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STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER

Commissioner of Youth & Sports - capital expenditure

COVER

Deb. No. 06 of 27.04.04

Rodrigues Regional Assembly

27 April 2004

QUESTIONS (*Oral*)

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER

MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

POULTRY BREEDING - ACTIVITIES

(No. B/436) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for trade whether complaints have been received regarding the reluctance of local traders to purchase '*Poulet Local, Rodriguais*' and, if such is the case, what he intends to do to encourage the breeders to continue with their poultry breeding activity.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am sorry. I have forgotten the reply to the question at my office. I will do it at a later stage.

Mr Chairperson: Is the Commissioner not in a position to answer the question?

Mr Lisette: Unfortunately, I have forgotten the answer, but I will do it at a later stage.

Mr Chairperson: I see that members on the other side are smiling. May we have an indication as to when the reply will be made available?

Mr Lisette: Once I get it, I'll give the reply to the House, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: This answers the qualms of the Minority Leader. Let us move to the next question, please.

(See answer after PQ No. B/439)

FEMALE FOOTBALL TEAMS - FACILITIES

(No. B/437) Mr J.C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner of Youth & Sports whether, with regard to Rodriguan female football teams, he could state the number thereof and if the same facilities are offered to them comparable to those offered to their male counterparts and, if not, why.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that there are presently 17 female football teams affiliated to the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee. During a round table that I had with the Rodrigues Football Committee and representatives of all clubs in December last, it was agreed that female teams may be considered on the same footing as a regional club. Formerly, these female teams were involved in only two tournaments, but as from this year an additional Republic Cup tournament has been set up for them.

The female teams are provided with the same facilities as their male counterparts and they are considered on the same footing as the regional male clubs. As proof, not later than two weeks back, all female teams that are affiliated with the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee have been provided with a grant-in-aid of Rs6,000 per team. With regard to their prizes, they are rewarded on the same basis as any regional male team.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been to La Ferme to watch the match for the Republic Cup and I have not seen the female football team playing. Can I ask whether the match for the Republic Cup has already been played or not?

Mr Lisette: I am referring to any Republic tournament, for example, volleyball. Normally, the tournament is played within a period of time. It may be before or after 12 March. In the case of female teams, the tournament is still going on and I have been informed that the final will be played in the next coming weeks.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I referred to the facilities. As we all know, matches are being played at Camp du Roi and people have to pay gate money. Can the Commissioner say what is the ratio of the gate money that the female team gets?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a well-known fact to all the stakeholders that 25% of the gate money collected goes to each team. It means 25% goes to team A, 25% to team B, 25% to the regional football committee, and 25% to the *comité de gestion*. It is clear that 50% of the money collected go to the respective teams, which are going to participate in the match.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is not the case. My information is that the female teams have not received any gate money. Will the Commissioner confirm that fact?

Mr Lisette: I confirm, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that a decision has been taken to give 50% of the money to the different female teams whenever they participate in tournaments in the stadium. But it is to be noted that the money given to the regional football committee is collected by them and is provided at the appropriate time.

Mr Agathe: M. le président, vous savez que nous cherchons la perfection en ce qui concerne le football. Deux *sport coaches* ont été nommés pour former les jeunes. Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire si les *sport coaches* entraînent aussi les dames?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commission has set up the *Ecole de foot, le centre de formation*, the Rodrigues Junior Team. These structures fall under the aegis of the Commission for Sports. Each club should find its own coach. I believe that it is a universal concept that each club should have its own coach. If a technical advice is required, I do not see any problem to send the coaches to the different clubs, provided that this does not impinge on their professional activities.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, my question is clear: do the sport coaches train also female teams?

Mr Lisette: We do not have any *école de sport* for female on the island.

Mr Agathe: It is a fact that the sport coaches do not train the female.

Mr Chairperson: Is the Member stating it as a fact?

Mr Agathe: Yes, from what the Commssioiner has said.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Next question, please!

TRADE LICENCES - APPLICATIONS

(No. B/438) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner for Trade and Commerce whether he could, for the benefit of the House, state -

- (a) how many applications for trade licences his Commission had received since the beginning of the year 2003;

- (b) the number he has acceded to, and
- (c) the grounds on which the others had been objected to.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), I have been informed that 197 applications for trade licences have been received by my Commission since the beginning of 2003.

As regards part (b), 115 of these applications have been favourably considered and 67 are still under consideration.

As regards part (c), 15 applications have been set aside since my Commission has received unfavourable recommendations from the relevant authorities, mainly, the Police and the Health Departments. The Police normally places an unfavourable recommendation when they feel that the proposed activity represents a threat to public security, order and safety, whereas the Health Department places an objection when it is felt that the proposed activity represents a threat to public health, that is, the place is not hygienically fit for that purpose. It is to be noted also that some of the premises proposed for carrying on a trade do not meet the structural basic requirements for securing the safety of the employees as well as for the public.

Mr Agathe: Can the Commissioner say which authorities are concerned for the approval of trade licences?

Mr Lisette: It depends, Mr Chairperson, Sir, on the trade licence that the person is applying for. Normally, we need recommendations from the Police, the Fire Services and the Health Department. But, as per the Tourism Act of 2002, now with the setting up of the Tourism Committee in Rodrigues, we need recommendations from the Tourism Committee also.

Mr Agathe: Is it true to say that most of the objections for a trade license come from the Commission of Trade and Licence?

Mr Lisette: I have said, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that, whenever we are dealing with an application for a trade licence, we need to have recommendations from the different authorities. If the recommendations are unfavourable, it is for my Commission to object to the grant of such a licence. It is my Commission which represents the Licensing Authority. It is my Commission which deals with the Police, the Fire Services or the Health Department. Upon receipt of the recommendations from these authorities,

my Commission informs the applicant whether his application has been approved or rejected.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, whenever an application has not been acceded to, can we know whether there is any ground of appeal for the applicant and, if yes, what are the procedures?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally, the person sends his application to the Commission. We then send it to the different authorities that visit the place where the trade is to be carried out. The representatives of these authorities meet the applicant and he is informed of the reason as to why his application has been rejected.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Commissioner confirm whether most of the objections on the part of the Commissioner of Trade are mostly based on state land lease?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a fact that if a person does not hold a lease for a specific purpose, it is clear that he will not be able to carry out the activity. Normally, when the person comes to the Commission, we look at the lease produced and we check whether the activity applied for appears on the lease. It is clearly specified on the lease the type of commercial activities that are allowed to be carried out by the person.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if there are so many applicants applying for a trade licence, it is because in Rodrigues there is an unemployment problem. These persons are trying to stand on their feet. The fact that many applications cannot be considered is a serious problem and in order to avoid such frustration on the part of the applicants, I would ask the Commissioner if he intends to launch an information campaign on the criteria and procedures to be followed for the granting of a trade licence and what they should do in case their application is rejected.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not agree with the Member when he said that many applications are being rejected. From the information that I have here, out of 197 applications, 115 have been acceded to, 67 are still under consideration and it does not mean that they are going to be objected to. We have objected only to 15 applications that have been sent to the Commission. These 15 objections can be due to unhygienic conditions prevailing on the premises or they do not meet the requirements as to safety. I do not think that, because of these problems, applications should not be sent to my Commission. It should be made clear that whenever somebody makes an application at my Commission there is an

officer who explains to the person the different requirements that he has to satisfy in order to obtain the licence.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, some people came to me. For example, in the Commission, there are objections referring to state land lease. Can I name some persons, with your permission, Sir?

Mr Chairperson: Unless the question will be unintelligible without the names, otherwise the Member can put his question.

Mr J. Roussety: There are two persons, one from Mont Piment ..

Mr Chairperson: There is no need to cite, I think, in these particular circumstances. The Member may just enumerate the circumstances, the matters, objections or whatever.

Mr Agathe: Some people have got their state land lease, that is, residential cum commercial. They have got a receipt for that, but there are still objections on the part of the Commissioner for Trade regarding the permit.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not know about the specific case the Member just mentioned, but it is clear that when we have a residential cum commercial lease, there are certain activities that can be carried out at the residential lease. If it is felt that the proposed activity is going to cause harm to the people living in the surrounding, it is clear and certain that the environmental office will object to that application, because it is found in a residential area. Concerning that specific case, I do not have an answer right now, but I think that I have provided the information.

Mr Chairperson: The Member may proceed if he wants to draw the attention of the House concerning that specific case. The Member may put his question if he so wishes or otherwise we will move to the next question.

PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT - PASSENGER LOUNGE

(No. B/439) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether the present structure of the passenger lounge at Plaine Corail Airport caused any inconvenience to passengers during windy and rainy weather, and if yes, what measures were being taken or intended to remedy same.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the passenger terminal at Plaine Corail Airport is owned and managed by Airport of Rodrigues Ltd. a public company and as such the Rodrigues Regional

Assembly does not have any responsibility in the day to day running of the airport.

