NILOTICA (PIQUANT Loulou)

(No.B/77) The Minority Leader (Mr. Johnson ROUSSETY) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the propagation of the Accacia Nilotica (piquant loulou) on the island, he could provide information

- (a) with regard to the surface area presently covered by that plant and as a percentage of the total surface area of Rodrigues;
- (b) as to when it was introduced, in which places it was first planted and for what purposes; and
- (c) whether there are any control mechanisms in place in the island with a view to controlling its invasive behaviour?

The Chief Commissioner, Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

- (a) Accacia Nilotica (piquant loulou) covers a total area of about 188 hectares which represent 1.7% of the total surface area of Rodrigues.
- (b) Piquant loulou was first introduced in Rodrigues in 1975 and was planted over an area of 2.5 hectares at Mt Fanal. It would appear that it was introduced by the then Island Commissioner (Mr. HESELTINE) because of its resistance to drought. It is to be noted that Rodrigues experienced a severe drought during mid 70's.
- (c) Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is no specific measures to control its propagation but since 1989, no more plantation of Accacia nilotica has been done. A test exercise for its eradication has been carried out successfully over an area of one hectare at Riviere Banane. However, the eradication being labour - intensive, the exercise would be extended to other places upon availability of enough labour. The possibility of contracting out the eradication exercise would be explored.

The Forestry Services have also been requested to uproot young plants of piquant loulou.

FOOTBALL ACTIVITIES

(No. B/78) The Second Local Region Member for Marechal (Mr. Agathe) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Sports whether, as regards football activities, he would state

- (a) where all the matches for the "Republic Cup" are being played now;
- (b) the number of matches scheduled;
- (c) the amount of money granted to the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee both by the MFA and the Rodrigues Administration during Financial year 2002/2003;

- (d) the percentage of the gate money that will be attributed to each club, the Football Committee and the Comité de Gestion;
- (e) the time schedule for the MFA Cup on the mainland Mauritius?

Mr. Nicolson Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

- (a) As regards part (a) of the question, all the matches for the Republic cup have been scheduled to be held at Camp du Roi Stadium by the Football Regional Committee. However, the Regional Committee is looking into the possibility of playing some of the matches on playgrounds such as Oyster Bay, Marechal and Grande Montagne.
- (b) The number of matches scheduled is 22.
- (c) As for part (c) of the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

As per the information given by the Secretary general of the MFA, there is no specific quantum of funds allocated to Rodrigues or any sports Region of the Republic. So far, the MFA has met the cost of Rs.157,000 related to the participation of Boysters in the MFA cup. As from July to December 2002, Rs 149,591 was spent by the Football Committee for the various activities. This year for the period January to June 2003, my Commission has earmarked a sum of Rs 500,000 for the different local competitions and leagues with a view to boosting up the standard on the island.

- (d) Gate money collected at Camp du Roi Stadium is shared as follows:
 - (i) the two participating teams -25% each
 - (ii) Regional Football Committee -25 %

(iii) Comité de Gestion -25%

Additional information

- Exceptionally, this year because of the Indian Ocean Game, the MFA cup will not be extended to regional clubs i.e Rodrigues and the other 12 regions of Mauritius. Only national clubs of 1st and 2nd Divisions will be involved.
 - Even for the first division league, there will be only one game.
 - For the time being, there is no time schedule for the MFA Cup on the mainland Mauritius.
- (e) There is no time schedule for the MFA cup on the mainland Mauritius as a result of chaotic situation related to the structural set up of the MFA in respect to the new Act.

MANGUES GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

(No.B/79) The Second Local Region Member for Marechal (Mr. AGATHE) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education (administration) whether, with regard to Mangues Government School, he would state

The number of children attending same; and

- (a) Whether the perimeter of the schoolyard has recently been reduced and, if so, why?

Mr. L. ROUSSETY: *Mr.
Chairperson, Sir,*

- (a) 279 children attend Mangues Government School presently.

- (b) Part of the front yard has recently been reduced to give way to the construction of the public road and a bus lay-by

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Back filling of the school backyard will help in the creation of additional space.

