

No.8 of 2003

RODRIGUES

FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 8 of 2003

Sitting of Tuesday 06 May 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

No. 8 of 06.05.2003

RODRIGUES
FIRST REGIONAL SEEMBL Y

Sitting of Tuesday 6 May 2003

Contents

Announcements
Questions (Oral)
Matter of Privilege
Adjournment

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Housing Problems

ANNOUNCEMENTS - Standing Orders and rules

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

- (I) Article Published in « Ici rodrigues » Newspaper
- (II) Letter from Minority Leader

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

(No.B/135) Vehicles – used oil, tyres and bodies

(No.B/136) Public Beaches - erosion

(No.B/137) Rivière Banane – TV reception

(No.B/138) Port Mathurin Police Station – recreational area - toilet

(No.B/139) Port Mathurin & Grand La Fouche Road construction

(No.B/140) Cyclone Kalundé – relief funds

(No.B/141) Port Mathurin - street lighting

(No.B/142) Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) – State of Preparedness

(No.B/143) Fibre Glass Water Tanks

- (No.B/144) Port Mathurin - drainage system
- (No.B/145) Cyclone Kalunde - donations
- (No.B/146) Queen Elizabeth Hospital – Paediatric ward - flooding
- (No.B/147) Conjunctivitis Epidemic
- (No.B/148) Rainy Seasons - potable water
- (No.B/149) Dams and Reservoirs - siltation
- (No.B/150) Anti-Erosion programme
- (No.B/151) Baie Diamant Fish Landing Station - parking facilities
- (No.B/152) Psychological Illness - treatment
- (No.B/153) Orphan's Pension - payment
- (No.B/154) MASA – Officers - secondment
- (No.B/155) Pedestrians - security at *radiers*
- (No.B/156) – Creve Coeur - road construction
- (No.B/157) Judo Committee/Judo Clubs
- (No.B/158) Quatre Vents, Papayes & Marechal - multi-purpose centre, health section, etc.
- (No.B/159) Junior Football Team
- (No.B/160) Government Vehicles - use by Commissioners
- (No. B/161) La Ferme - Administration Building - construction
- (No. B/162) Petit Gabriel Dispensary - opening hours
- (No.B/163) Marechal College - access road

(No.B/164) Cuclone Kalunde - road network – damages

(No.B/165) Riviere Coco Road - construction

(No. B/166) Fishermen - navigational and communication aids

(No. B/167) Flooding Cases – Drainage Committee

ANNOUNCEMENT

REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – STANDING ORDERS AND RULES

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, I have the following announcement to make. Today, is the thirteenth ordinary meeting of this Assembly. It is roughly more than 6 months since the Assembly first sat on the 25th October 2001. During this period we have witnessed many important decisions that have been taken in this House. I am sure that you understand what this House represents and what it stands for and it devolves upon you to restrain yourself and anybody whatsoever from trying to bring much disrepute and discredit to the House.

Respected Members, I have observed that some of you, at times in the past, and now often, will not pay heed to Standing Orders and Rules of the Assembly. Section 65 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act provides, I quote –

“There shall be freedom of speech in the Chamber of the Regional Assembly’.

I have to emphasize that this freedom can be exercised only in conformity with the Standing Orders and rules of the Assembly. It is apposite to note that Standing order 35 provides, I quote -

‘A member desiring to speak shall rise in his place, and if called upon, shall address his observations to the chair’.

This is an elementary rule which clearly says, not only that the Member can address the Chair only from a standing position, but also that he has to catch the eye of the Chairperson. I regret to note that this rule is not always adhered to by a few. I have had to call for order on many occasions. Interruptions from a sitting position is unparliamentary and those who do these should not, I expect, continue with such practice. Order in the House will be seriously jeopardised as I would not be able to listen to two persons at the same time. Obviously my whole attention will be solely directed

towards the person addressing the Chair from a standing position. Those who systematically flout the Standing Orders would ultimately have to face the sanctions provided for in the Standing Orders.

Lastly, respected Members, we have to put on record that the creation of this Assembly comes as a result of many years of struggle for an autonomous status. This struggle has been consistent over more than 20 years, so long, that some of the proponents may have passed away without having had the privilege of knowing the result. We can no more than stand with respect. You should bear in mind that while giving due respect to this institution, we shall be giving the right signal to the public in general and to the Central Government .

I thank you for your attention.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

VEHICLES – USED OIL, TYRES AND BODIES

(No. B/135) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment whether, with regard to the increasing number of vehicles, he would state the measures he is taking to manage the following waste –

- (a) used oil;
- (b) used tyres;
- (c) the bodies of old unused vehicles.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, with your permission, I am tabling the answer as it is a lengthy one.

Mr Chairperson: Well, I understand it would be difficult to ask supplementary questions.

Mr J. Roussety: I understand that question B/135 requires an oral answer. I have the appendix to the Order Paper; the questions require oral answers. I believe that the answer should be read by the Chief Commissioner, unless the question requires a written answer.

The Chairperson: So, the Minority Leader is insisting that the answer be read.

Mr J. Roussety: No, I am not insisting, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I am referring to the Order Paper which says: "Questions for which notice has been given requiring an oral answer". It is on the Order Paper. I believe that the answer should be read.

The Chairperson: I'll have to inform the Minority Leader that ...

Mr J. Roussety: I am not insisting, but I am just informing you that it has to be an oral answer.

The Chairperson: I understand that this is a young Assembly. The practice is that if the answer is short and readable, normally the Commissioner or the Minister concerned will read the answer. But there are some instances that answers cannot be read such as tables, percentages, graphs and a practice has developed in the Houses that in cases of long answers, normally it is acceptable that these answers are tabled.

Mr J. Roussety: I understand that if answers contain figures percentages etc, it is not easily readable. I'd like to ask you to propose that this does not become a general practice.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, thank you.

Mr J. Roussety: Otherwise we will not have the opportunity to ask supplementary questions, because we don't know what answers are being given.

Mr Chairperson: So, the Minority Leader wants to say that this should not be done too often.

Mr J. Roussety: I don't want you to say things that I want you to say. I want you to say that it should not become a general practice that answers to questions which have been put for oral answers are just tabled.

Mr Chairperson: Thank you. Commissioners will kindly take note. So, that will do for Question B/135. We now move to the next question.

PUBLIC BEACHES - EROSION

(No. B/136) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) whether, as regards the public beaches at Port Sud Est and Mourouk which have been eroded by strong waves to a great extent during cyclone Kalunde, he could state the immediate measures he intends to take to remedy same.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the damages caused during cyclone Kalundé to public beaches in general have been discussed in the last Rodrigues Environment Committee. A report made by Environment Division has indicated that considerable erosion has taken place particularly at St Francois, Anse Ali, Fumier, Mourouk, Port Sud Est and Graviers. The committee has decided, as an immediate measure, to initiate action for the construction of aesthetically designed stone walls on the most severely eroded beaches at Fumier, Anse Ali, Mourouk and Port Sud Est so as to protect them from further degradation.

Concerning the other beaches, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has already solicited expertise from the Ministry of Environment in order to advise on the type of protective measures that have to be implemented.

At present Mrs Virginie Case is conducting, under the aegis of the Commission de L'Océan Indien, a scientific study of the vulnerability of our public beaches. Just after cyclone Kalundé, she made an assessment of the situation and will submit her findings shortly. We hope to have useful recommendations on the completion of the study.

RIVIERE BANANE - TV RECEPTION

(No. B/137) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he could seek information from the MBC as to why the people living in the region of Rivière Banane have been deprived of T.V broadcast since 08 January 2003.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have written to the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation to seek the necessary information.

I shall submit a reply to the Assembly in due course.

PORT MATHURIN POLICE STATION – RECREATIONAL AREA - TOILET

(No. B/138) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment whether concerning the public toilet in the recreational area in front of Port Mathurin Police Station, the Commissioner inform the House -

- (a) whether same is operational and, if not, could the Commissioner look urgently into the matter;
- (b) who is responsible for the cleanliness and maintenance of same.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir,

- (a) The public toilet in the recreational area in front of the Port Mathurin Police Station is operational.
- (b) Maxiclean Ltd is responsible for its cleanliness under the supervision of the Environment Division. As for its maintenance, same is carried out by the Commission of Public Infrastructure.

It is to be noted that on frequent occasions, the toilet has to be closed to enable the repair of broken items and damages caused by vandals. This is very unfortunate as this problem is being faced in most of public toilets in the island.

Mr Jabeemissar: The Chief Commissioner stated that the toilet is operational. But on many occasions I've seen that the men's toilet remains closed all day. Does it mean that both toilets were operational or only the women's toilet?

The Chief Commissioner: I have been informed that toilets are operational, but I must inform the House that I have read the contract with Maxiclean. The present contract should be reviewed, to take into account problems encountered with the management of all public toilets so that a more elaborated one is prepared which should include the following tasks to be performed by the contractor. For the time being there is no provision in

the contract saying that whenever there is no water, the contractor should look for it. The tasks are as follows –

- (i) provision of water and spare reservoir to ensure availability of water for high pressure washing, maintenance and repair of all fittings, wiring, fixtures, pipes, rainwater harvesting devices, etc.
- (ii) provision of locker to store detergents, toilet paper, soap, paper holders, waste pails, receptacles and indicative boards;
- (iii) provision of 24 hour watch, cleaning of toilet blocks, embellishment of immediate surroundings, weekly pumping of pits, and
- (iv) provision of leeching fees, regular painting of walls.

So, we are going to review the contract with Maxiclean or we can launch a special contract for the cleaning of the toilets around the island.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, my question is whether the men's toilet is operational there.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, men's toilet, where?

Mr Jabeemissar: At the place mentioned in the question.

The Chief Commissioner: I am informed that the public toilets in the recreational park in front of Port Mathurin Police Station are operational. I don't know whether it is the men's or women's toilet which is not operational. But I am informed they are.

Mr Jabeemissar: May be the Chief Commissioner has been misinformed, Mr Chairperson, Sir ...

Mr Chairperson: You can't say that. This is irregular. If you want to challenge the Commissioner, you have to come with proof. Then you can ask your question.

The Chief Commissioner: I'll look into it.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I heard the Chief Commissioner mention vandalism. Can he say what measures he intends to take to reduce vandalism?

The Chief Commissioner: I have just mentioned in my answer that we are going to review the contract for the cleaning and maintenance of the toilets around the island. There is a lot of vandalism. Not only at the toilets in front of the Police Station but also at La Gare Routière at Baie Lascars. There is, as I said, a lot of vandalism. We've tried to cope with this by closing the toilets during the night. I think we need to review the contract or have a special contract for maintenance and cleaning of the toilets.

