

No. 02 of 2004

RODRIGUES

FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 02 of 2004

Sitting of Tuesday 16 March 2004

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

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

Debate No. 02 of 16.03.04

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Debate No. 02 of 16.03.04

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) CHAIRPERSON - RULINGS

(ii) MINORITY LEADER – AMENDMENT TO MOTION

(iii) STANDING ORDERS 19(3), 37(5), 37 (6) & 67(5)

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, I have the following announcements to make. May I start by referring to Standing Orders 37(6) and 37(5). Standing Order 37(6) provides, I quote –

“The Chairperson shall be responsible for the observance of the rules of order in the Assembly or in any Committee thereof, and his decision upon any point of order shall be final”.

Standing Order 37(5), provides, I quote –

“No debate shall be allowed on a remark which has been ruled out of order by the Chairperson”.

I stress on this. It is out of order to argue with the Chairperson in the Assembly. In case anyone of you is in disagreement with any of my rulings, you may come with the appropriate motion. Standing Order 67(5) provides, I quote -

“The Chairperson shall not be bound to give any reason in support of any of his decisions”.

It is to your knowledge that, at times, I may not explain in minute details some of my decisions. I probably bear in mind that you do understand what I say in brief in my rulings. Five minutes before the sitting of 27 February 2004 - I mean the previous sitting - a Member came to my office to inform me of an amendment he would wish to make to the motion which appeared on the Order Paper. May I read the notice –

“Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to move the following amendment as per rule 31(7) of the Second Schedule of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2002 to the motion which appears on today’s Order paper, that a new order 18(A) be added after Standing Order 18 of the Standing Orders to make provision for the Minority Leader to put a question by private notice”.

And this notice proceeds to cite the intended Standing order to be amended. I stated in this House that the wording was not regular. The Member was informed in my Chamber that he has to re-word the motion to make it clear which question I will have to put to this House. Contrary to the advice given, that Member submitted the notice of amendment unchanged after the motion had already been given. Respected Members, you can judge by yourself whether that conduct was appropriate or whether it was in utter disregard of the Chair. Now, turning to the proposed amendment, may I quote from Erskine May –

“Questions proposed and put from the Chair should repeat the terms of the motion on which it is based. An amendment irregular in form could not be proposed from the Chair”.

Erskine May further provides –

“Amendments may be classified into three types. First one, to leave out certain words, second one, to leave out certain words in order to insert or add others, third, to insert or add certain words”.

The notice I have received cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be said to fall in anyone of the above classifications. Unless the Member has stated in clear and unequivocal terms which words or phrase have to be added or deleted from the wording of the main motion, the proposed amendment was irregular. I cannot *proprio motu* modify the terms of a notice unless the modification has been previously agreed by the Member. Lastly, the notice purports to be made under Standing Order 31(7). Notwithstanding that this is totally inappropriate, being given that the motion was made under Section 64 of the Act, I find that as it is, the proposed amendment may also fall foul of Standing Orders 31(3) and 64(3) of our Standing Orders. Without going into the merit of the proposed amendment, suffice it for me to mention subsection 1 of the intended Standing Order to be added. I quote –

“The Minority Leader who never puts a question on the Order Paper for oral answer”.

This was supposed to be the new section to be added to the Standing Orders. We all know, respected Members, that this is not true being given that Standing Order 18(4) allows the Minority Leader to give notice of questions for oral answers, and this situation has prevailed since the Assembly first sat.

May I, by the way, add that, from the Order Paper, I have found that there are two questions which, really, by their length, offend the practice of the National Assembly. The first question is No. B/414, which contains approximately 135 words, and the second question is No. B/415, which contains approximately 150. The practice of the House is that questions should be limited to 75 words. I am afraid, in future, I would have to follow more strictly Standing Order 19(3) which says –

“The Chairperson may reject any question which he considers to be unduly long”.

I’m afraid this Standing Order has to be followed more stringently, and the appropriate instruction is hereby given to the Clerk of the Assembly.

Lastly, as far as unparliamentary words are concerned, respected Members, I have to add that, in certain cases, before I give any ruling, I would have to pay attention to address my mind to the real purport of the words uttered, as well as the conduct of the Member concerned.

Respected Members, I have to add that I feel myself compelled to make the above announcement not to blame anybody in this House, but to draw your attention on the above issues, of course, for your future consideration. Thank you for your attention.

The Chief Commissioner: Sir, the Papers have been laid on the Table.

Debate No. 02 of 16.03.04**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS****RODRIGUES COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES - DENTAL CARE**

(No. B/402) Mr Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to dental care in Community Health Centres in Rodrigues, he could state if any mobile dental unit is partly defective in any of these Health Centres.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I inform the House and particularly the respected First Local Region Member for La Ferme, that there is no dental unit in Community Health Centres and no mobile dental service available in Rodrigues.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may be the Commissioner has been misinformed, but the name given to the apparatus supposed to give dental care to patients is called the mobile dental unit. To make it clear for him, my question was about whether this unit – the mobile dental unit, which is the term given to this apparatus - is defective or not. I don't know whether he has been misinformed, but the apparatus is called the mobile dental unit.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am sticking to the wording of question No. B/402.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I insist on the fact that I am sure that this apparatus is called the mobile dental unit. I don't know whether he does not want to reply to this question, but I am insisting here that this is called the mobile dental unit. May be he has to check, I don't know.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I'm insisting on the words 'Community Health Centre'.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, first, he was insisting on the mobile dental unit and now he is insisting on the words 'Community Health Centre'. What's wrong with him? What's wrong?

Mr Chairperson: This is question time. Put your question, please. Can we now move to the next question? Next question.

MARECHAL SWIMMING POOL – CONSTRUCTION – SOIL REMOVAL

(No. B/403) Mr Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the removal of soil for the construction of the swimming pool at Marechal, he could -

- (a) state the places where the soil was being deposited, and
- (b) give reasons as to why such places were chosen for soil deposit.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the bulk of the soil excavated from the swimming pool's site has been deposited in front of the Stone Crushing Plant of Welcome Industries at Grand la Fouche Corail, at Citadel next to the water reservoir, at Baie du Nord and Montagne Tonnerre. A contractor has deposited excavated materials at the first two places without authorisation. When the uncontrolled disposal of excavated materials was noted, the contractor was advised by the Environment Unit, in a letter dated 13 February 2004, that an authorisation is required to deposit excavated materials on State land, and they were further instructed at the last site meeting that the disposal of soil is not satisfactory. It was decided that the contractor would have to level all the soil deposited to the satisfaction of the Environment Unit. The backfilled material is being leveled by the contractor. On the other hand, the contractor was requested and authorised to deposit excavated soil at Baie du Nord and Montagne Tonnerre, where football grounds will be created. Mr Chairperson, Sir, in addition to these four places, I am informed that soil has also been deposited by the contractor without authorisation in the fields and the yards of persons living in the regions of Marechal, La Ferme, Piments and Grand La Fouche, who had so requested. The soil is to be used to backfill their yards and to improve the agricultural lands. A communiqué is being issued to remind all lessees that a clearance from the Environment Unit is required prior to digging of construction site, and individual letters are being sent to all owners of

excavators to request them to ensure that such clearance is obtained prior to such works.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware that soil has been dumped at Petite Butte and that one boy named Brian Larcher, who is six months old, has been injured and transferred to Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital in Mauritius for ten days? He has broken his hips and the kneecap.

The Chief Commissioner: I was informed of this accident, but I was also informed that the "*Comité Village*" had also requested the contractor to deposit excavated soil near the Community Centre to level the land. As I have just said, there are also other people, farmers, agriculturists, who requested the contractor to deposit the excavated soil in their fields, so as to have a better land for cultivation. I think this falls under the responsibility of the Community Centre and the Committee that has requested that soil be deposited there just to level the land around the Community Centre.

Mrs M.T. Meunier: May I ask the Chief Commissioner, when he talks about the responsibility of the Community Centres, who in the Environment Department monitors whether this is done properly? Because here, we have a case of an accident due to the soil being deposited in front of the path of these people, which resulted in this boy's injury. So, who usually monitors whether this is done properly in Rodrigues?

The Chief Commissioner: I think that there is also the responsibility of those who asked for excavated soil. They have to be there and contact the contractor. I have been told also that the contractor has employed lorry owners to deposit all this excavated soil somewhere. I think there should be a communication between the lorry owner and the Committee of the Community Health Centre, so that the land can be deposited in a place where they would like the soil to be deposited. This is a request from the community. I think that the '*Comité Village*' should take their responsibility. As regards monitoring, this is also a question of communication between the lorry owners and either the President or any member of the '*Comité Village*'. But we are going to find out how this accident happened and whether there has really been a request from this '*Comité Village*' to have excavated soil deposited around the Community Centre.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are not against providing the inhabitants with excavated soil, but with the way it has been done. Maybe it should be better controlled. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether he is aware that the soil has even been deposited in the sea.

The Chief Commissioner: This is a project for the future, namely to deposit soil near the coast and around the “*jetée*” of Baie du Nord to create a recreational area around this “*jetée*”. Mr Wong So, the Island Chief Executive, has taken the responsibility to create this area, which is going to be filled. He said that, as he is a son of Baie du Nord, he would like himself to do this. This is our project. We know that we have to build a rock **band** there, so that the soil cannot go further into the sea.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to know whether, before constructing the swimming pool, there has been a feasibility study carried out so as to know where to deposit the soil.

The Chief Commissioner: As I have already said, that’s why we have to remind the public that, whenever there is excavation, they should ask authorisation from the Environment Unit. The Environment Unit will liaise with the contractor to see exactly where the soil has to be deposited. As I said, the contractor did not ask for authorisation, and this is the problem. By way of a communiqué, we did remind the population that they should ask for authorisation before excavating land even for building a house, and the owners of excavators should also be aware whether the person has already got his permit from the Environment Unit to excavate his land. Sometimes, we have to remind people that they need to ask for an authorisation before they excavate soil and deposit it somewhere. It is the Environment Unit which is going to monitor and tell the person where to deposit the soil.

Mr G. Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Chief Commissioner whether there are conditions attached to permits which have been granted to persons who have requested to have their land filled with the excavated soil and, if so, whether these people abide by the regulations?

The Chief Commissioner: I understand that the Member would like to know whether there are conditions attached for those who excavate their land to build their house. Yes, there are conditions. The Environment Officer goes there. There are conditions on even where to drop the excavated

soil. Somewhere, along the road to the prison, we have noticed that someone has just excavated land and dropped it on the other side of the road. *Cela a causé une sorte de défiguration de l'environnement. C'est pour cela qu'il faut demander l'autorisation au préalable, et lorsque toutes les conditions ont été respectées, le permis est octroyé. Quand la personne a obtenu son permis, les officiers de l'environnement, les enforcement officers – il y en a deux pour l'instant – font un suivi du travail. Et c'est cela qui est important. Il faut que la population puisse demander cette autorisation. Les gens ne peuvent pas dire «bé bon, nous jete saleté par ci par là, n'importe comment». Il y a quand même tout un aspect de l'environnement qu'il faudrait garder. On a vu des cas où on retirait de la terre d'un côté pour la jeter de l'autre côté, et cela fait vilain. Donc, on peut enlever de la terre et aller la jeter quelque part pour faire un comblage ou dans un terrain agricole qui n'est plus cultivable où les gens voudraient pouvoir replanter.*

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Chief Commissioner whether he will agree with me that the way these deposited soils have been scattered everywhere not only cause an eyesore to the environment but is also a great threat to our environment? For example, this morning, it has rained heavily, and we can see that although the soil has been leveled at La Ferme, it has started being carried away by the water. This is not only causing obstruction to the drains along the roads, but surely it will be deposited in the sea. What does he intend to do in order to prevent such situation from recurring?

