

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

CORAIL REGION - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/109) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards water supply to the region of Corail which also includes Petite Butte, Corail Petite Butte, Vangasaille, Anse Quitar and Grand La Fouche Corail he will say -

- (a) when each of the above-mentioned villages was last supplied with tap water;
- (b) the frequency at which normally tap water is supplied to them;
- (c) if there has been any delay in the water distribution, and, if yes, mention the reasons therefor, and
- (d) what steps have been taken to remedy the situation?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner (Mr J. Daniel): Mr Chairperson, Sir I have been informed that –

- (a) The villages of Petite Butte, Corail Petite Butte, Vangasaille, Anse Quitar and Grand La Fouche Corail are all provided with water from Montagne Cabris (Sud) reservoir. The Montagne Cabris (Sud) reservoir is fed with water from two sources, namely -
 - (i) from “la collectrice du Sud” system via Papayes reservoir, and
 - (ii) from Mourouk system and Mont Lubin borehole via Quatre Vents Reservoir.

The abovementioned villages were last supplied with water by the network as follows -

Village	Date last supplied
Petite Butte	1.4. to 8.4.03
Corail Petite Butte	27.3. to 31.3.03
Vangasaille	13.4.03
Anse Quitar	5.4.03 to 9.4.03
Grand La Fouche	12.4.03
Corail	

- (b) The water supply frequency is normally scheduled from 15 to 25 days on a monthly basis during dry season. The frequency is reduced to once weekly during the wet seasons.
- (c) There has been delay regarding the water distribution in the above villages for the following reasons –
- (i) As stated earlier, the villages under reference are all served from Montagne Cabris (Sud) reservoir of capacity 500 m³. The feeder mains as well as the water distribution mains have been subjected to disconnection and realignment due to construction of road in that sector since 07 March 2003. Due to the complexity of the works coupled with the passage of cyclone Kalunde and the recent heavy rains, the contractor has only been able to carry out excavation works for the crossing road on 02 April, 2003.

Moreover, the collectrice du Sud has been damaged due to the recent cyclone and has now been repaired. As regards Mt. Cabris (Sud) reservoir itself, it was discovered on 06 April 2003 that the liner had been severely damaged. Same has been repaired on 14th April

2003 and is being tested today. Damage caused to Papayes reservoir and the subsequent works that had to be carried out to bypass the reservoir also caused further delay in the water distribution.

(d) The following steps have been taken to remedy the situation.

- The main pumping from Riviere Coco reservoir has been connected directly to the main feeder leading to Mt. Cabris (Sud) on 2.4.03.
- Due to the defectiveness of the liner of Mt. Cabris (Sud) reservoir, action has been taken to bypass the reservoir directly to the water distribution network on 9.4.03 until the repairs of the liner.
- Action has been taken to repair the liner on 14th April 2003 and the reservoir is being commissioned today.
- Damages to la collectrice du Sud, which feeds the reservoir of Rivière Coco the reservoir, were repaired on 10.04.03.

The water distribution has now been re established to the normal situation.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to the reply of the Deputy Chief Commissioner, it seems that there has been something wrong in the answer, because Corail Petite Butte received water only on Friday last after more than 3 months. Will he please tell us exactly?

Mr Chairperson: Mr Jabeemissar, unless you are prepared to bring evidence before this House, you can not say that the answer is wrong, unless you have factual evidence, of course.

Mr Jabeemissar: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because I received water on Friday last.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, repeat your question again.

Mr Jabeemissar: Maybe the Deputy Chief Commissioner has been misled by his officers. The construction of the road started quite a long time

ago; they could have foreseen that these problems would affect the distribution of water in this region. The people of Corail Petite Butte and the villages mentioned in my question have been to the Water Unit of La Ferme everyday, complaining about the absence of water to their villages. No reasons were given to them, so much so that the Police had to intervene. So, I see that this problem has gone too far. The authorities have not taken into consideration the problem in those villages. This is why I have asked this question. So, will the Deputy Chief Commissioner, please say why is it that only after 3 months that the village of Corail Petite Butte received water?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner : M. le Président, je comprends bien l'attitude du membre de la region de La Ferme. Mais avant le cyclone Kalunde et les recentes pluies, on a eu beaucoup de problemes concernant l'eau ; il y avait même un manque d'eau à Rodrigues. Et on faisait la distribution à Rodrigues par des camions citernes. Mais quand je dis que Corail Petite Butte *has been distributed with water from 27th March to 31st March*, cela ne concerne pas seulement Corail Petite Butte mais aussi les villages avoisinants. Peut être que le robinet de Monsieur Jabeemissar était fermé.

(Interruptions)

Mais je dois lui dire qu'on est en train de mettre les bouchées doubles dans la region du sud ouest de Rodrigues. Je vais venir avec un *statement* plus tard pour vous dire quels sont les travaux qu'on est en train de faire dans cette région pour apaiser la souffrance des gens. Je dois dire aussi que le gouvernement est là et n'importe quel gouvernement qui sera là ne peut pas faire l'eau avec la main, on ne peut pas inventer l'eau. Il y a un problème partout, pas seulement dans la région de La Ferme, il y a des problèmes un peu partout. On est en train de faire de notre mieux. Je vais venir avec un *statement* la semaine prochaine pour apaiser la souffrance des gens. Je comprends l'attitude de M. Jabeemissar parcequ'on a besoin d'eau pour des besoins domestiques. Mais je vous dis sincèrement que la situation est en train de s'améliorer.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand that water has been supplied after 3 months, that is, 90 days. I understand the gravity of the situation. The villagers received water for drinking, water for domestic

purposes after so long. Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner tell us for how long and how many metre cubes of water - he studied water - were supplied to these regions?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, being the Commissioner responsible for water supply, I am not a valve operator and I am not accountable to Mr Roussety to answer his question. I will come afterwards, as I said earlier, with a statement to explain why these problems arose.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson Sir, I am surprised by this answer. I know very well that the Deputy Chief Commissioner is not a valve operator.

Mr Chairperson: Please address the chair.

Mr J. Roussety: I know very well Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the Deputy Chief Commissioner is not a valve operator. But I am telling him that water was supplied for one hour, one hour after 3 months! The Deputy Chief Commissioner has the answer.

Mr J. L. Emilien: The Deputy Chief Commissioner said that the frequency is from 15 to 25 days. This means that people living in this region do not know when water will come to their places. In a recent past, we had a communiqué on radio informing people when they were having water. May I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he intends to resume with this practice, just to help these people?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, These emissions were broadcast on radio to say when water would be supplied. But the cost of broadcasting these emissions were too high and we are approaching the MBC to lower that cost in order to be able to give these broadcasts everyday to all the villages concerned.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson Sir, for the time being everybody knows that we are not going to see the Water Unit for water problems, because it has been raining for one full week. Surprisingly, it was only after

rain had fallen for one week that they decided to distribute water to people. When people need water, they don't have it; when it rains then they distribute water...

Mr Chairperson: What is the question?

Mr Jabeemissar: My question is: being given that everybody knows that here in Rodrigues, we rely mainly on rainwater for our use, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner to inform his officers to supply water ...

Mr Chairperson: This is not a question addressed to the Deputy Chief Commissioner. It is a request. Please rephrase your question.

Mr Jabeemissar: This is a request, but at the same time it can be a question, too. When we go and tell officers about our problems, they say that can't do anything due to lack of water. Now, when we have rainwater – suppose today we have to be supplied with tap water ...

Mr Chairperson: This is question time. Please put your question.

Mr Jabeemissar: They can't inform us by radio. But I think there are officers there who can go and inform villagers that on such and such a date they will be provided with water so that they may take the necessary precautions because...