Mr Agathe: When we refer to the public toilets near the Police Station, they are about fifty metres from the Police. How is it that there is vandalism there when it is under control?

The Chief Commissioner: You mean that policemen should look after the toilets, watch the toilets!

Mrs Meunier: May I draw the attention of the Chief Commissioner to the fact that he mentioned...

Mr Chairperson: This is Question time.

Mrs Meunier: ... that he would review the contract for maintenance and cleanliness. But I don't think maintenance and cleanliness are meant to reduce vandalism. I want to know how he intends to reduce the risks of vandalism in this case.

The Chief Commissioner: May I say that sometimes the toilets are closed for repairs of damage caused by vandals. There is a problem of watchmen. That is why I said that the contract would be reviewed to include all the tasks I mentioned above in the contract of Maxiclean or to have a special one as is done in many countries.

Mr Chairperson: Next question, please.

**PORT MATHURIN & GRAND LA FOUCHE ROAD
CONSTRUCTION**

(No. B/139) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the construction of the Port Mathurin – Grand La Fouche Corail road, he will, for the benefit of the house, obtain information as to whether -

- (i) The works will be completed as scheduled;
- (ii) The excess soil, rocks and debris that are being removed from the sites are being disposed of in an environment-friendly manner, and
- (iii) The initial contract has provided for the construction of anti erosive sidewalls or structures along the road especially as regards the portion from Mont Lubin to Port Mathurin and, if not, why not.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir I have been informed by the Road Development Authority that the construction of the Port Mathurin – Grand La Fouche Corail road will not be completed as scheduled due to the following reasons -

- (a) non availability of sufficient aggregates due to the increasing number of ongoing projects in Rodrigues;
- (b) irregular shipment of materials and equipment due to lack of space on ships;
- (c) rainy weather & cyclone Kalundé that prevailed in Rodrigues recently and
- (d) delay in procedures for Land Acquisition for the portion of private land between Quatre Vents and Bigarades.

The excess soil, rocks and debris that are being removed from the sites are being disposed of at Mont Lubin, Mont Plaisir and Maréchal. The conditions attached to the reinstatement of the dumping site have been worked out by the Environment Unit, Forestry Division, Public Infrastructure and Agricultural Services. Before handing over of the project, the Contractor will have to ensure that all the conditions stipulated in the permit have been fully complied with to ensure compliance with environmental clearances obtained. The contract provides that if the contractor fails to reinstate the dumping site to the satisfaction of the authorities, the employer may deduct such amount representing the cost of making good the dumping site from the contract sum.

No anti erosive sidewalls or structures all along the road have been provided for in the contract. In places where the slopes are abrupt or unstable because of terrain conditions, masonry structures are being provided to stabilise these slopes, otherwise the slopes are cut to such an inclined angle that does not require the construction of retaining walls or other structures.

CYCLONE KALUNDE - RELIEF FUNDS

(No. B/140) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards all financial donations, grants, aid, or assistance received from Central Government and any other donor here in connection with the Kalundé cyclone rehabilitation efforts he will, for the benefit of the House –

- (a) state the total sum received and give a brief account of the different sources, and
- (b) give an indication as to how these sums have been or are being appropriated, on which criteria and under whose authority.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, there are two Relief Funds which have been set up in the wake of cyclone Kalundé -

- (i) The Prime Minister's Relief Fund which is managed by the Prime Minister's Office. Unfortunately we do not have the latest figures on the donations received to date. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly may submit requests for financial assistance under this Fund and we propose to submit claims from scavenging companies, Maxiclean and Securiclean which were much involved in the clean-up operations.
- (ii) The Chief Commissioner Relief Fund which was a decision approved by the Executive Council at its meeting held on 27 March 2003. Two accounts are operated at State Bank of Mauritius and Mauritius Commercial Bank. Only authorised officers are allowed to withdraw money from the accounts.

(a) The donations received are as follows –

State Bank of Mauritius

French Embassy = Rs591,014.93

Domaine du Decidé c/o
Mr P. Nairac = Rs 21,000.00

Phoenix Beverage Group = Rs 206,830.00

Organisation du Peuple
de Rodrigues = Rs 20,000.00

Airport of Rodrigues Ltd = Rs 10,000.00

Total Rs 848,844.93

Mauritius Commercial Bank Ltd

- Current A/C 36 000 7090

Stella Insurance Ceylinco Rs 10,000

Anglican Diocese of Mauritius Rs 10,000

Rs 20,000.00

Savings A/C 362 154 554

Donation from Mauritius
Commercial Bank Rs 620,000.00

Total Rs 640,000.00

(b) The above accounts are operated upon instructions from the Executive Council which approves all donations and expenditure.

The Island Chief Executive and Finance Division manage the accounts and send regular update reports to the Executive Council.

Up to date, the following expenditure have been approved by Executive Council -

(i)	Payment of fees for SC and HSC examinations to 59 needy students	Rs225,292.00
(ii)	Purchase of 116 mattresses to be delivered to beneficiaries after cyclone Kalundé (payment not yet effected)	Rs 90,000.00
(iii)	Payment of freight for one container of cement donated by Mauritius Portland Cement (Lafarge) (payment not yet effected)	Rs 21,000.00

Total amount approved for payment		Rs 336,292.00

There are other fundings in kind for specific projects and these are not accounted for in the above summary.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I also asked for an account of sums or assistance received from the Central Government. I've had no answer to this part of the question. I am aware that the Prime Minister on his visit in Rodrigues mentioned that Rs50 m. would be provided. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether this amount has been remitted to the Regional Assembly or the Executive Council?

The Chief Commissioner: The Rodrigues Regional Assembly has requested for a sum of Rs10 m. from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. But what I have said here is that we don't have a list of persons or organisation which have contributed to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. I shall come further with a statement giving much more information about the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, where the donations have been given for Rodrigues and a statement of account from the Prime Minister Relief Fund for Rodrigues.

PORT MATHURIN - STREET LIGHTING

(No. B/141) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to street lighting in the Port Mathurin zone, he would -

- (a) give an account of the total number of street lights and the number thereof which are malfunctioning;
- (b) take immediate measures to repair faulty lights in the quay and Port Mathurin jetty area given the recreational nature of that site at night and its vital role in the operation of fishing boats based there.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that there are presently about 200 units of street lanterns in the Port Mathurin Zone, which includes the villages of Pointe Monier, Camp du Roi and Fond La Digue. Presently some 50 units are not functioning properly.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the maintenance of street lighting is normally carried out by the Electrical Unit of the Public Infrastructure Division in collaboration with the officers of the Central Electricity Board. As most of the officers of the Central Electricity Board were involved in the Post Kalundé rehabilitation of the electrical network, delays were experienced in the repairs of the faulty street lighting network all around the island. I have been informed that the Central Electricity Board is now in a position to provide for assistance in the repairs of the street lighting and therefore action is being taken to repair all faulty lights all around the island, including that at the Port Mathurin jetty.

Tenders have already been launched for the purchase of street lanterns to replace defective ones as well as the installation of new ones. The offers are being evaluated and the contract will be awarded shortly.

SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS) – STATE OF PREPAREDNESS

(No. B/142) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, following the outbreak and

the rapid propagation of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in the world he would -

- (a) give an account of the state of preparedness in the health services in Rodrigues as regards that disease;
- (b) ascertain whether patient isolation or quarantine facilities are available over the island and, if yes, where they are situated.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life was notified of the syndrome by the WHO on 15 March 2003, nearly two months ago. Hitherto, not a single case of SARS disease had been notified within the whole Republic of Mauritius. If there is any doubtful case of SARS infection, the person coming to Rodrigues would be screened and identified either at the SSR International Airport before his entry into the plane or at the Port Louis harbour before taking the ship coming to Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b) the question of quarantine does not arise as I said earlier all screening measures are done in Mauritius.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have asked about the state of preparedness in Rodrigues. The disease is very serious and contagious. I am aware that a number of tourists, and even Rodriguans, coming from abroad, transit through SSR Airport without leaving the airport, without disembarking in Mauritius. What is the state of preparedness at Plaine Corail Airport and at Port Mathurin regarding the disease? Because he may note that, in spite of the state of preparedness, nothing prevents a case from arising in Rodrigues. For example, at the airport, what measures are there at present regarding disembarking passengers? It may happen that a traveller from Singapore or another part of the world transits through Mauritius and then comes to Rodrigues and is infected. What can we do?

Mr Sooprayen: As I have just said every screening, every measure is taken in Mauritius. So, if we have doubt, that is, we doubt the Ministry of Health's measures. Anyway, Mr Chairperson, on 17 April 2003, an official meeting was held at Queen Elizabeth Hospital where representatives from Police, Health services, Air Mauritius and Civil Aviation section, Customs and Nursing Officers serving at the Airport and at the Port were convened and apprised of the situation and measures to be taken. The

recommendations by the Ministry of Health are already being implemented at all levels.

Mr J. Roussety: Are there screening facilities at the airport and the Port regarding SARS disease in Rodrigues?

Mr Sooprayen: But the screening will be done in Mauritius.

Mr J. Roussety: So, the Commissioner is admitting that there are no screening facilities in Rodrigues, that anybody could travel in Europe or anywhere in the world and come directly to Rodrigues without screening.

(Interruptions)

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

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards persons coming from abroad, tourists coming from abroad, everything is done either at the Airport or at the Port in Mauritius.

If ever a yacht comes to Rodrigues with tourists no authorisation is given to berth. A sanitary team would be sent where it is anchored, that is, far away and sanitary inspection is made.

Mr Emilien: D'après la réponse du Commissaire, il semblerait que les milliers de masques qu'on achète à Maurice n'ont pas leur raison d'être. Puisque si le *screening* est fait à l'étranger, il n'y a pas lieu de prendre des mesures à Rodrigues. Si on fait tout à Maurice, la question ne se pose pas à Rodrigues. Donc, les milliers de masques qu'on a à Maurice et dont disposent l'aéroport et le port n'ont pas leur raison d'être. Mais je voudrais demander au Commissaire s'il trouve cela normal qu'il n'y ait pas de mesures préventives ici à Rodrigues à l'arrivée des étrangers ou même des Rodriguais venant d'ailleurs ?

Mr Chairperson: This is a clear question.

Mr Sooprayen: I have already given my answer. The respected Member has not quite understood my answer.