The Chief Commissioner: I agree with the Member. I have also seen soil being deposited at Cascade Jean Louis and down there, there is a water source. That's why, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we would like to ask the population to be very disciplined. Besides, we have a very fragile island. Wherever we go, we'll see soil going into the sea, into a water source. We are going to see where the soil has been deposited, and we are going to have a meeting this week with the Environment Officers to examine this problem and to have a report on the damage that has been caused. We will see with the contractor whether it will be possible for him to have retaining walls. So, we are having this meeting this week, and we will meet the contractor perhaps after this meeting.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we know that the soil has been excavated and deposited for weeks – two or three weeks. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner why is it that so much time has been taken

before action was initiated by his Commission, because if immediate actions had been taken, this would have limited the effect on - as he has just said - this fragile ecosystem that we have in Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner: As I said, the contractor has deposited excavated materials in the first two places without authorisation. The uncontrolled disposal of the excavated materials was noted by the Environment Unit. We have even received complaints as well as the *Police de l'Environnement*. The contractor was advised by the Environment Department in a letter dated 13 February, and the *Police de l'Environnement* contacted the Environment Unit. Before the 13th, they decided to send a letter, which letter was sent on the 13th. The soil was dumped at Grand la Fouche Corail from 06 to 12 February 2004. I understand that they have been too late to react to this problem, but anyway, as I said, we are meeting the Environment Unit. The *Police de L'Environnement* is doing a good work and, sometimes, I, myself, ask them to have a look if there is something wrong here and there. But people should ask authorisation to the Environment Unit. This must be the golden rule concerning our environment. People should ask for the Environment Unit's authorisation before starting excavation of land somewhere.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, people should ask permission before excavating land. Sometimes, it appears that much permission must be asked specifically for a number of matters. Can I ask the Commissioner responsible for Environment from which regulations or law is it necessary for citizens to ask permission from his Commission?

The Chief Commissioner: I think it is in the law, but I need notice of the question because it is a question concerning environment. Everything is mentioned in this law even for digging, dredging. You have to ask for authorisation before starting any work, even for building a house. But, I need notice of the question.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given the apparent extreme consequences of this affair and being given that, for the construction of the swimming pool, this matter has not been taken seriously either by the contractor or the Commissioner, I think it was clear to the Commissioner that land would be removed from this site. As Commissioner of the Environment, I would like to ask him whether he would bear the responsibility in front of Rodrigues, in front of the population, of future

generations, most specifically because land has been deposited in the sea, without any retaining wall. I don't know whether our decision-makers have taken note of what they are doing. I would like to ask him whether his Commission and himself, as Commissioner, would bear the responsibility of this affair, and come with explanations to the population. First, he should bear the responsibility, because he is the Commissioner of the Environment and, second, he should come with clear explanations on this matter, because we cannot afford, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to jeopardise the future of our environment.

The Chief Commissioner: I take note of the question.

Mr C. Agathe: Has there been a communiqué either on radio or in newspapers for people to have this land?

Mr Chairperson: Which land are you referring to?

Mr C. Agathe: The excavated land.

The Chief Commissioner: I take note of the question.

RODRIGUES – LAGOONS - DIGGING OF CANALS

(No. B/404): Mr Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the digging of canals in the lagoons of Rodrigues, he could -

- (a) state if any Environment Impact Assessment had been carried out on the site before the works started, and
- (b) if yes, kindly table the E.I.A report.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that no Environment Impact Assessment was carried out prior to the digging of La Passe Petite Butte to Pointe Vingtour in 2003. A channel was dug manually and the Environment Protection Act 2002 does not specify such work as an undertaking requiring an EIA license.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, even though an EIA is not required under the Environment Act, as the Commissioner has said, I think that Rodrigues, being a small island, digging channels without taking into

consideration the Environment Impact Assessment, the marine eco-system which is very, very important in the marine life, is very serious. This is a very serious matter. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner to see to it that, next time, before such works are carried out, this EIA is taken under consideration.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning the Environment Protection Act, all the sectors which need an E.I.A are mentioned in part (b). I read section 23, part (b) of the Environment Act, where it is said: “lagoon dredging is reprofiling of sea beds including creation of bathing areas”. This means dredging, using mechanical tools to dredge. But, concerning this ‘Passe’, the work is being done manually. Dredging is much more harmful to the environment. The persons who have done this work were requested to transport the sand from the sea onshore, and that’s why I say that there is no need for an E.I.A. This is a question of dredging.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if I understood well, the Chief Commissioner said that the excavated marine soil has been removed and set ashore. Is that it? May I know from the Chief Commissioner where this marine soil has been deposited?

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

(Interruptions)

Mr J. Roussety: Can I make a point of order?

Mr Chairperson: Yes, of course.

Mr J. Roussety: The Chief Commissioner is repeatedly disturbing the proceedings, speaking while a Member is standing. Would you please call him to order?

Mr Chairperson: Yes, I think the Minority Leader is right when he says that we should not, in this Assembly, distract a Member who is standing. But, he should agree that it has been a two-way street. I heard the Member from the minority talking to the other side. It is acceptable if the distraction is not to disturb the Member.

POINTE COTON PUBLIC BEACH - OLD ABANDONED CAMP – PULLING DOWN

(No. B/405): Miss Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he intended to pull down or restore the old abandoned camp situated at Pointe Coton public beach.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the old abandoned camp standing on the public beach at Pointe Coton is structurally unsound and will be pulled down. The Consultant employed by the Commission for Public Infrastructure is preparing a Master Plan for the upgrading of the public beaches of Pointe Coton and St. François.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Chief Commissioner who is the owner of this old abandoned camp and, if he knows the owner, whether there was a lease and whether the lease has expired?

The Chief Commissioner: The lease of the Roman Catholic Diocese, to whom belonged this camp on the site, has not been renewed on its expiry. It was very long ago; the lease has not been renewed.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Chief Commissioner whether there has been an agreement between his Commission and the owner of this camp, and whether any compensation will be given to the Roman Catholic Diocese for this camp being pulled down?

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of the question. I don't know what happened when the lease expired. I'll find out.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand this was leased to the Roman Catholic Church. Can I ask him why this lease to the church has not been renewed?

The Chief Commissioner: I'll find out, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

ROCHE BON DIEU - FOOTBALL PITCH - UPGRADING

(No. B/406): Miss Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports whether, as regards the football pitch found at Roche Bon Dieu, the Commissioner could state what measures were being taken to upgrade same.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the upgrading at La Ferme football ground is on the verge of being completed. Once completed, my Commission intends to upgrade the football ground at Roche Bon Dieu. Actually, Gibbs Consultant is preparing a tender document for the upgrading, which will include fencing of the ground, resurfacing of the damaged part of the pitch, parking facilities, and provision of toilets and seats for spectators.

CYCLONE KALUNDE – DAMAGED HOUSES – REPAIR

(No. B/407) Miss Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could state when iron sheets and timber would be delivered to the beneficiaries whose houses had been partially damaged by Cyclone Kalundé.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, following the passage of cyclone Kalunde, a survey was carried out by officers of my Commission to evaluate the quantity of materials required for the repair of the damaged houses. Only cases of damaged houses that have been reported to Police were visited. Some 1,377 cases were visited and investigated all around the island. A list of materials required for the repair of the damaged houses was ordered and all the materials were received in December 2003. The distribution of materials for repair has started since February 2004 and is scheduled to be completed shortly.

NEW ANSE RAFFIN DAM – WORK PROGRESS

(No. B/408) Mr. J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could state the progress of work at the Anse Raffin Dam Project.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the works at New Anse Raffin Dam is progressing

satisfactorily as per revised schedule. Works are expected to be completed by 30 July 2004. As at 10 March 2004, 65% of the overall work has been completed. The excavation for the dam has been completed at 100%. The rockfill placement has been completed at 70%, progress with regards to concreting of the cladding, that is, the slant edge, is at 58%.

WELCOME INDUSTRY (UPB) – EMPLOYEES’ DISMISSAL

(No. B/409) Mr. J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Industrial Relations whether, as regards the notice of dismissal of the five (5) employees at the Welcome Industry (UPB), the Commissioner could state whether he had been notified by the employer of such dismissal and, if yes, the reason therefor.

Mr Mercure: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have not been notified of the dismissal of employees at the Welcome Industry Ltd.

However, I am informed that the firm has notified the Minister of Labour & Industrial Relations and Employment, in a letter dated 23 February 2004, of its intention to declare redundant all the workers employed in its mobile stone crushing section. The reason put forward is that this section was put into operation for the construction of the Plaine Corail-Port Mathurin road and the Airport Extension Project, which are now terminated.

I am also informed that, subject to the approval of the Minister, the case will be referred to the Termination of Contracts of Service Board for consideration, as provided under Section 39 of the Labour Act (No. 50 of 1975). This provides that any employer who intends to reduce the number of workers in his employment either temporarily or permanently shall give written notice to the Minister of Labour & Industrial Relations, who shall refer the matter to the Termination of Contracts of Service Board for consideration. According to the same law, the Welcome Industry Ltd has to wait for the decision of the Board before any dismissal.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, taking into consideration that the advice has been sent to the Termination of Contracts of Service Board, did the Commissioner have a meeting with Welcome Industry (UPB) to know whether compensation is going to be paid in one lump or in three months?

Mr Mercure: According to section (39) of the Labour Act, the company has to wait for the TCSB to make an inquiry and, then, according to law, they will be remunerated if ever dismissal is justified.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand the stand of the Commissioner. We know that the Ministry is in Mauritius, but he is the one responsible in Rodrigues, and these people are in Rodrigues. What is he going to do, at the level of his Commission, in order to facilitate or to speed up the process, so that these people who have been victims and have lost their work can know what to do?

Mr Mercure: Mr Chairperson, Sir, until now, nobody has been dismissed from his work. There is notification that there may be redundancy. It happened in the Republic of Mauritius and here we have the same law. We have to wait for the TCSB to do an inquiry. We must bear in mind that the TCSB is an independent body, which is nominated by the Ministry of Labour & Industrial Relations, and which will come here to conduct the inquiry. I am not supposed to make them speed up their inquiry; this is an independent body. So, we are going to wait for the inquiry and then we will see.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I refer to the Industrial Relations Act. What will happen to the workers if the Termination of Contracts Service Board take more than three months?

Mr Mercure: I have already answered the question. According to the same law, Welcome Industry has to wait for the decision of the Board before any dismissal. Nobody will be dismissed, even after three months, if the TCSB has not yet done its inquiry.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he is sure that he has not been notified of this matter.

Mr Mercure: I have already said, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that I have not been notified of the dismissal of the employees at the Welcome Industry. No letter has been addressed to me. As far as I am concerned, I have not received any letter. According to law, Mr Chairperson, Sir, they should notify the Minister, not the Commissioner. They sent a copy to me, saying that they notified the Minister. I have not been notified personally.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we all know the reasons behind this. In future, there might be other similar cases, where firms will have to decrease their manpower. In that case, what will be the stand of the Commissioner if everything has to be addressed to the Minister in Mauritius? Therefore, what's the role of his Commission?

Mr Chairperson: The Member cannot ask a question on things that are purely hypothetical. This is not allowed, unless the Commissioner wants to answer the question.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am speaking to the Commissioner responsible - I stress on the word 'responsible' - for Industrial Relations. What is his role in that?

Mr Mercure: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I can't go beyond the law. I am working according to a law which **frames** me, as far as my job is concerned. The company has sent a letter to the Minister according to the law. My responsibility is clear here. I'm looking after the rights of the workers, their health and safety. This is the law.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, si jamais le Termination of Contracts Service Board décide de prendre des décisions à Maurice, que se passera-t-il concernant les travailleurs?

Mr Mercure : Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Termination of Contracts Service Board will come to Rodrigues to conduct an inquiry. This is a tribunal and an independent body; we have to wait for them to come and do the inquiry. How can they take decision from Mauritius? They have to come to meet the workers, all the parties concerned. Does the Member think that they are going to look at the letter and take a decision? There is a procedure to follow.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, afin de pas licencier les travailleurs, ne serait-il pas possible pour le "Executive Council" de faire des développements?

Mr Chairperson : I can't find any connection with the main question.

ECOLE DE JUDO – NUMBER, LOCATION, FACILITIES, ETC

(No. B/410) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports whether he could state -

- (a) the number of “*Ecole de Judo*” under the responsibility of his Commission;
- (b) their locations;
- (c) the facilities offered to them, and
- (d) the number of tournaments which have already been organised and the forthcoming projects.

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

- (a) There are seven “*Ecoles de Judo*” which are attended by about 150 *stagiaires*.
- (b) With a view to ensuring that maximum youths may join an “*Ecole de Judo*”, my Commission has ensured that these *écoles* are scattered throughout the island. As a consequence, “*Ecoles de Judo*” have been set up in the following villages, namely Malabar, Mangues, Port Mathurin, La Ferme, Songes, Grande Montagne and Allée Tamarin.
- (c) The following facilities are provided to the young judokas -
 - (i) transport facilities during competitions;
 - (ii) it has been reported to my Commission that many of the young judokas cannot afford to buy a kimono for training and competition purposes. As a consequence, my Commission launched tenders for provision of same. Right now, we are awaiting

for 108 kimonos to be shipped to Rodrigues to be distributed to the young judokas.