Mr Chairperson: Your question, please.

Mr Jabeemissar: Yes, my question is: will he tell his officers to go and inform people in the villages concerned when water will be distributed?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson Sir, I take note of the method that the member has suggested. And I shall take the necessary action to inform the people about the date when water will be supplied to them. But we in the Executive Council, are also looking into the possibility of installing public notices – *panneaux ou tableaux d'affichage dans plusieurs endroits pour leur indiquer les dates de la distribution de*

l'eau. Mais il fait attendre un peu 'ti pas ti pas on avance' dit Père Gregoire.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, In the reply of the Deputy Chief Commissioner, he has said he has been informed by someone, he is misleading ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: The Member is saying that the Deputy Chief Commissioner is misleading the House. You have to be more precise.

Mr Agathe: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Is the Deputy Chief Commissioner going to make an enquiry in order to clarify the situation?

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

GRAND LA FOUCHE CORAIL TO PETITE BUTTE ROAD - IMPROVEMENTS

(No. B/110) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards the roads from Grand La Fouche Corail to Petite Butte, he will say whether

- (a) he is aware that at different places the road urgently need improvements, especially where the retaining walls have collapsed, if yes, what remedial steps he intends to take;
- (b) the enlargement of the road is in the pipeline because the traffic is becoming more and more difficult due to heavy vehicles using it and if yes when.

The Deputy Chief Commisisoner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I have been informed that at different places along the roads from Grand La Fouche Corail to Petite Butte, part of the retaining walls has been damaged. The road, which is about 3 km long, was built some 20 years ago. After cyclone Kalundé, many damages have been caused to that road and I have given instructions to the Public Infrastructure Division to make a survey of all the retaining walls which have been damaged in all the regions of the Island. In the light of the finding, we will take immediate actions to start repairing same.

With regard to part (b), as stated previously, road construction and repairs are effected in accordance with a priority list. The upgrading of the above road is included in the programme of road construction/ road repairs. The Road Construction Programme for financial year 2003 - 2004 has already been spelt out in my speech on the Draft Estimates 2003- 2004 a few days ago. Even Rivière Coco was included in that. We have put the upgrading of that road as a priority in the road construction programme for financial year 2004-2005 to cater for the increase in traffic.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, does the Deputy Chief Commissioner mean that the road which he is talking about from Grand La Fouche to Petite Butte is included? I did not understand clearly as he has mentioned “other roads”.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, this road is one of our priorities, because we have hotels, public beaches and schools in the South and South East.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have other reasons to state that it is a priority, because now there are important works being done at Anse Raffin. This road is being used everyday by heavy vehicles. And due to the narrowness of this road, I think it must be repaired urgently.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I know that this road leads to Mr Jabeemissar’s house. But as I said it will be included in the road construction programme for 2004- 2005. As heavy vehicles are using this road, it is preferable to start the upgrading of the road after the construction of Anse Raffin Dam.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he is saying that the road that will be repaired after the building of the Anse Raffin Dam will be damaged after heavy vehicles use it. If the road can't be repaired, because heavy vehicles will use it and damage it, then what type of road are we getting after the building of Anse Raffin Dam?

Mr Chairperson: I think the answer was before the building. Yes, Deputy Chief Commissioner.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I have already answered the question. It is in the priority list for 2004 – 2005.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, proceed.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we understand that it would be inconvenient to build the road now given that there is a big construction going ahead at Anse Raffin. Heavy vehicles will use the road. Can't the road be improved? The Deputy Chief Commissioner thinks only about Anse Raffin Dam. What about the inhabitants of these regions? Are they not Rodriguans, people living in this country? So, what we are asking is that the road be improved, not to be constructed completely. It can be improved, repaired so that it can be a minimum standard road. The Deputy Chief Commissioner is insisting that the road goes to Mr Jabeemissar's house. Do you think that Mr Jabeemissar is asking a question to get the road built to his House? This is not serious.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, your question, please.

Mr J. Roussety: My question is: can't the road be improved? Because school children, buses, cars, motorcycles, economic agents use this road for production, etc. Can't this road be improved pending the construction of a new road?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are other roads that need improvement in this country. But as I have said it is a priority for 2004-2005. *Mais je voudrais dire une chose – ce sera une grande première si la minorité pourrait mettre à la disposition de L'île*

Rodrigues autonome la machine à fabriquer la roupie pour rendre notre budget illimité.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner is persisting with his ridiculous answers. He said this road leads to Mr Jabeemissar's house; now he is asking us to invent rupees ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Please, please! Order please! Order please! I understand two persons were talking at the same time. I was on my feet and nobody resumed his seat. I shall no longer allow such a situation in this House. Any more supplementary questions.

Mr Jabeemissar :Oui, M. le Président, à mon avis..

Mr Chairperson: Put your question directly, please.

Mr Jabeemissar: The Deputy Chief Commissioner, Mr Chairperson, Sir, should have ...

Mr Chairperson: Your question, please

(Interruptions)

If you don't have any questions, please take your seat.

Mr Jabeemissar: Yes, Mr Chairperson, next time I'll come up with another question.

CAVERNS – TOURISMS PURPOSES

(No. B/111) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards our caverns whether -

- (a) he could give the names of all the caverns which are being exploited for tourism purposes; and
- (b) if there exists any action plan for a better utilization of these resources, and, if yes, briefly outline the recommendations/proposals.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, up to now, only Caverne Patate is officially being exploited as tourist attraction while other caves in the south western part of the islands are not controlled.

With respect to part (b) of the question, it is to be noted that in 1998, Mr G Middleton, an expert commissioned by the Ministry of Environment, submitted a report with recommendations for the conservation and management of the caves in Rodrigues. At the request of ARTO, in 1999, another cave specialist from Reunion Island made specific recommendations on the upgrading of Caverne Patate.

Based on these two reports, the following measures have been implemented -

- (i) construction of steps and aesthetic security barriers at the entrance and exit of Caverne Patate;
- (ii) restriction of vehicle access to the guide house to protect the limestone arch from being destroyed by vibrations caused by vehicular traffic;
- (iii) provision of four (4) gates;
- (iv) improvement of pathways;

It is also proposed to construct a visitor's centre at Caverne Patate and to provide specialized lighting inside the cave in order to show its most attractive features. The other recommendations of the experts will be studied by my Commission with a view to improving the management of the other caves.

In March 2002, tenders were sought by the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues for the construction of the Visitor's Centre, but the tender exercise aborted because of delays in the tender evaluation process. New tenders will be sought for the project for which funds have been provided in the capital estimates for the next financial year.

Technical recommendations for the lighting of Caverne Patate have been received from the Ministry of Public Utilities and will be studied for implementation subject to the availability of funds.

Mr Owen Griffiths has submitted an application for 20 hectares of state land at Anse Quitor which include Caverne La Vierge for the re-establishment of giant land tortoises as an ecotourism project. My Commission is awaiting the views of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Technology and Natural Resources before proceeding further with the processing of the application. The Executive Council is agreeable to the project which has been favourably recommended by a technical committee in Mauritius which was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, regarding Cavernes Patates, will the Chief Commissioner say whether there exist toilets and water facilities for visitors there?

The Chief Commissioner: There is a toilet and Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will say that in the past a pipeline was installed to go to the toilets and water tanks, but all these pipelines have been removed by people.

(Interruptions)

Yes, it is true. It is not only in Caverne Patate, but in Pte. Coton also all the pipelines were removed. So, we have to find the best way to supply water to the toilets and the reservoirs.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, we should know that Caverne Patates is in an area where there are many farmers. Now we can see animals, specially sheep grazing everywhere. Will the Chief Commissioner not agree with me that these regions need to be fenced?