UNTARRED ACCESS ROAD

(No. B/80) The Second Local Region Member for Marechal (Mr. AGATHE) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, for the benefit of the House, he would state

- (a) the length of the untarred access road linking the seaside to the Cemetery at Rivière Coco;
- (b) whether a petition signed by the inhabitants praying for tarring of the road has reached the Rodrigues Administration, and if yes, when;
- (c) what action has been taken as a result thereof;
- (d) the number of school children crossing the river to attend the Ste Thérèse de l'Enfant Jesus RCA Primary School and the Marechal College on school days as well as the number of old aged and handicapped persons doing so generally;
- (e) whether he intends to have this road tarred as a matter of urgency?

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

- (a) The length of the untarred access road linking the seaside to the cemetery at Rivière Coco is about 800 metres long;

(b) a petition signed by some inhabitants of Rivière Coco requesting for the tarring of the road was sent to the Rodrigues Administration on 15th April, 2002;

(c) as a result of the petition, a cost estimate of the road including a bridge was worked by the Public Infrastructure Division for inclusion in the 2002-2003 budget. However it was not budgeted.

(d) No data is presently available on both the number of school children crossing the river to attend the Ste Therese RCA School and Marechal College on school days and on the number of old aged and handicapped persons doing so.

(e) My commission has already been requested to include the tarring of the road in the priority list of the coming financial year.

HOUSES BUILT IN THE AFTERMATH OF CYCLONE CELINE II

(NO.B/81) **The Second Local Region Member for Marechal (Mr. Agathe)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to houses built in the aftermath of cyclone Celine II he would:-

(a) do the needful so that the people living in these houses can become the owners thereof; and

(b) (i) state the number of unoccupied houses in that category;

- (ii) the number of houses already or in the process of being rehabilitated;
- (iii) the total amount of money disbursed for (ii) above and from which item;
- (iv) the total amount of money disbursed per house for the casting of the slab;
- (v) whether it is intended to re-imburse part of the cost of houses whose construction had been started by the present occupants at their own costs before the scheme became operational?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that 300 houses were built in the aftermath of the cyclone CELINE II. I have been made aware that the persons occupying those houses do not possess a residential lease nor have they been provided with an official document to prove that the houses have been vested in them. Moreover, I have been informed that certain persons living in these houses have been granted a residential lease elsewhere. A committee is being set up to carry out a survey so as to set up a list of all bona fide occupants with a view of regularizing their situation.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed as follows: -

- (a) Sixteen houses are presently unoccupied;
- (b) 286 houses have been rehabilitated. Two houses have been converted into community centres (namely at Cité Patates and Ile Michel) and twelve were found to be beyond repairs. The rehabilitation consists in the replacement of the corrugated iron sheets by a concrete slab and an extension of about 110 sq ft to provide for a kitchen and a bathroom;

- (c) the funds were met for the Capital Budget and amounts to Rs 12,979,403.00 i.e. a cost of about Rs 45,000 per house;
- (d) the estimated cost incurred for the casting of the slab is about Rs 15,000;
- (e) depending on recommendations of the committee that will be set up, action will be initiated by my Commission to re-imburse part of the cost incurred by those occupants of houses prior to the rehabilitation programme, if need be.

MOUROUK RESERVOIR

(No.B/82) The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. Jabeemissar) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner?

As regards the Mourouk reservoir, could he say whether

- (a) The premises are properly fenced to ensure maximum security;
- (b) the site is considered as a restricted area in view of its vital importance;
- (c) in case of emergency, the workers posted there, can get urgent help?

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

- (a) The Mourouk Valley is already fenced and is considered as forestry reserve under the supervision of the forestry services. The reservoir is not fenced as it is already situated in the controlled area. Due to the

construction of a gabion dyke across the river part of the fencing has been damaged and is presently being rehabilitated. A metal gate is being installed at the entrance.

- (b) The site is considered as a restricted area. Moreover, access to the site is being highly monitored. An occurrence book has been introduced at the Pumping Station in which all visitors are being requested to identify their names and the purpose of their visits and the time of arrival and departure; To better control access, the Water Unit is presently fencing the reservoir compound.