- (d) Two competitions have been organised since January 2004, namely *Tournoi de l'Indépendance* and a competition involving all '*Ecoles de Judo*' was organised in February. For the present year, the '*école*' will be involved in other activities namely, '*Regroupement des écoles de judo*' in June, *Championnat Régional* in April and a *Criterium Ceinture Couleur*. A "*stage*" will also be organised during the Easter Holidays for the young judokas.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to know who has set up the "*Ecole de Judo*". Is it the Commission or the Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is the policy of my Commission now that all "*Ecoles*" which are set up in Rodrigues are under the supervision of our Sport Coach. We have an adviser coach in the Judo field, and so it is the responsibility of the coach to set up "*école de Judo*" in different parts of the island.

Mr Agathe: Est-il vrai que le Commissaire est le Président d'un comité de Judo à Rodrigues ?

The Chairperson: Does the Member really think that it has any connection with the main question?

Mr Lisette: I would like to answer this question. Normally, I do meet all the "*animateurs*" very often, because it is my duty to meet them. I can meet the "*animateurs*" in any field, at any time, because it is my responsibility, as Commissioner for Youth & Sports, to know what is happening in each and every *école de Judo* in Rodrigues.

Mr Agathe: Is the Commissioner the Chairman? *Animateur* is different.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally when I meet these *animateurs*, I chair the meeting.

Mr Agathe: C'est grave, Monsieur le Président. Ce n'est pas possible...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Can the Member be allowed to speak, please? Please proceed.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a small boy named Emmanuel Milazar who forms part of the *école de Judo de Mangués*. He has been admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital from 02 to 06 February, as he has been injured. He attends Maréchal Pre-vocational School. What has the Commission provided to him?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of this question, concerning the case referred to by the respected Member.

STATE LAND LEASES

(No. B/411) Mr François (First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he could state the measures he intends to take as regards the persons who have not yet turned up to sign and pay for the State land leases (residential, commercial, industrial, etc).

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, as at to date, 473 persons, to whom letters of intent for a State land lease has been granted, have not yet turned up to sign their leases.

It has been decided to invite them again to come and sign their leases. They will be explained that if they do not sign their leases, they may be requested to vacate the land and remove any structures and building that they may have erected on the site in accordance with the condition of the letter of intent and the State Land Act.

The same arrangement will be made regarding another 198 persons who have received letters of intent but have not yet paid their rent.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a serious problem about this matter. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether he is aware that when the authorities write to somebody who has applied for a

lease, very often - this happened I think, to even some Members here - they write to the person at the address where the person has asked for the lease; it is not where he lives, his actual residential address. I would like to ask him whether he is aware that the addresses are not correct. The address is the place where the person has applied for a lease, but he lives elsewhere. So, this is a big problem. I would like to ask him whether he is aware of this situation and what measures he proposes to take.

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

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to the number of applicants who did not turn up to sign their lease, it seems to be alarming. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether there has been any inquiry made to know exactly why so many applicants did not turn up? Because they asked for a lease! Why is it that they did not turn up to sign? There may be many reasons behind that. Has the Chief Commissioner made any inquiry to know why this is so?

The Chief Commissioner: They will be asked to come and sign before the Principal Surveyor or the Departmental Head of the Commission for Land. So, when they come, these persons will talk to them and we will know exactly why they have not come. I think this is what we are going to do; send them a letter. We have discussed with the Principal Surveyor and asked him to explain to the person who is going to sign the lease, what is in the lease. Sometimes, people don't read, they don't know exactly what is in this lease. I think this is being done by the Surveyors. So, we are going to find out whether really the lease is being read in front of the person and explained in Creole or French rather than in English. We asked ourselves many questions as to why those people did not turn up. We are trying to have a sort of good communication with those people, so that they can really understand their responsibilities and know that when they have asked for a lease, they should pay. I have been told that a lot of people do not have money to pay. So, for these cases, we are going to see what the Rodrigues Executive Council can do. But there is a problem. We have to pay every year. Are we going to put the person in front of his responsibility, that is, to put money aside to pay his CEB bill, his land lease bill and so on? This is a question of responsibility. We have to "*responsibiliser*" the population. I think we have to give information, and that's why the radio should help us in the future.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know how these persons, who have not yet turned up to sign and pay for the State land lease, are informed that they have to come to pay and sign?

The Chief Commissioner: We send them a letter asking them to come. They will receive a letter.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, very often, the letter is a folded paper that has been clipped and put at the Post Office. I do not criticise the Post Office, but very often some letters don't reach their destination. I would like to propose to the Chief Commissioner to send the letters by registered mail and to see to it that when a person receives the letter, he signs for it. Would he see to it that letters are sent by registered mail?

The Chief Commissioner: I take note of the question.

POST CYCLONE KALUNDE - LOW-COST HOUSING UNITS - BENEFICIARIES

(No. B/412) Mr François (First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huitres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could state when the 65 low-cost housing units project for the beneficiaries, whose houses were destroyed during Cyclone Kalundé, was due to start.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, following the passage of Cyclone Kalunde, the Executive Council has decided to reconstruct 65 low-cost housing units. These houses are to be offered to the people that have been identified who have completely lost their houses during the cyclone. In this context, 65 beneficiaries have been identified following a survey carried out by my Commission and by the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of the Vulnerable groups. A tender exercise was carried out and seven offers were received by my Commission. Following approval by the Central Tender Board, the contract has been awarded to Sinsamy Ramen Co. Ltd. The site will be handed over next week, and all houses are scheduled to be completed within five months. The material costs will be met by the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable groups, whereas the labour component will be met under the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know whether it is 67 or 65.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: It is 65, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to refer to Question B/141, where it is mentioned 67. I quote –

“Following the passage of Cyclone Kalunde, the Trust Fund for the Integration of Vulnerable Groups has agreed to finance the reconstruction of all damaged houses subject to the beneficiaries satisfying the criteria. A list of all damaged houses was handed to the Trust Fund for consideration and they subsequently submitted a list of 67 beneficiaries that are eligible. The Executive Council has, at its meeting of 14 May 2003, decided to approve the reconstruction(...)”.

Mr Chairperson: Is the Member going to read the whole question?

Mr Agathe: No! It is 67!

Mr Chairperson: I am not interrupting the Member. If he wants to address the Assembly on some point, he can do so. Would the Deputy Chief Commissioner respond to this?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission and the Trust Fund for Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups have an official list of 65 houses. I think that there is a typing error. We will find out.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the information is misleading. We want to know where are the two beneficiaries! What are their names? Vanished!

Mr Chairperson: The Deputy Chief Commissioner has already given the answer.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir,...

Mr Chairperson: If the Member refers to a previous debate, he should go strictly to the point which he wants to raise.

Mr Agathe: There is some information that has to be tabled. We are still waiting for it. It refers to the...

Mr Chairperson: This is question time. Probably the Member may wait for a later time to raise this issue. Of course, it is a pertinent issue, but it should not be raised now.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether the works in line with this project have already started and, if yes, what is the responsibility of his Commission, whether his officers go and monitor the progress of work, whether materials needed are being given, etc.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, the site will be handed over next week. So, works have not started yet.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with reference to the question, it seems that these houses will be constructed for the beneficiaries whose houses have been destroyed during Cyclone Kalunde. May I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner why has it taken so much time before starting the construction of these houses?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand the eagerness of the beneficiaries to obtain all the materials and to have their houses constructed quickly. But, in terms of transparency, sometimes tender documents take time to have a final outcome. The financial and technical bids of bidders take time to be examined, because sometimes there are compromises between the quantum of financial bids and the quality of work to be done. Therefore, we have to wait for the final approval of the Central Tender Board. We had the final outcome in December 2003, and work will start soon.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if I asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner the previous question, it is because I know that, at least, two victims of Cyclone Kalunde are now being provided with construction materials and construction of the houses has already started. I want to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether there is actually a parallel project for the victims of Cyclone Kalunde.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups has not finished with its projects in Rodrigues. There are about 350 houses to be built again and there are victims of Cyclone Kalunde, whose houses were destroyed during Kalunde Cyclone, who were on the list of beneficiaries of the Trust Fund's houses. This is how this has happened.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we know that the houses of those beneficiaries were destroyed. I would like to ask the Deputy Commissioner what his Commission is intending to do this year, and what his Commission has done to solve partly this problem. As we know, this morning there has been a heavy rainfall. What are these people doing? Where are they? I would like to ask the Deputy Commissioner what his Commission has done for these people.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have already replied to this question in PQ No. B/407. I will make a statement later during the sitting.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner table the list of beneficiaries of these houses?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is another question. This is not in the main question.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if we look at the main question, we see that it refers to beneficiaries. So, I want to know whether he will table the list.

Mr Chairperson: Of course, the Member's supplementary question is pertinent to the main question, but the main question refers to the 65 low cost houses. We cannot expect the Deputy Commissioner to come with the list now. Of course, if the Member gives notice, the Deputy Commissioner will have to respond to his question. Please put the question again.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has been a survey and it has been established that there are 65 beneficiaries. How is it that there are 65 beneficiaries? I am aware that there are 67. Can he table the list of the beneficiaries?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the Trust Fund is participating in the co-financing of these houses and the Trust Fund does not fall under our purview, the matter should be referred to the Minister of Finance before. Then, if need be, the list of beneficiaries will be tabled.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether his Commission is responsible for the 65 beneficiaries?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the project is co-financed by the Trust Fund and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly under the Prime Minister's Relief Fund, and as we are the Public

Infrastructure Commission which has the technical power and knowhow to do infrastructure projects in Rodrigues, my Commission will be here to supervise and monitor the project. Tender documents have been launched by my Commission, and my Commission is only responsible with regard to tender documents preparation, supervision and monitoring of works.

Mr Jabeemissar: Therefore, Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner state to the House whether he does not know anything about the beneficiaries because he is responsible only for monitoring, technical matters and so on? Will he, therefore, state to the House that his Commission has nothing to do with regard to this, that he does not know anything about the beneficiaries, and that we have to wait for the Ministry of Finance?

Mr Chairperson: Put your question, please.

Mr Jabeemissar: My question is whether he will state to the House if yes or no he does not know anything about these beneficiaries.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, these beneficiaries have been visited by the Trust Fund. As for supervision and monitoring of the work, we have the list of persons who will benefit from these houses. Normally, we should have the list of the people to do supervision. We cannot supervise something that we don't know.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, he has the list. He is working on it for monitoring. This list...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Put your question.

Mr J. Roussety: He is talking, and then he will say that he does not understand.

Mr Chairperson: Please do not disturb the Member who is talking.

Mr Grandcourt: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The Members on the other side of the House are constantly disturbing the Minority Leader.

Mr Chairperson: Is this is a point of order? What is the request?

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is apparent that if some Members are disturbing others, you should call them to order. I don't have to tell it to you.

Mr Chairperson: Of course, yes. Is the Member telling me what I have to?

Mr J. Rouseety: I don't have to tell you what to do Mr Chairperson, Sir. You do what you have to do. You have all the powers.

Mr Chairperson: You were on your feet, putting your question. Why did you stop? Please proceed.

Mr J. Roussety: Before I proceed, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that some visitors are not sitting properly in this House. I would like them to sit properly, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has the list for monitoring purposes. Will he table it for the purpose of monitoring what he is going to monitor? Can he give the names of all these persons whose constructions are going to be monitored? Is it one site or 65 sites?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are 65 houses to be constructed, but we have less than 65 sites. As the Trust Fund and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are co-partners in the project, I should seek the advice of the Trust Fund before and, if need be, the list of beneficiaries will be tabled. I should seek the advice of the Trust Fund, because it is co-partner in the project.

RODRIGUAN STUDENTS - SCHOLARSHIPS

(No. B/413: Mr François (First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huitres)) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether he could state the number of scholarships awarded to Rodriguan students in the present calendar year.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if you allow me, I shall reply to PQ No. B/413 and PQ No.B/415 together.

Mr J. Roussety: I understand the purpose of the Commissioner, but I beg to disagree because PQ No. B/413 comes from the majority whereas PQ No. B/415 is from the minority. I would rather propose that they are answered separately.

Mr Chairperson: I understand your point. But, it is consonant with parliamentary practice that a Commissioner, if he or she, finds that two questions are closely related together, to give only one answer.

Mr J. Roussety: Therefore, I understand he will give information relating to all that I have asked for.

Mr Chairperson: Of course! We are going to see to it that both questions B/413 and B/415 are answered together. If ever there are supplementary questions to both questions B/413 and B/415, Members are informed that they may put them after the main answer. Can you proceed, Commission for Education?