The Chief Commissioner: I think that the region itself was formerly a region fenced with coral walls. I think the Member is talking perhaps about another region that could be fenced for preservation. We'll see this when we consider Mr Griffiths's project for the tortoise exploitation there. We have not yet surveyed the 20 hectares of land. We do not know exactly what is the outline of this project. We'll look into the matter and have a good project there. As regards grazing around, we are going to see whether we can fence grazing areas for animals. I think it's good for the people of the region and the whole island.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the answer the Commissioner gave, he said that in the action plan, there is a proposal for the allocation of State land to one promoter. I understand there is one cave in the land that is going to be leased to a promoter. Caves are our national heritage. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner in this action plan or in what he is proposing what measures are being taken to prevent an alienation of caverns to one particular promoter, that is, the promoter takes the cavern as if it is his private or personal property? What measures are being envisaged to see to it that caverns are accessible all the time to all the inhabitants, to all people visiting Rodrigues? Because caverns have to be preserved for the youth and for the enjoyment of all people in Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner: Well, Mr Griffiths's project is like the Crocodile Park in Mauritius. It will be a sort of tourist attraction and people will be able to go inside and visit the caves. I think, it's good that we have someone from the private sector who is looking after the special cave mentioned in my reply; and people will have access to the caves. In the future, poor people visiting the caves, people going to Coco Islands, students will have access to our *patrimoine*. We are going to see to it in the future that people can have access to the caves. Concerning the Griffiths's project, we spoke to him and he said that everybody will be allowed to get in. This will depend on the people coming in, whether they will be able to be pay or not. This will be discussed with him and perhaps a Memorandum of Understanding will be worked out especially concerning caves.

Mr Chairperson: We can now move to the next question

ANSE NICOLAS/BAIE DU NORD - WATER NETWORK

(No. B/112) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could, for the benefit of the House, say –

- (a) how many families in the village of Anse Nicolas – Baie du Nord are not yet connected to a water network;
- (b) what measures will be taken in order to remedy the situation.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the village of Anse Nicolas is presently provided with water from Manique reservoir through a water pipe network of 63 mm diameter. As regards the village of Anse Nicolas, all families have been provided with an individual water prise except for one household which has not yet submitted its application for a water prise. I have been informed that there is no objection for his application to be favourably considered.

With regard to the village of Baie Du Nord, out of the 80 families, there are about 15 families that have not yet been provided with a water prise. These families are now being provided with water by lorry water tanker on a fortnightly basis. A decision was taken to remedy the situation before the setting up of the Public Infrastructure Commission, but nothing was done.

However, after the setting up of my Commission, provision has been made for the laying of a new pipeline extending from Montagne du Sable Reservoir to the village of Baie du Nord. The tender for the purchase of pipes and fittings has already been launched in newspapers and the contract will be awarded at the end of next week. Upon receipt of the pipes and fittings, the network will be laid as a matter of priority.

**LAW YU KAM, MR JAMES – ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTION -
NOTICE**

(No. B/113) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards any illegal construction at Allée Tamarin or any other part of Rodrigues, he would state -

- (a) whether any Stop Order Notice or other notice has been issued to Mr. James Law Yu Kam in the last twelve months, and, if yes;
- (b) for what reasons and what were the instructions therein, and
- (c) whether such stop order has been complied with.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir,

- (a) I am informed that a notice to stop construction was issued to Mr James Law Yu Kam by the Resident Engineer in May 2002.
- (b) The notice was served upon Mr Law Yu Kam since he did not possess a building permit.

Mr James Law Yu Kam holds a residential lease over cadastral plot No. 89/B at Pointe L'herbe of an extent of 427 m² for the period expiring 30 June 2016.

On 28 March 2001, he applied for the cancellation of the above lease and the grant of a building site over another plot of land at Anse aux Anglais. This application was turned down and Mr J. Law Yu Kam officially informed on 23 May 2001.

On 06 September 2001, he made another application again for the cancellation of the lease at Pointe L'Herbe and for the grant of another lease, this time, at Allee Tamarin. This application was also rejected by the Task Force Committee on State Land

Use. In the meantime, however, he started construction over a plot of state land at Allée Tamarin.

- (c) I am informed that Mr Law Yu Kam did not comply with the notice to stop construction and there was no follow-up action in the case.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will look into the matter and appropriate action will be taken.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is a serious case of law being infringed. Some persons have been waiting for a lease since ten years. Others just go and take their lease, take their part in Rodrigues and build their house. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have witnessed this because it is in my island region. I should like to ask the Chief Commissioner responsible for Land, the highest authority in the island, what immediate measures are going to be taken so that the construction be ceased? Because that despite the different notices that have been served on this person. I have nothing against him. I just want discipline and the law being respected. This person has a lease; he wants another lease; he just goes and takes the land. So, I want to know from the Chief Commissioner what immediate measures are going to be taken as from tomorrow so that this construction is ceased? Because it is illegal. We cannot tolerate illegal transactions in this country.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I will not tolerate interruptions from a sitting position.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I said, I'll look into the matter and appropriate action will be taken. The matter will be put into the hands of the State Land Committee and that Committee will take a decision.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that the proposal of referring the matter to the State Land Committee is correct, but given the gravity of the situation, the law has not been complied with. Will the Chief Commissioner take immediate measures e.g. refer the case to the DPP - this is the signal we want to send. You have referred to my mother, my friends.

Mr Chairperson: I did not hear that. This is question time.

Mr J. Roussety: My question is whether the matter will be referred to the appropriate jurisdiction, the DPP or the State Law office for appropriate legal action.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Minority Leader knows that there is a great number of illegal constructions in the country

Mr J. Roussety: This one is flagrant!

The Chief Commissioner: The Member should go around and see. It's a very difficult problem in Rodrigues. People are building their houses without any permit or State land lease. Well, what I've said is that Mr Law Yu Kam had asked for a cancellation of lease. Quite a number of cases are being studied by the State Land Committee concerning transfer or cancellation of lease. Those people do not like to stay there; they want to go to other places. This problem will be studied by the State Land Committee

Mr J. Roussety: I would like to draw the attention of the Chief Commissioner that we were talking about one case. It is not correct to generalise the case of Mr Law Yu Kam to say that there are other offenders...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr J. Roussety: If there are other offenders, this is not my problem...

Mr Chairperson: Has the question been answered?

Mr J. Roussety: It has been answered. Now I am asking supplementary questions.

Mr Chairperson: The Member should do so directly.

Mr J. Roussety: My question is: when immediate measures will be taken? The law is continuously being violated.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, what is your question?

Mr J. Roussety: My question is: what immediate measures are going to be taken as from tomorrow?

Mr Chairperson: But this question has already been answered unless the Chief Commissioner wants to add anything. We move to the next question, please.

(Interruptions)

Next question, please.

(Interruptions)

At this stage, the Minority Leader, followed by the other members of the Minority group, left the Chamber.

Mr Chairperson: We don't have any question. Let's move to the next item on the Order Paper.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

WATER UNIT – ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Chief Commissioner : Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a short statement to this House regarding some organisational problems that occurred in the Water Unit following the passage of Cyclone Kalundé and the recent rains.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in my recent speech on the Draft estimates in this House, I made an appeal to the public servants to be agents of change in order to succeed in making autonomy a success and I have today to confess that this process will be a very tough challenge, indeed.