However, I am informed that right from the beginning the project architects had favoured an open concept design to give a unique sensation of proximity, conviviality between passengers and well wishers and part of the departure hall was left open for aesthetic and comfort purposes.

I am also informed that during windy and rainy spells, there is some inconvenience to departing passengers in the hall and Airport of Rodrigues Ltd then makes alternative arrangements to move the persons inside. Normally, the inconvenience is not major at Plaine Corail area as it does not have many rainy and windy periods over the year.

Airport of Rodrigues Ltd. will look for any remedial measures deemed necessary. The consultants will visit Rodrigues on Thursday 29 April 2004, to advise Airport of Rodrigues Ltd.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Chief Commissioner confirm that Airport of Rodrigues is a public company?

The Chief Commissioner: As I said, the passenger terminal at Plaine Corail Airport is owned and managed by Airport of Rodrigues Ltd. as a public company and as such the Regional Assembly does not have any responsibility in the day to day running of the airport.

Mr J. Roussety: I do not think, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that Airport of Rodrigues Ltd. is a public company because, to my knowledge, it is not listed on the stock exchange. I believe it is rather a private company. I would invite the Chief Commissioner to confirm that. Can he tell us, Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given the strategic importance of the airport in Rodrigues, who are the shareholders of this private company? It is a private company.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of this question. I'll come with a statement in the future.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am aware that some of the shareholders are the Government of Mauritius, Airport of Mauritius and governmental and semi-governmental organisations. What is the stand of the Chief Commissioner regarding the participation of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the shareholding of that private company?

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

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, was the Regional Assembly in a way or another associated ...

Mr Chairperson: Minority Leader, your question is quite pertinent indeed, but I have to give a ruling whether it falls within the ambit of the original question. Please, proceed.

Mr J. Roussety: Thank you. I hope I will get an answer.

I would like to know whether there has been any consultation with the Government in Rodrigues when that airport was being constructed as to the proper design concerning the comfort and convenience of passengers. Passengers waiting at the airport are feeling very uncomfortable during rainy days. It is a new airport; I know that it is not his responsibility. But has there been any consultation with the Government?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must tell the Minority Leader that the construction of the airport started just before 03 October 2002.

Mr J. Roussety: Will the Chief Commissioner look into the possibility of requesting the Government of Mauritius to transfer the shares or part of the shares to the Regional Assembly? We have got our autonomy and it is our duty to look into the matter. Since the Airport of Rodrigues Ltd owns the airport I think it would have been quite proper that the Regional Assembly holds the shareholdings. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act says that all property vested in the State of Mauritius would be transferred to the Regional Assembly. So, will the Chief Commissioner look into the possibility of bringing that ownership to the Regional Assembly?

The Chief Commissioner: The Minority Leader has asked a lot of questions concerning that matter and I will come with a statement.

Mr Chairperson: I understand that the Commissioner for Trade will be available to answer Question B/436. Can we revert back to question B/436 from hon. Member for Maréchal, please?

POULTRY BREEDING ACTIVITIES

(No. B/436) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner for Trade whether complaints have been received regarding the reluctance of local traders to purchase '*poulet local, Rodriguais*' and, if such is the case, what he intends to do to encourage the breeders to continue with their poultry breeding activity.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has received no written complaint regarding the reluctance of local traders to buy '*poulet local Rodriguais*', but upon the content of the question and information

received from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation, it is understood that the source of the problem, if any, might be from the rules that must be applied during the storage and transportation of the fowls from Rodrigues to Mauritius by sea.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that exporters of fowls from Rodrigues to Mauritius must not overcrowd the baskets and should observe the rules based on international ones, that is, enough space per fowl. These rules were implemented as from the year 1994 and a notice was brought to the attention of those concerned by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation. Some time ago, the Corporation was informed by the Mauritius Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (MSPCA) that these rules were not being observed. Acting upon this, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation actualise these rules and make sure that they are being observed and applied and as a consequence prevent the local traders of fowls from maintaining their cruel habit of overcrowding the baskets disrespecting basic and clear rules in sea transportation for animals.

Furthermore, it has been brought to the notice of the Corporation by MSPCA officials who are working and monitoring the situation ashore in Rodrigues that the fowl's baskets are filled up days in advance.

As a result of all the reasons stated above, the Mauritius Shipping Corporation has no other option than to instruct Masters on their vessels to reject overcrowded fowls basket. Obviously, the local traders seem not to be happy about this decision because the number of fowls is now less per basket than tolerated before despite previous clear indications given to them.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it should be noted that *poulet local Rodriguais* will still be shipped to Mauritius provided that the basic rules are observed. Local farmers should be encouraged as far as possible to group themselves in co-operatives so they may no longer be under the mercy of the few local buyers. And as a consequence they may dictate their conditions while selling their products.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has taken the wise decision of regrouping breeders into co-operatives, but if the breeders are left to themselves they will not be able to set up their own co-operatives. They need to be supported. Since this decision has been applied, it is unbearable to see the sufferings of our local breeders. What does the Commissioner intend to do to encourage these breeders to set up their co-operatives?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are a caring Government. I can assure the hon. Member that we do feel the sufferings of the different breeders. But I should bring to the notice of the Member that at our level we

have started a series of meetings with the poultry breeders; and I am liaising right now with the Commission responsible for Agriculture to meet these breeders in order to help them in the setting up of their associations or co-operatives.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning these exporters, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he has received any notice from the Mauritius Shipping Company on that matter before the rules were really applied?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have stated in my answer the rules exist as far back as 1994 and the exporters from Rodrigues were aware of them, but they were not complying to. At the level of my Commission I did not receive any notice from the Mauritius Shipping Corporation and I do not see the need for it. If somebody has to be informed it should be the buyers who are contradicting the international rights.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it seems that the Commissioner is concerned with applying rules and not with helping the breeders to sell their produce. Their problem is not the application of rules though from a point of view it is important, but the fact is that the breeders are not able to sell their produce. They are being deprived of this revenue. This income is important for them; they need it to earn a living, to buy books and to send their children to school. Rules have to be applied, because, as the Commissioner has said, we cannot carry on with cruelty towards animals. I was myself very much surprised about the way these fowls are sent to Mauritius. We agree that laws, rules and international conventions must be applied. Can I ask him, as Commissioner responsible for Trade and Commerce, whether at the level of his Commission, there has been an analysis of the impact of this measure? For example, has he noticed, as a result of this measure being implemented, that there has been an increase in cost of shipping these fowls to Mauritius and has he examined the possibility of giving subsidies on baskets to help local producers, Mr Chairperson, Sir? Has he looked into that possibility and, if not, will he look into the possibility of introducing subsidies per basket of fowls sent to Mauritius to help these local producers? The role of the Local Government is to help local producers. Will he look into that matter and will he go ahead with a complete analysis of the socio-economic impact of these measures of the local fowl industry?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I feel that we should not jump to conclusion that we should provide for subsidy. We should, Mr Chairperson, Sir, at the first instance, look at the matter straightforwardly. The problem that we are facing right now is that local breeders are not willing to bring poultry to Mauritius. As I have said before, when we are going to set up

these co-operatives, an association with the poultry breeders, these persons will be in a possibility to sell their products to Mauritius. So, as a consequence, the question of subsidy, at this level, does not arise.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it seems that the Commissioner does not understand this problem. There are buyers who are prepared to buy, but because of the new regulations these buyers are faced with an increase in cost. They have to put a limited number of fowls in every basket. So, the problem is a problem of cost. They are prepared to export but the cost is too high. This is why they have stopped the transaction for they do not get any profit. It is the role of Government to intervene, Mr Chairperson, Sir, because there has been an increase in cost. With the setting up of co-operatives, their problem of organisation will be solved, but the problem of cost will remain. This is why I am asking the Commissioner to look into subsidising the exports of fowls. They do not need to pay Rs1000 per basket. It could be a difference in cost between the old and new cost of exporting. Mr Chairperson, Sir, the role of Government is to help local production. If you look at big countries, I know I am going a bit far, but allow me to put one more question....

The Chief Commissioner: On a point of order, the Minority Leader is making a speech. He should put his question.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, the Chief Commissioner is right on this point. So, I rule accordingly.

Mr J. Roussety: It is a speech to which everybody was attentive. What I wanted to say, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is that compared to large countries, the USA, for example, largely subsidise their sectors of production. We, in Rodrigues, we do not do it. Will the Commissioner try to look into subsidising the export of fowls in Rodrigues? It is a fiscal policy, Sir.

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

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to the shipping rules that have been set up, local *poulet* was sold at Rs45 half a kilo. Nowadays, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the price is Rs15 half a kilo. Is it a type of incentive the Commissioner is giving to the breeders?

Mr Chairperson: Please wait. The Member has stated something. I do not understand the gist of the question. Can he state it clearly?

Mr Agathe: Is it an incentive that the Commissioner is giving to the breeders?

Mr Lisette: Can the Member be clear in his question?

Mr Chairperson: You have not yet understood the question. Can it be asked anew?