Mr J. Roussety: Regarding the state of preparedness, can I ask the Commissioner, as regards the masks, which people wear in regions where there is SARS disease, can he give an indication of the average number available in the different hospitals? I know they are available for medical personnel. But are they available for patients or even for the population? Because Rodrigues is very small.

Mr Chairperson: I can see this has not direct relationship with the main question unless the Commissioner wants to give an answer.

Mr Sooprayen: I have already furnished an answer, Sir.

Mr Agathe: Prenons par exemple quelqu'un, qui part là-bas sans même un masque et s'il est contaminé, il y aura des problèmes. Quelles mesures a-t-il....

Mr Chairperson : The Member has to be clear. When you say « *là-bas* », can you explain where?

Mr Agathe : Going to visit the yacht, for example.

Mr Chairperson: I have not understood the question. Can the Member be clearer?

Mr Agathe: Prenons, par exemple, le cas de quelqu'un de l'hôpital qui va visiter le yacht sans un masque...

Mr Chairperson: The Member means the health officers.

Mr Agathe: Yes. If they go there without a mask, therefore, they can be contaminated. What measures has he taken to prevent this?

Mr Chairperson: The Member means people coming in yachts.

Mr Agathe: Yes.

Mr Sooprayen: Who tells the Member that Health Inspectors will go there without a mask? As I have just said there has been an official meeting on the 17th of April. Everything has been discussed. So, when the Health Inspectors will go there for inspection, they will be well equipped.

Mrs Meunier: When the Commissioner says everything has been prepared, can he state what concrete measures he has taken?

Mr Chairperson: The Commissioner has answered this question many times. This is not allowed.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Commissioner mentioned that, as the screening is being done in Mauritius at SSR Airport, I understood that there is no need to have precautionary measures in Rodrigues. Now, he says all will be done for Health Officers when they will be visiting the yacht.

Mr Chairperson: If you have understood the answer, the Commissioner mentioned that there was a meeting and the officers will take the necessary precaution.

Mr Emilien: Can the Commissioner inform the House what was the outcome of the discussions and what concrete measures they have decided to take?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I'll come with a statement.

FIBRE GLASS WATER TANKS

(No. B/143) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards circular fibre glass water tanks in Rodrigues, whether he could say -

- (a) how many were installed prior to cyclone Kalundé and the initial cost per unit;
- (b) how many have been damaged by cyclone Kalundé; and
- (c) how many are in use now.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that prior to cyclone Kalundé, 100 units of fibre glass tank of capacity 15 m³ each were installed all around the island. The cost of each unit was Rs25,000 and funds were donated by the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of the Vulnerable Groups.

The Water Unit has reported the damage of 8 units following the passage of cyclone Kalundé and 21 units are now operational.

There has been a delay in the procurement of appropriate diameter of fittings for the outlets of the tanks. I have been informed that all the fittings are now available and all the remaining tanks will be operational by the end of May 2003. As regards the damaged fibre tanks, action is being taken by my Commission to collect all of them for repairs. Moreover, action is being taken to consolidate the fixing of the tanks so that they will resist more in cyclonic conditions.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the damage, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House how many are still lying by the roadside and what does he intend to do with them?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Après le passage du cyclone Kalundé, nos camions ont été utilisés pour faire d'autres travaux. Au cours de la semaine prochaine on va essayer de ramasser tous ces bassins pour les déposer ensuite à Baie Lascar pour être réparés.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner say why so many of these tanks – even those recently installed - have been blown off by cyclone Kalundé?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Je viens de dire que des actions seront prises pour rendre la fixation de ces bassins plus solides pour qu'ils puissent résister aux conditions cycloniques. Mais, je dois dire au membre de la minorité que ces bassins n'étaient pas installés sous la responsabilité du commissaire des travaux qui est présent ici. Je comprends l'inquiétude du membre à l'effet qu'il y a beaucoup de bassins qui ont été mal installés, peut-être les fonds pour pouvoir bien consolider les bassins ont été sous-estimés. Je dois vous dire que je suis en train de faire tout le nécessaire pour rendre l'utilisation de ces bassins plus efficaces à la population. Je dois dire aussi qu'il est de notre ressort de dire à la population que ces bassins sont mis à leur disposition pour les aider – le problème d'eau concerne tout le monde. Il ne faut pas qu'il y ait des vols de robinets et des fittings.

Mr J. Roussety: The Commissioner has said that there have been problems with the supply. It seems that fittings have been supplied as per specifications. Can I ask him to table the initial contract and whether he can see if penalties – he was speaking of penalties for removal of rocks – are not

applicable due to the fact that the supplier has not conformed to the specification laid down in the contract?

Mr Chairperson: I understand that this is a contract by the Trust Fund.

Mr J. Roussety: The Commissioner said that it has been funded by the Trust Fund, we are not aware. Can he look into the contract? Because it is nearly one year now that we see water tanks - public funds - lying by the roadside. Some people are saying that the fittings have been stolen. Can the Commissioner look into the matter to see whether all the clauses of the contract have been adhered to, who verified it and who designed it? Because public funds are concerned. I believe that the Chairman of PAC is noting what I am saying.

Mr Chairperson: But I understand from previous answers that this Trust Fund is not within the jurisdiction of the Regional Assembly. Is the Deputy Chief Commissioner in a position to answer this question?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Peut-être il y a eu un problème avec le contract, parce que des bassins ont été fournis sans fittings. *I'll look into the matter and report to the Assembly.*

Mr J. Roussety: If you would allow me to make a precision, we are not asking about the Trust Fund. We know that the Trust Fund is not under the Regional Assembly. It concerns water resources. So, it is not a means to escape the answer by saying that it is the Trust Fund.

(Interruptions)

It concerns the water resources as per schedules of the Regional Assembly – 4th schedule, section 26 and has as responsibility water resources. So, they are responsible. Why are you saying that they are not responsible? It is said in the Regional Assembly Act also – every organisation which works in Rodrigues must collaborate with them.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The question was on the tanks not on water. I have answered about the tanks. I'll look into the matter to see whether the contract has well been awarded.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Please wait. I have, in my scanning of the supplementary questions, said that Trust Funds and all things related to Trust Funds are not within the jurisdiction of the Regional assembly on the basis of the answers given by the Commissioners on previous occasions. Of course, the supplementary questions are on a specific point, that is, on the terms and performance of a contract by the Trust Fund and a third party. This is why I said that this might not be within the jurisdiction of the Deputy Chief Commissioner.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, maybe I misunderstood the answer of the Deputy Chief Commissioner. If such is the case, I apologise beforehand. But it seems to me that he said to part (a) of the question that we have a hundred units of water tanks and to part (b) eight were damaged and to part (c) twenty-one are operational. Can he enlighten me? I don't understand. What about the 79 left?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: One hundred minus 79, that is, 21 are operational. We are helping you to instal these tanks.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I heard a Member say "shame, shame" from a sitting position. This will no more be allowed in the House.

PORT MATHURIN -DRAINAGE SYSTEM

(No. B/144) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards the drainage system at Port Mathurin, whether in the light of recent flooding, he could –

- (a) make a short statement on projects regarding drains which have been implemented during the last five years;
- (b) give the total expenses incurred thereon;
- (c) say whether the works have been completed, and
- (d) inform the House whether there has been any enquiry concerning corruption or misuse of funds.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that retaining walls and drains were constructed during the period August 1997 to November 1998 under the “Construction of Drain/Retaining Walls” contract. The funding for the project was met under the Prime Minister’s Relief Fund and the MURD Fund.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am tabling a list of Work Orders issued under the contract, the site location, the corresponding length of drain and/or retaining wall, the date of issue of Works Order as well as the final value of the works.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that all works have been completed as per contract.

I have been informed that following the Commission of Enquiry on the ex-MURD, the Police have carried out an inquiry and all cases reported in the report are being investigated. The Police have not yet reported the outcome of their inquiry.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have noticed recently that at certain places, namely near the Cliderlex building and Restaurant Paille en Queue, water remains in the canals for a long time. Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner say what measures he intends to take so that the stagnant water is continuously pumped?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is another question, that is, PQ B/167, concerning drains. I’ll give the answer very soon.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, my question concerns drainage system at Port Mathurin.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have not yet reached the question mentioned by the Deputy Chief Commissioner. We are discussing this particular question.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, we will reach it soon.

Mr J. Roussety: We will, we may not. If a Commissioner is asked a question, he cannot...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Can you lower down your hand and address the Chair, please. No more interruptions from the other side.

Mr J. Roussety: We are asking a supplementary question to Question B/144, the Commissioner is making anticipation. We have a particular question; we don't ask questions which are similar. We are asking a supplementary question, it has to be answered; we should not be referred to questions which are coming, because we don't know what can happen.

Mr Chairperson: I understand that the Second Local Region Member for La Ferme is not insisting on that question. Is that so?

Mr Jabeemissar: I insist to have an answer.

Mr Chairperson: If the Member insists, I'll have to tell him that his supplementary question is not strictly related to the main question and it is, in fact, within the four corners of Question B/167.

Mr Jabeemissar: O.K., Mr Chairperson, Sir. Could the Deputy Chief Commissioner say whether there has been or there is actually sanitary inspection being carried out at these places to ensure that the health of the people living there is not threatened by the stagnant water?

Mr Chairperson: No, this is not allowed. It has no relation to the main question. You come with your question later, but not with regard to this particular question.

Mr J. Roussety: With regard to part (d) of the question, can the Commissioner say whether there are public officers concerned in any form with the Commission of Enquiry on ex-MURD?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is not a matter for the House to give names of public officers involved in Police enquiries. The matter is left to the discretion of the Police.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I did not ask for names. I asked whether there is any public officer concerned. I would extend my

question to ask what preliminary measures are being taken against these officers, if ever there are any?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this supplementary question is *sub judice*.

Mr Chairperson: The Deputy Chief Commissioner means that the Police is enquiring into the cases.

Mr J. Roussety: As far as I know a matter is *sub judice* when it is before court.

Mr Chairperson: This is what I confirm.

Mr J. Roussety: It is an enquiry. As far as I know it has not yet been brought before a court. The question of *sub judice* does not arise. I insist to have an answer.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The matter is within the hands of the Police. The Police will give the outcome of the enquiry and then perhaps the Member will know the names of the public officers who are involved in this case.

Mr Chairperson: Are you saying that this information is privileged by now? Or are you saying that the matter is being investigated by the Police?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I refer once again to my initial question.

Mr Chairperson: Which part you mean?

Mr Jabeemissar: As regards the drainage system of Port Mathurin...

Mr Chairperson: Which part, please?

Mr Jabeemissar: The main part, that is, part (a).