As regards part (c) of the question, following a site visit and a meeting which I had with the workers posted there, my Commission has already applied to the Mauritius Telecom for the provision of a telephone line at the pumping station. The installation of same by Mauritius Telecom is awaited.

HOTEL AND TOURIST-RELATED PROJECTS IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/84) **The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. JABEEMISSAR)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to hotel and tourist-related projects in Rodrigues concerned with the coastal area from Pointe Coton to Gravières (both inclusive), he could state

- (a) the number of applications with the names of applicants received;
- (b) whether approval has been granted to any of them, and, if yes, give details thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir,

- (a) I am advised that 33 applications have been received for hotel and tourist related projects within the coastal area from Pointe Coton to Graviers (both inclusive).

The list of applicants is being handed over to the Clerk.

- (b) Yes, three projects have been approved and a list with details on all approved hotel and tourist- related projects in Rodrigues has been handed over to the Clerk of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in response to Question B/1 addressed to the Chief Commissioner by the Minority Leader.

FISHERMEN'S CARDS

(No.B/85) The First Local Region Member for Marechal (Mr. EMILIEN) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the issue of Fisherman's cards, would he say whether

- (a) any instructions were recently received from the Central Government on the issue of such cards;
- (b) the nature of these instructions;
- (c) the date on which these instructions were received;
and
- (d) whether these instructions have been complied with especially in the month of December 2002?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regards to part (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed that at the beginning of year 2002, an inter-ministerial committee was set up to monitor the

implementation of the report on the “Reorganisation of the Fisheries Sector in Rodrigues”. That committee met for the first time in February 2002 and decided that as from that date, fishermen cards should not be issued to new applicants to fish in the lagoon and that fishermen cards would be issued for off-lagoon fishing only.

(c) The officers of the then Rodrigues Administration who attended the inter-ministerial committee took note of the decision at the meeting. (d) Mr. Chairperson Sir, Yes, the decision of the inter ministerial committee was complied with, since the 23 fishermen who were issued fishermen cards in December 2002 are all involved in off-lagoon fishery.

THE SETTING UP OF FORM VI COLLEGE AT CITRON DONIS

(No.B/86) The First Local Region Member (Mrs. MEUNIER) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education (Administration):-

Whether, as regards the setting up of a Form VI college at Citron Donis, he could state

- (a) the criteria used for admission;
- (b) whether there are any vacancies still available there; and
- (c) whether the school is equipped with all the necessary amenities such as a library, a laboratory, etc?

Mr. Lelio ROUSSETY,
Chairperson, sir, the criteria used for
admission to the Form VI college at
Citron Donis are as follows:-

- (i) the student must have passed the School Certificate with a credit in at least four subjects including the ones to be taken at A Level;
- (ii) the student should not have reached his 19th birthday by 31 December 2002

- (b) Vacancies are still available for those who satisfy the criteria
- (b) The school is not yet fully equipped. The needful is being done

LICENCES ISSUED TO HAWKERS etc

(No. B/87) The Second Island Region Member (Mrs Meunier) asked the Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Licensing with regards to licences issued to hawkers, street market traders and other traders, he would state whether

- (a) any such licences have been issued recently during the year 2003;
- (b) if yes, state how many people have obtained these licences and on what criteria and table the list of beneficiaries thereof; and
- (c) if not, when these licences would be delivered?

Mr. Nicolson LISETTE: Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

- (a) No licence has been issued during the year 2003 to hawkers, street traders and other trades.
- (c) My Commission will be delivering licences soon.

Additional information

The regulations regarding licences were passed in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on 27th December and were published in the Government Gazette No. 8 of 23rd January 2003.

Criteria to be followed.

1. Applicants will have to fulfill all the recommendations attached to the licence applied for.

2. Priority will be given to an applicant who is unemployed
3. The number of already existing licences
4. Public safety, public security and public health.
5. Whether applicant has a commercial lease or not.