Mr Agathe: We have some breeders who have contracted money from funding agencies, like "*l'évé, déboute*" and are having great difficulties to refund now. What step is the Commissioner taking to help these breeders?

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are going to liaise with the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture to sort out the problem because it is a question that deals with poultry breeders.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, due to the delay in the selling of the local *poulet*, there is also the problem of diseases. What does the Commissioner intend to do in order to help these breeders?

Mr Chairperson: This can't be allowed. This is far from the original question. If you want to follow this line, you may give notice of the question. Next question, please.

HIV AIDS - SENSITISATION & AWARENESS PROGRAMMES

(No. B/440) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether there has been any recent case of HIV/AIDS here, and if yes, what measures he was taking to avoid a recrudescence of the disease.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, one case of HIV/AIDS has been detected in Rodrigues recently. In order to avoid recrudescence of the disease, the following measures are being taken -

First, intensive sensitisation and awareness programmes are being organised by the Rodrigues AIDS Committee with the collaboration of the Youth Services and other stakeholders such as the Mauritius Family Planning Association (MFPA), the *Action Familiale* and Village Committees. The most vulnerable groups such as youths are being targeted. To date 35 awareness sessions have been organised with out-of-school youths, unwed mothers, college students and workers of both the public and private sectors. These programmes are ongoing and emphasis is being laid on the preventive approach.

Second, training programmes on management of the disease and counselling skills have been developed for Nursing Officers and the youths respectively. The youths that have been trained are now acting as peer educators and are organising regular awareness programmes through the Youth Counselling Service.

Third, systematic surveillance programme to screen all blood donors, pregnant women attending antenatal clinics, foreign workers, volunteers on request and those undergoing pre-employment check-ups have been developed.

Fourth, I have liaised with the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life with a view to developing a long-term strategic plan specific for Rodrigues to combat AIDS. This will allow a holistic and a more integrated approach in the fight against the disease.

Mrs Prosper: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning transfusion of blood, is there a qualified person to monitor the situation?

Mr Sooprayen: Yes, everything is done. We have a qualified person here and the blood is being examined in Mauritius. Everything is done at the right level.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, a new case has been detected. What has been done with the person who is HIV positive? What measures have been taken?

Mr Sooprayen: After screening, when a person is found to be HIV positive, he is sent to Mauritius.

Mr J. Roussety: Has that person been sent to Mauritius against her will or was he forced to do so?

Mr Sooprayen: The person has been sent for treatment in Mauritius.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, it seems that there is a problem because persons who are HIV positive have not already developed AIDS. Will the Commissioner send everybody who becomes ill in Rodrigues, that is, HIV positive, to Mauritius each and every time?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I inform the House that the person, in particular, is pregnant and as such she has to be sent to Mauritius for delivery.

Mr J. Roussety: Emphasis is being laid on the preventive approach, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I agree with the Commissioner for Health that as far as possible we must take precautionary measures such as good living practices, but in Rodrigues there has been a change in the social ways of living whereby young men and young women....

Mr Chairperson: No speech please! Be brief.

Mr J. Roussety: It is not a speech. Young men and young girls are having sexual intercourse at a very early stage. It is like that when a country develops. The World Health Organisation has recommended the distribution of condoms as a sure means of prevention. What is being done at the level of the Commission for encouraging its use and distribution around the island? Nothing is being done.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have just said in my answer, the *Action Familiale* and the Family Planning are doing their best to help these people and with the strategic plan that we will be setting, everything will be done. We are doing our job. I wish to inform the House that as from now, as a member of the National AIDS Committee, this will help Rodrigues a lot.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Health said earlier on, that screening is done on pregnant women and volunteers, but this does not reach the whole population. I know that for other diseases the *caravane de la santé* does the screening in villages. Can he consider doing screening for AIDS as well with the *caravane de la santé*?

Mr Sooprayen: Sir, this decision will have to be taken nationally.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Commissioner say whether there is any treatment for HIV patients in Rodrigues?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: No insinuation, please! Proceed.

Mr J. Roussety: The question is: what treatment is available in Rodrigues to persons who are HIV positive or who have developed AIDS?

Mr Sooprayen: Sir, I need notice of the question.

PIG & POULTRY BREEDERS - REMEDIAL MEASURES

(No. B/441) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade Commerce & Licensing whether he was aware of the difficulties faced by pig and poultry breeders to sell their produce and, if yes, what measures he intended to take to remedy same.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the reply about the difficulties faced by poultry breeders and the measures to be taken has been provided in PQ No. B/436. As regards the pork sector, it is a known fact that commercialisation of pigs is not regulated and buyers and sellers come to mutual agreement on price and other sale conditions. Very often, the farmers find themselves at the mercy of buyers who dictate their own terms. Producers should be encouraged as far as possible to group themselves in associations so that they may operate together and, as a consequence, have more bargaining power.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, when formerly I raised a question in this House concerning the difficulties faced by pig breeders to sell their produce, the Deputy Chief Commissioner informed the House that he would come with some measures, in order to help breeders to sell their produce locally. I would now ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether they have already been initiated and, if not, when.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't recall the question.

Mr Chairperson: I think the question was addressed to the Deputy Chief Commissioner who gave an extensive answer. It was the Commissioner for Agriculture who answered the question.

Mr Lisette: The question was addressed to the Chief Commissioner and I don't remember what was the content of the question, and so it is quite difficult for me to reply.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said that he is encouraging pig breeders to group themselves in co-operatives. I would like to ask him what is the role of his Commission, and what facilities are being offered by the Commission for the grouping of these pig breeders.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as you can see, it is a question related to pig breeders and co-operatives. There are two Commissions. One deals with agriculture (pig breeders) and the other one with the setting up of co-operatives. With regard to the question raised and the answer given, the

Commissioner responsible for Agriculture and the Commissioner responsible for Co-operatives are going to liaise, so that they may settle these matters, and the policies undertaken.

FINANCE SECTION, CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION –

LEAKAGE OF INFORMATION

(No. B/442) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he could inform the House if there had been any leakage of information from the Finance Section of Central Administration lately and, if yes, the nature of the leakage, and whether an inquiry was being conducted.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has been a leakage of information from the Finance Section of the Central Administration and three Rodrigues Regional Assembly documents have been reproduced in the newspaper 'Ici Rodrigues' in its edition of 10 April 2004.

A request has been made to the Police on Thursday 22 April 2004 to investigate this matter, as there has been breach of Chapter 2, Section 6: Security of the Personnel Management Manual.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is a very serious matter, namely information from Central Administration being made public. And it is not any information! Is he sure that there has been only one leakage of information, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

Mr Chairperson: He said that there were three documents.

Mr J. Roussety: He said there was one leakage involving three documents. Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner sure that there has been only one leakage? Because, may be, there have been others, and his Administration would have to be blamed.

The Chief Commissioner: I have given the answer according to the question. There has also been an internal inquiry concerning security in the Finance Section of the Rodrigues Administration.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner & Commissioner responsible for Central Administration seems to be sure that it is from the Finance Section of the Central Administration that the leakage occurred. How can he be sure? He says that now there is an inquiry, whilst they have already pointed at the Finance Section. Has the file in which these

documents were been at the Finance Section only or has it been circulated at the Registry, at his office, at the office of the Island Executive or at another office? Has the file been at the Finance Section only or has it left the section? Is it possible that this file has left the Finance Section?

The Chief Commissioner: The documents were stamped and paid by the Finance Section.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it was stamped and paid, but what about the letters? In the newspaper, I see that there is a letter...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I do my job. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have with me a copy of letter signed by Mrs l'Evêque and Mr Auguste, which has been sent to the Senior Finance Officer. Can the Commissioner tell us where this letter has been sent? Is it at the Administration?

Mr Chairperson: Can we circulate the letter, so that the Commissioner can identify which document the Member is referring to? Letter is tabled – Appendix A.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, after the publication of the documents in the newspaper, the Island Chief Executive made an inquiry about how things are going on and a request has been made to the Police to inquire into the matter. I think that, after this incident, more security measures will have to be taken in the Central Administration with regard to documents.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Chief Commissioner confirm that...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Commissioner confirm that whenever there is a letter, which is sent to the Administration, like the one that has been signed by the two persons I mentioned earlier, it must first go to the Registry of the Administration?

Mr Chairperson: This is day to day administration, unless the Chief Commissioner would give an answer.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are in the Assembly, and we need to know whether, whenever any letter is received by the

Administration - if he is aware - it has to go first to the Registry of the Administration.

The Chief Commissioner: The question is about a document from the Finance Section, whereas for documents going here and there, it is a question of administrative procedures.

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

Mr Chairperson: The question is whether the Chief Commissioner is aware of the different stages a document has to go through.

The Chief Commissioner: I mentioned the different steps and procedures.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, so, the Chief Commissioner confirms that the documents were not only at the Finance Section. He said that they go here and there. These documents have circulated. Anybody in the Administration could have taken these documents and leaked them to the press. So, it is not good to blame the Finance Section, because the inquiry is not yet over. They say that the Police are conducting an inquiry and they come here and blame the Finance Section as well as all the persons working there. Is he sure that it is the Finance Section? How can he come here, while the inquiry is ongoing, and say that the Finance Section is to be blamed?