It has come to my notice this week that in at least three reservoirs, namely Quatre Vents, Montagne du Sable and Hauteur Accacia, problems of water overflowing has been encountered. Following preliminary enquiry, it was found that the personnel involved had not foreseen that the surplus incoming water due to recent rains and Cyclone Kalundé was going to cause a problem of overflow. It is a fact that the water distribution system in Rodrigues is one, which has been evolved on a labour intensive system. The passive system of waiting instructions from higher level and working systematically on the same line without taking into consideration changing factors shall have to disappear.

If we want Rodrigues to enter fully into in this world of professionalism, there is an urgent need to address the issue of organisational structure of the Water Unit. Following meeting I had this morning with the staff of the Water Unit and my Commission, I am seriously looking at the possibility of installing a fully distance operator controlled system to monitor -

- (a) the Level of water in reservoirs;
- (b) the flow rate of inflow water;
- (c) the remote system of regulating valve, and
- (d) remote system of starting and shutting off of pumps

This automatic system will provide less manual interference with the water system and will promote a better management of the system. It is a fact that some workers will be redundant and will have to be deployed elsewhere. But this is the price to pay for a better service. As a care taking regional government, we will ensure that no workers will be left out.

Meanwhile, I am taking the personnel of the Water Unit to task to ensure that such things do not recur. A full inquiry to situate the responsibilities is being carried out and disciplinary actions against those responsible will be taken as per existing regulations and this House will be kept informed accordingly.

Hier soir M. le président, avec ce problème de *overflow* à Camp du Roi, il y a eu des manifestations, mais la minorité qui est là, comme j'ai dit, ne comprend pas qu'un budget est limité et on a des priorités. Si tous les membres ici qui ont un salaire, est-ce qu'ils peuvent prétendre un château, un jet privé, une voiture et une moto en même temps ? M. le président le

développement ne tombe pas du ciel, *ti pas ti pas nous avancer* comme dit Grégoire. Le développement d'un pays passe par plusieurs étapes et cela marche très bien quand vous avez la liberté de prendre des décisions. Même les pays développés ont toujours des développements à faire. Il y a des priorités à considérer avant tout. Même le développement humain passe par plusieurs stades. Nous sommes autonomes mais pas indépendants. Quand vous dites que rien n'a été fait pendant tant d'années, vous êtes en train d'induire la république mauricienne en erreur, tous les gouvernements qu'on a eu les Premier Ministres, en l'occurrence, Sir, Anerood Jugnauth, mais le pire c'est de faire plonger les gens, sans savoir, dans l'ignorance. M. le président, il faut avoir un regard sur le passé. Il nous faut comparer Rodrigues des années 70 et le Rodrigues d'aujourd'hui pour que les illusions de certaines personnes deviennent réalité et pour qu'ils rendent à la politique ses lettres de noblesse.

Je terminerai en disant que les spectateurs se croient toujours footballeurs et ils oublient qu'ils ne sont pas sur le terrain.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr Chairperson: Thank you very much. No statements from Commissioners. We move to the next item, please.

MOTION

EDUCATION, CULTURE, WELFARE, SPORTS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE – APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name on the Order Paper, namely -

“This Assembly is of opinion that, in accordance with Section 59(5) (d) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, there are appointed the following seven members to sit on an “Education, Culture, Welfare, Sports and Leisure Committee” to examine the implementation in Rodrigues of the Educational Reforms approved by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius”-

- (1) Mr André Lelio ROUSSETY
- (2) Mrs Marie Arlette PERRINE-BEGUE
- (3) Mr Robertson MERCURE
- (4) Mr Louis Philippe FRANCOIS
- (5) Mr Joseph Allan Ladd EMILIEN
- (6) Mr Gaetan JABEEMISSAR
- (7) Mrs Marie Therese MEUNIER

Mr Chairperson, Sir, Section 59(5)(d) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act provides, I quote -

The Regional Assembly shall appoint, with or without delegated powers of the Assembly, the following standing committees-

(d) an Education, Culture, Welfare, Sports and Leisure Committee

It is furthermore provided that, inter-alia, every committee shall submit its confirmed report to the Regional Assembly which when adopted shall become a resolution of the Regional Assembly.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, no provision has been made in the Act as to the matters which the Committee would be competent to consider. The threshold would be that the Committee is competent to consider any matter falling within the purview of the Education, Culture, Welfare, Sports and Leisure sectors, obviously upon such instructions that would have been given by this Assembly in conformity with the philosophy of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act. Depending on the need which the prevailing circumstances would dictate, the Assembly would at the instance of my Commission, be requested to consider whether other specific terms of reference to the committee would be appropriate.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, provisions exist in the Standing Orders and Rules of the National Assembly for the setting up of select committees. On the other hand there are also no provision for the setting up of Standing Committees as opposed to Select Committees. Provisions for the setting up of standing committees exist at the level of local and regional administration.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, section 11(1) of the Fourth Schedule to the Local Government Act provides, I quote -

- (1) There shall be set up in respect of every council the following committees with delegated powers –
 - (a) Finance Committee
 - (b) Public Health Committee
 - (c) Works and Planning Committee
 - (d) Welfare Committee

Similarities between the Municipal Councils and the Regional Assembly on this score are real.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand that these Committees, as they now exist at the Municipal Councils, are given comprehensive and exhaustive terms of reference. Our position is somehow different in the sense that there are different organs that have been created for the proper functioning of the Regional Assembly. For instance, Section 35 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act provides that the Executive Council shall be responsible for the carrying out of the functions of the Regional Assembly.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Education, Culture, Welfare, Sports and Leisure Committee would, as stated in the motion, as its first terms of reference, be requested to examine the implementation in Rodrigues of the Educational Reforms approved by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius and effective as from the beginning of this year. Important administrative considerations have to be taken into account for the effective implementation of these reforms.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given the geographical position of the island, its distinctive features both physically and population wise, there has now been developed what is commonly known as the specificity of Rodrigues. This has since obtained statutory recognition in the particular context of allocation of financial resources to Rodrigues. In no uncertain terms, Section 46 (B) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act recognizes the distinct history and identity of Rodrigues on that score. Mr Chairperson Sir, this motion is in line with such philosophy whilst giving full consideration to the fact that the administration of the education sector is indeed an area of responsibility attributed to the Regional Assembly.

Lastly, Mr Chairperson Sir, I have been informed that the Minister of Education and Scientific Research would make his first official visit to Rodrigues in early May, since the take-off of the Regional Assembly. In view of the importance of the subject matter at stake, it would be appropriate for the Committee to submit its report to the Assembly before his visit.

With these remarks Mr Chairperson Sir, I commend the motion to this House.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Je crois que la motion qui a été présentée à l'Assemblée vient à point nommé. Il y a des décisions qui sont prises sur le plan national à Maurice concernant l'éducation à Rodrigues. Pour le moment on est en train de construire des bâtiments pour abriter des collèges à Mont Lubin et à Songes. Mais parfois il y a des problèmes concernant des décisions parce que les Rodriguais n'étaient pas présents dans la prise des décisions. Je crois que c'est une bonne chose que la minorité se joigne à nous pour discuter sur certaines choses concernant l'éducation à Rodrigues.

Merci, M. le président

Commissioner L. Roussety: I congratulate the Chief Commissioner on the initiative of setting up such a Committee.

Mr Chairperson, Sir in Rodrigues the Regional Assembly only has the administration of education and when we look at the specificities of Rodrigues, we cannot just apply to the letter everything that has been asked in Mauritius as part of the reforms of the Education Act. I'd like to come, for example, to the subject of the application of the teaching of Asian languages in Rodrigues.