Mr Chairperson: The project for drains. You have to be clear.

Mr Jabeemissar: The Commissioner himself stated that there has been fault in the system when it was constructed and this has caused stagnant water. That is why, once again, I ask what measures the Commissioner intends to take in order to avoid the health of people being threatened?

Mr Chairperson: I'll have to repeat my ruling. This question is not allowed. The way the question has been couched, the Member wishes that the Commissioner makes a statement without giving any specific indication on which area he wants his answer to be. The Member can come with notice on another occasion. For the time being this question is not allowed.

Mr Jabeemissar: I'll come with another question later on.

Mr Chairperson: Thank you.

CYCLONE KALUNDE - DONATIONS

(No. B/145) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security whether, as regards donations received in kind following cyclone Kalundé, he would -

- (a) give a brief account of the different items received, and
- (b) inform the House how the distribution of same has been or is being made.

Mr Mercure: Mr Chairperson Sir, with respect to part (a) the items received as donations are as follows -

- (i) Two containers from the Imagine Communication Ltd, Radio 1 and the Caudan Waterfront containing foodstuffs and used clothes;
- (ii) One container from J. Kalachand and Co. Ltd which contained foodstuffs, 50 mattresses and cooking utensils.
- (iii) 1 container from Happy World Food Ltd containing foodstuffs.

- (iv) 7920 litres of juice from RODNIX Ltd;
- (v) 100 mattresses from the MCB Ltd.
- (vi) Two containers from the MBC and the Municipality of Curepipe. These two containers contained foodstuffs, school materials, mattresses, bed, soft drinks and clothes.

As regards part (b), the distribution of these donations, a committee chaired by my Commission and comprising representatives of NGOs, was set up by the Cyclone Committee to look into the organisation of the distribution programmes.

These NGOs have been invited to participate at all stages involved as follows -

- (i) the opening and transferring of the items from Container Park to the Marketing Board Store at Citronelle;
- (ii) inventory of the items received by the Social Security Officers;
- (iii) packing of these items for the number of beneficiaries, and
- (iv) their distributions into the three Social Security Centres at La Ferme, Malabar and Port Mathurin respectively.

Security measures have been taken and all transfers of the items are escorted by the Social Security Officers from the Marketing Board to the different centres.

The beneficiaries are based on field reports undertaken by the Public Infrastructure and the Social Security Divisions following complaints of damaged houses registered at the Police Stations throughout the island. Based on these reports genuine cases of completely damaged, partially damaged houses and flooding cases registered at the Social Security Centres were considered.

All foodstuff items were packed into a standard family size of 5 persons as agreed by the coordinating Committee to enable the packing operation.

Clothes are handed over to the Red Cross for distribution.

The mattresses received from the MCB Ltd have already been distributed to a first batch of 100 beneficiaries. Procedures have already been initiated for the purchase of additional mattresses from the Chief Commissioner's Relief Fund and will be distributed along with those received from J. Kalachand and Co. Ltd as donations.

All the other non-foodstuff items such as cooking utensils and beds which cannot be distributed to all the beneficiaries will be delivered on a merit basis as will be recommended by the Social Security Division after thorough examination of the social profile of the victims.

Mr Jabeemissar: Can we get information from the commissioner as to when this distribution exercise will be completed?

Mr Chairperson: You mean distribution of the mattresses and articles that have not yet been distributed.

Mr Mercure: This exercise has been carried out during three occasions (on Saturdays). I don't have the exact dates. I will table the information.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are accounts that some of the foodstuffs, especially the drinks, that have been distributed were either expired or were due to expire in one or two days. Can I ask the Commissioner how far is this information true?

Mr Chairperson: Normally such questions are not allowed. But if the Commissioner wants to answer, he may do so.

Mr Mercure: I am not aware of any juice whose consumption date had expired. If the Member comes with proof, maybe...

Mr J. Roussety: I did not talk about juice. The Commissioner is saying juice.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Can we move to the question, please?

**QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL –
PAEDIATRIC WARD - FLOODING**

(No. B/146) Mr G. Jabeemisar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, there had been any problem of flooding in the Paediatric ward of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital recently and the reasons thereof.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would kindly request the respected Second Local Region Member for La Ferme to refer to my statement dated 18 March 2003.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand the Commissioner. But I am not aware of the statement he is mentioning.

Mr Chairperson: The Member should refer to the previous statement made.

Mr Jabeemissar: As I said, I am not aware having received such a statement.

Mr Chairperson: The fact that you have not received a copy of the transcript of the statement does mean that the Commissioner has not answered your question. This is Question time.

Mr Jabeemissar: For the benefit of the House, would the Commissioner, at least, say yes or no?

Mr Chairperson: The Commissioner has been very clear that the subject matter of the question has been dealt with in a previous statement.

Mr J. Roussety: I did not hear exactly when the previous statement was made. Can he please repeat?

Mr Chairperson: I understand that the statement was made on the 18th of March 2003.

Mr J. Roussety: Thank you, Sir. The statement was made on the 18th of March. Today we are 6th of May. The question said “recently”. So, it includes the period between 18th of March and 6th of May. We are insisting. You are again evading answering questions!

Mr Chairperson: What is your question?

Mr J. Roussety: I am going to be precise, because notion of “recently” is relative. During cyclone Kalundé or the recent flooding, has there been flooding in the paediatric ward?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, during the torrential rain in the night of Tuesday 22nd April 2003, the paediatric ward was partly flooded. I said the same thing in my statement of 18th of March. There are two drains crossing the hospital compound near the ward at two points. The first from a main drain crossing the hospital from the main road leading to Anse aux Anglais and the second from another part of the same road a bit further. Rainwater from the road flows into the hospital compound near the ward due to lack of drains along the road. The rainfall recorded on that day was abnormally high. In fact, according to the record of the Meteorological services, the rain gauge recorded a rainfall of 122.5 mm. Water which flowed heavily from the drains and from the main road penetrated into the ward through the back door of the wall. Patients were quickly shifted to the female ward and the paediatric ward was clean the next morning. Again, the next morning my Commission has implemented the following emergency measures –

- (a) a wall of about one foot just behind the back door from which the water has penetrated into the ward has been raised;
- (b) part of the small drained wall which was broken in the past with the intention of evacuating west water from the tap was sealed and,
- (c) drains were cleaned by removing all obstructions, including small branches in order to facilitate the rapid flow of water.

CONJUNCTIVITIS EPIDEMIC

(No. B/147) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, he would state what measures had been taken by the Health Department to control the spread of the conjunctivitis epidemic affecting the island.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it has been noticed that after each cyclone there is an outbreak of conjunctivitis of viral origin due to damp and humid weather. The disease did not spare the population of the island of Mauritius, too. Members of the public who contract this disease attend hospital and appropriate treatment is initiated and advice is given to them to prevent it from spreading to other members of the family or neighbours. A Medical Officer intervened on the radio to provide advice on measures to be taken to reduce the spread of the disease. However, as I said earlier, it is a condition that occurs mainly after cyclonic weather and it is of a benign nature.

RAINY SEASONS – POTABLE WATER

(No. B/148) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner since it had been noted that, during the recent heavy rainfall and the days that followed it, many regions had been served with a brownish and improper drinking water, would the Deputy Chief Commissioner say –

- (a) what immediate measures he had taken to reduce the risk of health problems due to this situation;
- (b) what long-term measures he intends to take so that people could be provided with potable water even during rainy seasons.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that water supply for domestic purposes depends mainly on underground water resources, except for a few water systems which rely on surface water. After very heavy rains, it is normal that the turbidity of the water increases to such a level that no effective filtration treatment is available and the only plausible solution is to close down the treatment plants temporarily. I have been made aware that in some cases, the treatment plants were not shut down, but the water was still chlorinated thus reducing the risk of contamination. Firm instructions have been issued to the Water Unit not to distribute brownish water to the population.

My Commission is proposing to increase the water production at sources by constructing large impounding reservoirs, which will have the effect to stabilize the turbidity of the water, even after heavy rainfall. No large fluctuation would be experienced by the filtration plants thus

preventing it from being clogged. Moreover, with the coming into operation of the desalination plants, a more regular, reliable and safe provision of drinking water even during rainy season could be guaranteed. The load on surface water will be then reduced and such water will be reserved for agriculture.

DAMS AND RESERVOIRS - SILTATION

(No. B/149) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he would the state –

- (a) what immediate measures he has taken to tackle the increased siltation of small dams, reservoirs and rivers in the valley after the recent heavy rainfalls, and
- (b) what long-term measures he intends to take to prevent the continued siltation of dams and reservoirs in valleys.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that, as a matter of routine works after the passage of a cyclone or a heavy rainfall, there is a team of labourers from the Water Unit that carry out desiltation works on small dams. Following the passage of cyclone Kalundé, the small dams at Camp du Roi, Cascade Pigeon and Fond Accacia were desilted by workers of the Water Unit with the help of the villagers. Tender Documents are being prepared for the desiltation of other dams all around the island.

Appropriate anti erosive measures will be taken in those catchments areas in the long term to limit the siltation of these small dams. Presently, anti-erosive measures are being carried out in the valley of Rivière Banane, Mourouk and Rivière Pistaches under the Anti-Erosion Programme. The project will be extended to other valleys all around the island.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned in his reply that a team of labourers is affected to the desiltation of the small dams...

Mr Chairperson: No, not “is”, but each time there is rainfall, then there are workers attached for desiltation purposes.

Mr Emilien: Such is the case now. But he did not mention any machinery. I would like to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner if there is any machinery involved in this exercise.

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

ANTI-EROSION PROGRAMME

(No. B/150) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he would state –

- (a) what is the state of progress of the activities of the Anti-Erosion Programme, and
- (b) whether there had been any changes in the management structure and the reasons thereof.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that The Anti-Erosion Programme in Rodrigues was launched in 1999 following the signature of the Financing Agreement between the Commission of the European Communities and the Republic of Mauritius in March 1999, for a grant of Euro 3.3 m (about Rs82 m) from the European Union and a Government contribution of Euro 1.7 m. The European Union grant was later increased by 20% and the completion date scheduled for June 2003 was extended to June 2004.

The budget includes the financing of works (53%), supplies/equipment (10%), technical assistance (23%), training and evaluation (7%), and contingencies. The technical assistance contract provides for 40-man months for an expatriate manager, 20-man month for a Junior Engineer and short-term technical expertise of 15-man months.