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of scholarships awarded to Rodriguan students in the present calendar year is 14. I wish to apprise the House, first and foremost, that the Commission for Education & Training aims at enhancing the skills and knowledge of the Rodriguan youth. In this respect, working sessions are being held with the H.S.C holders, with a view to guiding them in their career's choice.

With regard to part (a) of the question concerning the 14 scholarships available in 2004 for students having taken HSC exams in 2003 in Rodrigues, the details are as follows –

- State scholarships (2). I will point out Mr Chairperson, Sir, that these are firm scholarships.
- French scholarships (2). These also are intended to be firm scholarships, subject to acceptance by the nominee.
- India Commonwealth Scholarships Fellowship Plan 2004-2005 (1).
- India General Cultural Scholarship (2), and these are new.

- People's Republic of China (1) - this is a new offer.
- The Russian Federation (1) - this is a new offer.
- The President's Award, University of Mauritius (1) - this is already established.
- Science related subjects, University of Mauritius (2).
- Rodrigues Regional Assembly Scholarship for medical studies at SSR Medical College (2). These are new scholarships set up by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

As regards part (b), Mr Chairperson, Sir, the allocation of scholarships in the past was carried out (i) on the basis that the students concerned should be born in Rodrigues of Rodriguan parents and should have studied from form IV to H.S.C in Rodrigues and, (ii) be, in principle, on the list of scholarship rank orders issued by the University of Cambridge. However, the final selection of candidates for pursuance of higher education rests with the universities concerned. I repeat that the final selection of candidates for pursuance of higher education rests with the universities concerned, as the latter have their own established criteria set.

Concerning part (c) Sir, I wish to inform the House that the present criteria for allocating scholarships to Rodriguan students having studied HSC in Rodrigues in 2003 are the same as in previous years. In this respect, I wish to submit to the House the names of the two State scholarship winners designated under "Additional Laureate Scheme 2004 for Rodrigues", namely Mr David Leung Long and Miss Marie Jane Legoff. These are firm scholarships, as I stated earlier. The winners of the two scholarships donated by the French Government - one boy and one girl - are Mr Laval Andy Alain and Miss Stellie Emilien. Since the French Government does not finance studies in medicine, Mr Laval Andy Alain, who wishes to become a doctor, has had to renounce to his French scholarship in favour of a medical scholarship on offer elsewhere. The French Embassy was informed accordingly, and Mr J.W.Deeram, who ranked immediately after Mr Alain, has been chosen as a substitute by the French Embassy – chosen by the French Embassy. I will now give the name of our nominee. This is a nominee who remains to be approved and accepted by the donor country. The name of our nominee for the India Commonwealth Scholarship Fellowship Plan 2004-2005 is Mr Joseph F. Edouard. The list of the ranking, according to the Cambridge University, for Rodriguan students, is being tabled (Appendix A). I would like to elucidate one particular point,

Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning the ranking. Many people think that everyone whose name figures on the list means that he has won a scholarship. This is not true, and this is where I wish to dispel this idea. I will, however, read the names of all those who figure on the list of ten. David Leong Long, Mary Jane Legoff, Laval Andy Alain, J.W. Deeram, Stellie Emilien, J.F. Edouard, Christopher Prudence, M.D. Tolbize, J.K. Wolfton, Levis Joseph Léopold.

As far as part (e) is concerned, the two medical scholarships created and financed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly do not - I repeat, do not - fall in the category of scholarships offered through the Ministry of Education & Scientific Research. The House will be interested to note that these two medical scholarships were created in 2003 when Rodrigues was experiencing particularly acute difficulties in the recruitment of doctors from Mauritius. These difficulties explained the presence of Egyptian and Malagasy doctors in our hospitals during the most recent years. In view of the fact that our application for funds was not approved by Cabinet until May 2003, our two candidates could not be admitted to the SSR Medical School. I repeat, we had to apply for funds to finance those two Medical Scholarships at the SSR Medical School. Courses had already started at the beginning of March 2003. The two candidates who were awarded these scholarships were Mr Christopher Spéville Hortense and Miss Arlette St. Pierre. I also wish to inform the House that, at the time these choices were made, there were no suitable candidates left on the 2002 pass list who could have answered the criteria imposed by the SSR Medical School. These criteria are that candidates should have the following minimum grades in their main subjects: A, C, C - that's the minimum grades they should have in subjects - or B, B, C which, in each case, amount to 22 points, A being equivalent to ten points, B to eight points, C to six points. This is how the application of Miss Arlette St. Pierre was considered and approved. I wish to state that Miss Arlette St. Pierre is 21 years old and was born in Rodrigues of Rodriguan parents. She studied at Loreto Convent Port Louis, in Mauritius. She is fully qualified.

(Interruptions)

Members have to listen to the full story. Go and find me one Rodriguan who has been left out in favour of Miss St. Pierre! Go and find out who had 22 points in three subjects, that is, Maths and two science subjects, and was left out, and come back to me! She studied at Loreto

Convent Port Louis, in Mauritius. She is fully qualified, and her detailed 2002 HSC results are as follows: Principal: Maths A, Chemistry A, Biology A; Subsidiary: French A, General Paper A.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in view of the increasing number of scholarships being awarded to Rodrigues at the request of my Commission and the multiplicity of donors, and the fact that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has more autonomy in the formulation and implementation of policy, it is considered that the latter should be more involved in the selection of Rodriguan candidates for scholarships. It has, therefore, been decided, for practical reasons, to set up a Scholarship Committee for Rodrigues, under the aegis of my Commission, to select candidates to open scholarships and submit recommendations for onward transmission and ratification in Mauritius, prior to same being forwarded to donor countries. The composition of the Committee is as follows –

- (i) Mr S.K Mahadeo, Director of Education (Chairman);
- (ii) Mr Hauroo, Departmental Head, Commission for Education & Training;
- (iii) Mr Jean Claude Pierre Louis, Departmental Head, Chief Commissioner's Office, and
- (iv) Mrs Jeanine Yeung, Head of the Human Resource Centre, Commission for Education & Training.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I also wish to apprise the House that the Rodrigues Scholarship Committee met yesterday, Monday 15 March 2004, and interviewed the candidates who applied for the two open scholarships for science subjects under the India General Cultural Scholarship Scheme 2004-2005. As regards the other scholarships being offered by friendly countries, the Rodrigues Scholarship Committee will continue to interview candidates, as and when required, and make the results known when the exercise has been completed.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, would the Commissioner confirm that he is allocating a scholarship at the SSR Medical College to a girl who, of course, has got the best results one can get, but who has studied from Form I to Form VI in Mauritius, whereas, this year, we have in this

batch students who have got grades A, A, C - I think it meets the criteria - who would wish to study medicine? Would he confirm that he is allocating a scholarship to somebody who has studied in Mauritius and whether it is the policy of the Executive Council to award scholarships to people who have studied from Forms I to VI in Mauritius with all the facilities, tuition, good teachers, whereas those who studied in difficult conditions in Rodrigues, don't have access to these scholarships? Will he confirm this and is this right?

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is with glee and joy that I confirm that for the scholarships awarded last year, the two beneficiaries integrated the SSR Medical College this year. As for the 2003 vintage, allocations have not yet been made. The two persons who were awarded scholarships to the SSR Medical College last year are, I repeat, Mr Jean Christopher Spéville Hortense who had grades A, C, C, and who came after the list of ten ...

Mr J. Roussety: On a point of order, Sir. The Commissioner has already stated this.

Mr L. Roussety: I repeat that the two who integrated the SSR Medical College this year were chosen last year. I assure this House that there was nobody else available on the pass list when these two candidates' applications were approved. I will say again that, as far as candidates from the 2003 vintage are concerned, nobody has yet started further studies. They will start towards the end of the year. I think, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that within the confines of this House, many of us have been to University either as scholars or as private students, and we do know that studies start towards the end of the year and in Australia, studies start at the beginning of February for the following year. So, all those who have passed and been included in the list of ten this year are still here. Interviews are still taking place. As far as the criteria set by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for Rodriguan students, even in Mauritius, is concerned, when we do not have suitable candidates to integrate the SSR Medical School, the decision is taken collectively by the Executive Council. A bond will still be exacted from them. They will sign a bond to come back to Rodrigues at the end of their studies and work in Rodrigues for a number of years.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner for Education when was the deadline for the submission of applications for the

SSR Medical College Scholarships provided by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since last year? I would also like to know if any of the students who obtained their results this year submitted applications for these scholarships and their names.

(Interruptions)

Mr L. Roussety: The selection was made last year. Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question is whether students from last year applied. Perhaps the respected Members of the minority ought to have a copy of the pass list, so that they could see the kind of grades that the students achieved in the 2002 examinations.

Mrs Meunier: I do not think the Commissioner understood my question well. I will rephrase it.

Mr Chairperson: Please, be brief.

Mrs Meunier: I will ask him one question at a time. When exactly did the Rodrigues Regional Assembly advertise the SSR Medical College Scholarships and what was the deadline for the submission of applications?

Mr L. Roussety: Does the Member mean for this year?

Mrs Meunier: For last year.

Mr L. Roussety: The applications were made and submitted, because these were not advertised.

(Interruptions)

Our first consideration was to examine the pass list for 2002 and also the scholarship list for that particular year. I am very pleased to give the supplementary information asked for. On the list of ten last year, the candidate, who came first, did languages. The one who ranked second did science as well as the one who ranked third. So, Nos. 2 and 3 were science people, No. 4 was Accounts, No. 5 was Science, No. 6 was Accounts, No. 7 was French, Economics and English, No. 8 was Science, No. 9 was French, Accounts, English, and No. 10 was French, Biology and Chemistry.

Mrs Meunier: I think the Commissioner is not answering my question. He is going into the details of the results. I work in Rodrigues College and I know the results perfectly well. So, I don't need that. I need an answer to my question.

Mr Chairperson: May I inform the Member that she can put her question, but I cannot direct the Commissioner as to the way he has to answer and I have no control over the contents of his reply. Can the Commissioner be allowed some time? Have you understood the question, Mr Commissioner?

Mr L. Roussety: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Selection was done at the beginning of 2003 after the decision of the Executive Council to give two medical scholarships. We should have made the selection earlier for the simple reason that courses at the SSR Medical College start in February, but funds were not available. We had to apply for funds from the Ministry of Finance, giving the right argument concerning the scarcity of doctors in Rodrigues in order to obtain the funds. Approval for funds was not received until May 2003. Otherwise, the two candidates who started courses at the medical school this year would have started last year.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner is, I believe, irresponsible. Funds were not yet available and he did not have confirmation that funds would be available and, in spite of that, he took upon himself to allocate the scholarships. They had requested for funds - as usual, we request everything - but he decided to allocate a scholarship to a girl who has studied in Mauritius, without knowing that funds would be available. I would like to ask him how is this possible.

Mr L. Roussety: It has been made possible after consultation with the members of the Executive Council.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask him what is the annual cost of these SSR Medical Scholarships and the reasons why they have not been advertised? Because we live in a democratic country and we have equal opportunities. Why has this not been advertised to give equal chances, for example, to people in the nursing sector who would have liked to make further medical studies? He took upon himself to choose two persons. This is not correct, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Public funds are not the

property of Mr L. Roussety. Everybody should have the opportunity to postulate for scholarships. I would like to ask him why these scholarships were not advertised to give equal opportunities to everybody. What is the annual cost of each scholarship?

Mr L. Roussety: I take note of the hon. Member's question, and I shall come up with a statement next time.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, two scholarships are being awarded to persons who studied in 2003. Will there be two SSR Medical Scholarships for those who have passed and received their results during calendar year 2004?

Mr L. Roussety: Of course, there will be! I said there would be 14 scholarships. There will be the two SSR Medical scholarships and they are being advertised. Of course, they will. And the thing is that we will not lose one. I wish to inform you that that we are not going to lose one. If you look at the pass list of 2002, you will find we had nobody. These considerations were taken by the Executive Council. There was nobody with those marks because as I said. The marks are exacted by the SSR Medical School. You have to get A, C, C or B, B, C to make the minimum of 22 points. I give you my word of honour, that there was nobody available on that list after Mr Christopher Spéville Hortense. There was nobody else and we could not allow the scholarship to go to waste because we did lose one scholarship last year. We lost the Indian Scholarship last year.

(Interruptions)

We did lose it!

(Interruptions)

It was advertised.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order! Order, please!