Mr Chairperson: Please, this is question time.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, it is!

The Chief Commissioner: We did not blame the Finance Section.

Mr J. Roussety: This is what the Chief Commissioner said!

The Chief Commissioner: I mentioned a leakage of information from the Finance Section of the Central Administration. The documents come from the Finance Section; it is a question of payment. We know that these documents can go through the Registry and any other department of the Administration. The Police are going to inquire about the leakage of the documents not only from the Finance Section but into all the different stages these documents have gone through.

RODRIGUES FOOTBALL TEAM - COACH

(No. B/443) Mr L. P. François (First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports

whether, as regards the Rodrigues Football Team, which had been set up recently, he could inform the House –

- (a) who is responsible for the coaching of the team, and
- (b) what are the facilities extended to the players and those concerned.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee has appointed Mr Raphaël Spéville to coach the Rodrigues Football Team, which has been set up recently.

Mr Spéville holds a *Brevet d'Etat de Cadre Sportif*, certificate level 2. Mr Spéville is an experienced coach and has been training local teams for many years.

As regards part (b) of the question, my Commission is agreeable to the provision of the following facilities requested by the Regional Football Committee, namely –

- (i) basic equipment for training sessions;
- (ii) transport facilities after training sessions, and
- (iii) refreshment after training sessions.

RODRIGUES – CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT – CONSULTANT

(No. B/444) Mr L. P. François (First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible, *inter alia*, for Cultural Matters whether, as regards matters concerning cultural development in Rodrigues, she could say if her Commission had the intention to recruit an expert for this purpose and, if yes, what will be the scope of his work.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the reply is in the affirmative. The services of a consultant will be enlisted for a study on cultural development and promotion of cultural industries in Rodrigues.

The scope of the consultant's assignment is as follows –

- (i) to undertake an audit of contemporary culture in Rodrigues;
- (ii) to define the cultural policy of Rodrigues with reference to its linguistic, sociological, historical and geographical specificities;

- (iii) to spell out details of this policy in the context of education, training and creativity in the various educational, artistic and handicraft fields;
- (iv) to recommend the necessary means of implementing this policy, in terms of finance, materials, human resource and infrastructure, and
- (v) to set a time frame of some four to five years for decision making on cultural policy.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can we know why we need the services of an expert in Rodrigues for a study on cultural development? At her Commission, they need an expert for a study on cultural development. Can we know, first, what is the urgency of such a study? Second, what is the need for an expert and, third, what is the amount being earmarked for that study?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I did not get the second part of the question.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I know what is the sum earmarked for that study?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we launched tenders at local, national and international levels for the recruitment of this expert. We think that it is important for us, as culture is one of our economic policies. As I said, it was disregarded in the past and cultural industries did not contribute to the socioeconomic development in Rodrigues. I am responsible for culture in Rodrigues, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and I think that this regional Government has the responsibility to give full possibility to all the areas of responsibilities that have been given to us to develop to their full swing. It is in this perspective that we are taking an expert to help us devise policies, mainly with regard to the cultural economic perspective of our industries in Rodrigues. We are paying the consultants as per the tenders sent. Actually, we received seven offers and the best one was Rs500,000. Half of that sum will be paid by the French Embassy and the other half by my Commission, under the item 'Promotion for Arts & Culture in Rodrigues'.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, what is the urgency of spending Rs500,000 on such a study?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a question of policy. If, for the Minority group, culture is of no importance, as it is...

Mr J. Roussety: The Commissioner is imputing motives to our group and this is out of order, because culture is important for us. I would request her...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please! The Minority Leader is on his feet.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner is imputing that culture is not important for us. This is not true, Mr Chairperson, Sir! Our problem is from a financial point of view, namely if it is necessary to spend Rs500,000 on a study. The Commissioner cannot say that culture is not important for us. This is an offence towards the Minority group. It is we who promote culture here! So, this is out of order, and I would request you, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to give your ruling on this.

Mr Chairperson: There has been a statement made by the Commissioner as part of her answer to your question. I understand that the statement was directed against a group. The Standing Orders give protection to any attack, personal or otherwise, against a Member. This is what democracy stands for. It is an attack against a group. This statement will not be offending any section of the Standing Orders. But, of course, the Commissioner has to refrain from making any personal attack against any specified Member in this Assembly. You can proceed with your answer, Commissioner.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: I have already replied to the question, Sir.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, what will be the duration of that study? Will that expert work independently? What is the time frame for that study?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the expert will work for six months on the study.

Mr J. Roussety: What is the expected output out of the study, out of Rs500,000 being spent?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have already answered this part of the question, when I said that, first, this expert will undertake - and this has never been done in Rodrigues - an audit of our contemporary culture in Rodrigues. We are starting anew; we are opening a new page in our development, which is called our autonomy, and it is very strategic and very important for us to know what we have done in the cultural sector and where we are going. An audit is very important for us, as a kick-off exercise. Second, there will be an Action Plan on four to five years for

policy in cultural development, as well as improvement of cultural policies in Rodrigues.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given the wide scope of culture we have here and the wide variety of local specialists who know more than anyone else what are the priorities, does the Commissioner think that, to know what we have and what to do in the cultural sector in Rodrigues, she needs an expert, costing Rs500,000? Is it really necessary to have this expert?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question of the Minority Leader gives me an idea of what culture would be under that Government. I have already said that half of the sum of Rs500,000 will be paid by the French Embassy and half by the Regional Government.

As regards local experts, culture does not just mean dancing. It means more than that, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Nobody in Rodrigues has specific expertise...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: We launched tenders with regard to specific criteria. Local, national and international people submit their qualifications and also their tenders. It was done on that basis. We wanted to recruit a person who has the necessary expertise and specifically with those qualifications.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to tell the Commissioner that culture is not a matter which concerns experts only.

Mr Chairperson: We move to the next question, please.

WATER – IRRIGATION PURPOSES

(No. B/445) Mr L. P. François (First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could say what measures he was contemplating to make water available for irrigation purposes from the three “*retenues collinaires*” recently built, namely at Nassola, Papayes and Rivière Banane.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, following consultation between my Commission and the Anti-erosion Programme to boost up the agricultural sector, three water harvesting structures, that is, “*retenues collinaires*” have been installed on a pilot basis at Nassola,

Papayes and Rivière Banane to collect surface run off water from rehabilitated drains in their respective watersheds. The capacity of each water harvesting structures is about 600 m³.

On each site, a pump is being installed to pump water uphill into a water tank of 9 m³, from which a small irrigation network will be installed to connect neighbouring planters' field by gravity.

The water users' group at Papayes and Nassola has already been set up, whereas the one at Rivière Banane is in the process of being set up. The water users' group will, *inter alia*, be responsible for the maintenance and operation of the system.

GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING – NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

(No. B/446) Mr L. P. François (First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Women's Affairs whether she could say if Rodrigues will participate in the preparation of the National Action Plan for Gender Responsive Budgeting and, if yes, how and when.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, Rodrigues will participate in the preparation of a National Action Plan for Gender Responsive Budgeting. It is to be noted that the Gender Responsive Budgeting does not involve the preparation of a new budget, but requires the readjustment in reallocation of items in the budget from a gender perspective for the realisation of tender equality goals.

A core team has been set up and comprises Economists, Statisticians, two representatives from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and officers of various Ministries, including the Ministry for Women's Rights.

The representatives of Rodrigues Regional Assembly are Mrs Marie Danielle Grandcourt, Senior Statistical Assistant and Mr Aboobakar Fathemamode, Executive Officer of the Finance Division.

The first meeting of the core team has been held on Wednesday 21 April 2004. A monthly meeting has been scheduled to work out manuals and techniques and also an evaluation of budgets for preparing gender responsive budgets.

WOMEN CENTRES – TRAINING OF WOMEN

(No. B/447) Miss M. L. Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Women's Affairs as regards the mass training for women whether she could state –

- (a) the number of women who were being trained at the women's centres under the Commission for Women in Rodrigues;
- (b) how many of them had shown interest in the courses offered, but have not been enrolled, and
- (c) what measures were being taken so as to guarantee access to all those interested in the courses.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, 402 women are now being trained at the Women's Centres in Rodrigues. 541 more have shown interest in the courses offered, but have not been enrolled.

New courses will be run during this year to accommodate other applicants who have shown interest in the courses.