I recently went on a mission and had the honour of meeting the hon. Minister of Education, himself where we discussed the matter face to face. It had been the intention of just bulldozing the application of the teaching of

Asian languages just through without first consulting us, without looking around to see what physical difficulties we have, because our difficulties may not be the same as they may experience in Mauritius. They had proposed, for example, that classes be held up between 17.00 and 18.00 hrs. The situation in Rodrigues is not the same as it is in Mauritius. In Mauritius most parents have cars. There are streets in towns and even in villages. While in Rodrigues, we are not endowed with such infrastructures so that our children have got only one road to walk along and they have to descend down valleys and climb uphill to get to their respective homes after school hours. So, it is no wonder that a child may have to walk up to one hour after leaving school in order to reach his home. This particular difficulty had not been foreseen, for example, by the Ministry of Education. So, we laid our cards on the table and they have now been able to see our difficulties during the course of the meeting. Now I have come back and being made fully aware of the fact – of course I was made aware – that laws promulgated by the National Assembly in Mauritius concerning education have necessarily got to be applied in the Island of Rodrigues which is part of the Republic of Mauritius, we are now doing our best to put into practice the teaching of Asian Languages. I have explained that we do not have in Rodrigues an Asian Language community, even though as far as Arabic is concerned - Arabic being the language of worship of the Moslem community - we are going to do our best to put this into practice. There are several problems which certainly we would like to share with the minority and have their ideas and collaboration in the application of these things.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and once again I congratulate the Chief Commissioner on this very excellent initiative.

Commissioner A. Perrine Bégué : M. le président, je voudrais moi aussi dire quelques mots sur la motion du Chef Commissaire pour la mise sur pied du comité sur l'éducation, la culture, les sports et les loisirs ainsi que le bien-être à Rodrigues. La création d'un tel comité est très importante dans le sens que surtout par rapport à l'éducation et aussi dans tous les autres domaines, parceque là on parle de la société rodriguaise en général et de son devenir.

Comme vous le savez, M. le président, nous sommes donc dans ce parlement avec un exécutif. Nous aurions pu, par exemple, nous contenter

de prendre *full power* de ce qui nous est donné, c'est-à-dire de prendre des décisions nous-mêmes. Mais, comme l'a si bien dit, le Commissaire à l'Éducation, nous avons eu l'administration de l'éducation. Or, il y a, par exemple, des sujets sur lesquels toute l'assemblée doit réfléchir et apporter des suggestions au gouvernement central. Et là je pense que c'est très important parcequ'il y a des sujets qui demandent de mûres réflexions surtout par rapport à l'éducation parceque l'éducation a une grande importance à la création de la société de demain; elle favorise le développement de l'enfant rodriguais, de l'enfant mauricien, et donc de l'adulte de demain, car c'est l'homme qui accueille, qui influence, qui fait le développement. Donc, tout ce qu'on fait dans l'éducation, tout ce qu'on donne à l'enfant d'aujourd'hui, tout ce qu'on lui offre comme possibilité et la façon dont on le façonne fait de lui ce qu'il deviendra demain et fait de nous ce que nous deviendrons demain. Donc je pense que l'éducation, la culture, les loisirs, les sports sont des domaines très importants qui façonnent l'enfant et qui vont avoir un impact sur le développement à venir de Rodrigues. Je trouve que c'est une bonne chose d'amener toute cette assemblée, c'est-à-dire les deux côtés de la chambre, à réfléchir sur certains sujets et de trouver un consensus, parcequ'on est dans une démocratie. Et comme le dit si bien *the essence of politics* est justement de trouver un consensus dans le dialogue sur des sujets qui nous concernent tous.

Donc, voilà une très belle initiative, voilà un très bel exemple de la démocratie parceque, comme vous le savez très bien, dans cette loi, il n'est pas dit quand il faut mettre sur pied ce comité. Et au début même de notre mandat nous mettons sur pied ce comité; c'est une manière de consolider encore plus la démocratie. J'approuve cela et ce qui est bien c'est que ce comité aura donné l'occasion de réfléchir, d'amener des propositions aux fins de discussion ici même devant cette assemblée. Et ce comité qui est décrit « *with or without delegated power* » - *I think the Committee will be « without delegated powers*. Mais néanmoins ce que nous pouvons amener ici à travers un comité de réflexion va éclairer la chambre sur des sujets qui nous concernent tous et qui vont jouer un rôle très important sur ce que nous faisons aujourd'hui, c'est-à-dire, construire demain.

Je félicite encore une fois le Chef Commissaire pour cette motion que j'accueille avec beaucoup d'appréciation.

Merci, M. le président.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je remercie les membres de la majorité qui sont intervenus sur cette motion et je pense que nos amis de l'autre côté de la chambre qui sont absents, vont pouvoir profiter de cette occasion pour se rencontrer et apporter une réflexion ensemble surtout dans ce secteur de la vie rodriguaise qui concerne l'éducation. Nous souhaitons que le comité va faire son travail pendant les quelques jours à venir. Le Ministre de l'éducation a exprimé le souhait de rencontrer les membres de l'assemblée pour qu'ils puissent lui faire part de leurs suggestions en ce qui concerne l'application des réformes dans l'éducation à Rodrigues, une réforme de l'éducation dans le cadre de la République de Maurice.

Merci, M. le président.

On question put, the motion was agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 06 May 2003 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chairperson rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

BAIE AUX HUITRES - RECLAIMED LAND AREA – SURVEY, LETTER OF INTENT, ETC.

(No. B/114) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the reclaimed land area at Baie aux Huitres, he would state -

- (a) whether a survey has been carried out for the purpose of land to be leased for residential, commercial or other purposes;
- (b) whether any letter of intent or lease has been issued to any applicant; and
- (c) if yes, let the House know the outcome thereof.

Reply: The answer is as follows -

- (a) I am informed that the reclaimed land at Oyster Bay of an aggregate extent of 16.89 acres has been parcelled out into 75 lots for commercial and industrial purposes;
- (b) letters of intent have been issued to 19 approved lessees, nine (9) leases have been finalized while leases with respect to the remaining ten (10) persons who have received letters of intent are in the process of being finalized. A list showing the names of the nineteen (19) lessees as well as the details concerning the area of their sites and the purposes of their leases is being tabled, and
- (c) up to now, none of the lessees has started to develop his land. Next week, officers of the Planning Division of the Ministry of Housing and Lands are coming to Rodrigues to review the parcelling which has been carried out on the reclaimed land at Oyster Bay in the light of new proposals and commitments such as the creation of a Marina for fishing boats and pleasure crafts

as well as the relocation of promoters whose land has been repossessed to accommodate the CEB Project at Pointe L'herbe.

POINTE L'HERBE - POWER PLANT

(No. B/115) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the construction of a new power plant at Pointe L'Herbe by the Central Electricity Board, he would state whether -

- (a) complaints have been formulated against that project;
- (b) an official Environment Impact Assessment or a cost-benefit analysis has been carried out at the request of promoter and, if yes, by whom,
- (c) and what were the findings thereof.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, when the Central Electricity Board first decided to shift the expansion of their power station from Port Mathurin to Pointe L'herbe to meet the increasing demand of electricity on the island, there were complaints from some residents at Pointe L'herbe concerning noise and vibration nuisance. A letter was received on 9 October 2002 to that effect. Subsequently during a meeting chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance on 12 October 2002, it was decided that the site for the Power Station will be shifted more towards Pointe Monier and that CEB will be requested to look into this problem of noise nuisance. The sites leased to three companies, Allied Builders Ltd, Mauritius Consumers Cooperative Federations Ltd and Total Mauritius Ltd will now be re-possessed and the CEB site will be adjacent to RODNIX. Further meetings were held at the Ministry of Environment and during a meeting held on 7 February 2003, CEB confirmed that the environmental noise level will not exceed the prescribed limits for residential exposure at Pointe L'herbe. This part of the reclaimed area at Pointe Monier/Pointe L'herbe will in future be declared Industrial Zone as the noise level at night will be slightly higher near the RODNIX premises.