The project activities are included in Work Plans as follows -

- The overall Work Plan
- The Start-Up Work Programme; and
- Three Annual Work Plans to date (AWP 1, 2, 3)

As at 31 March 2003, progress in the implementation of the programme of activities under the different work plans are shown below as regards disbursements -

Work Plan	Year	Amount (Rs m)
Start-Up work Plan	1999/2000	1.6
Annual Work Plan No. 1	2000/2001	7.6
Annual Work Plan No. 2	2001/2002	20.6
Annual Work Plan No. 3	2002/2003 (March)	4.0

Another amount of Rs4.7 m is committed for expenditure under the current Work Plan.

As regards part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that following consultation with the delegation of the European Commission, the Ministry of Economic Development and Financial Services and Corporate Affairs, it was decided to strengthen the Project Management Unit following the departure of several key staff, the phasing out of technical assistance and the transfer of scheduled activities to the Agricultural Services as from March 2003.

At present, the project is staffed with an Acting Project Manager, and Acting Project Counterpart and other administrative staff to ensure the implementation of the last phase of activities under the programme. I have also to state that following a monitoring mission carried out in February 2002 by a Consultant, it was highlighted that the project is highly relevant by addressing the issue of erosion on a number of fronts and its participatory approach is a positive aspect. It also underlines the high standard of work of the Project Management Unit, although there is considerable delay in the execution as only half of its budget has been disbursed after three years.

BAIE DIAMANT FISH LANDING STATION – PARKING FACILITIES

(No. B/151) Mr L. P. Francois (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in view of security problems faced by customers at the Baie Diamant Fish Landing

Station located at a dangerous road curve, the Commissioner could look into the possibility of providing parking facilities at that particular place.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have personally visited the site and am aware of the security problems faced by the customers and I am therefore referring the matter to the Road Safety Committee, which has just been instituted for appropriate recommendations and actions.

Mr J. Roussety: I have also visited the place - I pass by it nearly everyday – from information I have checked there is no fish landing station there; it is rather situated at Pointe La Gueule. So, there is no need of providing parking facilities there the more so as it is a dangerous curve. Is the Deputy Chief Commissioner aware that there is no fish landing station at the point he is referring to his question?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: As I have said I am referring the matter to the Road Safety Committee. I have not said that parking facilities will be provided at the point stated in the question. We are looking at the possibility and if there is possibility for more parking space there, we will do the necessary; if there is no need, we will not do it.

Mr J. Roussety: The question is not to be asked, because the House may be misled. There is no fish landing station there; the fish landing station is at Pointe La Gueule. So, I don't know who is responsible for fish landing station. The matter should be looked into so that fish that is being landed there should be landed at Pointe La Gueule, but not at a dangerous spot.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The Road Safety Committee will look into it and will take necessary action.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ILLNESS - TREATMENT

(No. B/152) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether with regard to mental and psychological illness in Rodrigues, he would state what type of medical personnel and treatment are provided.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, all mental and psychological illnesses in Rodrigues are being looked and cared after by the Physician who is a specialist in internal medicine. Nursing Officers who have followed training in general nursing are also involved. However, cases which need expert opinion and management are being referred to Mauritius, after consultation with the Consultant Psychiatrist attached to Brown Sequard Hospital. Furthermore so psychiatric cases are being reviewed twice yearly by visiting psychiatric specialists from Mauritius. Appropriate treatment depending upon the conditions of the disease is provided.

Mr Francois: Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Commissioner inform the House if provision is being made, or will be made, for a special ward at QEC Hospital or elsewhere for those people suffering from mental or psychological illness?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the White Paper on Health Sector Reform and Development makes provision for the setting up of a Mental Unit in Rodrigues.

ORPHAN'S PENSION - PAYMENT

(No. B/153) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security –

- (a) whether he would state if all the beneficiaries of the orphan's pension have obtained their due this month, if not, state why, and
- (b) what measures he intends to take to restore the situation to normal.

Mr Mercure: Mr Chairperson Sir, with regard to (a) according to information obtained from the Social Security Division, the majority of the beneficiaries drawing Orphan's Pensions have obtained their benefits for the month of April 2003. Few cases of children who are attending schools, especially those who are over fifteen years and those who were waiting for their School Certificate results to obtain their proficiency certificates from their schools, will be paid this month.

As regards part (b), normally, Orphan Pension is processed at the Benefits Branch of the Ministry of Social Security in Mauritius and the payment is effected in Rodrigues. I am informed that the delays are

encountered at the level of the Benefits Branch in Mauritius for the processing of the award.

I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly that my Commission is only responsible for the administration of social security issues. The development of policies rest with the Ministry of Social Security and as such, I cannot at this stage take any measures to restore the situation to normal, especially if the delays are encountered in Mauritius.

MASA – OFFICERS - SECONDMENT

(No. B/154) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture –

- (a) whether, any public officers have been seconded to the MASA, and if any, the terms and conditions thereof, and
- (b) the name of the officers and the amount of money disbursed for the duration of the secondment.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that up to now, no public officer has been seconded to the Mauritius Society of Authors (MASA), therefore part (b) of the question does not arise.

PEDESTRIANS - SECURITY AT “*RADIERS*”

(No. B/155) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in view of difficulties faced by pedestrians and vehicles to cross the *radiers* at Port Sud Est, Baie Malgache, Riviere Coco, Baie Diamant, Baie du Nord and Anse Baleine, as a result of heavy rainfalls during cyclones, he would state –

- (a) how many accidents including fatal ones have occurred on and near these *radiers* during the last five years;
- (b) the names of the victims of fatal accidents at those spots during flooding.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir,

- (a) I am informed that from 1998 to date, only one accident has occurred on the *radier* of Baie Malgache. The rider of a motorcycle, dazzled by the light of an oncoming vehicle, went off the road and knocked against a kerbstone and was killed.
- (b) There has been no fatal accidents near those *radiers* during flooding.

Mr Guillaume: Mr Chairperson, Sir, no provision has been made in the budget for the building of a new bridge, could the Chief Commissioner state what urgent measure he intends to take to remedy this situation?

The Chief Commissioner: I think this question should be put to the Commissioner for infrastructure. At the next sitting perhaps the Commissioner can give an answer.

Mr Chairperson: This question is not connected to the main question. The Member can come on the next occasion with notice.

CREVE COEUR – ROAD CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/156) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to road construction at Crève Coeur near “Tiboule House” he would, for the convenience and benefit of pedestrians walking along this road -

- (a) take urgent measures for the installation of speed breaking devices and pavement in the region, and
- (b) also state the breadth of the road.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that with regard to the road construction at Crève Coeur, footpath and shoulders have been provided for to cater for the safety of pedestrians. Speed limit road signs as well as other warning signs, including pedestrian crossing will be placed for the safety of road users. I am making a request to the Police to ensure that more frequent police patrols and speed checks be carried out along this road. Furthermore, a footway at the bottom of the left hand side of Pont Henning will be constructed so as to channel the pedestrian traffic off the road along the “Pont Henning”.

I am further informed that the road comprises a 6.7m wide carriageway together with a 1m wide shoulder on one side and a footpath of 1.2 m wide on the other side.

JUDO COMMITTEE/JUDO CLUBS

(No. B/157) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Sports whether, with regards to judo in Rodrigues to date, he would state if –

- (a) the Rodrigues Judo Committee still exists, and
- (b) how many new judo clubs have been opened.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, As regards to part (a) of the question, three of the members of the Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee have resigned from the above committee. My Commission is awaiting a ruling from the Judo Federation.

As regards part (b), there has been no new judo clubs.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question is very clear...

Mr Chairperson: To which part are you referring?

Mr Agathe: To part (a), Sir. Would the Commissioner state whether the Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee still exists?

Mr Lisette: This question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerns the Judo Federation.

Mr Agathe: No, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I want an answer. Does it still exist? Yes or no?

Mr Chairperson: I understand your point. But, according to me, the answer is clear; there are members who have resigned and the matter is within the hands of the Judo Federation. So, when the Federation gives its ruling, the Commissioner will be in a position to inform this House.

(Interruptions)

This is apparent from the answer. I am not at all answering the question for the Commissioner. If the Member has understood the answer well, he would not have put another question.

Mr Agathe: Is there a Committee parallel to the Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee?

Mr Lisette: There is no Committee which is parallel to the Rodrigues Regional Judo committee.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is there a Steering Committee which deals with judo in Rodrigues?

Mr Chairperson: I can't see any mention of Steering Committee in the question. But if the Commissioner wants to answer this question.

Mr Lisette: No, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: So, the Member will have to come with notice.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question is very clear. I have proof that there is a Steering Committee in Rodrigues for judo.

Mr Chairperson: You have to understand that the Commissioner is not answering the question, because it does not appear on the Order Paper. You can give notice of the question for the next occasion.

(Interruptions)

Of course, the Commissioner has to see whether he wants to answer the question or not. As far as the Steering Committee is concerned, I can't see any mention of it in your original question nor can I find any direct link of a Steering Committee to the main question.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not against your ruling, but the matter under consideration is judo. The Commissioner said there is no Committee, the matter is with the judo federation. The Member is not speaking about a new matter; he is speaking about judo today. The Commissioner should not escape questions.

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry, I have to inform you that...

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with all due respect to you.

Mr Chairperson: You seem to question my ruling. In fact if you would feel that when you ask a specific question on judo this would open the door for all questions concerning judo, you are completely wrong. I am sorry to say so. This is a specific question on the Committee and new judo clubs. The Member asking the question – or any other Member – should restrict himself to this question. If you want to ask questions on judo, you may come with notice. Of course, this is permissible.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to know from the Commissioner if La Ferme Judo Club still exists.

Mr Chairperson: Again this is not relevant to the main question.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairman, Sir, this is my main idea.

Mr Chairperson: You seem not to agree with me. Can you inform me how La Ferme Judo Club fit in your main question?

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I came with the main idea of the question whether with regard to judo in Rodrigues. La Ferme Judo Club concerns judo.

Mr Chairperson: Of course, we all know that fact. But unfortunately we have rules concerning questions and these rules have to be adhered to. Restrict yourself to the Committee and new judo clubs. If you would say that all questions concerning judo in Rodrigues should be allowed, I am sorry I have to repeat myself, this is not a right judgment.

**QUATRE VENTS, PAPAYES AND MARECHAL - MULTI-PURPOSE
CENTRE, HEALTH SECTION, ETC.**

(No. B/158) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, for the benefit of the House, he would –

- (a) state the number of people living in the village of Quatre Vents, Papayes & Marechal, and

- (b) consider the construction of a multi-purpose centre, including a health section and a playing field for outdoor games at Papayes.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, no specific statistics is available as regards the number of people living in Quatre Vents, Papayes and Marechal.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is to be noted that there exist both a polyvalent community centre and a multi-purpose sports pitch at Quatre Vents and Marechal. I have referred the matter to the Commission for Health and Commission for Youth and Sport for a policy decision at their ends.