The training will be further decentralised and courses will be held at Battue Madame, Malabar Women's Centre which is presently being refurbished and extended to provide additional accommodation. There will also be courses at Petit Gabriel and in the north eventually.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY - ORGANISATION

(No. B/448) Miss M. L. Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible, *inter alia*, for Family Welfare, regarding the international exigencies of the United Nations on the necessity for every country to observe International Year of the Family in May this year (which is also its 10th Anniversary), whether she could state what activities were being proposed by her Commission to create awareness of family issues and welfare in Rodrigues this year.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has set up a committee for the organisation of the International Year of the Family in May 2004. The committee has met last week and various subcommittees are working on specific activities for inclusion in a programme which will be announced in due course.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES – RENOVATION WORKS

(No. B/449) Miss M. L. Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health what measures were being taken so as to carry out some renovation works in the remaining community health centres and their surroundings.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the following measures have been taken for carrying out renovation works in many community health centres.

With regard to part (a), the maintenance team has been reorganised and strengthened with a view to increasing its efficiency and effectiveness. The team is now posted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and is equipped with appropriate tools and equipment, coupled with well-established weekly programme.

With regard to part (b), works that require a specialised skill are contracted out to small contractors with a view to expediting matter. These works include painting of community health centres, fencing and replacing of defective ones, laying of tiles, renewal of electrical and plumbing installations.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY – ACTIVITIES

(No. B/450) Miss M. L. Castel (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the “Environment Day” on the 5th June, whether the Chief Commissioner could state the different activities which were being scheduled to commemorate that day.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as every year the World Environment Day will be celebrated on the 5th June. This year the theme chosen by the United Nations for the World Environment Day is “Wanted: Seas and Oceans, Dead or Alive”.

I am chairing an organising committee comprising Government officers and representatives of the NGOs to look into the activities to be organised, which will include -

A “*Salon de l'Environnement*” where Government services and NGOs will be able to exhibit their activities for the protection of the sea.

- Poster design competition for secondary school students on the theme for year 2004.
- Reading of a message on environment in all schools and colleges on the 5th June 2004.
- Cleaning campaigns and symbolic tree planting in all schools.
- Theatrical show on the theme in villages.
- Sea waves rally/carnival.
- Featuring of the films “*Piqueuses d’Ourites*” by Laval Plaiche; the Reef Beneath of Shoals in Rodrigues and animated cartoons for fishermen communities, primary schools and colleges.
- A sensitisation programme on protection of environment through radio and the press.
- Removal of abandoned fish traps, anchors in the sea by diving centres, (hotels), Shoals, RUG, Fisheries Department, NCG and fishermen.
- A popular symposium for sand miners, fishers and tour operators in view of preparing a charter code of conduct for sea users.
- Removal of trunks and bulky waste on beaches.
- Launching of Rodnix’s community-based project for the collection of plastics bottles and cans.

FISH LANDING STATIONS - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/451) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the construction of offices at fish landing stations mentioned in the budget proposals 2004/05, whether he would –

- (a) give a list of all official fish landing stations to date;
- (b) say how many of the new offices it was intended to construct subject to the approval of the budget proposals and when, and

(c) say if he intends to recruit additional Fisheries Protection Officers.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am tabling the list of 23 fish landing stations prescribed under the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act 1998.(Appendix B)

With regard to part (b), quotations have already been floated for the conversion of containers into offices to be installed at the following fish landing stations –

- (i) English Bay
- (ii) Pointe l’Herbe “Oyster Bay”
- (iii) Rivière Coco.

The design of offices and opened shelters for the sale of fish to be erected on fish landing stations is being worked out by the consultant. Tenders will then be sought for the construction of three or four of these offices and shelters depending on cost per unit. Toilets will also be constructed next to the converted containers and similar amenities will be included in the new offices.

An amount of Rs800,000 is available in this year’s estimates. Funds have been earmarked in the budget for financial year 2004/2005 for the construction of additional offices and shelters on other fish landing stations. Subject to availability of fund in subsequent financial years, more offices and shelters will be constructed until all the fish landing stations are provided with such amenities.

In so far as part (c) is concerned, there is only one vacancy in the grade of Fisheries Protection Officer, which will be filled as soon as the issue of a Civil Establishment Order would have been settled.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the budget proposal for year 2004/2005 makes provision as far as construction of offices is concerned for Fisheries Research and Fisheries Protection Division.

Mr Chairperson: Respected Member, before you go any further, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the budget has been voted in this Assembly, but has not yet been approved. So, it will still stand as something, which is in the future, or hypothetical I may say. Please, restrict yourself to this part which is factually based. Thank you.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if ever this budget is approved and funds are made available, may we know from the Chief Commissioner, firstly, how these offices will be equipped in order to undertake research?

Secondly, the Commissioner has said there is only one post of Fisheries Protection Officer earmarked in the budget. So, would it be advisable to stick to only one?

Thirdly, does he intend to recruit more staff in the next financial year if he wants to give much importance to this sector?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question relates to the construction of offices at fish landing stations. I did mention about fish landing stations, which are going to be built in this year's budget and those, which will be built in the next budget subject to availability of funds.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I also said that the consultants are working on the design. There is also the new IFAD Project coming in the mid term. I asked the steering committee in Mauritius that in so far as shelters built for fishermen to sell their fish near the fish landing stations are concerned, all the expenses will be met by IFAD.

As I said, one vacancy is going to be filled. Now, whether there are going to be additional posts, I don't know, but I take notice of the question.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is not normal the way officers of the Fisheries Division are working now. For example, at Bay Malgache, one officer has to stand under a tree along the roadside all day long in order to work. This condition is not acceptable at all. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether there is any urgency to implement these decisions. He has said that he would convert containers into offices. This is a good idea in the short-term, until real offices are constructed. I would ask him whether, now, he intends to at least have small shelters constructed for these officers, because nearly everywhere along the coast I have not seen any covered structure for these officers.

The Chief Commissioner: It will not be big buildings as Petit Butte. There will be small shelters. There will be only one office for the Fisheries Guards and a shelter near this office for the fishermen. There will be a table for the fishermen to sell their fish and whenever there is rain they can sit there.

The construction of the three fish landing stations has been recommended by the Fisheries Department in English Bay, Pointe l'Herbe

Oyster Bay and Rivière Coco. There will be other recommendations made by the Fisheries Department for the year 2004/2005. We have not yet asked the Fisheries Department where those offices will be built. We shall have to wait. Perhaps I can come with a statement later on to give the names of the future fish landing stations which are going to have a small office.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, since we are going to have the construction of fish landing stations, are the Fisheries Protection Officers meant to work ashore or on the sea?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, these fish landing stations are there specifically for Fisheries Guards who would take the presence of the fishermen. This is only for that purpose, because they are going to monitor the catches and that is why we will build these shelters. We need to have precise statistics concerning catches of octopus and fishes.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may we know from the Chief Commissioner what are the duties of these Fisheries Protection Officers? Are they there only for taking attendance or what not?

The Chief Commissioner: A Member on the other side put the same question last year. We are going to find out solutions in order that Fisheries Guards can be on sea instead of being on shores taking the presence of fishermen.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner just mentioned the construction of one fish landing station at Rivière Coco. When the new Police Station was operational at Rivière Coco, I remember that it was mentioned that the old Police Station would be converted into a Fisheries Post. Can the Commissioner say whether this policy is still maintained or whether a new building will be constructed for that purpose? I don't know the real state of that building, but I would like to know whether the actual structure could not be converted into the proposed building so that lesser money would be spent?

The Chief Commissioner: When the Prime Minister was in Rodrigues, we had a meeting with the Chief Commissioner of Police. He suggested that there should be more involvement of the NCG in the protection of the lagoon. There would be an NCG Post near Plaine Corail Airport, because there was a question of rescuing people whenever the need is felt. There was also the question of the former Police Station of Rivière Coco and there must be a sort of engineering inspection concerning the state of the building to see whether this building has to be rehabilitated and

whether it would cost more money than building a new one. Perhaps, the NCGs will take over this building in the future.

GRAND VAR IRRIGATION PROJECT - IMPLEMENTATION

(No. B/452) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner with regard to the implementation of Grand Var Irrigation Project, whether he could say –

- (a) what would be the total cost of the project;
- (b) what acreage of land would be irrigated, and
- (c) how many planters would benefit from such project.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the concept of the Grand Var Irrigation Project consists of the rehabilitation of an existing dam situated at Fond Marechal and the laying of an irrigation main. The water available will be distributed to about 20 planters growing mixed vegetables in that area. The surface area that will be covered by the system is about 4.65 hectares. The design is being finalised and the cost estimates of the project is around Rs300,000.

Funds have been provided in the coming budget for implementation of same.

Mr Jabeemissar: This is a very good incentive to planters to provide them with irrigation, but I would ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether there are other regions where planters are involved in agricultural activities which deserve irrigation as Grand Var. I have not heard about Grand Var being a very good agricultural region. That is why I wonder why Grand Var has been earmarked and why not other places as well.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning our new regional Government policy, the Commissioner for Agriculture, in the last Budget, had earmarked Rs1.3 m. for incentives to planters and farmers. And this will concern provision of water in clusters where there are planters doing agriculture.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, since Rs300,000 will be invested in that project, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner assure the House that once the project has started, what will be the sustainability of the

project, for how long will it last so that the planters will really benefit and what will be the real output of this project?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the output will depend on the activities carried out by the planters. Officers will help them in their activities. I think that these officers are right in choosing Grand Var for the implementation of such projects and I would tell the respected Members that the outcome would be positive.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have not heard the answer for the number of planters who will benefit from the project and I...