With regard to parts (b) & (c), an Environmental Impact Assessment Report was prepared on behalf of CEB by an international firm Mott Macdonald from United Kingdom. Mitigation measures were proposed in the report and the Acting Director of Environment issued an EIA Licence ref: ENV/12/1041 on the 06 January 2003.

MOTHERS (UNMARRIED) - SOCIAL AID

(No. B/116) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security (Mr Mercure) whether, as regards social aid granted to unmarried mothers in respect of their children, he would

- (a) give the criteria used, the amount paid per child and the number of present beneficiaries and the total amount involved monthly;
- (b) state whether there are any conditions attached for the continued payment of the aid;
- (c) state the number of cases where payment has been ceased since January 2003 as a result of a woman living with a man?

Reply: I am informed that social aid is granted to women and their children on ground of abandonment or because they are unmarried heads of households when they are incapable to earn adequately their livelihood and have insufficient means to support themselves and their dependents in accordance with the Social Aid Act 1983. At present, there are 745 such mothers who are in receipt of social aid and an amount of Rs952,000 is being paid monthly.

Normally an adult receives Rs655 while children are paid as follows -

- Below 10 years old - Rs250
- 10 - 15 years old - Rs305
- 15 - 20 years old - Rs385 (if attending full time education)

As regards to part (b) of the question, I am advised that the payment of social aid is discontinued in case –

- (i) where the beneficiary remarries or lives with a partner under the same roof.
- (ii) she is working and has sufficient means to cater for her family; or
- (iii) when she does no longer have qualifying dependent children.

As regards part (c) since January 2003, social aid of two beneficiaries have been stopped because they are living in “*concubinage*”.

BAIE TOPAZE – PRUNING OF TREES

(No. B/117) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the security of motorists and pedestrians at Baie Topaze, he would give instructions to prune the trees alongside the road near the residence of Mr Emmanuel Félicité.

Reply (Chief Commissioner): As a matter of fact, I replied to two other questions relating to similar issues namely Question B/99 and B/100 at the sitting of the 18 February. Pruning of trees along public roads and places is an ongoing exercise which has been disrupted by the passage of cyclone Kalunde. As you would have noted, trees which were uprooted by the cyclone as well as broken branches caused a lot of obstructions in public places and premises and in many instances the fallen trees and branches represented serious hazards to human life. The Forestry Services which is responsible for the pruning exercise is still busy with post Kalunde clearing. As soon as the cleaning is over, they will resume the pruning of trees along public roads including Baie Topaze and all other places where such intervention is required.

MT. PLATE - CONSTRUCTION OF ENCLOSURE

(No. B/118) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether,

with regard to the construction of the enclosure at Mt. Plate some years ago, he would give a description of its present condition and make necessary arrangements if any, to improve its condition to prevent animals from getting in.

Reply: I am informed that some 74 hectares of state land at Montagne Plate was fenced in 1985 so as to create a sylvo-pastoral perimeter. The enclosure which is four kilometres long consists of about one kilometers of fencing and three kilometres of stone wall. I have been informed that the galvanized fence is still in good condition whereas the stone wall is frequently subjected to damage by cattle owners. I am informed that three galvanized doors are rusted and about 70 metres of stone wall damaged. I have also been informed that during the last two years forest patrol was not seriously monitored in that region. The case has been referred to the Commission for forestry services so as to increase the frequency of forest patrol in that region. My commission is looking at the possibility of replacing the stone wall by a galvanized fence so as to prevent grazing animals from getting inside the enclosure.

MARECHAL/LA FERME/ MANGUES - EXCAVATED SOIL

(No. B/119) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the excavated soil obtained from the road construction between Marechal and La Ferme via Mangues, he would state -

- (a) the places where the soil has been deposited; and whether this is in conformity with the terms of the contract, and
- (b) if any Environment Impact Assessment was carried out before the contract was awarded.

Reply: I have been informed that surplus of excavated soil from the road construction along Marechal and Quatre Vents are deposited next to Marechal football ground whereas the surplus soil from Quatre Vents to La Ferme Road via Mangues are dumped at Baie Topaze. The contract for the road construction specifies that all surplus soil shall be deposited at an approved dumping site. All clearances for the above dumping sites were

granted by the Environment Division after consultation with other Divisions concerned. When it came to my knowledge that excavated soil was being dumped at the former coral quarry of Petite Butte, the matter was discussed with the Division concerned and it was decided to stop dumping on that site immediately. No Environment Impact Assessment is required under the EPA for road construction works.

LA FERME – SENIOR CITIZEN CENTRE - REFUGEE CENTRE

(No. B/120) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security (Mr Mercure) whether, with regard to the refugees at the Refugee Centre of Citizen Centre at La Ferme, he could state why these people have not been allowed access to the dormitory in the said building during their stay there.

Reply: The Senior Citizen Centre of La Ferme is used as a refugee centre for the village and Mr Josue Albert, the president of the Senior Citizen Association, is the supervisor of the refugee centre and he is assisted by Mr. Josian FELICITE. During cyclone Kalunde, the refugee centre was opened from 6.00 a.m on 11 March until the all clear signal on 14 March. One family from Manique consisting of seven persons stayed at the Centre and they left on 14 March.

I am informed that the supervisor of the refugee centre graciously put three mattresses as well as cooking facilities available in the kitchen and belonging to the Federation of Senior Citizen's Association at the disposal of the refugees who slept in the living room of the Senior Citizen Centre. It is to be noted, that refugee centres are not normally provided with mattresses or beds.

CYCLONE KALUNDE - REFUGEES

(No.B/121) Mr A. L. Emilien (The First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security (Mr

Mercure) whether, in connection with the passage of cyclone Kalundé, he would state -

- (a) the number of refugees in the Refugee Centre and the duration of their stay for each Refugee Centre;
- (b) the quality of commodities itemwise issued to the refugees;
- (c) the total amount of money spent on these refugees; and
- (d) measures taken or to be taken for those whose house or fishing boat has been completely destroyed.

Reply: A list showing the number of refugees and the duration of their stay is being tabled. With regard to part (b) of the question, while they were at the refugee centres, the refugees were issued with the following items: -

<u>Commodities (Rs)</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Value</u>
Canned Tuna	192	3264.00
Packets of candles	42	667.80
Packets of biscuits	176	2763.20
Coca Colas – 2 litres	132	3036.00
Box of matches	84	84.00
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	Total	9815.00

Other items, which were received in donation from solidarity activities and are being distributed to cyclone victims including the families who took refuge in centres, are being compiled and would be tabled in due course.

As for part (c), a total amount of Rs40,700 has been paid as allowance to refugees.

With respect to part (d) of the question, 216 cases of cyclone victims whose houses have been destroyed have been referred to the Trust Fund for

Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups which will provide each head of household, who is eligible, for a housing unit under the existing social housing programs. The cases of the four professional fishermen whose boats were destroyed by the cyclone have been referred to the Poverty Alleviation Programme “Anou diboute Ensam” financed by the European Union which will provide a new fishing boat to each of them.

In the meantime, the victims whose houses have been damaged or destroyed are being provided with foodstuffs and other commodities which are received from solidarity movements both from Mauritius and Rodrigues.

ILE MICHEL - PASTURE LAND

(No. B/122) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, whether he would state -

- (a) when the pastureland at Ile Michel was set up and its total surface area;
- (b) the total amount of money disbursed therefor and the duration of the works;
- (c) the present state of the pasture land, including the fence, and
- (d) what measures he intends to take to rehabilitate same?