Mr J. Roussety: The Commissioner said that there are no statistics available. There is the population census; he has been misinformed.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I said that there is no specific statistics concerning Quatre Vents, Papayes and Maréchal. But according to the population census of 2000, the number of people living in zone 10 is 2,951, including other villages like Chateau des Fleurs, Dans Sami, Deux Montagnes, Grand La Fouche Corail, Mangues.

JUNIOR FOOTBALL TEAM

(No. B/159) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Sports whether, with regards to the Rodrigues Junior Football Team to date, he would state –

- (a) where the team is being trained;
- (b) if they are provided by the Regional Assembly with a means of transport to and from the playing fields;
- (c) if a private firm is sponsoring the team as is the custom, and if not, why not, and
- (d) whether the team complies strictly with the rules governing membership of a junior team.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, for the time being, the team is being trained at Camp du Roi. However, arrangements are under consideration to

conduct future training sessions at Grande Montagne and Rivière Coco as per the availability of the ground.

As for part (b) of the question, the answer is yes.

With regard to part (c), there is no official sponsoring. However, sometimes training equipment such as shorts and jerseys are donated by firms like Shell. The reason is a result of financial implications on the firm.

As regards part (d), There is no rule governing membership of a junior team.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to know what is the real objective of the Rodrigues junior team.

Mr Lisette: It is to improve the standard of football in Rodrigues, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr J. Roussety: I understand that a private firm which is sponsoring the Rodrigues junior team is facing financial difficulties. What measures are being taken? Because a firm which is making losses is sponsoring the team. Why do we not change the team? Can this proposal be studied?

Mr Chairperson: I understand from the answer that there is no private firm actually sponsoring the team. So, on basis of this, what is your question?

Mr J. Roussety: I understand that the Commissioner said that there are financial losses by the firm.

Mr Chairperson: Is this your question?

Mr J. Roussety: No, it is all right.

Mr Agathe: According to the development of sports, junior means someone below 18. Are the players of the team of the said age range?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the respected Member is laying too much emphasis on the name of the team. The philosophy and the aim of the team are important. It could have been known as the Centre National De

Formation Technique or whatever name. But we should not focus on the name; we should focus rather on the aim of the team which is to promote the standard of football in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson: What about the age?

Mr Lisette: The age of the players is from 18 to 21 years old, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Agathe: Is the structure for the Rodriguan Ecole de Football (Junior Team) different from that of the mainland?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are in an autonomous island. Autonomous means innovative, that is, to find new ways so as to adapt them to our specific needs. This is why I have considered it very important to set up the team.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has not answered the question. Formerly it was known as Centre National de Football de Rodrigues. What was the reason behind changing it into Rodrigues Junior Team?

Mr Chairperson: I am afraid this is not related to the main question. You can't put a question which is not related to the original question. There are rules which do not allow you to put questions which are not related to the main question. So, you can come with new questions. You have to comply with the Standing Orders.

Mr Agathe: Is there a Committee which governs the team?

Mr Lisette: A Committee will be set up in due course, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, since the team is participating in different tournaments held in Rodrigues, it means that gate money is being paid. On what name is the cheque being drawn?

Mr Lisette: I'll have to look for the information, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, *c'est grave...*

Mr Chairperson: It is not serious, because nowhere in the question mention is made of the fees paid, of the governing body of the junior team. I have allowed the question, because it seems that the Commissioner wanted to answer. But it is not related to the main question.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would insist on the main point: whether the Rodrigues Junior Team is participating in a tournament in Rodrigues, I am asking how the funds are being managed.

Mr Chairperson: This question cannot be allowed. You don't seem to abide by the ruling. But I am sorry this is not related to the main question. This is the end of the matter. The question is not allowed.

GOVERNMENT VEHICLES – USE BY COMMISSIONERS

(No. B/160) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the Government vehicles at the disposal of the different Commissioners, he would state –

- (a) if the vehicles were bought new and if not, their source;
- (b) when were the vehicles handed over to Commissioners;
- (c) when were the vehicles handed over to the Rodrigues Administration;
- (d) the date and store form number used when the vehicles were taken over;
- (e) the amount of overtime paid to each driver attached to each Commissioner, and
- (f) whether any such vehicle has been involved in any accident lately, and if yes, make a brief statement thereon including the costs of repairs, and under which departmental item cost of repairs have been met.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir,

- (a) The executive vehicles were brought to Rodrigues for senior officers supervising the elections for the Regional Assembly and

thereafter seven cars were left in Rodrigues for the Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioners and Chairperson of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry, Chief Commissioner. Will you be commenting on the Chairperson's privilege?

The Chief Commissioner: No, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: You can proceed.

The Chief Commissioner:

- (b) These executive vehicles came from the pool of vehicles under the care of Police Department in Mauritius and were not new.
- (c) The vehicles were handed over to the Commissioners and Chairperson as from 15 October 2003.
- (d) & (e) Police handed over the vehicles to Rodrigues Regional Assembly through Store Form No. 5 dated 27 March 2003.
- (f) I have been informed by the Island Chief Executive that it is not proper to make public the overtime paid to public officers. The overtime bill is paid on certification by the Commissioners for hours of work carried out for their official duties.
- (g)
 - (i) The windscreen of vehicle 457FB97 under care of Deputy Chief Commissioner was damaged by a water tank during cyclone Kalunde. The vehicle was parked at Petit Gabriel Health Centre.
 - (ii) Yes. The vehicle of Commissioner for Social Security, Mr Robertson Mercure, met with a minor accident on 09 April 2003 when GMR 518 hit his vehicle parked at Court House premises. An enquiry is under way and I shall table additional information in due course.

(h) Cost of repairs for vehicle 457 FB 97 amounted to Rs 15,019.54 consisting of Rs14,298.45 for the windscreen and Rs721.09 for labour.

(i) Cost of repairs were met under Central Administration Vote for Maintenance of Vehicles.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the vehicle which is under the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Commissioner, was the vehicle handed over to the Central Administration?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I said in my reply to parts (d) & (e) that Police handed over the vehicles to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through Store Form No. 5 dated 27 March 2003.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the vehicle which was damaged at Petit Gabriel in to the service of the Deputy Chief Commissioner, can we know from the Chief Commissioner, who is answering the question, in which conditions – even it was during cyclone – this VIP vehicle was kept, and if he has the information can he give us the amount of money disbursed for the repairs?

Mr Chairperson: The second part of the question has already been answered. The first part is allowed.

The Chief Commissioner: The vehicle was parked in the yard of the health services at Petit Gabriel. Unfortunately, most of the vehicles are parked outside, even at Saint Gabriel, Citronelle, La Ferme and Petit Gabriel. We have noticed that those vehicles should be parked under shelter. If a substantive question could be put to the Commissioner for Infrastructure, I think he will give a reply as to how those vehicles should be parked in future.

Mr J. Roussety: The vehicles have been granted to them for their personal use, etc. Can we know from the Chief Commissioner who pays for the fuel of these vehicles, whether it is the Administration or the Commissioners themselves? We are aware that Members of the Assembly for are eligible for petrol allowance.

The Chief Commissioner: Petrol allowance is given to the Commissioners and other Members of the Regional Assembly. For the time being fuel is being paid by the Central Administration and discussions are being held as to whether petrol allowance will be granted to those who possess a private car or to those who do not possess a private car. This question is being discussed with the Authorities in Mauritius.

Mr Agathe: I want to know whether...

Mr Chairperson: Put your question directly to the Commissioner.

Mr Agathe: Can we know whether there are vehicles which are still at the Police?

Mr Chairperson: This question has been answered. Unless the Chief Commissioner wants to give additional information. I understand from the answer given that these vehicles were handed over to the Rodrigues Administration on 27 March through Store form No. 5.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes.

Mr Chairperson: That will be enough for the answer.

Mr J. Roussety: In the Regional Assembly (Immunities and Privileges) Act, it is said that those persons are entitled to a car plus the services of a driver. Is it allowed that other persons other than the drivers drive the car?

The Chief Commissioner: Those who have the right to drive a Government car can do so with a service licence.

Mr Agathe: I refer to part (e) of my question. Is there an authority to pay same?

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry. I did not get your question. Does it refer to part (e)?

Mr Agathe: yes. Is there an authority to pay overtime?

The Chief Commissioner: The Central Administration by the

Island Chief Executive.

(Interruptions)

Who is the authority in the Regional Assembly? It is the Island Chief Executive. I may give some additional information for the Member. If the car is under the Deputy Chief Commissioner, so you have items where expenses are made under that Commission and paid by that Commission. But that depends on whether maintenance and petrol are being paid by the Commission. We have to look in the Budget to say exactly. We did something for the next Budget that the Central Administration takes the responsibility to pay petrol allowance and maintenance will be taken by the Commission for Infrastructure concerning the mechanical workshop.

Mr Agathe: Is it for the payment of overtime also? Are the recommendations at Chapter 20.10 paragraphs 50 to 52 of the Financial Management Manual and Chapter 10.2 paragraph 61 of the PRB report 1993 being adhered to in the computing of overtime?

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of that question.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand the information regarding overtime is quite confidential, because it concerns privileges of Members.

(Interruptions)

Public money is public money and it has to be accounted for. As far as public money is concerned, there should be no confidentiality. Maybe the amount is too big to be made public! Can I request the Chief Commissioner to table the information in the House?

The Chief Commissioner: I have been informed that this information cannot be disclosed, not only for Commissioners, but public officers, drivers and all people working overtime in the Central Administration, different Commissions; it is not allowed.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as far as overtime is concerned, some drivers are found carrying children from so many places. Is this considered as overtime?

Mr Chairperson: I can't see any connection of this supplementary question to the main question. This question is not allowed. We move to the next question.

LA FERME - ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/161) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the construction of the administrative building adjacent to the post office at La Ferme, he would state -

- (a) the time during which the latter has been under construction, and
- (b) the amount of money spent on its construction to date.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that construction works at the administrative building at La Ferme started in May 2001. The building has a total surface area of 1650 m² and is scheduled to be completed in February 2004.