Mr L. Roussety: I said that we lost the India Commonwealth Scholarship last year because it was offered to someone who accepted it and

then changed his mind. We had a lot of problems last year, with people accepting, then declining, and then coming back to it again. As I said, this year, we are going to have 14 scholarships. I wish to put your mind at rest that nobody is trying to wrangle anybody out of scholarships. The person who came seventh on the list last year did not win a scholarship because he did have the subjects on offer, as well as those who came ninth and tenth. There were seven instead of eight. Mr Chairperson, Sir, we want to give the chance to Rodriguans who have also studied in Mauritius. Why not? We are not doing it to the disadvantage of anyone. As I said, Members can bring to me evidence that someone has been done out of the scholarship in favour of another one studying in Mauritius, and then we will see how to do reparation.

Mr Chairperson: No challenge, please. There is also the second limb of the question relating to the amount for each scholarship. I do not know whether the Commissioner for Education will answer this question.

Mr J. Roussety: We are prepared to respond to challenges Mr Chairperson, Sir, like we did at La Ferme.

Mr Chairperson: Does the hon. Member want to ask a question?

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The Commissioner said that nobody in Rodrigues last year met the criteria for this scholarship. I have nothing against the nominee for the scholarship. My problem is about the procedure, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I believe it is not good to give a scholarship to somebody who has studied completely in Mauritius *au détriment de ceux qui ont étudié à Rodrigues*. I would like to ask the Commissioner how he proceeded to identify that person.

Mr Chairperson: I wish to inform Members that there are 34 questions on the agenda and that we have tackled only 13. We have used more than two hours, and we are left with probably only 45 minutes for the remaining questions. I am not going to limit supplementary questions, but Members should be alive that part of the questions may not be answered during the time stipulated.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I won't discuss about time, but I note that you made an announcement at the beginning that took about 15 minutes. According to my watch, it is now half past noon. I don't

understand how it can be more than two hours, and second I would like to say that Question time is three hours, excluding your announcement.

Mr Chairperson: Of course! It is not more, but it is approximately two hours.

Mr J. Roussety: We started Question time at 15 minutes to eleven.

Mr Chairperson: The Minority Leader is right. We started Question time at 10.45 hours. Even then, according to the trend we are taking, we have not reached even one half of the questions and more than half of the time has already elapsed. Would the Commissioner for Education continue with his answer?

Mr L. Roussety: The Executive Council decided that these scholarships should be open scholarships for consideration on merit. We wanted this to be among the student population, among those who had just got their H.S.C, to start off a career in medicine. We do not see anything wrong with that. Why go to nurses and so on and so forth? We wanted to go to those who had expressed the will to be doctors and work for Rodrigues.

Mr J. Roussety: How did you identify that girl?

Mr L. Roussety: The girl wrote to us, just as Mr Spéville Hortense. I repeat again, in front of this hallowed House, that nobody has suffered any injustice due to Miss St. Pierre, who is a Rodriguan, being allocated this scholarship, because there was nobody on the pass list after Mr Christopher Spéville Hortense who had 22 points. I will remind the House, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the SSR Medical College is a private college and not on the same footing as the University of Mauritius, for example. The Ministry of Education cannot go and tell them to do this or that.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, each year there is ranking for HSC. I would like the Commissioner to confirm whether scholarships are given according to this ranking, that is, somebody who is first on the list chooses what scholarship he or she wants, or if somebody is fifth or sixth, the fifth or sixth scholarship is allocated to him. I would like to know whether this is the procedure. In fact, this is what has been established since

scholarships have existed here. In my time, it was like that. I would like the Commissioner to confirm whether this is still the same or whether those who pass HSC can apply for scholarships and if somebody who is ranked 20th, 30th or last can get a scholarship whereas somebody who is 10th or 11th does not. I would like him to confirm whether it is possible now for somebody who is ranked after another person to get a scholarship.

Mr L. Roussety: As I said earlier on in my reply, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the four scholarships, that is, the two laureates and the two French Scholarships, were firm scholarships, whereas the remainder on the list is open scholarships. Students have to apply for these scholarships and their applications must be considered by the donor countries. Last year, we lost the Indian Commonwealth Scholarship because what the Government of India offered to the applicant did not suit him. So, he pulled out at the last minute and it was too late to nominate someone else. I repeat that the two scholarships offered by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for medical studies are open scholarships and applications of the best qualified Rodriguan boys will be considered collectively by the Executive Council as was the case last year.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't understand which is which! The Commissioner says that there is a Scholarship Committee while at the same time the Executive Council chooses the scholarships. Can he give precisions on this? They poke their nose everywhere!

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, perhaps my respected friend, the Minority Leader, has not been attentive to the replies I gave. The scholarships obtainable through the Ministry of Education are subject to the scrutiny of the Scholarship Committee. But the two scholarships of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly are and remain within the purview of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. As I said earlier, the first four scholarships are firm ones, the others have to be applied for, two Rodrigues Regional Assembly are open scholarships, and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly decides.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move that the Assembly be suspended for fifteen minutes so as to have more information.

Mr Chairperson: I think it is a good time to break. So, I suspend the sitting for one hour.

At 12.40 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 1.40 p.m. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr Chairperson: First and foremost, I have to say that only 13 questions have been answered up to now, and we are left with 21 questions. I do not rule that Members don't have to put supplementary questions. But, you are alive that, in order to finish all the questions within the one hour five minutes that remain, we have got to limit the supplementary questions.

Mrs Meunier: I would like to ask one more supplementary question with regard to PQ B/415. Earlier on, in his reply, I heard the Commissioner for Education talking about working sessions he carried out with HSC holders on career guidance. I would like to know whether he carried out the working sessions before or after the results arrived.

Mr L. Roussety: Those who have sat the HSC Examination and who have not achieved sufficiently good grades in order to go to University on their own naturally have not been included in the list of potential scholars. So, we talk to those people in order to give them a career guidance. We are very serious in our intention concerning *l'insertion professionnelle* (career guidance) and we want to direct them towards certain capacities which we are going to need in the very near future, for example, safety inspector at work. But, there are several others which do not readily come to mind now.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as you are aware...

Mr Chairperson: You can ask your question but this will be the last one as far as B/415 is concerned. You may have a complex question if you wish.

Mr J. Roussety: As you are aware, there is an Education Committee. It seems that at no time these issues of granting scholarships to people who have not studied in Rodrigues were brought in front of this Committee despite the fact that this was the case for other matters like the issue of oriental languages. Can I ask him why - I don't know whether he is a member of the Committee, but I believe he is - he did not bring this issue at the level of the Education Committee of the House?

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the directive came rather late in the day, after the meeting of the last Education Committee in the House. It was Cabinet that directed that we should have our own Scholarship Committee. Normally, this is not a matter that is discussed politically, because if you remember the Scholarship Committee is composed of civil servants of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly plus one member from the Ministry of Education & Scientific Research in Mauritius. There was, I can assure you, absolutely no intention to hide anything. The information would have been provided at our next meeting, because this is where we put our cards on the table.

Mr Chairperson: Can we move to the next question? We come back to the question before B/415.

***GITES, GUESTHOUSES, HOTELS, LOGEMENT CHEZ
L'HABITANT - LICENSES***

(No. B/414) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards “*Gites*”, guesthouses, hotels, *logement chez l’habitant*, boardrooms, *pensionnats* and other similar items in the tourist sector, he could -

- (a) state the procedure and criteria to obtain a permit of operation and the types of permits deliverable by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
- (b) state whether there have been requests for meetings with the authorities by the operators or their representatives and, if yes, from whom, when, and whether any such meeting was not granted and the reasons therefor;
- (c) obtain information as to the number of units in operation whether with permits or not, together with the names of their owners and locations, and
- (d) state the number of applications received since October 2002, the number of permits issued and the number refused, giving the names and addressees of applicants whose applications have been turned down and the reasons therefor.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, according to Tourism Act 2002, the Island Chief Executive is responsible to exercise all the powers of the Tourism Authority in Rodrigues and to issue licenses for tourist enterprises.

A Rodrigues Tourism Committee has also been established under the Tourism Act, and this committee has decided that the Commission of Trade & Licensing will issue licenses for tourism enterprises. The procedure for application of a license is as follows -

- The promoter has to apply for a license from the Commission of Trade & Licensing, which refers the application to the Rodrigues Tourism Committee. The applications are examined by the Technical Committee prior to inspection of the premises.

In the light of the decision of the Technical Committee, inspections are carried out to ascertain that the buildings to be used for the tourist enterprises meet the established standards.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir...

Mr Chairperson: Is it a point of order?

Mr J. Roussety: Yes. I don't know whether there is a problem, but I am having problems to hear the Chief Commissioner.

Mr Chairperson: Is the microphone working?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes.

Mr Chairperson: Can you please continue?

The Chief Commissioner: In the light of the decision of the Technical Committee, inspections are carried out to ascertain that the buildings to be used for the tourist enterprises meet the established standards. The inspection report is considered by the Technical Committee whose decisions are referred to the Commission for Trade & Licensing for the issue of license or to inform the applicants of rejected applications.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Rodrigues Tourism Committee is in the process of adapting the standard and criteria established by the Tourism Authority for Mauritius to the Rodriguan context, and these criteria will be used for assessing applications for tourist enterprises in Rodrigues.

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly can issue licenses in respect of all types of tourist enterprises listed under schedule of the Tourism Act.

As far as part (b) is concerned, the former President of the “*Association des Gîtes, Chambres et Tables d’hôtes*” has submitted a request on 17 January 2004 for a meeting to discuss on licensing, following the Rodrigues Tourism Committee’s meeting held at the beginning of January 2004. The meeting was not held since the matter was still being considered by the Rodrigues Tourism Committee of which the former president of “*Association des Gîtes, Chambres et Tables d’hôtes*” was a member.

However, I had a meeting with all applicants for a license to run *Gîtes* and *Chambres d’hôtes* along with all licensees of boarding houses on 08 March 2004, where the application of the Tourism Act 2002 as well as the procedure and status on licensing of tourist enterprises were discussed.

With regard to part (c), Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling a list of operators of tourist accommodation enterprises, which are duly licensed. As regards those operating without license, it will not be proper to table their names as we do not have an exhaustive list of all persons operating without a license. All those who are operating a tourist enterprise are being invited, through a press communiqué, to submit their names and projects to my Commission.

Concerning part (d), Mr Chairperson, Sir, since 2002, we have received 35 applications for *Gîtes* and *Chambres d’hôtes*, 11 applications for restaurants, 1 application for a hotel of 25 rooms, 1 application for boarding house. Most of the promoters are operating *gîtes* on residential lease. At the last meeting of the Rodrigues Tourism Committee, a list of applicants has been examined. It has, therefore, been decided to refer recommended cases to the State Land Committee to consider their application for the change of the purpose of their State land leases to enable them to operate tourism enterprises on their leased land.

The applications for license to run tourist enterprises are being considered and, so far, none has been approved or rejected.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the *gîtes, logement chez l'habitant*, I would like to know whether, if someone has a residential lease and wants to operate tourist-related activities, he has to change that lease into a commercial lease.

The Chief Commissioner: Of course! Residential means for residence, and if you operate a business, this means commercial. You are asking for money; this is commerce. There is a great difference between residential lease and commercial lease. *Chambres d'hôtes, gîtes* are commercial. People are doing commerce and are receiving money, just as for a restaurant or a hostel. They are commercial and industrial. I think we are not allowed to do that. The same thing applies to those who are hiring their house. When you have a residential lease, you don't have the right to rent your house. Whenever you rent your house, you are doing commerce, you are operating a business, and so, a commercial lease is required.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, before these persons are engaged in these informal economic activities, they reside in a place first and then they decide to do these activities gradually – *ajoute ene ti piece par ici, par là, après ena dimoune pas content, rode crazê*". I wish to ask the Commissioner whether it is a policy to ask *ti dimoune*, the layman to convert a house. Le principe de la table d'hôte est de recevoir quelqu'un chez soi, chez l'habitant. C'est ce qui a été encouragé par Monsieur Serge Clair, lui même, dans le passé.

Mr Chairperson: Please, when you address a Member, don't make it personal. You have to address by the title of the Member.

Mr J. Roussety: The Chief Commissioner himself was an advocate of this in the past. I would like to ask him whether this would not create additional burden on the Cadastral Unit, on the Registration Unit.