Reply: I am informed that the pastureland at Ile Michel was set up in 1996. The total surface area of the pasture is about 150 hectares.

As regards part (b), the works started in 1993 and were completed in 1996. The total amount of money disbursed was 7000 ECU from the EDF project representing cost of materials and 14,000 ECU representing cost of labour by the Government.

With regard to part (c), I have been informed that the pasture land is presently degraded and the fencing is in a very bad state.

As for part (d), I am informed that the Chief commissioner has had a meeting with the Forest Division where the latter has been directed to make a survey for the rehabilitation of damaged fenced of nature reserves and pasture land. As this regional government is aiming at cattle rearing in defined stable, the pasture land of Ile Michel will become a community pasture where farmers can get easy access to fetch for fodder and thus stop those animals to ramble freely in nature.

FISHERMEN –NAVIGATIONAL AIDS

(No. B/123) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards fishermen in Rodrigues, he would -

- (a) say when navigational aids will be installed at the eight places identified for same;
- (b) if yes, state the total amount of money disbursed, if any, for the purchase of navigational aids and, if not, why such a long delay and state whether tenders have been floated therefor, and
- (c) say whether he intends to subsidise the purchase of mobile phones for off-lagoon fishermen.

Reply: Further to the reply of Mr Jean Daniel Speville to Question B/3 at the sitting of the Assembly of the 05 November 2002 and the latest recommendations of the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, quotations have been sought for the supply of navigational aids for installation at -

Passe St Francois;

Passe Grenade ; and

Passe Port Sud Est;

The closing date for submission of quotations is the 16 April 2003.

The Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping has recommended that surveys are required to determine suitable sites for the installation of transit marks where navigational aids would be installed at Passe Baladirou and Passe Demie (also known as Passe Jimmy) while at Passe Butte, Passe Quatre Vingt Brisant, Passe L'encre and Passe Plate, appropriate channels should be dredged before the installation of beacon lights.

With regards to part (c), since Rodrigues is a duty free zone, any person, including off lagoon fishermen, can purchase mobile telephones at duty free prices which are much lower than those existing in Mauritius.

RADIERS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/124) Mr A. L. Emilien (The First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in respect of “*radiers*” found at Rivière Coco, Pistache, Anse Baleine, Anse Raffin and other places which were impassable during cyclone Kalundé, he would state for the benefit of the House -

- (a) measures under way or to be taken to remedy the situation, and, if yes;
- (b) the time frame for such works;

Reply: I would like to inform this Assembly that the construction of *radiers* along the valleys of Riviere Coco, Pistache, Anse Baleine, and Anse Raffin was effected under the former EDF Projects in Rodrigues. The objectives of constructing those *radiers* was mainly to facilitate the passage of water. I am aware of the difficult situation that arises for the public to cross those *radiers* during heavy rainfall. And this situation arises even in developed countries even though sophisticated bridges have been constructed because we cannot control the magnitude of rainfall. Moreover, during a cyclone of such intensity like Kalundé, there is no safe place outside. People are supposed to be inside. However, I have requested my Commission to carry out a complete survey on –

- (a) those valleys where large impounding water retaining structures could be built to retain the water during heavy rainfall thus

- preventing heavy flow across the *radiers* and at the same time harnessing water for agriculture, and
- (b) those valleys where the construction of the bridge would be inevitable.

Necessary action would be taken in the light of the findings of the survey and any works required to be done will be initiated in due time.

WATER RESOURCES UNIT – WORKERS - COMMUNICATION

(No. B/125) Mr D. L. Guillaume (The Third Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in view of difficulties, Valve Operators, Pump Operators, Reservoir Keepers and their senior officers face to communicate with one another in the Water Resources Unit, he would state what type of communication he intends to introduce in this sector.

Reply: I have been informed that all the Valve Operators, Pump Operators, Reservoir Keepers are under the supervision of a Gangman who acts as the liaison officer between the site of works and the sub-offices. Any difficulties encountered should be reported to the Gangman who in turn reports to the Inspectorate staff for remedial action. All offices are provided with telephone facilities. Some main sites such as Mourouk will be provided with telephone facilities. A radio communication system has been introduced in all water unit vehicles to facilitate communication and hotlines have been installed at Malabar. Up to now no complaint has been received concerning communication between the different stakeholders of the water sector. We are having various meetings with the inspectorate staff every week so as to maintain a good planning in that sector. The need for the introduction of any other type of communication is not being felt at the time being.

AGRICULTURAL SERVICES - TRACTORS

(No. B/126) Mr D. L. Guillaume (The Third Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in view of difficulties faced by farmers to mechanise their fields, he would state -

- (a) how many tractors, there are in the agricultural sector and their conditions;
- (b) the number of hectares village wise ploughed from December 2002 to February 2003, and
- (c) what measures he intends to take to give equal treatment to one and all.

Reply: I have been informed that there are two heavy-duty tractors and seven small tractors available for land mechanization at the Agricultural Services. One heavy-duty tractor is actually broken down and has been found to be beyond repairs. The heavy-duty tractors are normally used to operate on heavily compacted soil whereas the small ones normally operate on loose and lightly compacted soil.

As regards part (b), the information is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as ready.

With regard to part (c), the small tractors are deployed region wise for eventual use in those regions. These regions are Trefles, Port Sud Est, Oyster Bay, Marechal and La Ferme. Applications are filed with the Extension Officers serving those regions. The services are available to the public at large without any discrimination. From the setting up of the Commission for Agriculture we have never had any complaint regarding unequal treatment concerning the use of tractors. My Commission is also looking into the possibility of creating five mini mechanical pools in each of those five regions so as to be able to meet the demands.

AGRICULTURAL VALLEYS - ROADS

(No. B/127) Mr D. L. Guillaume (The Third Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to difficulties faced by farmers' vehicles to access places in agricultural valleys such as Anse Baleine, Fond Baie Malgache, Mt. Croupier etc, he would state what measures are being taken to remedy the situation and when new roads will be built in these agricultural valleys.

Reply: As I have already stated, road construction and road upgrading are carried out according to a list of priorities set out by the Executive Council and according to availability of funds. Infrastructural Development in agricultural valleys has normally been funded by the European Union and presently under the Anti-Erosion Programme. Three catchments areas are being taken care during this present programme namely the valley of Riviere Banane, Pistaches and Mourouk. Construction of access roads in the above valleys are being financed under the other schemes such as IFAD, "*A Nou diboute ensam*", etc., which normally finance construction of track roads all over the island. My Commission is therefore approaching the IFAD Programme and the other programmes to finance track roads to some of the agricultural valleys upon requests by farmers.

LA FERME – SENIOR CITIZEN'S CENTRE

(No. B/128) Mr J. C. Agathe (The Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner of Social Security (Mr Mercure) whether, with regard to Senior citizens' Centres, he could -

- (a) make a short statement on La Ferme Senior Citizens' Centre, and
- (b) state the number of senior citizens' groups in Local Regions 1 and 2.

Reply: I am informed that the Centre is a Government Quarters which was put at the disposal of the senior citizens' Association by the then Rodrigues Administration. In 1998, the Rodrigues Administration authorized

the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations to convert the building into a “Centre d’Accueil” to be used for the accommodation of members of Senior Citizens’ Associations from Mauritius who visit Rodrigues for exchange programmes with local Senior Citizen Associations.

The conversion of the building was financed by the Federation of Senior Citizens’ Association from its own fund and with financial support from the NGO Trust Fund.