I have been informed that the total money spent so far amounts to Rs4,303,371.67 out of the estimated cost of Rs8 m. The breakdown of cost is as follows -

Materials: Rs1,669,747.67

Labour: Rs2,633,624.00

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner the reasons as to why this building is taking so much time to be constructed.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: It is to be noted that the estimated cost of contracting the building to private contractor would have been around Rs13 m. If it is constructed by the Public Infrastructure as I have stated, it would be around Rs8 m. Therefore, the building was constructed with Government labour, although it takes more time due to established procedures.

PETIT GABRIEL DISPENSARY - OPENING HOURS

(No. B/162) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to the extension of the opening hours at the dispensary at Petit Gabriel, he could state -

- (a) the criteria observed for this extension, and
- (b) if the same facilities could be made available to the other dispensaries over the island.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, upon assuming the office of Commissioner, I received a request from the villagers of Petit Gabriel for night service. In view of the staffing problem and extra financial costs, the Executive Council has instead given approval for a four-hour extension service on working days. We took into account that the region is one of the most populated in Rodrigues and the health centre has the largest number of patient attendances in Rodrigues; it attained 8,289 last year compared to 5,473 one year earlier. Thus, we are satisfied with the extended hours of service at Petit Gabriel Dispensary.

As regards part (b) of the question, I would say that, besides ambulances to Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the two area health centres, we envisage to have an ambulance attached to each community health centre. The “Caravane de la Santé” will continue serving the different villages of the island.

In addition to these facilities, the White Paper on Health Sector Reform and Development makes provision for a SAMU (Service d’Aide Medicale d’Urgence).

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am sorry, we are talking about dispensaries; we are not talking about health centres. With regard to part (b) of the question, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether the same facilities could be made available to the other dispensaries over the island which means that the opening hours will be extended to other villages.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think and I am convinced and positive that our caring Government will do much more than having only four-hour extension in the near future.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to know whether these facilities will be made available to other dispensaries. He simply has to say yes or no.

Mr Chairperson: With due respect to what you have said, the Chair has no control over the answer. It is up to the Commissioner to give the appropriate answer.

MARECHAL COLLEGE - ACCESS ROAD

(No. B/163) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the construction and upgrading of the road from Grand La Fouche Corail to Quatre Vents via Marechal he could state -

- (a) if the project also includes an access road to Marechal College
- (b) if not, why not

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that there is already an access road to Marechal College. The upgrading of the access road to Marechal College has not been included in the road construction and upgrading of Grand La Fouche Corail to Port Mathurin Road. The project consists of the rehabilitation of the main road only and all accesses on this 13 km road are not included. However, the tying in of all existing accesses form part of the project.

Mr J. Roussety: We know that there is an access road and we also know its state. But I believe that the philosophy of the question concerns the new road. Is the Deputy Chief Commissioner proposing to upgrade the road? Because as it is now, it is not a road; it is a path. Is he proposing in the project Plaine Corail/Port Mathurin road to improve the road leading to one among the first colleges of Rodrigues, and if not, why not?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: As I have stated there is already an access to Marechal College. *M. le président, les questions directes méritent des réponses directes. Il faut écrire la philosophie de la question quand on les envoie.* I would like to say that the upgrading of the access road to Marechal College has not been included in the road construction upgrading of Grand La Fouche Corail to Port Mathurin Road. *L'appel d'offre ne fait pas mention de tels projets.* The project consists of the

rehabilitation of the main road only and all accesses on this 13 km road are not included. However, the tying in of all existing accesses form part of the project. A project has to be finite and clearly stated. One cannot start considering accesses on this project as there are dozens of accesses along this project and funds are limited. But it is the policy of this regional Government – we know that there is a College there – to improve the access road which leads to the educational institution. We will look into the matter afterwards in next financial budget that will be presented in the Assembly.

CYCLONE KALUNDE – ROAD NETWORK - DAMAGES

(No. B/164) Mr J. A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether with regard to the passage of cyclone Kalundé in Rodrigues, he could state -

- (a) whether a survey has been carried out concerning roads affected by floods and/or sea water;
- (b) if yes, the outcome thereof and if not, why not;
- (c) the measures taken or envisaged if any, to remedy the situation, and
- (d) the time frame for such measures.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that following the passage of cyclone Kalundé, the survey, which was carried out to assess the damages caused to the road network, has revealed that -

- (i) landslides have occurred at Riviere Coco, Anse Tamarin, Mt. Charlot, Baie du Nord and Mt. Cabris;
- (ii) part of the retaining wall along the road at Ile Michel was damaged;
- (iii) damages to the road surface at certain spots along the road at Terre Rouge, Mt. Charlot, St. Gabriel, Mt. Cabris, Eau Vannée, Mt Tonnerre and Le Choux were noted.

Minor damages have occurred at other places. The Public Infrastructure Division has already taken necessary steps to clean all roadside drain and existing cross drain, the removal of soil on the road

surface and the patching of damaged road surface. The above works are expected to be completed in one month. In the long run, retaining walls and construction of new drains are being envisaged as part of the ongoing rehabilitation and maintenance works.

ROAD CONSTRUCTION – RIVIERE COCO

(No. B/165) Mr J. A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether with regard to the construction of a road at Rivière Coco (from the coast to the cemetery) he would inform the House if a bridge was being envisaged somewhere near the Primary school to connect the new road with the existing one which was impassable both during cyclone Kalundé and the recent heavy rains, namely on the “radier” near the coast?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is already an existing footbridge at Riviere Coco linking the road leading to the cemetery to the old road. The feasibility of extending the project of the construction of a road at Rivière Coco (from the coast to the cemetery) to include a bridge somewhere near the primary school will be looked into by my Commission.

A decision will be taken in the light of the technical and cost implication of the construction of such bridge.

Minor repairs will be effected to the existing footbridge.

FISHERMEN - NAVIGATIONAL AND COMMUNICATION AIDS

(No. B/166) Mr J. A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether with regard to Fishermen in Rodrigues, he could state -

- (a) whether installation of navigational aids is being envisaged at Grande Passe, if yes, when and if not, why not, and
- (b) what communication facilities he envisages to provide to off-lagoon fishermen.

The Chief Commissioner: With regard to part (a), yes, Mr Chairperson Sir, quotations were sought for the supply of navigational aids for installation at Grande Passe and other passes around Rodrigues. On the opening of the quotations on 16 April last, only two nil quotations were received while a quotation with prices was received after the closing date and time for the submission of offer and could not be considered.

New quotations were floated on 17 April 2003 and the closing date for submission of offer is the 14th May 2003.

As regards part (b), Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that a repeater for VHF radio was installed and commissioned at Malartic in February 2001 and all off lagoon fishermen who possess VHF radio can use, and are using, this facility to communicate with their bases, the Fisheries Protection Services and the National Coast Guard.

Mr Chairperson Sir, I am further informed that in line with the decision announced by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech for financial year 2002/2003, the Ministry of Fisheries has initiated procedures for the purchase of security and safety equipment including hand flares, fluorescent tarpaulins and radar reflectors for distribution to off lagoon fishermen in Mauritius and Rodrigues. These equipment will facilitate the search for fishermen and boats in case of need.

FLOODING AREAS – DRAINAGE COMMITTEE

(No. B/167) Mr J. A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether with regard to floods as a result of torrential rains during cyclone Kalundé and recent heavy rainfalls, he would –

- (a) state the localities most badly affected by rainwater;
- (b) say what measures if any, he intends to take to remedy the situation and when works are being planned to start;
- (c) inform the House about the state of the drains in these localities and whether any rehabilitation work will be undertaken in the near future.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that the localities most badly affected by rainwater have been mainly in the Northern region.

As regards parts (b) and (c) of the question, it is to be pointed out that in certain of these cases, the existing natural or constructed drains were not properly cleaned and maintained and this resulted in flooding. A survey of all those cases where remedial action is to be taken is being carried out and remedial action will be taken in the light of the findings of the survey. As regards the Northern area, the Contractor responsible for the maintenance and cleaning of drains will be taken to task to ensure the regular maintenance of those drains falling under the purview of his contract.

Given that Port Mathurin area is only less than 1 metre above mean sea level, the construction of a network of drains is problematic. A drainage committee will be instituted soon to review all those cases of flooding and propose appropriate actions.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in reply to part (a) of my question, the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned that mainly the northern region of the island was affected by rainwater. It is assumed that in other parts of the island also we had problems with rainwater; he mentioned also that remedial actions will be taken only for the north. Can he inform the House what are the other localities affected by rainwater and what are the actions to be undertaken?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Public Infrastructure Division has received complaints only from the northern region. This is why appropriate action has been taken for the northern area.

Mr Chairperson: I have to remind the Member that the question talks of “localities most badly affected by rainwater”.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner said “mostly in the northern region”. It is being assumed that we have got problems in other regions also.

Mr Chairperson: As you yourself assumed in your question!

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE

I. ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN “ICI RODRIGUES” NEWSPAPER

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, I wish to inform the House that I have today received a letter from the Chief Commissioner inviting my attention to an article published in the newspaper ‘Ici Rodrigues’ in its issue of Saturday 19th April, 2003 at Page 1 under the caption “*Le Parlement Regional de la honte et du discredit*”.

The Chief Commissioner is requesting for my ruling as to whether the publication of the article is in breach of Section 65 (3) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act and the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act.

I have studied the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act and Section 65 (3) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act. I have also considered Section 288 of the Criminal Code.

I do not propose to comment at length on the article being given that, in my opinion the qualifications used do not represent a fair and *bona fide* comment of the House.

On basis of the request of the Chief Commissioner, I feel that there has been a contempt of the Assembly which would justify a privilege complaint.

I would, therefore, invite the Chief Commissioner to move the House that the matter be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for inquiry and for such action as he may deem appropriate.

Lastly, when I took office back in October last year, I said in my speech I quote -

“ I am sure that with the help of all members, I will succeed to embrace the House with a sense of responsibility and dignity”

You probably would like to belong to an institution which deserves the respect of one and all. It should transpire also that all the Members are

responsible persons and none will be tempted to lower the dignity of the House. The dignity of the House is obviously the sum total of the behaviour of all its Members inside and outside the House.

Thank you.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this Assembly is of the opinion that the article which appeared in the newspaper “Ici Rodrigues” in its issue of Saturday 19th April, 2003 at page 1, captioned -

“ Le parlement regional de la honte et du discredit ”

be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions with a view to determining whether any offence or offences have been committed in breach of Section 65 (3) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act and the National Assembly (Privileges, immunities and Powers) Act and for such appropriate action as he thinks fit.

In support of this motion, I am tabling a copy of the weekly referred to above.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

The Chief Commissioner: I move for a Division.

On question put, the House divided.

Ayes : 10

Noes: 8

Motion agreed to.