SCHOLARSHIPS BY THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

(No.B/88) The Second Island Region Member (Mrs. MEUNIER) asked the Commissioner for Education (administration) whether he would consider the financing of two scholarships by the Regional Assembly for the benefit of deserving HSC students who have passed their 2002 examination?

Mr. L. ROUSSETY: Mr. Chairperson, Sir Seven scholarships are available for HSC students who have passed the 2002 examination.

The Regional Assembly will try to negotiate for more scholarships from potential donor countries and agencies before considering the possibility of financing any other scholarship.

PUBLIC BINS

(No.B89 and B/90) The Second Island Region Member (Mrs. MEUNIER) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, he would consider improving the appearance of public bins which were placed in villages by the ex-Local Council in order to improve their architectural and overall aesthetic look and also make them more practical?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I am replying to question B/89 and B/90 together. It is the policy of this autonomous government to make Rodrigues an environmental friendly island. This Executive Council is already aware of the situation and the matter was discussed in the last Rodrigues Environment Committee. A multidisciplinary team comprising officers of the Public Infrastructure,

Environment unit, Public Health and Water Unit will be set up. The terms of reference of the team shall be to carry out a survey of those bins, which need rehabilitation so as to carry out any improvement works as well as the impact of their location on the environment. Moreover my commission has been requested to work out subsequently a maintenance programme for those bins.

ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS CAUSED BY RUBBISH AT PUBLIC BEACHES

(No.B/91) The Sixth Island Region Member (Mrs. PROSPER) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he would state what measures are being taken to prevent environment problems caused by rubbish at the public beaches of Pointe Coton, St Francois and Baladirou?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, there are at present two manual workers of the Environment Unit permanently posted to the public beaches at Pte Coton and St François for daily cleaning of toilets and collection of waste.

The wastes are removed twice weekly by a government tractor. The litter bins on these two beaches have also recently been replaced by new ones.

As for the public beach at Baladirou, since the opening of the new road a weekly collection service is being ensured.

It should be pointed out that cleaning and maintenance of all public beaches in Rodrigues will soon be included in the forthcoming contract for solid waste collection and cleaning services by private contractors.

This initiative by the Executive Council is expected to improve considerably the state of environment at these public beaches.

It is my intention to offer clean and safe beaches to the public in general.

EXTENSION OF CITRON DONIS ROAD TO RIVIERE COCO

(NO.B/92) The Sixth Island Region Member (Mrs. PROSPER) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner?

Whether the public road from Citron Donis would be extended to Rivière Coco, in view of the fact that there is a secondary school at Citron Donis and students of Rivière Coco and neighbouring villages spend a considerable amount of time and money to attend same by bus?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the road from Petit Gabriel to Tamarin is about 4.5 km long and the stretch from the junction of Bois D'Olive to Rivière Coco is about 1.7 km. The first 1.5 km from Petit Gabriel to Citron Donis was completed in December 2000. Since then the construction of the road has stopped.

My Commission is presently finalizing the budget proposals for road construction road upgrading for the next financial year. In line with this governing Executive Council policy to consider the tarring of access road to remote villages as a matter of priority, my Commission has been instructed to include the tarring of this public road since it was among the main priorities of our electoral commitments.

STATE LAND AT ST. FRANCOIS

(No.B/93) The Sixth Island Region Member (Mrs. PROSPER) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he would, for the benefit of the House,

- (a) state the procedure set up for the timely consideration of application for the lease of state land in Rodrigues;
and
- (b) state, in relation to an application by "Pleasure Bay" for the lease of state land at St. Francois:
 - (i) when the application was made;
 - (ii) whether it has been granted, and if so, under

what conditions; and

- (iii) whether the lease agreement has been determined and the reason thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, as explained by Mr. Daniel SPEVILLE in reply to Question B/22 at the sitting of Tuesday 28 November 2002, the State Land Committee has been reconstituted and subject to legal advice, all decision regarding the allocation of land leases will be taken in Rodrigues in accordance with Sections 26, 32 and 54 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001. Prior to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, all leases had to be approved in Mauritius.