The Chief Commissioner: This is specified in the law – residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural lands. For those people having a residential lease, this will now be changed into residential cum commercial lease - *chambre d'hôte*. It's quite different for *gîtes*. That's why we say that whenever a person would like to run a business, first of all he should present

his project and say whether he would like to operate a *gîte* or a *chambre d'hôte*. According to law, this will be surveyed by a Surveyor as a residential cum commercial lease. It means a lot of work for the Government Valuer to evaluate the land and for the Surveyors to work again the lease for those people who are changing their residence into residence cum commercial. We are trying to have some order in the question of land. But in the future, those who are going to run a *gîte* or a restaurant should present a project, saying that they would like to set up a restaurant or a *gîte* somewhere.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, regarding this matter of *gîtes*, *table d'hôte*, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner what is his stand regarding public officers who have invested a lot of money, have built up their goodwill, their reputation in this sector, but who apparently have to either resign or to stop such activities at a go. What is his stand concerning this matter?

The Chief Commissioner: Public officers are not allowed to operate a business. Every business is commercial. In the past, we have seen public officers having land in the name of their wife. What we are saying now is that, whenever there is a project, the person must come and say that he is or he will operate this project. In the past, we have seen public officers taking the place of people trying to operate a business. Why should public officers do business?

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, my question was not in relation to public officers, from a general point of view, doing business. Of course, this is not recommended. That would cause a crowding out effect to the economy. What I am saying is that those who have invested in *gîtes*, in *tables d'hôtes* are already in business and they want to preserve their job in the government service. What does he propose? Should these businesses close? Should they lay off all the workers working with them? What will they do with the amenities? Will they put rats in them?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have said that we are going to change the purpose of the lease into residential cum commercial leases. We are not saying that these people are going to be rejected, but there are some norms and regulations to be followed. There is the question of security and norms – the size of the room, electrical installations, etc. Those norms and regulations are being laid down by the

Tourism Authority in Mauritius. Now, we are trying now to apply those regulations and norms in Rodrigues. Do you know what will happen if things go on like this? We went to Reunion Island two weeks ago and people said that they had been in some *chambres d'hôtes ou gîtes* that were not according to the norms. I think this is a question of good reputation and people with whom we had a meeting - those owners of *chambres d'hôtes* - agree with that. They should participate in the good reputation of the tourism sector here. I think it is a good thing that people should try to follow the norms, regulations and discipline also. The only thing is that they are going to pay a bit more for the lease, as it is not a residential lease and they are receiving money – Rs1000, Rs2000 for 2 to 3 nights - whereas other people have a residence. People doing *gîte* and people owning a residence cannot pay the same sum of Rs1000. This is an injustice, because they are doing commerce. Those who are doing commerce should pay a lease according to what they are doing, to what they are operating. This is very clear I think.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I did not get the answer but I understand that they must close their business. Those public officers who have invested their money, who have contributed to the development of tourism in Rodrigues must close their business. The Commissioner says that the applicant must deposit his project. Yes, we have to deposit the project. But where to deposit this project and how much time does it take for somebody to get an answer?

The Chief Commissioner: The Minority Leader should come with a substantive question. We need notice of that question. However, I will reply to the question concerning public officers. There is a Tourism Committee, and it is the Tourism Committee that is going to decide whether a project is going to be rejected, and there will also be discussions with those who are already operating. One person can be a public officer and the other one not. There are cases where the two persons are public officers. I know of one case where somebody has resigned to be at the disposal of the guests. So, he has chosen. Il a fait un choix, pour faire fonctionner sa chambre d'hôte, parce que la chambre d'hôte est quelque chose de spécial. La chambre d'hôte signifie qu'il faut être là, car la personne qui y vient veut trouver une ambiance humaine ; il vient chercher la conversation, la connaissance, et c'est pourquoi il faut toujours être là. Il y a des cas où les gens sont venus dans une chambre d'hôte où il n'y avait personne, tout comme pour un gîte. Le gîte c'est justement quelqu'un qui reçoit des gens, qui montre la chambre, et c'est fini. Le concept de la chambre d'hôte est

complètement différent. Et je félicite celui qui a pris la décision de démissionner du gouvernement pour pouvoir se consacrer entièrement à ce type de concept du tourisme à Rodrigues.

RODRIGUAN STUDENTS - SCHOLARSHIPS

(No. B/415) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether, as regards scholarships of all kinds offered yearly to students passing the Higher School Certificate (HSC) in Rodrigues, he would -

- (a) give a detailed account of the scholarships available in 2004 to students having taken HSC examinations in 2003 in Rodrigues;
- (b) state what have been the criteria for the allocation for scholarships in the past;
- (c) state what are the criteria for allocating scholarships to students having studied HSC in Rodrigues in 2003, giving the names of the nominee for each scholarship;
- (d) give the list of the ranking, according to the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate or the Cambridge Examinations Syndicate, for both boys and girls;
- (e) ascertain whether any scholarship is being granted to a student not having sat for HSC in Rodrigues and, if any, give the name of the student, his/her age, the place or college where he/she studied and the scholarship granted, and
- (f) explain the need, composition, and purposes of a scholarship Committee at his Commission?

(Vide reply to PQ No. B/413)

LAND LEASES – COMMERCIAL PURPOSES

(No. B/416) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the issue of land leases for all purposes, he will give the list of all applicants to whom his office or the services under his Commission have written to since October 2002 to inform them that their applications cannot be approved, giving the names of the applicants, the date of the application, the place they applied for, the type of lease applied for, and the individual reasons of the refusal.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, since October 2002, 775 persons who applied for leases for commercial purposes have been informed that their applications have not been approved. Out of 1,032 applications received from 1989 to 2000, which were processed, the remaining 257 have been short-listed for site visits to identify suitable sites. Applications were considered village-wise in chronological order, taking into account the financial capability of the applicant to carry out the business for which a lease is being sought and the number of ‘commerce’ already operating in each village as well as the availability of sites for the proposed businesses. All applicants were convened to fill an enquiry form indicating *inter alia* their financial capability.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, a list of those whose applications have been rejected is being compiled and will be tabled as soon as it is completed.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I asked the same list for residential leases. I have written to you recently to tell you that these matters have not been tabled. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner when he is going to give us this information, because “very soon” is very subjective and very often we don’t get the answer.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think the question is not relevant to the main question put to me concerning the purposes of the applications, the list of all applicants to whom his office or the services under his Commission have written to since October 2002 to inform them that their applications cannot be approved, giving the names of the applicants(...). This means those who have made an application for commercial leases, and which have not been approved.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is there any procedure for the applications that have been turned down? Is there a procedure of appeal or any other procedure if the applicant wants the authorities to re-examine his application?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is the State Land Committee which processes the applications, and some applications are rejected. It depends which type of applications - residential, commercial, agricultural - and there are also some priorities. The State Land Committee approves those applications according to the priorities. It depends on the project, on the application.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether, when applications are turned down by the State Land Committee or whatever, he informs people in writing about the reasons why these applications have been turned down. We cannot just turn down applications of people who have presented a project without giving any reasons at all.

The Chief Commissioner: I don't know whether the State Land Committee should give reasons why an application has been turned down. I'll find out with the State Land Committee concerning that matter.

FRANCOIS, MR J.F. – ADVISER TO THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER

(No. B/417) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the employment of any adviser for land-related matters at his office, he will, if any, state the name of the person, table his qualifications including his Higher School Certificate if, any, give the justification of such an employment, state what are the emoluments and other benefits payable to her/him, her/his terms of reference or duties assigned, whether any advertisement for recruitment was made and the work done by her/him since his appointment to date.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, Section 70 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 prescribes that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly can recruit officers on contract. For public officers, there are procedures laid down for the recruitment process.

For advisers to the Chief Commissioner, just like is the case in Mauritius for recruitment of advisers to Ministers, the Chief Commissioner selects the adviser and an official request is then made to the Prime Minister's Office for approval of employment.

The Prime Minister then approves or rejects proposal after seeking clearances from all the authorities. There is no need to advertise for such post of advisers.

In the present case, Mr Jean Francisco François was selected by the Chief Commissioner as his adviser on lands, housing and environment matters.

Mr François is holder of a Cambridge Certificate (GCE Advanced Level) in two subjects, a Foundation Studies Certificate Course and a Bachelor of Surveying from the University of Newcastle in Australia. The salary has been worked out by the Pay Research Bureau and the other conditions of service by the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms. He draws a salary of Rs22,300 monthly up to 30 June 2004 and Rs23,200 monthly as from 01 July 2004.

The duties assigned to Mr J.F. François also shown on Annex I tabled (Appendix B). An adviser is not a public officer and, therefore, his duties are restricted for advice to the Chief Commissioner. Appointment of Mr J.F. François was necessary to assist the Chief Commissioner in handling the numerous representations made by the public on land, housing and environment issues. Since his appointment, he has participated satisfactorily in the above assignments.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is this professional allowed, as an adviser, to have access to Government information, information regarding lands, and the matters with which he deals?

The Chief Commissioner: There are surveyors for that purpose. Whenever we need information concerning land issues, we ask the Departmental Head to seek information from the Principle Surveyor. The adviser does not have the right to have access to files in the different Commissions. He only seeks information. Whenever he needs information, I can give it to him through my Departmental Head, just to help the Chief Commissioner in formulating some policies concerning environment,

housing and land. This has been done correctly up to now, and we know that he is being told by the Island Chief Executive that he has not the right to have access to information directly from any Head of Department.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, he has access to Government information. Does he have access to Government information?

The Chief Commissioner: I would like the Minority Leader to come with specific examples, with facts.

Mr Chairperson: The question is too vague.

Mr J. Roussety: I don't have to prove anything. I am just asking questions. I am asking the respected Chief Commissioner whether Mr François has access to Government information.

The Chief Commissioner: He gets information indirectly from me. If he says that he wants to have information on a report, I give him the information from my personal file, my reports. Mr Chairperson, Sir, in Mauritius, advisers sit beside the Ministers, like Mr Ananda Rajoo, for example. This person has all information through his Minister, so that he can advise the Minister on certain issues. He does not have the information directly. In the past, an adviser came directly to look for files at the Cadastral Office and then brought those files to Mauritius. Now, this is not the case. We are very disciplined in our work, and Mr Francisco François has information from me, the Chief Commissioner, because...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Please, I will allow only a last question. It can be a complex question.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner say whether it is as a result of the good work, of the expertise of the newly appointed adviser, that so many applications have been turned down?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please! Order!

The Chief Commissioner: This is rubbish, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: Next question please.

RODRIGUES - NET FISHING

(No. B/418) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the opening of the net fishing in Rodrigues, he could -

- (a) inform the House of the amount of fish caught this year to date, and
- (b) state the size of the catch at the beginning of the season this year and for the corresponding period last year.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the catches for period 01 to 14 March 2003 amounted to 24,504 kgs and for period 01 to 14 March 2004, it was 73,123 kgs.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to the answer given, we can deduce that the catch has at least trebled. Is that it? So, it is quite surprising to note that, in spite of the figures given, everywhere people have been complaining of not having adequate fish now. Can I take it for granted that these figures are genuine?

The Chief Commissioner: I, myself, Mr Chairperson, Sir, did ask questions about the great difference between 24,000 and 73,000. But, I have been told that for the preceding year 2002 it was about 35,000, and now it is 73,000. I will try to inquire into this and see whether the Statistical Office at the Fisheries is working very well. I don't know whether these fishes are being weighed, and I questioned the Departmental Head about how this happened. We are going to find out.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir...

Mr Chairperson: Is it a supplementary question?

Mr Jabeemissar: Yes, it is the last one. According to the size of the fish that we can see, we note that every year the size is becoming smaller, and we know that our lagoon is overexploited and cannot anymore give what is expected. So, I would ask the Chief Commissioner to tell the House what is his policy concerning the fishing sector, so as to get enough fish for our own consumption without at the same time overexploiting the lagoon.

The Chief Commissioner: I agree with the hon. Member. I think that the problem comes from the question of “*surveillance de la mer*”, and we are trying to solve the problem this year. We are trying to have all the fisheries guards who are posted to fish landing stations transferred at sea to control the lagoon. I think this will help a lot. We have also asked the Commissioner of Police to increase the number of policeman for Rodrigues so as to have more policemen in the National Coast Guard to help the Fisheries Protection Service, so that the lagoon can be well protected in the future.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL & LA FERME AND MT. LUBIN AREA HEALTH CENTRES – PUBLIC TOILETS – ELECTRIC LIGHT

(No. B/419) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether he could inform the House if the toilets found in the compound of Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Health Centres of La Ferme and Mt. Lubin are provided with electric light at night and if not, the reasons therefor.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, all toilets found in the compounds of Queen Elizabeth Hospital, La Ferme and Mt. Lubin Area Health Centres are provided with electric light at night.

Within these compounds, problems are encountered with some public toilets where, on account of repeated acts of vandalism, continuous provision of light at night was found defective.