MATTERS OF PRIVILEGE (Contd.)

II

LETTER FROM MINORITY LEADER

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, I wish to inform the House that I have on Tuesday 18th of March, 2003 received a letter from the Minority Leader in fact dated Monday 18th of March - I am sure this would have been a typing error - to the effect that another Member of this House has severely insulted him and used filthy words against him. I have

subsequently informed the Minority Leader that, being given that the matter is not of an urgent character, I would announce my decision today the 6th May 2003. The Minority Leader has also informed me that these insults came after his speech in the Assembly and have been made because of words spoken in front of the Assembly. He has called for my ruling on this matter. I have considered Section 65(3) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act and the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act. On the basis of the complaint of the Minority Leader, I feel that these words, if really uttered would probably constitute a contempt of the Assembly which would justify a privilege complaint. I would, therefore, invite the Minority Leader to move this House that the matter be referred to the Deputy for Public Prosecutions for enquiry and for such action as he may deem appropriate.

Mr J. Roussety: I am surprised, Mr Chairperson, Sir, before I speak about my privilege complaint...

Mr Chairperson: This is a procedure which is new to all of us. You are not allowed to make any speech on it unless you don't want to make any motion.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, it is said at Section 68 (4) of the Standing Orders – setting out briefly the nature of the complaint.

Mr Chairperson: It is said that a Member who raises the matter will table a motion setting out briefly the nature of the complaint. So, if you would table a motion, then you can set out your motion briefly. But if you don't table a motion.

Mr J. Roussety: I will not table a motion

Mr Chairperson: If you don't table a motion then ...

Mr J. Roussety: I have a comment if you would allow me to make ...

Mr Chairperson: Yes, if you are not going to table a motion then you may proceed.

Mr J. Roussety: I note that my privilege complaint was prior to the complaint by the Chief Commissioner which has been considered first. The

Member concerned, Mr Philippe Francois, met me and has apologised. We need to understand ourselves. So, he has done something wrong and then he has apologised. I am therefore, accepting his apologies. I am not tabling any motion that the matter be referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions. But the matter is with the Police also.

Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: On the basis of what you have said, you seem to put in a chronological order what I have to say first and what I have to say second. I would only have to inform you that the first ruling concerns the whole Assembly and the second one is an individual complaint. Of course it stands to reason that the collective complaint is to be considered first.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 27 May 2003 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chairperson rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

HOUSING PROBLEMS

Mr Chairperson: I understand that the Minority Leader wants to intervene at adjournment.

Mr J. Roussety: Vous m'accordez le privilège de faire cette déclaration à l'ajournement.

Mr Chairperson : It is your right.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, of course; I am using it.

M. le président, on vient de parler de *privilege complaint*. J'ai été insulté, parceque j'ai parlé de la vérité dans cette chambre notamment concernant le *Trust Fund for the social Integration of Vulnerable Groups* et c'est cela mon intervention. On avait dit à la séance du 18 mars à l'ajournement après le cyclone combien certaines personnes ont souffert du

cyclone et de la discrimination dans l'allocation des maisonnettes du Trust Fund. Quand je dis discrimination, je veux dire des discriminations politiques. Certaines personnes ont été victimisées parcequ'elles ne sont pas de tel ou tel bord politique. La minorité avait promis de venir devant cette assemblée devant l'opinion publique avec un rapport.

Mr Chairperson : Please wait. It seems that you have heard what I've said about the Trust Fund. If you would speak on matters not within the competence and jurisdiction of this Assembly and the Commissioners, I am afraid this will not be acceptable.

Mr J. Rousety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand your point. When we met at the Seminar at Les Cocotiers, the Speaker of the National Assembly said that matters at adjournment must be as far as possible specific. My matter concerns housing.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, if you would like to speak on housing, that's fine. But you should not...

Mr J. Roussety: Housing, part of it being houses built by the Trust Fund in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson: I don't want to embarrass you. But you should realise that if you are going to raise a matter on which none of the Commissioner would be able to take any action...

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, if it concerns housing, then it is one of our areas of responsibility. I would have finished if you had allowed me.

Mr Chairperson: But you don't seem to abide by the ruling or to abide by the philosophy of the Act. This is why I have to take my time to inform you.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, I understand. But I am telling you again that I am intervening on matters under our responsibility – housing. Now if you rule that housing ...

Mr Chairperson: You seem to be arguing with me. So, proceed with your subject matter.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, under the area of responsibility “housing” a number of projects have been made – projects following Bella cyclone, other projects by other organisations; and this brings us to projects undertaken by the Trust Fund. I am not speaking about the Trust Fund. I am speaking about the housing project in Rodrigues of the Trust Fund. The matter, I believe, is relevant. We have prepared our Report entitled “Bias and shortcomings in the housing programme of the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups in Rodrigues”. It is a report prepared by the Minority. We’ve not prepared it sitting in our office. We have prepared it from information we have gathered in the field. We see that people are suffering badly, because of the actions of the management of this housing programme. Therefore, we have adopted a methodology. We have grouped together, we have sat down and spoken, we have looked at the problems, analysed them and discovered a number of shortcomings in these projects. We are, therefore, today tabling copy of this report for action by the Assembly and for alerting public opinion on these shortcomings. Funds have been used - I am tabling three copies - in Rodrigues and in a number of cases people have suffered in their heart. Dans leurs coeurs ils ont souffert, parce que quand ils voient à côté des gens qui méritent moins la petite maison qu’ils sont en train d’avoir. Certaines personnes ont une maison depuis un ou deux ans. Ils ont eu 100 blocs, 10 pochettes de ciment, des fers de construction, puis, plus rien. Quand ils vont au Trust Fund parfois certains officiers leur disent qu’ils ne peuvent pas en avoir parce qu’ils sont de tel parti. Ce matin même, on ne sait pas comment...

The Chief Commissioner : Mr Chairperson, Sir, on a point of order.

Mr Chairperson : Could the Minority Leader wait?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Minority Leader is trying to introduce this question of housing while this programme is financed by the Trust Fund which is not relevant for discussion here. That’s why I should like to have your ruling concerning the comments made by the Minority Leader and the Report tabled in the Regional Assembly whereas you would know that, according to advice tendered by the State Law Office, this Regional Assembly has not the right to discuss or to talk about projects financed by the Trust Fund.

Mr Chairperson: When I mentioned this, the Minority Leader seemed to say that I am wasting his time. But I will say only a final word

that questions/statements pertaining directly to the Trust Fund will not be allowed in this Assembly.

Mr J. Roussety: I understand the point. But I am speaking about housing. I understand that some people feel embarrassed. We are not attacking anybody. *M. le président, on ne veut toucher à un cheveu de personne dans le Trust Fund. Ce n'est pas notre problème.* We are not intervening on the Trust Fund. We are intervening on housing in Rodrigues; and as far as I know when housing is made, the organisation *ne peut pas faire la pluie et le beau temps*. If something wrong is being done at the Mauritius Ports Authority, for example, we don't know anything! The Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act talks of collaboration. If you don't want to know what is happening at the Trust Fund, what really is being done there, then it is your problem.

(Interruptions)

It is not your business, of course!

Mr Chairperson: Order, please! I have given the final word. You don't seem to have understood. I'll have to stop you if you are going to refer to the workings of the Trust Fund.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, I have tabled my report regarding this matter.

Mr Chairperson: Yes.

Mr J. Roussety: Everything is included in my report. It seems some people do not want me to speak here, despite my freedom of speech, despite that I am speaking on a matter relevant to the Regional Assembly Act. Everything is in my report. We have other means to alert public opinion.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

At 1.07 hrs The Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 27 March 2003 at 10.30 a.m.

ANNEX to Question B/135

(a) **Used oil**

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly is very much conscious about the problem of disposal of used oil in Rodrigues. At present the policy for the management of used oil has not been clearly defined at the national level. In the absence of this framework, the Environment Division is advising the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and private workshops to store used lubricating oil from vehicle until a solution is found.

It should be noted that in mid August 2002, during the visit of a Ministerial delegation from the Ministry of Environment, the Central Electricity Board was contacted on the possibility of the incineration of used lubricating oil generated in the island. This proposal was not acceded to as no provision has been made by the CEB to incinerate used oil recovered from the public and private sector. However, in the context of the extension of its power station, the CEB is proposing to purchase an incinerator of bigger capacity where it might be possible to burn bigger volumes of used lubricating oil. This option will be re-examined at an opportune time with the CEB.

Furthermore, used oil is classified as hazardous waste under the Environment Protection Act (Standard for hazardous Waste) GN 157 of 2001 and, consequently, any future management measures will be taken within this legal framework.

As regards the recycling of used oil, Rodrigues being a small island, this will not be a viable project given the relatively low volume generated. However, we are being informed that the Ministry of Environment is holding discussions with two foreign firms which are willing to establish a used oil recycling plant in Mauritius. We shall continue to follow-up on the issue

so that Rodrigues be given care in any decision taken on that project by the above Ministry.

(b) **Used tyres**

Mr Chairperson, Sir, The number of vehicles in Rodrigues is increasing and it goes without saying that the quantity of old tyres is increasing as well. In order to reduce the ill effect of used tyres on the environment, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is supporting the following activities: -

- (i) the retreading of used tyres;
- (ii) the utilization of used tyres for embellishment works at the request of certain villagers;
- (iii) the utilization of used tyres for protection works against soil erosion, beach erosion at Ile aux Sables.

There is no readymade solution for that problem given the synthetic nature of the materials. However, the Environment Division is advising public and private sectors to store their used tyres in appropriate places and to avoid creating eyesores.

At the same time, it is ensured the used tyres do not enter the normal waste stream. The disposal of used tyres is a headache for all small island states; even in Mauritius, no solution has been found up to now. Whenever an appropriate method of disposal is identified, we shall request the same be extended to Rodrigues also.

(c) **The bodies of unused vehicles**

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly is dealing with the issue of difficult waste that is scrap metals, old engines, vehicle carcasses in a holistic way. Recently, the Environment Division, jointly with the RCSS, has started a survey in order to identify all such waste scattered in the island, causing eyesores to the environment. The survey will shortly be completed.

A private company in Mauritius has been contacted and the possibility of shipping these scrap metals by the latter for recycling is being discussed. One of the major constraints is the cost of shipping of the scrap metals to Mauritius. The company has requested for a subsidy on the shipment cost.

In the absence of other alternatives, this company will be asked to submit an acceptable proposal for consideration.

The possibility of creating natural habitats for fish is being looked into. Some of these vehicle carcasses may then be sunk at sea under expert supervision.