Mr Chairperson: You have not heard about it? Were you following in this Assembly?

Mr Agathe: I am following, but I have not heard. Can the Commissioner table the number of planters, including the acreage of land at their disposal?

Mr Chairperson: Do you want an answer or a document?

Mr Agathe: Can the Commissioner table it, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

Mr Chairperson: You want a document then?

Mr Agathe: Yes.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I will come with it in the near future.

PORT MATHURIN MARKET - COVERED STRUCTURE

(No. B/453) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards Port Mathurin market whether the Commissioner was aware that many sellers operated outside the covered structure which caused much inconvenience especially during rainy days, and if yes, what he proposed to do in order to remedy same.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am aware of the present conditions in which presently some 68 sellers are operating outside the covered structure. This is a good sign that the agricultural sector is going on the right track. We are presently negotiating with some external donor agencies for the financing of a completely new market at Port

Mathurin which will cater for the increasing number of people who sell agricultural products, handicrafts and fresh meat.

Meanwhile as a temporary measure, a small light weight steel structure will be erected to shelter those operating outside the covered structure on the left and right hand sides of the existing markets. The design is being worked out by officers of my Commission and quotation of same will be made shortly.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning the temporary structure, will the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House as to the time frame such structure will be completed? We must not forget that if we have so many sellers in our market now, it is because of the favourable condition. We know that it is raining nearly everyday and we cannot expect our sellers to be left outside in rainy conditions.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have seen that it is a matter of urgency and as soon as the design is worked out and the quotation made we will look into the matter.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House as to whether those who operate under the covered structure and those who are outside have got a permit to operate? Can he inform the House about the situation?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of this question. I will look into the matter.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed and I am sure that some people have got their permit to operate in the market. It is not acceptable that some having permits operate outside under the rain, especially that they have to come very early in the morning and there is no light at all, whereas others operate in safety conditions and they are better well off. So, we cannot accept that situation. That is why I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner to look into it, as this is a matter of urgency.

QUARTERS FOR STAFF

(No. B/454) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards the ancient public buildings in Rodrigues some of which were formerly used as quarters for staff from the mainland, whether the Commissioner -

- (a) was aware of their present state, and

(b) if he proposed to restore them.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling a list of all buildings which are normally used as quarters together with their present state and proposed actions that are being envisaged for those in a bad or poor state.(Appendix C)

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, before I have a look at the list of quarters, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he is aware that recently one of these old quarters caught fire.

Well, these quarters are vacant. If yes, why is it that it is occupied? Surely, it should have been occupied. If it is not protected, therefore, it is left at the mercy of squatters or tramps.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the respected Member is talking about Les Longères A25 to E25 which caught fire on Saturday 17 April in the morning. The Police is making an inquiry. That building was not a quarters, it is an old building which housed unserviceable items and the building was on the point of demolition. The Police is making an inquiry to see the condition in which this building caught fire.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I refer to the core point of my question. As regards the ancient public buildings, some of which are used as quarters, it is a fact that in Rodrigues we have many...

Mr Chairperson: It seems to me that some of the supplementary questions are longer than the original questions when, in fact, they should not. Supplementary questions are normally asked for the further elucidation of the answer given. It can't be taken as a pretext for speech. So, you have to be very precise when you ask a supplementary question. Thank you.

Mr Jabeemissar: If my question was like this, it is to draw the attention of the Deputy Chief Commissioner.

Mr Chairperson: Of course, I understand your purpose, but if you have some more extensive statements to make, of course, you can make it at adjournment time, if you wish. Proceed with your question, please.

Mr Jabeemissar: I'll ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he is aware that at Pointe Canon, some ancient public buildings - I don't know their real state - are used as dumping sites. That place being a very important one as far as tourists' viewpoint is concerned, I would like to know

whether he is going to undertake a survey to see whether these old buildings have got to be demolished so as not to give way to such practice or whether they are going to be restored to cater for other activities.

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

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, on the list of quarters, we see that there are many which are to be pulled down. Can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner when they will be pulled down, and secondly, whether they have already started to pull down some of these quarters?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is a continuous process. Some of these quarters have already been pulled down and those which have been enlisted to be pulled down, will be pulled down in time.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is stated here that...

Mr Chairperson: The Member should put his question.

Mr Grandcourt: The buildings are in a bad condition. This is a threat to people. This is why I have asked the question. I am asking the Commissioner to consider having them pulled down as a matter of urgency.

ANSE AUX ANGLAIS - BRIDGE - SAND ACCUMULATION

(No. B/455) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he was aware that the mouth of the river passing under the bridge at Anse aux Anglais is being completely silted by sand, and, if yes, what measures he intends to take to remedy same.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, yes, we are aware of the problem of accumulation of sand which has partially obstructed the bridge at Anse aux Anglais. Sand which has accumulated at that spot will be removed shortly for the replenishment of beaches in that region. Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is encouraging to note that the villagers of Anse aux Anglais are proposing to participate in the exercise.

After the re-opening of the mouth of the river, the situation will be closely monitored to assess if there is further accumulation of sand and, in the affirmative, to identify its causes and remedial measures if appropriate.

TOURISTS (FEMALE) - ASSAULTS

(No. B/456) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner what measures have been taken at the level of his Commission following the assaults on two female tourists which occurred during the past months.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I shall reply to Questions B/456 and B/460 together as they relate to the same issue.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that no tourist was assaulted during year 2002. There was one case of assault on a tourist at St. François in 2003 and since the beginning of this year, there have been three cases of physical assaults on tourists, namely a case of rape at Trou D'Argent and a case of attempt upon chastity at Baladirou.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, trees along the footpath via Trou D'Argent from Tasman to Eau Douce have been pruned along a width of 8 metres on both sides. The Police was also requested to effect more control in the isolated places which are regularly visited by tourists.

I am advised by the Divisional Police Commander that -

- (i) regular Police and National Coast Guard (NCG) personnel are providing regular patrols ashore and afloat at all beaches;
- (ii) the co-operation of the personnel of Fisheries and Forest Departments is also enlisted, particularly in places where communication is rendered difficult due to island's topography, and
- (iii) a "*Police du Tourisme*" will be set up in Rodrigues soon.

I have also been informed by the Divisional Commander that all cases involving tourists are being tackled promptly and lodged before the Court.

The tourism operators will also be requested to advise their customers that it is advisable not to venture in isolated places like Trou D'Argent alone, but to be accompanied by a friend or guide.

Mr Chairperson: The Commissioner has given answers to Questions B/456 and B/460. So, supplementary questions on both answers are welcome now.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, étant donné la vocation touristique de notre île, le tourisme est en voie de devenir le moteur principal du développement de Rodrigues, est-ce que le Chef Commissaire pourrait envisager de négocier avec le Commissaire de Police pour avoir une unité connue comme *beach patrol* ou *beach Police* à Maurice to ensure the protection of tourists? Because, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are regions like St. François, Trou d'Argent which are very remote. The tourists, when they come here, feel free. Women walk alone, but some people are watching them to assault them for money, etc. If there is a Beach Police, particularly in these regions, in the region of Mourouk where there are beaches, this would be a good thing. It would be going in the right direction in writing to the Commissioner of Police to set up, at least, a unit of this service here.

The Chief Commissioner: J'ai évoqué avec le Commissaire de Police quand il était ici la question d'une Police du Tourisme comme cela existe à Maurice. Nous ne savons pas encore quand cette Police du Tourisme va opérer. Est-ce qu'elle va opérer dans plusieurs endroits en même temps avec des véhicules bien spécifiques. Quant au *Bike Patrol Police*, on va essayer de voir avec lui. Tout dépend aussi de la topographie du pays. Celui qui commet le délit, il aura disparu avant que la bicyclette n'arrive jusqu'à lui. C'est à la Police de l'environnement de voir comment cette Police du Tourisme va opérer. Nous espérons que cela arrivera le plus vite possible et avec le recrutement de nouveaux éléments de la Police, nous avons demandé qu'il y ait plus de policiers à Rodrigues non seulement en ce qui concerne la Police du Tourisme mais aussi la Police de l'Environnement et le National Coast Guard.

Mr Chairperson: Don't misunderstand me when I say bike because they started with the bike patrol in Mauritius along the beaches. This is why I said that to the Minority Leader. Any supplementary question?

Mrs Meunier: Je voudrais demander au Chef Commissaire quel a été l'encadrement donné aux personnes qui ont été victimes des attaques au niveau de sa Commission ou d'autres Commissions?