Applications for state land leases have to be submitted to the Land Section at the Central Administration. After examination of the application, the State Land Committee submits its recommendation to the Commissioner responsible for state land for approval. All approved cases are then referred to the Cadastral Office for surveying, issue of letter of intent and finalisation of leases.

With regard to part (b):

- (i) Pleasure Bay Hotels Ltd submitted its application on 18 August 1999.
- (ii) Approval for the grant of a lease over a plot of land of an extent of 7A60 at Anse Ally/Fumier was issued in a letter of intent addressed to the applicant on 27 March 2000. A list of conditions specified in the letter of intent is being handed over to the Clerk of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

(PART (b) (ii))

- (i) a deposit of rupees three hundred and eighty thousand (Rs 380,000) must be made by you at the Cashier Office, Rodrigues Administration if and when you accept the offer.

- (ii) this deposit will be forfeited if the project is not started within 2 years and completed within 3½ years of the date of the lease, and the lease terminated.
 - (iii) only two floor building will be allowed on the land (ground floor + one storey)
 - (iv) pitched roofs will be preferred for the buildings and the height of the highest ridge should not exceed ten metres (10 m) from the local ground level.
 - (v) The plot coverage for the building should not exceed 20% of the total area leased.
 - (vi) the setback of buildings from the side facing the sea should be at least five metres (5 m), the setback of building from roads should be five metres (5 m) and two metres (2 m) from all other sides.
 - (vii) on-site car parking should be provided by the lessee
 - (viii) the sanitation should be to the satisfaction of Waste Water Authority
 - (ix) all plans should be submitted by the lessee to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for approval prior to start of construction works.
- (iii) The Ministry of Tourism requested the promoter to submit the under-mentioned documents by 8 January 2001: -
- (a) the new financial & shareholding structure
 - (b) letters of interest from partners and financing institutions
 - (c) profile and financial credentials of investors
 - (d) documentary evidence of funds.

As the promoter has failed to submit information sought within the prescribed date, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has approved the cancellation of the letter of intent. On 24 June 2002, Pleasure Bay Hotels Ltd was informed that Government had cancelled the letter of intent issued in their favour.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES FOR THE VILLAGERS OF RIVIERE BANANE

(No.B/94) The Sixth Island Region Member, (Mrs. PROSPER) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, there were public transport facilities for the villagers of Rivière Banane and, if not, state when same would be made available?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr. Chairperson, Sir I have been informed that presently no public transport is serving the villagers of Rivière Banane. The National Transport Authority has made some recommendations regarding the improvement of the road from Brule to Riviere Banane so as to ensure the safety of the public. I have been informed that the modification to part of the road falling on the state land is due to be completed in two weeks time. However the Cadastral Unit is initiating action to acquire part of some private land falling on the road alignment so as to enable modification and enlargement of the road.

On completion of the above improvement, the buses along route 210 will be then instructed by the National Transport Authority to effect at least 3 trips per day to serve the villagers of Rivière Banane.

OLD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING NOW IN AN ABANDONED STATE

(No.B/95) The fourth Island Region Member (Mr. Pierre Louis) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the old administration building which is now in an abandoned state although it is still sheltering the Art and Culture Office, the Environment Unit office, he would

- (a) state whether he intends to erase, or better still, restore same as part of our patrimoine and when;
- (b) report on the working environment of the officers working in the building;

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the old administration building has been declared a historical building and, therefore, will have to be preserved. The Public Infrastructure Division will start the renovation of the building after completion of the renovation of the *La Residence* scheduled in two months time?

Action is being taken to identify a new place to house the Environment Unit Office as well as the Arts and Culture Office to enable the renovation of the building. After renovation, the building will house the above offices.

WATER SUPPLY TO INHABITANTS OF PARC TORTUE AND ANSE BALEINE

(No.B/97) The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr. Jacques Pierre Louis) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, he will say what arrangements have been made so far to provide the inhabitants of Parc Tortue and Anse Baleine with a regular water supply by tanks or by pipes?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the inhabitants of Parc Tortue and Anse Baleine are normally supplied with water from Ste Famille reservoir, which in turn is fed from Camp Paul Spring. I have further been informed that

the production of water at this spring has fallen from 1120 m³ in April 2002 to 840 m³ in August 2002 and to 280 m³ in December 2002.