The Centre d’Accueil now consists of three bedrooms, one living room, two bathrooms, two kitchens and two toilets. The Senior Citizens’ Association of La Ferme also uses the Centre to organize its normal activities and put it at the disposal of the Womens’ Association of the village for training and handicraft activities.

With regard to part (b) of Question B/128, I am informed that there are a total of sixty three (63) Senior Citizens’ Associations in Rodrigues of which 16 are in the local regions 1 and 2.

RODRIGUES REGIONAL JUDO COMMITTEE - ACTIVITIES

(No. B/129) Mr J. C. Agathe (The Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner of Youth & Sports whether, with regard to Judo activities in Rodrigues, he would -

- (a) give a list of the activities held by the Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee for the last three years that is
 - (i) from September 2000 to August 2001;
 - (ii) from September 2001 to August 2002;
 - (iii) from September 2002 to date; and
- (b) state if the Judo competition in connection with Jeux des Iles de L’Ocean Indien will be held in Rodrigues this year and if yes, state what arrangements are being made in this connection?

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, the list of activities held by the Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee for the last three years is as follows

-

- (i) 1st September to August 2001 – Nil
- (ii) 1st September 2001 to August 2002

- 1. Training Session with Mauritius Judo Team (27 April to 3 May 2002)
- 2. Judo Competition – JIGORO KANO CUP (11 August 2002)
- 3. Second Team Stage with Mauritius Judo Team (24 August to 28 August 2002)

- (iii) 1st September 2002 to date - Nil

- (b) The Judo Competition will ultimately be held in the Malabar Gymnasium. In this connection, the gymnasium will undergo complete renovation as regards to painting, aeration and an esthetic look.

In addition, a new set of judo mat will be bought soon.

With a view to increasing the awareness of the population, my Commission together with sub-committee of COJI – Rodrigues will be organizing a whole set of activities. These include

- (1) a gathering of Rodriguan Youth at Baladirou;
- (2) execution of “fresques”;
- (3) organization of a fun run, and
- (4) formation of hostesses

The booking of the hotels for the judokas from the other islands of the region has already been done at Cotton Bay and Escale Vacances. Catering for the Judokas will be dealt with by the respective hotels.

MARECHAL/PAPAYES/BIGARADES - DAM

(No. B/130) Mr J. C. Agathe (The Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to agriculture on both sides of the road under construction from Bigarades to Grand La Fouche Corail he would -

- (a) consider the construction of a small dam with concrete base at Marechal, Papayes and Bigarades for irrigation; and
- (b) do the necessary to drain the road in such a way that the running water could fill these dams.

Reply: I would like to inform the second Local Region Member of La Ferme that action has already been taken to rain harvest the water falling on the roads from Grand La Fouche Corail to Bigarades to be used for agricultural irrigation. Works have already started with the construction of a “*retenue collinaire*” at Papayes. All the earth works have already been completed and the tender for the liner is being launched by the Anti Erosion programme. The works is being financed under the Anti-Erosion Programme. The option of constructing of small dams with concrete base was considered to be more expensive and not viable because most of the agricultural land is not found near the main road. Anti-Erosion Programme has instead retained the option for the construction small dams with plastic liner, as is the case in Reunion Island.

FORMATION DE FOOTBALL – SPORT COACHES

(No. B/131) Mr J. C. Agathe (The Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner of Youth and Sports whether he would, with regard to “*formation de football*” in Rodrigues, state -

- (a) the names of the sport coaches;
- (b) where they are posted;
- (c) if they are required to work after working hours;
- (d) who supervise them;
- (e) whether they record their time of departure in the afternoon in the Attendance Book;
- (f) the age limits to attend each ‘Ecole de Formation’;
- (g) the different names of ‘Ecole de Formation’, and
- (h) the name of competition(s) held in Rodrigues in which the trainees are involved.

Reply: As regards part (a) of the question, the names of the sport coaches are Louis Michelin Biram and Alex Cursley Tan Wee;

With regard to part (b), members of the staff of the Sports Division are posted to the Headquarters at Malabar;

As for part (c), according to PRB Report, they are requested to work after office hours, on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays;

With regard to part (d), the staff of the Sports Division is supervised by the Sports Co-ordinating Officer;

As regards part (e), Like all public officers, sports coaches record their time of departure in the attendance book every afternoon. However, when they are called to work after office hours, time of departure is inserted on the following day; and in such cases, they are covered by proper entries in the movement book;

With regard to part (f), there are three “*Ecole de Formation*” namely *Centre Régional de pre-formation de football (CRPF)*, *Centre Formation*

Regional (CFR) and Rodrigues Junior Team (RJT). The age limits to attend these “*Ecole de Formation*” is 14-15 years for CRPF, 16-17 years for CFR and 18-21 years for RJT.

Concerning part (g), it is as above.

As for part (h), the competitions held in Rodrigues are as follows -

- (1)CRPF (a) Ecole de Football league Championship
- (2) CFR
 - (a) 2nd Division league championship
 - (b) All competitions organised by the Rodrigues Regional Football
 - (c) Triangular tournaments involving the two best teams in Mauritius.
 - (d) 1st Division football league + all competitions organised by the Rodrigues Regional Committee

WATER RESOURCES UNIT – VACANT POSTS

(No. B/133) Mrs J. Prosper (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards the 2003-2004 budget would he state -

- (a) whether the vacant posts at the Water Resources Unit will be filled, and
- (b) the number of posts which will be created on the establishment of the Water Resources Unit as well the salaries for each of these posts.

Reply: All vacant posts on the Water Resources Unit establishment will be filled in due course. You will note that the Draft estimates have not yet been approved by Cabinet in Mauritius and as such no firm commitment can be taken as regards expenditure with regards to those draft estimates. I would like to refer the respected members to the approved draft estimates,

which lay down the number of posts that have been created on the establishment of the Water Resources Unit. As regards the salaries for these posts, it is the matter of Civil service affairs as well as the Pay Research Bureau for the determination of the appropriate salary scale in line with established government procedures.

CYCLONE KALUNDE - VICTIMS

(No. B/134) Mrs J. Prosper (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner of Social Security (Mr Mercure) whether, with regard to victims of the recent cyclone Kalundé, he would -

- (a) state the number of houses that have been partly or completely damaged;
- (b) explain the procedures that victims had to follow to benefit from grants/aids, and
- (c) give a breakdown by name and locality of beneficiaries, stating the nature of damage and the quantum of aid to be or already provided.
- (d) give name/s of persons or bodies responsible for the distribution of such aids; and
- (e) state what measures are presently being taken to ensure that aids are distributed solely according to merits?

Reply: As regards part (a), I have been informed that 234 houses have been completely damaged and 497 houses have been partly damaged.

With regard to part (b), following the passage of cyclone Kalunde, all those whose houses were damaged have had to report the case to the nearest Police Station. A compiled list of those persons was submitted to the Commission for Public Infrastructure for further inquiry and assessment of damage. Six team of officers of the Public infrastructure effected a house-to-house survey and reported as follows –

(1) Out of the 392 cases of completely damaged houses reported only 216 were found to be genuine.

(2) Out of the 985 Cases of partially damaged houses reported only 521 were found to be genuine.

Concerning part (c), the information is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as ready.

As for part (d), the bodies responsible for the distribution of aids in respect of damaged houses will be the Housing unit, the Public Infrastructure Division in collaboration with NGOs. All cases of damaged houses will be dealt with by the Trust Fund for Vulnerable groups.

With regard to part (e), only cases referred by the Police and duly assessed by the teams who effected the survey will be considered. No other cases are being considered.

At 12.30 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 18 March 2003 at 10.30 a.m.