The Chief Commissioner: Nous avons eu des rencontres avec les différentes divisions au niveau des fôrets, des Forest Guards et aussi au niveau du Divisional Police Commander, qui a donné des instructions pour qu'il y ait des patrol un peu plus souvent, que ce soit à Baladirou, Mourouk, Pointe Cotton, St. François. Nous allons essayer de demander au

Commissaire de Police d'aller très vite avec cela parce qu'il y en est une question de sécurité des touristes. Nous suivons l'affaire de très près et nous voudrions que cela se passe le plus vite possible.

Mrs Meunier: M. le président, je crois que le Chef Commissaire n'a pas trop compris ma question. Je voulais demander après les attaques qu'il y a eu sur les touristes, quel a été l'encadrement immédiat, psychologique vu que ce sont des étrangers, il n'y a personne pour les suivre de près. Après les attaques, quelle a été la contribution de sa commission pour entourer les touristes?

The Chief Commissioner: Il semblerait qu'une des personnes qui a été attaquée a eu le soutien de la psychologue de la commission des arts et de la culture, de la femme. L'autre a dit que ce n'était pas nécessaire, donc elle est partie aussitôt.

Mr J. Roussety: M. le président, concernant des agressions sur les touristes, j'ai entendu le Chef Commissaire dire quand la Police du Tourisme ou la Police de l'Environnement - je n'ai pas trop saisi - va arriver; ce sera déjà trop tard. La Police n'est pas là juste pour intervenir. Il y a une présence dissuasive aussi. Quand les malfrats savent qu'il y a la Police, ils seront moins enclins à attaquer les gens. Je voudrais lui demander quelles sont les infrastructures de secours qu'il y a, par exemple, dans la région venant de Mourouk jusqu'à Pointe Cotton, par exemple. Si un touriste se fait agresser, est-ce que le Chef Commissaire est au courant que dans ces environs, il n'y pas un seul téléphone public? S'il est au courant, qu'est-ce qu'il compte faire dans ce sens?

The Chief Commissioner: Comme je l'ai dit, on n'attend pas la Police du Tourisme, cela est un projet à venir mais, *in the mean time, the regular Police, the National Coast Guard will provide regular patrols ashore and afloat at all beaches.*

Concernant les téléphones, nous allons essayer de voir avec le Mauritius Telecom s'il y a possibilité d'installer des téléphones un peu partout sur ces plages.

Mrs Prosper: Mr Chairperson, according to physical assault on tourists, could the Chief Commissioner state if there has been any negative impact on this sector?

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of the question.

HEPATITIS B AND C – REGISTERED CASES

(No. B/457) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health whether, he would inform the House about the number of cases of Hepatitis B and C presently recorded in Rodrigues.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, during the period January 2003 to March 2004, ten (10) cases of Hepatitis B and eight (8) cases of Hepatitis C were revealed through screening of blood donors and routine examination of patients attending outpatients department.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner for Health whether screening is done only when patients come to give blood all year round? Because it seems to be serious with these ten cases of Hepatitis B.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, they are volunteers. We cannot force them to come and this could be a decision at national level.

HIV/AIDS DISEASE – CASES, TREATMENT, ETC.

(No. B/458) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, as regards HIV/AIDS disease in Rodrigues, he could inform the House –

- (a) how many cases are confirmed up to now;
- (b) what treatment are they receiving, and
- (c) whether they are treated in Mauritius or in Rodrigues.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, two cases of HIV/AIDS have been confirmed in Rodrigues up to now.

With regard to part (b) of the question, these cases have been referred to Mauritius for assessment and regular follow-up. Anti-retroviral treatment is given according to established protocols.

As regards part (c) of the question, all treatments for HIV/Aids patients are currently being done in Mauritius in a specialised unit at Dr Bouloux Area Health Centre at Cassis.

POULTRY FARMING – PERMITS GRANTED, EQUIPMENT

(No. B/459) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade and Commerce whether, as regards poultry farming in Rodrigues, he would state –

- (a) the number of permits granted for poultry slaughtering;
- (b) whether these persons had the required equipment and infrastructure for the good running of the business, and
- (c) whether there was a follow-up from the time breeding starts to slaughtering to make sure that the product was safe for the consumers.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that no specific permit is granted for slaughtering of poultry. At present, no monitoring of local poultry production is carried out. However, for a better control, the Commission for Agriculture has proposed a number of posts veterinary officer in the next financial year.

Also it should be noted that poultry which is sold on the market is inspected by the Health Inspectors before sale to the public.

TOURISTS - ASSAULT

(No. B/460) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Tourism whether, as regards the tourist industry in Rodrigues, he would state -

- (a) the number of cases involving physical assault on tourists and reported to the Police over the last two years, and
- (b) what measures were being taken to safeguard the security of tourists.

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY – STAFF

(No. B/461) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards employment in the public service under the establishment of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he would –

- (a) give an exhaustive list to date of all existing posts under each

Commission, specifying the number of posts provided by the Establishment;

- (b) on the same list in (a) above, specify the corresponding number of officers effectively in employment per item/post, and
- (c) state the difference between the total number of posts provided by the Establishment and the total number of persons effectively in employment.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a list of existing posts under each Commission indicating the corresponding number of officers effectively in employment and the number of posts vacant is detailed on the annexed statement.(Appendix D)

From that second list of posts/Commission Divisions is annexed to it, showing the same information for administrative convenience, the total numbers indicated for each grade from which the appropriate staff is posted to Commissions' Divisions as and when required for the smooth running of services. (Appendix E)

In some instances, employees have been assigned higher duties against vacancies, with the necessary skills have been assigned their duties. For example –

- (a) Tradesman Assistants where some 20 general workers for the necessary skills have been assigned the higher duties;
- (b) 187 employees on contract for the Anti Erosion Programme will be employed in a substantive capacity against vacancies.

Some posts have been created in the Estimates, October 2002, June 2003 and in the year 2003/2004 and such creation has not yet been approved by the Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms.

Advice has been obtained to get the required approval on a case-to-case basis. In some cases, the filling of vacancies is being delayed in the absence of the Civil Establishment Order for Rodrigues Regional Assembly. This issue is presently under consideration. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 will have to be modified for the inclusion of the RRA employees as public officers and the most schemes of service to include the new conditions of the Pay Research Bureau Report of 2003.

There was also a policy decision taken not to fill in the vacancies in the grade of Tradesman as most of the major consideration works are being contracted out and also for the grade of Watchman where private security services are being contracted out.

Some posts mainly and particularly in the medical and health services as detailed hereunder still appear from the establishment of the parent Ministry in Mauritius and it will remain until such time that qualified Rodriguan candidates are available to take over.

Medical and health services, specialists, dental surgeons, senior medical laboratory technicians, social security, senior social security officer, cadastre principal surveyor, agriculture veterinary officer. Such posts as specified in (iv) above have been filled by Mauritians posted to Rodrigues on a hour of service.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (c) of my question, that is, the difference between the total number of posts provided by the Establishment and the total number effectively in employment, I have not heard about the total number of posts, all commissions comprised the total number of posts vacant for Rodrigues Public Service.

The Chief Commissioner: The information is missing here in my reply. I'll come with a statement at the next meeting. I am sorry.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, a quick analysis of what has been submitted - maybe the figure is too big for them to give – we can see, for example, at the Administration, there are 512 vacant posts concerning general workers; watchmen 30, handy workers: 30, gangmen: 36. I don't know whether the Budget provides for these costs already, but the Commissioner is saying that the policy of the Government is to contract out works, to contract out security services. Is the Commissioner aware of the working conditions, especially, as regards salary, social security and job security of all these persons? Does he not think that with this policy he is jeopardising jobs in Rodrigues, making workers more vulnerable? Because workers who work in the Government, at least, they have job security. Is he aware that there is this problem? We are not recruiting in Government, we are contracting out; the contractors work for three months, then they lay off the workers. Is it the policy of the Government to create more insecurity for workers instead of recruiting effectively?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of posts are there, but we have not decided to decrease the number of posts, but the provisions are not meant for these posts, but we are recruiting 187 field and general workers. This does not mean that we are going to stop, wherever those old workers are retiring from the service, they will be replaced by new workers. In so far as tradesman or tradesman assistant are concerned many young people have been trained at the IVTB, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I think it has been said in the PRB that we can take those people directly for the special post of tradesman assistant or tradesman. This will be done maybe by the Commissioner for Infrastructure. But I must say that we have not taken the policy to decrease, but we have taken the policy to replace people who are retiring from the service. As you know, Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is a delicate issue. Sometimes, we have to fight with people of the Ministry of Finance in Mauritius, especially for field and general workers. They asked us why employ people in Government and so on. But we have tried this time to convince them that we must employ those 187. I think it's a good thing and in the future as things will be going on, there will be no decrease. We are not decreasing the number of posts, we will keep them. But the provision is not for the number of vacancies, that's why we'll keep the number of posts for the possibility to employ people. If we decrease the posts, it will be difficult to increase additional ones. That is why we keep the number of posts and the provision made is not fully for the number of posts for labourers.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand that there are some posts which are not going to be filled. The 512 general workers, for example, are not going to be filled. Under one item, mention is made of 11 charge nurse (male), but these posts are not filled; charge nurse (female) 8. Here also these posts are not filled. Nursing supervisor: 3, but not filled. There are 22 posts of nursing officers which are not filled.