As a result of the above decrease, the following measures have been taken: -

- (a) additional water from Malabar is being conveyed to Ste Famille reservoir;
- (b) Additional water supply is being provided by lorry water tankers, which fill the fiberglass water tanks situated in the respective villages.

SECURITY FOR THE SCHOOL CHILDREN GOING TO OYSTER BAY GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

(No.B/99) The First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres (Mr.Francois) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner when, for the sake of greater security for the school children going to Oyster Bay Government School and using the path along the reclaimed land as a short cut, the trees growing on the reclaimed land could be pruned?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed by the Forest Division that they have already initiated action since yesterday to prune the trees growing on the reclaimed land. My commission will follow up the progress of works closely.

SECURITY ALONG THE GRAND VAR ROAD

(No.B/100) The First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres (Mr. Francois) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner With regard to security along the road at Grand Var, whether he would state whether the necessary arrangements could be made to prune the trees growing along the road?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner : Mr. Chairperson , Sir, the Forestry Division has informed me that the pruning of trees growing along the road at Grand Var will be carried out after the completion of the works at Oyster Bay reclaimed area. The pruning of those trees have delayed due to the fact that the Forestry Division is giving priority to the reafforestation programme so as to maximize the benefits from the recent rains.

IRRIGATION PROJECT PROPOSED FOR THE PLANTERS AND FARMERS OF BAIE MALGACHE

(No.B/101) The First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres (Mr. Francois) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether the irrigation project proposed for the planters and farmers of Baie Malgache was operational and, if not, why not?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson ,Sir, I have been informed that there are 31 planters in the valley of Baie Malgache. The irrigation network is presently being carried out and part of it has been completed. Ten planters have been connected to the network and the rest will be connected upon completion of the network.

ARRANGE DAM AT MARECHAL

(No.B/102) The First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres (Mr. Francois) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, he would arrange for the dam at Marechal serving the region of Grand Var in particular the planters there, and the dam at Fond Rado at Rivière Coco, to be desilted and repaired so as to give a better water supply to the planters and farmers of the two regions?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the existing intake structure at Fond Rado is actually silted and will require mechanical means for desiltation. With the help and enthusiasm of some planters in that region, action has been taken to carry out improvement works to another small intake structures upstream by equipping same with appropriate outlets. Polyethylene pipes of diameter 63 mm have already been purchased to enable the laying of a network for irrigation purposes. The installation of the network will start as from 3rd March 2003 and is expected to be completed by 7th March 2003.

As regards the intake works at Fond Marechal, it is at present partly silted. Six planters are actually being provided with that water for irrigation purposes at Valley Grand Var. The Water Unit will carry out the complete desiltation of the small dam so as to increase the storage capacity and will look at the possibility of extending the irrigation facilities to other planters of the region.

A survey is being carried out by the Water Unit on all those small dams that are partly or completely silted. Tender for desiltation of those dams will be floated in Rodrigues among small Rodriguan contractors.

LAND USE

(No.B/103) The Fifth Island Region Member (Miss CASTEL) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards land uses since the setting up of the Executive Council, he would state

- (a) how many agricultural, residential and commercial leases have been issued;
- (b) what measures he intends to take to assist those people with very old concrete houses whose roofs leak but who cannot benefit from the Rs.40,000 from the NHDC through lack of residential lease?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, With regards to part (a), Leases are normally drawn up after the settlement of survey fees by approved lessees as requested in letters of intent addressed to them.

Since the setting up of the Executive Council, 39 letters of intent have been issued for agricultural purposes and title deeds are being drawn up. 357 residential leases have been signed by approved lessees and will be finalized soon.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regard to part (b),

In December 2002, the Executive Council has requested that applications for leases of all those who have applied for financial assistance from NHDC to be considered.