However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that, at this point of time, electric light will no longer be a problem in all public toilets as my Commission is going ahead with the introduction of private security services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the two Area Health Centres as from April this year. Thus, I am sure such acts of vandalism will be under control.

RODRIGUES - AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

(No. B/420) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the recent survey carried out in connection with agricultural land use in Rodrigues, he could -

- (a) state the number of registered planters;
- (b) inform the House of the total area of land available for agriculture, and
- (c) the area which is now under cultivation of food crops?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that with regard to the recent survey carried out in 2003 in connection with agricultural land use in Rodrigues that -

- (a) the number of persons requesting their registration as planters amounts to 5,015.
- (b) the total area of land available for agriculture and total area under cultivation of food crops is presently being surveyed and mapped. As soon as the exercise is completed, this House will be informed accordingly.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner what is his policy as far as food crop production is concerned so that, not in the long-term but in a rather short-term, we attain self-sufficiency in our food production.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are surveying all the land in Rodrigues, particularly agricultural land. The overall use of mapping the arable land is to allow the Commission to keep a record of total arable land over the island, formulate agricultural policies as

regards leasing of arable land, categorize agricultural land according to their fertility and location, enable proper land management by incorporating the data into the GIS, and also formulate other policies to share land, which are not under cultivation, to young and other persons who have the desire to enter the agricultural profession.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in order to motivate planters, what sort of incentives does the Commissioner propose to give to them?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are having several meetings with planters and we are telling them that they should be grouped, so that clusters of planters be formed, so that more facilities can be granted to them in terms of mechanization, water and infrastructure.

RODRIGUES - VEHICLES - FITNESS TESTS

(No. B/421) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the fitness tests on vehicles in Rodrigues, he could say -

- (a) if the way it is carried out here is the same as in Mauritius;
- (b) how many officers are attached to the service, and
- (c) if the existing structure is adequate to cater for the increasing number of vehicles in Rodrigues and, if not, what alternative measures he proposes to take.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that prior to 1993, the examination of vehicles was performed by Police Officers. However, following the setting up of the National Transport Authority Office in Rodrigues in 1993, and to be in line with the Road Traffic Act, it is required that the Examiner be a qualified person. The only qualified person in the Public Service in Rodrigues is presently the Technical Officer of the Mechanical Workshop. The standard procedures to be followed in respect of the examination of vehicles is similar to that which is applied in Mauritius. Only one officer is attached to the examination of vehicles.

As at 24 February 2004, the vehicle fleet in Rodrigues stood at 4,435. However, only private vehicles which are more than 7 years old, public

service vehicles and carriers vehicles are called for regular examination. An average of six vehicles is being examined daily. The actual situation is considered to be more or less satisfactory. However, in case the vehicle growth rate goes on the upward trend, consideration will be given for additional manpower to cope with the demand.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to the answer given by the Deputy Chief Commissioner, there is only one officer capable of carrying out tests on vehicles. Can he inform the House what happens whenever, for any reason, this officer is not on duty, to those people who bring their vehicles for fitness test on that day?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally when the Technical Officer is on leave, a communiqué is broadcast to inform the public of the date on which fitness tests will be carried out. However, we have taken the decision that, if the leave exceeds 15 days, technical assistance will be sought from Mauritius, from the Ministry for Public Infrastructure.

Mr Jabeemissar: We know that vehicles are being imported at a great speed here and we should prepare ourselves to face the future confidently. So, what does his Commission have in mind in order to cater for the future situations?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Normally, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to examine the roadworthiness of vehicles, the examiner should hold at least a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. However, in Rodrigues, there is one post of Mechanical Engineering and one post of Technical Officer which are vacant for the time being. I would ask the respected Member to perhaps encourage students - as they are teachers - to go and study these fields.

Mr Jabeemissar: I wonder whether the Deputy Chief Commissioner is putting that responsibility on this side of the House only. Is it not the responsibility of the Executive Council to have this policy? Why should we do that?

Mr Chairperson: This is argumentation. Next question.

IN-PATIENT JEAN NOEL ALLAS

(No. B/422) **Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to in-patient Jean Noel Allas who died in January 2004 in doubtful circumstances, he would state -

- (a) when he was admitted in hospital and the reason therefor, and
- (b) give reasons why he died outside hospital premises.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed the following -

- (a) Patient Jean Noel Allas was admitted to the Male Ward of Queen Elizabeth Hospital on Monday 26 January 2004 at 18.25 hours, suffering from bleeding gums. He had a history of chronic alcoholism.
- (b) On Wednesday 28 January 2004, at 9.30 hours in the morning, he absconded from the ward and went missing. The treating doctor, the Nursing Administrator and the Police of Port Mathurin Police Station were immediately informed.

Mr Chairperson: I am limiting the supplementary questions to only one. We have 15 minutes left, and we have thirteen questions. This would be roughly one minute for each question.

Mrs Prosper: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the situation is becoming very dangerous, very serious. It is not the first time that in-patients escape from hospital and die outside. Could the Commissioner inform the House what security measures are being taken?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, actually we are going to fence the area health centres and Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We are having soon, that is, in two weeks' time, security services at the three important institutions, namely Queen Elizabeth, La Ferme and Mont Lubin.

JOURNEE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FEMME 2004

(No. B/423) **Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Family Welfare whether, as regards activities organised for “*Journée Internationale de la Femme 2004*” held on Tuesday 02 March 2004 at Les Cocotiers Hotel, Anse aux Anglais, she would state -

- (a) the amount of money disbursed, and
- (b) whether there was any problem with the sound system and any other shortcomings and, if so, give the reasons therefor.

Mrs Perrine-Begué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the context of the International Women’s Day, a Workshop/Exchange was organised by the Commission for Women Entrepreneurs at Hotel Les Cocotiers on Tuesday 02 March 2004, with the theme “The Challenges for Women’s Entrepreneurship in Rodrigues”.

115 participants attended the workshop. Payment has not yet been effected to the hotel for the organisation of the event.

As a result of a power cut, the sound system did not work properly for some time during the opening ceremony. Corrective action was taken by the hotel by means of a generator and afterwards the sound system was utilised during the whole workshop.

Mrs Prosper: Would the Commissioner state the amount being disbursed, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

Mrs Perrine-Begué: No money has been disbursed yet, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

CEB – NO. OF CONSUMERS, DISCONNECTIONS, ETC...

(No. B/424) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he could obtain information from the Central Electricity Board in Rodrigues about -

- (a) the number of consumers to date, and
- (b) the number of disconnections at households since the setting up of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, I am informed that the number of CEB consumers up to 29 February 2004 is 10,400.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that disconnections of supply following non-payment of account since the setting up of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, that is, from October 2002 to February 2004, are as follows -

- Total number disconnected - 525
- Total number reconnected - 334
- Total number of accounts closed - 191

STATE AND PRIVATE LAND POLICIES

(No. B/425) Mrs M.T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he could inform the House -

- (a) about State and private land policies in Rodrigues for the coming years;
- (b) his policy regarding women as far as State land lease is concerned, and
- (c) table the list of women who have already obtained their land leases and those who have applied for same and are still awaiting a reply.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the policy regarding State land in Rodrigues is spelt out in the National Development Strategy which was finalised and approved by the Government last year. The three main recommendations of the National Development Strategy are that land development in Rodrigues should-

- firstly, not hinder the economic development of the island;
- secondly, not have any adverse effect on the natural environment, and
- thirdly, contribute towards the social progress of the population.

Land allocation and utilisation will, therefore, be made according to the National Development Strategy.

A Draft Outline Scheme is being updated in accordance with the National Development Strategy.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am further informed that Government has commissioned a study to revise the Town & Country Planning Act 1954 as recommended by the National Development Strategy, to facilitate the enforcement of the National Development Strategy.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is no specific policy on private land, which are private properties, which can be used and developed by their respective owners according to existing laws and regulations, such as the Morcellement Act, the Building Act, the Environment Protection Act.

As regards part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is no separate policy regarding women, who are given the same treatment as men as far as allocation of State land lease is concerned.

Concerning part (c) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, a comprehensive list of all women who have obtained a lease is being compiled and will be laid on the Table of the Assembly as soon as it is completed.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand that the Chief Commissioner says that there is no separate policy. But I refer to a communiqué and...

Mr Chairperson: The hon. Member cannot refer to a communiqué, unless she wants to be brief.

Mrs Meunier: It was an official communiqué, where he talked about women's cases being considered before giving them land. Would he give more explanation concerning this matter?

The Chief Commissioner: I shall answer this question whenever the respected Member comes with a substantive question.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER RELIEF FUND

(No. B/426) Mrs M.T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he would inform the House, with regard to the Chief Commissioner's Relief Fund, how much money has been disbursed to date for what purposes.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner Relief Fund has two accounts at Mauritius Commercial Bank and State Commercial Bank.

- | | | |
|---|--|----------------|
| • | Total funds collected at both accounts | Rs2,151,651.63 |
| • | Total funds disbursed from both accounts | Rs1,360,816.86 |
| • | Balance as at 29.02.2004 | Rs 790,833.77 |

The details of the expenses incurred are shown on the Annexes **(Appendix C and D)**. All expenses must have the approval of the Executive Council before disbursement is effected.

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY STAFF – NIGHT DUTY ALLOWANCE

(No. B/427) Mrs M.T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the allowances paid

to civil servants who perform night duty as prescribed by the PRB, he would inform -

- (a) how many civil servants are entitled to receive this allowance;
- (b) how many have already obtained it, and
- (c) the amount of money disbursed to pay same.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as far as part (a) of the question is concerned, the staff of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly who perform night duty and are entitled to night allowance, as recommended as the Pay Research Bureau, are watchmen, nursing staff, firemen, Fisheries Protection Officers, prisons officers and meteorological observers. There are approximately 675 officers who benefit from these allowances.

With regard to part (b) of the question, about 400 Rodrigues Regional Assembly employees have already been paid the night duty allowances, and arrangements are being made to effect payment to the remaining eligible employees, mainly watchmen.

Concerning part (c), the total amount of money disbursed up to end February 2004 amounts to Rs282,105.38.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL – TELEPHONISTS - TRANSFER

(No. B/428) Mrs M.T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether he would inform the House about -:

- (a) the number of telephonists working at Queen Elizabeth Hospital;
- (b) whether there has been any transfer recently, and, if, yes who, and
- (c) what has been the impact on the work performed by telephonists at the hospital.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, there are five telephonists working at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Concerning part (b) of the question, yes, there was a transfer recently. She is Mrs Ivonia Gaspard Spéville.

As regards part (c), work performed by telephonists at the hospital has not been affected by these changes, as Mrs Gaspard Spéville was replaced by Mr Sylvio Cupidon.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can we know where the officer concerned was transferred and for what reasons?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Commission was in receipt of an application from Mrs Ivonia Gaspard Spéville for her transfer. Concurrently, with the establishment of a PABX system at the Human Resource Centre, the services of a telephonist conversant with such a system was required. Approval of all the relevant authorities was sought and obtained for her transfer. I am informed that her application for transfer was subject to giving up some acquired privileges attached to her initial post. As she agreed to give up those privileges, she was offered a transfer to the Human Resource Centre as a Telephonist/Receptionist.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir...

Mr Chairperson: I said only one supplementary. But, the hon. Member is allowed to put the last supplementary.

Mr J. Roussety: I am very much impressed by the facilities that have been extended to this mother and wife. Privileges, I would say, Mr. Chairperson, Sir...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Please wait. Order, please! Order, please!

Mr J. Roussety: Her request has been approved, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Can the Commissioner say whether he will examine requests for transfers of such nature in the future on the same grounds, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have just said, Mrs Gaspard Spéville has given up some acquired privileges attached to her initial post. Par exemple, M. le président, son salaire est diminué, elle ne reçoit aucun *cash allowance in lieu of unutilised sick leave*. The top salary will definitely come down. M. le président, pour répondre à la question du *Leader* de la minorité, si toutefois on a une autre requête, la même procédure sera adoptée, car toutes les procédures ont été suivies. Nous sommes passés par le Civil Service Affairs, par le Island Chief Executive and so on, and we are very satisfied with what we have done.

Mr Chairperson: We are left with two minutes for so many questions, but I have noticed that most of the supplementary questions have come from the Minority side and most of the questions left are in fact from the Members of the minority. So, we are left with two minutes to proceed.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if you allow me, I will take PQ No. B/430.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, of course! The hon. Member can relinquish any question.