No commercial lease has been issued so far.

BUS SERVICE TO RIVIERE BANANE

(No.B/104) The Fifth Island Region Member (Miss CASTEL) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, being given that the village of Rivière Banane was deprived of bus services due to the steepness of the road leading thereto, he would make urgent arrangements for a taxi service to the village?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the criteria for the provision of a taxi service to a village are, amongst others, as follows: -

- (a) A population of 600 people per taxi;
- (b) Professional and social activities of the inhabitants of the locality;
- (c) Existence of facilities such as schools, dispensaries etc.;
- (d) Availability of bus services;
- (e) Transport facilities, if any, available at night in case of emergency.

On the basis of above, the National Transport Authority has been requested to carry out an inquiry and to submit a recommendation as whether taxi service could be provided to the village and to take any appropriate action on the basis of their recommendation.

APPROVAL OF BUDGETS ESTIMATES

(No.B/105) The Fifth Island Region Member (Miss CASTEL) asked the Chief Commissioner with regard to the Budget Estimates, approved by the Regional Assembly on the 7th of January 2003 and submitted to the Minister responsible for Rodrigues, whether he could state if same has been approved by the latter?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, The Minister responsible for Rodrigues does not approve the Revised Budget Estimates of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly; same has been submitted to Cabinet by the Minister of Local Government and Rodrigues and were approved on Friday 14 February 2003.

THE SEIZED ANIMALS AT MARECHAL BREEDING

(No.B/106) The First Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. Grandcourt) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the seized animals at the Marechal Breeding Centre, he would state

- (a) the number of auction sales which have been held over the past six months;
- (b) the names of persons who made a success bid and the number of animals bought by each of them; and
- (c) the prices at which the animals were bought?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards question B106, the Police have informed me that six auction sales have been held over the past six months. The name of the buyers, the number of animals purchased and the prices are as follows: -

Mr. Stenio LEGOFFE	3 goats	Rs. 300. each
Mr. Clarel BEGUE	1 goat	Rs. 200.
Mr. Michelin RAFFAUT	1 goat	Rs. 200.
Mr. Richelin LEGENTIL	4 goats	Rs 200. each

Mr. Jean Karl St PIERRE	1 goat	Rs. 200.
Mr. Clarel BEGUE	2 goats	Rs 200. each

(No.B/107) The First Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. Grandcourt) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, for the benefit of the house, he would state the number of animals released after seizure over period November 2002 to date and the names of their owners?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed by police that two goats belonging to one Mr. Kersley TOLBIZE and two pigs belonging to one Victorine TOLBIZE have been released after seizure over the period 2002 to date.

Additional Information:-

The police department does not fall under the purview of the RRA and is not accountable to the RRA.

ALLEGATION ABOUT PUBLIC OFFICERS' INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

(No.B/108) The First Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. GRANDCOURT) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, there had been any allegation lately about public officers' involvement in political activities and if so, what was the nature of the allegation and what, if any, has been the outcome: -

The Chief Commissioner, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the question of allegations against public officers is addressed directly to the Island Chief Executive who is the Administrative Head of all public service in Rodrigues.

I am informed that any disciplinary action initiated against any officer should not be made public.

STATEMENT BY CHIEF COMMISSIONER

With your permission, I wish to inform the House that last week, I attended a meeting which was chaired by Honourable Sylvio MICHEL, Minister of Fisheries in Mauritius. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the seaweed project and the reorganization of the Fisheries sector in Rodrigues.

(i) **Sea Weed Farming**

In the context of the FAD Fishery Development Sub Programme under the IFAD Diversification Programme, a pre-feasibility study of seaweed farming in Rodrigues has been commissioned. The objective of the study was to assess whether seaweed farming could be an alternative employment option for some women who are engaged in octopus fishery where productivity is declining while the activity has serious negative impact on the marine environment. The findings of the study are encouraging and the consultants have recommended that two pilot farms be established at Baie du Nord and Petite Butte respectively. It is also recommended to carry out concurrent trials of sea cucumber farming on both sites.