FOOTBALL MATCH FOR INDEPENDENCE CUP 2004

(No. B/429) Mr C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports whether, with regard to the St. Etienne S.C. V/ Dragon S.C. football match for the Independence cup 2004, he would state

- (a) what was the final score;
- (b)(i) whether there are representations concerning the match;
- (ii) table the letter of protests and any report made consequently thereon by the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee; and
- (c) what decision has been table by the Committee and the reasons to support same?

(Withdrawn)

DIEGO RODRIGUEZ HOTEL - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/430) Mr C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the Diego Rodriguez Hotel to be built in Fumier, he would state -

- (a) when the letter of application for land lease was received;
- (b) when the letter of intent was addressed to the applicant, and
- (c) the date the State land lease was granted.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the application of Ultra Marine Resorts Ltd, dated 28 November 2002 and addressed to the Minister of Local Government and Rodrigues, was transmitted by the Ministry of Local Government and Rodrigues to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on 10 December 2002. Ultra Marine Resorts Ltd applied for a State land lease at Fumier for the construction of a four-star hotel to be called Don Diego Rodriguez.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the letter of intent was issued on 18 July 2003, while the land lease has not yet been finalised.

Mr Chairperson: Time has elapsed for questions. Next item!

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER

CYCLONE KALUNDE – RECONSTRUCTION WORKS

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a statement to the House.

Following the passage of cyclone Kalunde, I am pleased to inform the House that distribution of materials for the repair of damaged houses has already started since mid February 2004 - one week before the last sitting.

About 1,377 cases were registered and investigated all around the island by officers of my Commission. Sixty-five persons will benefit from a completely new low-cost house. The distribution of materials is being carried out by my Commission under the supervision of an inspectorate staff. The contract for the construction of 65 new low-cost housing has been awarded and the construction of same will start shortly. The cost of materials for repairs amounts to more than Rs2 m., whereas the cost of reconstructing the 65 housing units amount to about Rs9 m., including all labour and material costs. The purchase of the materials have been carried out in accordance with the existing tender procedures. Being given that some of the tenderers have quoted more than the prescribed amount, the whole matter had to be sent to the Central Tender Board. I understand the eagerness of the beneficiaries to obtain all their materials very quickly. However, my Commission is committed to ensure that all tender procedures are strictly adhered to and will activate matters for an early delivery of all materials.

Moreover, my Commission is proceeding ahead with the construction of a track road leading to Mont Malartic to enable better access to the communication equipment found there, especially during rainy and cyclonic condition.

The damaged roofs of the reservoirs at Mourouk, Fond La Digue, Mangues, Citadelle and Anse Quitor are being repaired. Tenders have been launched for a new pumping station and a treatment plant at Telbert, so as to make use of the available water following the desilting of the Telbert Dam. This will no doubt improve water distribution and water quality in the above regions.

Tender for the repair of the damaged stands at Camp du Roi will be launched shortly. I would like to extend my gratitude to the officers of my Commission and those of Youth & Sports for the preparation of the specifications and scope of work for the tender documents. Corrective action to remove all the dump soil following the landslide at Queen Elizabeth Hospital is being taken. Tenders for same have already been launched and the works will start shortly.

The covering and repairs of the second cell of the Citadelle reservoir will be carried out shortly. This, coupled with the large project of installing

primary network, to link reservoirs in the Southern region like Mt. Cabris to Bangelique via Anse Quito, Grand La Fouche Corail to Camp Pintade via Piments, Grand La Fouche Corail to Citadelle, Papayes to Manique via Mangues and Mont du Sable, will no doubt increase the water storage capacity and improve the water supply in the southern region several fold in the very new future.

I would like to reassure this House and the Rodriguan people of the commitment of this governing Executive Council to aim at the betterment of our people.

With these words, I would like to thank you for your attention.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

‘LA TRIBUNE’ WEEKLY NEWSPAPER– ARTICLE

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, I wish to inform the House that I have today received a letter from the Deputy Chief Commissioner to the effect that the weekly newspaper “La Tribune” has published in its issue of 11 March 2004, at page 3, an article reflecting on the conduct and character of the Chairperson under the caption –

“Le Mouvement Rodriguais annonce une manifestation dans les rues de Port Mathurin le samedi 20 mars”.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner is requesting for my ruling as to whether the utter or and the publication have acted and are respectively in breach of Section 65(3) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act and Section 6 of the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act. My reading of the letter of the Deputy Chief Commissioner is that the weekly has published matters which reflect on my conduct as Chairperson, which can amount to an accusation of partiality in the discharge of my duty and equally the person which the weekly attributes to have uttered this in breach Section 6(1)(5) of the National Assembly (Privileges Immunities and Powers) Act -

“uttering or publishing any statement reflecting on the conduct or character of or containing or amounting to an accusation of partiality

in the discharge of his duty by the Speaker, Deputy Speaker or Chairman of any Committee”.

In the light of the above, I feel that there has been a contempt of the Assembly, which justifies a privileged complaint. I would, therefore, invite the Deputy Chief Commissioner to move this House that the matter be referred to the D.P.P for inquiry and for such action as he may deem appropriate.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move for the following motion -

“This Assembly is of the opinion that the article which appeared in the newspaper “La Tribune”, in its issue of Thursday 11 March 2004, at page 3, caption “Le Mouvement Rodriguais annonce une manifestation dans les rues de Port Mathurin le samedi 20 mars” and which reflects on the conduct of the Chairperson during the sitting of 27 February 2004, be and is hereby referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions with a view to determining whether an offence or offences have been committed in breach of 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 newspaper referred to above.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir,...

Mr Chairperson: Any secondment? Please wait.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Mr J. Roussety: On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We have a motion in this House. Under Standing Order 36(1), a notice of motion...

Mr Chairperson: Is the hon. Member challenging...

Mr J. Roussety: No, I am not challenging anything. I am just telling you that there is a motion.

Mr Chairperson: If the hon. Member raises a point of order...

Mr J. Roussety: My point of order is that we have a motion of which we did not have any notice. There was no substantive motion before. Mr Chairperson, Sir, where are we going in this House?

Mr Chairperson: Please wait! Please wait...

Mr J. Roussety: Do we, now, take note of a motion when we come to the House? The motion is on the Table of the Assembly and not on the Order Paper, and you are allowing the motion...

Mr Chairperson: I am calling the Member to order. Please...

Mr J. Roussety: Shame, Mr Chairperson! The motion is coming to the House...

Mr Chairperson: Please, take your seat. I order the hon. Member to take his seat.

Mr J. Roussety: This item is not on the Order Paper! What is this? It must be on the Order Paper! What kind of Assembly do we have? The Standing Orders spells out that a motion must be on the Order Paper.

Mr Chairperson: Minority Leader, this is the last time I ask you to take your seat! We proceed with the motion. This is a procedural motion, where there is no debate. I will have to put the question.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Chairperson: Can we move to the next item on the agenda, please?

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 30 March at 4.00 p.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Mr Chairperson: I understand there is a Member who would wish to make a statement.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to my point of order...

Mr Chairperson: Please wait! The Assembly has already voted a resolution for the House to be adjourned, and now it is statement time! So, if the Member...

Mr J. Roussety: I do have a point of order. A point of order can be raised at any time, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: The point of order is against whom?

Mr J. Roussety: I raised a point of order and, unfortunately, I have not had your ruling on that matter. My point of order is to the effect that there has been a motion before this House, of which notice has not been given to me, as Member of the Regional Assembly, and according to Section 25(1) of our Standing Orders, it is said –

“unless otherwise provided by these Standing Orders, notice shall be given of any motion which it is proposed to make except”

I don't see where the motion fits in all these. So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I cannot ...

Mr Chairperson: I feel warranted to intervene here. Can the hon. Member take his seat? I understand that the Member is basing himself on the wrong document; this is history now. The new Standing Orders provide in Standing Order 25, I quote –

“Unless otherwise provided by these Standing Orders, notice shall be given of any motion which it is proposed to make except a motion relating to a Matter of Privilege.”

I would say that, even if this was not incorporated in our Standing Orders, it has been, over the years, a standard practice in the Parliaments.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to differ...

Mr Chairperson: This is my final decision on the matter. I am not going to accept any point of order on this issue.

Mr J. Roussety: I understand your point that motions can be allowed for...

Mr Chairperson: Please take your seat!

Mr J. Roussety: I understand...

Mr Chairperson: I order the hon. Member to take his seat!

Mr J. Roussety: I will not take my seat, because you are wrong and you are escaping things! Doing things wrongly in this House...

Mr Chairperson: I take it that the Member is challenging the authority of the Chair, even though the Assembly has already been adjourned.

Mr J. Roussety: I am trying to explain...

Mr Chairperson: I am ordering the Member to withdraw from this House. I order him to withdraw from this House again, and I instruct the Serjeant-at-Arms to execute my order. I suspend the Assembly.

At 3.00 p.m the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 3.10 p.m with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr Chairperson: I take it that this Assembly has been suspended for ten minutes and we have now 30 minutes for adjournment matters. Does anybody want to raise a matter at adjournment time? As there is none, the House stands adjourned.

At 3.15 p.m, the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 30 March at 4.00 p.m.

Debate No 02 of 16.03.04

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

JUDO – AMOUNT DISBURSED & CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

(No. B/431) Mr C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports whether, with regard to Judo in Rodrigues, he would state -

- (a) the amount of money disbursed on Judo after the J.I.O.I to date, and
- (b) table the calendar of activities for the same period.

Reply: The answer is as follows -

- (a) the amount of money disbursed for judo after JIOI is Rs85,650.40

(b)

DATE	MANIFESTATION	LIEU
16 November 2003	Participation of Judokas in Championship in Mauritius	Dojo GRNW Mauritius
22 November 2003	<i>Regroupement des écoles</i>	Malabar Gymnasium
31 January 2004	<i>Formation Arbitre</i>	Malabar Gymnasium
14 February 2004	Competition for Poussin, Benjamin, Minimes, Cadet, Junior, Senior	Malabar Gymnasium
07 March 2004	<i>Tournoi de l'Independence</i> All categories	Malabar Gymnasium
12 March 2004	Participation of our judokas in <i>Championnat International</i> in Mauritius	Dojo of GRNW

RODRIGUES – FOREIGN WORKERS

(No. B/432) Mr C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he would state the number of foreign workers in Rodrigues, their distribution employer-wise, and the reasons they have been allowed to work here.

Reply: The Rodrigues Regional Assembly does not keep a time record of all foreign workers presently working in Rodrigues.

Normally, any foreign worker must have a work permit and residence permit issued by the authorities in Mauritius. Once these permits obtained, the foreign workers may come to work to Rodrigues with the companies who have applied for their permits. This applies to the Indian and Chinese workers of Allied Builders Ltd and PADCO Ltd who number 24 and 25 respectively.

There are also some other foreigners who have obtained their work permit and residence permits specifically for Rodrigues – they operate in the tourism sector (pleasure craft, hotels etc) or in the environment sector (Shoals Rodrigues etc).

AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

(No. B/433) Mr Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to difficulties faced by farmers, he could state -

- (a) how many farmers have been registered by the Agricultural Service for the year 2002 and table their names;
- (b) how many of them have been qualified as professional farmers and table their names, and
- (c) when will the latter receive their professional card.

Reply: No registration exercise has been carried out by the Agricultural Services in 2002. The question of how many of them have been qualified as professional farmers and when they will receive their professional card does not arise.

ORANGE/ CHATEAU D'EAU & BAIE AUX HUITRES TO FOND LA BONTÉ ROADS - UPGRADING

(No. B/434) Mr Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in view of difficulties faced by bus owners to operate along the road from Orange to Chateau d'Eau and from Baie aux Huitres to Fond la Bonté, he could state -

- (a) what is the breadth of these two roads, and
- (b) if he intends to take immediate action to remedy this situation.

Reply: The width of the road from Orange/Chateau D'eau varies from 4 to 5.5 m and that from Baie aux Huitres to Fond La Bonté varies from 3 to 5.5 m. I am further informed that there are existing lay-bys along both roads.

Subject to availability of funds, the upgrading of both roads will be looked into during next financial year.

CYCLONE KALUNDE – DAMAGED HOUSES – REPAIR

(No. B/435) Mr Guillaume (Third Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could state -

- (a) in view of the fact that a number of victims of cyclone Kalundé have not yet received any assistance from the authorities to either repair or rebuild their houses, what he intends to do about it, and
- (b) if he will table the names of those who have received or will receive some form of assistance.

Reply: With requests to part (a) of the question, I would refer the respected Member to my previous reply to questions B/407 and B/412.

As regards part (b) of the question, it is considered premature to table the list of all those who have received or will receive some form of

assistance for the time being. If need be, the whole list will be tabled after all assistance would have been provided.