The pilot project which would cost about Rs 15 million will be of three years' duration and would enable an assessment of

productivity and profitability of the activity and would include capacity building for the staff of the Fisheries Training and Research Unit and selected farmers. The commercialization of the produce with China will also be looked into.

It was decided to go ahead with the implementation of the pilot project which would be funded by the Government. Technical expertise will be sought from China for the execution of the project.

(ii) Reorganisation of the Fisheries Sector

In July 2001, a team of officials from the Mauritius Audit Bureau, The Ministry of Fisheries, Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues, Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups and the Rodrigues Administration was appointed to assess the Fisheries Sector in Rodrigues and to make appropriate recommendations for the reorganization of the sector. The team of officials submitted their report in November 2001.

An inter-Ministerial Committee under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Fisheries was set up at the beginning of 2002 to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the report. The committee met three times before the 11 February and at the last meeting which I attended, it was decided that a next meeting would be held in Rodrigues. Thereafter the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations would be left to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly with the active collaboration of the relevant authorities from Mauritius.

- (iii) The committee was informed that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly had recommended the report on the creation of a Marine Protection Area in the region of Mourouk for co-funding by the Government of Mauritius and GEF (Global Environment Fund). It was also reported that the proclamation of existing marine protected area would be looked into.
- (iv) A report on octopus fishery which had been submitted by the Ministry of Fisheries would be studied.

The Minister of Fisheries informed the Committee that the compensation payable to fishermen who relinquished their net fishing activities would be reviewed. The Committee was apprised of the decision to set up a Fishermen Welfare Fund in Rodrigues.

On my return to Rodrigues, I have set up a Coordinating Committee on Fisheries and Marine Resources to ensure prompt consultation on all matters relating to the sector. I shall chair the committee which will consist of:

- (a) the Departmental Head of the Commission
for Fisheries
- (b) a representative of the Ministry of Fisheries
- (c) the Scientific Officer (Fisheries)
- (d) the Senior Fisheries Protection Officer
- (e) a representative of each of the two fishermen
Associations

- (f) a representative of Rodrigues Underwater Group
- (g) the Environment Officer
- (h) the Officer in charge, Planning Cell
- (i) the Officer in charge, National Coast Guard
- (j) a representative of ARTO
- (k) a representative of Shoals of Rodrigues

STATEMENT BY CHIEF COMMISSIONER

Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

As this House is already aware, on the night of 13 to 14 February, the climate in Rodrigues was influenced by the proximity of tropical cyclone Gerry. I am informed by the Meteorological Services that a communiqué issued at 16.00 hours on 13 February was sent to the MBC to be broadcasted for the information of the public. The communiqué specified that it was expected that sea would be very rough with heavy swells. The highest gust registered at Pointe Canon and Plaine Corail on that particular night was 80 km ph. However, as there was no cyclone warning in Rodrigues, some fishermen did not take their fishing boats out of the sea as a measure of precaution.

Once I was informed that some damages have been caused to fishing boats, my office immediately requested the Fisheries Protection Services to carry out a complete survey on each and every damaged boat and to submit an urgent report on the situation. During the day some fishermen called at my office and they were informed that instructions have been given to the

Fisheries Department to carry out a survey on damages caused to fishing boats and to report all damages sustained by them to the Fisheries Protection Service.

The Fisheries Protection Service has already submitted its report which shows that three fishing boats (2 belonging to professional fishermen have been completely damaged whereas another 15 boats belonging to professional fishermen were partly damaged. The boat of a sand carrier has also sustained severe damages and 12 fishing boats belonging to non-professional fishermen have also been damaged.

The estimated cost of repairs including materials and labour for the 15 boats belonging to professional fishermen is about Rs 32,100.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

I am here informing the House that I am taking the issue in the Executive Council tomorrow as a top priority so as to decide on the form of assistance which would be provided to fishermen concerned to enable them to repair their boats so that they can resume their fishing activities as early as possible. □

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 18 March 2003 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chairperson rose and seconded.

At 12.15 hrs The Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 18 March 2003 at 10.30 a.m.