Being given the high rate of unemployment, and the fact that there are persons who are qualified for these posts, who have the SC and the HSC, may we know what the Chief Commissioner intends to do? Provision is made in the Budget with regard to the number of posts in the Estimates. Many posts are vacant. I understand it is the policy not to recruit general workers, watchmen, etc. But what about teachers, firemen, prison officers, etc? Actually, there are 9 posts of prison officers vacant and firemen one, etc. What is being done to fill these posts, especially regarding the public service?

The Chief Commissioner: I did mention, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that in some cases, the filling of vacancies is being delayed in the absence of the Civil Establishment Order of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. This issue

is presently under consideration under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act. This issue is presently under consideration and the RRA Act will have to be amended for inclusion of the RRA employees and the revision of all schemes of service will reflect new conditions of the Pay Research Bureau 2003. These vacancies are going to be filled when this issue of Rodrigues Civil Establishment Order will be solved. I think that's why lots of posts have been created. For example, architect, nutritionist and engineer. According to the PRB report - I think it's very important - there has been a change in the schemes of service. The schemes of service are going to be worked out again and that is why there is a delay in recruiting people. The recruitment has to be made under the new schemes of service prescribed by the PRB Report. I must say that we are not stopping the recruitment of general and field workers.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is argument for the Labour Day! The Chief Commissioner said there is a problem with the Rodrigues Civil Establishment Order. We have been hearing this all the time. Can we know exactly what is the problem really? Many posts are vacant; people are waiting to be recruited. The money is there, but no recruitment is made. We understand there is a problem with the Rodrigues Civil Establishment Order. Is the Civil Establishment Order trying to recruit everybody by themselves, creating undue delay and undue problem?

The Chief Commissioner: I will come with a statement on this issue.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we know that in the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson takes over. What will happen if ever we don't have any Clerk at all? This may happen because he is a human being. Is it not high time to think about it? I don't know whether it is the Deputy Clerk or anybody else, who, in the absence of the Clerk, will replace him. In order not to have problems in the future, I think it is high time to think about it. May we know what the Chief Commissioner thinks about this issue?

The Chief Commissioner: I have raised this question and the proposal has not been accepted by the Ministry of Finance. Well, there have been a lot of proposals, which I am not going to mention here. However, I must say that the proposal for a Deputy Clerk has been made, but it has not been accepted due to budget constraints put forward to us by the Ministry of Finance. There are also very important posts which can help us to go ahead with our work and to help the different Commissions to be really autonomous in their actions, but we need more resource persons. Unfortunately, these proposals have not been accepted.

(Interruptions)

Yes, we are well aware of those facts. In future, we will see whether we can have these posts here, for example, Deputy Clerk or any other post which will be very essential for the service.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move that the Assembly be adjourned.

Mr Chairperson: Be adjourned? The agenda is not yet over. You want somebody to second your motion?

(Interruptions)

What is your motion?

Mr Agathe: To suspend the Assembly

Mr Chairperson: What will be your reason to suspend the Assembly?

(Interruptions)

We are nearly finishing with the questions. Members should be brief in their supplementaries. Next question, please.

**BAIE AUX HUITRES - MEUNIER, MR SIMON PIERRE -
RESIDENTIAL STATE LAND LEASE**

(No. B/462) Mr J. Roussety (The Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the application for a residential state land lease made by Mr Simon Pierre Meunier of Baie aux Huîtres, whether he will state the date on which the application was made, whether any letter of intent/approval has been issued to the applicant, whether any land has been surveyed and where, whether any lease agreement has been signed by him, whether any fee has been received to that effect by Government, whether a building permit has been issued and state when he will be granted his lease.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, Mr Simon Pierre Meunier of Baie aux Huîtres applied for a residential lease on 04 April 1998. In addition to his application, on 16 May 2000, the father of Mr Simon Pierre Meunier applied for a “*droit de surélévation*” in favour of his son and the case was recommended by the State Land Committee.

On 28 February 2001, Mr Antoine Marley Meunier was informed that the Government has approved to amend his lease agreement by the grant of a “*droit de surélévation*” over the existing concrete house in favour of his son Mr Simon Pierre Meunier. The approval was copied to the latter.

However, on 07 March 2002, Mr Simon Pierre Meunier wrote to the Rodrigues Administration to state that he was no longer interested to have the “*droit de surélévation*”.

Thereafter, a letter of intent has been issued to Mr Simon Pierre Meunier on 21 March 2003 over a plot of land of an extent of 398 m² at Allée Tamarin.

The lessee has paid rent and survey fee and the cost of “*mise en règle*” on 16 April 2003 and his lease agreement has been finalised and referred to the Registration Unit for registration and transcription on 19 April 2004.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that a building permit has been granted to Mr Meunier on 09 September 2003 on the site on which he has been granted a letter of intent at Allée Tamarin.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this person is facing great difficulties in having his lease. There is still something *bizarre* in this. They have issued a letter of intent, the applicant has paid his rent, he has been issued a building permit, Mr Chairperson Sir, prior to the granting of his lease. Is this the policy to grant a building permit prior to the granting of the lease? One question which has remained unanswered is: when will he be granted his lease?

The Chief Commissioner: The first part of the question is that, in order to allow people to go ahead, because it takes time to prepare the lease, we give them a letter of intent so that they can go ahead with their building permit and with the construction of their house before they have the lease.

As for the second part of the question, I have already replied. The lessee has paid rent, survey fee and cost of the “*mise en règle*” on 16 April 2003 and his lease agreement has been finalised. This takes a long time not only for Mr Meunier, but for others also. The lease agreement has been referred to the Registration Unit for registration and transcription on 19 April 2004. Once everything is registered, he will have his lease.

Mr J. Roussety: In this case, the person applied since 04 April 1998. It is more than 6 years. A letter of intent was issued on 21 March 2003. During the course of this application - I suppose the Commissioner has gone into a case - has there been any inquiry of a personal nature on the life or civil status of the applicant?

The Chief Commissioner: I have already replied to the question put to me concerning the case of Mr Pierre Meunier. I will not reply to further questions concerning the lease.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Chief Commissioner aware that officers of the Cadastral Office have told Mr Simon Pierre Meunier that because his fiancée has also applied for a lease, he is not going to be granted a lease?

The Chief Commissioner: I have replied to the question put to me on Mr Simon Pierre Meunier. I am not going to reply to further questions. I am not aware what is going on at the Cadastral Office.

Mr J. Roussety: I am speaking about Mr Simon Pierre Meunier. Is the Commissioner aware that Government officials dealing with this matter, allocation of State land lease for residential purposes, have told Mr Simon Pierre Meunier that because - not even his fiancée - his girlfriend has applied, he will not be granted a lease? Inquiries have been going on in this matter. Is the Chief Commissioner aware that inquiries have been made into the personal life of this person? May we know from his point of view whether this is right?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I replied to the question put to me concerning the case of Mr Meunier. I repeat: I will not reply to any other question outside that problem.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is it true that they have even requested a certificate from the Civil Status of Mr Meunier?

Mr Chairperson: Take your seat, please. You have surely understood the reaction of the Chief Commissioner. Of course, I understand your line of questioning. It relates to the day-to-day administration, what have the officers been doing or what have they said. Of course, it is not the responsibility of the Chief Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner is responsible for matters laid under section 26 of the Act. And your question is couched in such a way as to say whether he is aware and then he has answered it twice, if not thrice, that he is not going to answer any more questions. You have to understand that Standing Orders provide that once a

Commissioner refuses to give an answer to a specific question, this will be the end of the matter. If that is his answer, then we cannot go over and above the Standing Orders and have a debate outside of what should normally be done.

Matters that are being raised by the questions do not refer directly to the main question answered. If you want to have more information, be precise. Of course, the Commissioner will have to take a stand as to whether he will answer it or not.

Mr J. Roussety: Thank you. This is a question of policy for me. Is it the policy, Mr Chairperson, Sir, before granting residential leases, to go into inquiries of a personal nature on the applicant regarding this case specifically?

Mr Chairperson: Yes, this is about policy.

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of that question.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a problem in this case. The problem is that the person has been granted his letter of intent, his building permit, but not the lease, which is the legal document.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, but the answer is that the lease document has been sent to be transcribed in the office. This is what I understand from the answer.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, it is a different supplementary question.

Mr Chairperson: Proceed, please.

Mr J. Roussety: My question is being given that the applicant needs the lease to have a loan, the bank does not need the letter of intent, but it needs the lease agreement which is the legal agreement between the successful applicant and Government. Is he aware of the problem that a letter of intent and a building permit are of no use in finding a financial assistance or a loan? What is being proposed to solve this problem?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, why do we give a letter of intent or a building permit? Some people have the means to build a house, so they go ahead. Whenever someone goes to the bank, the bank needs a lease, those people have to wait for the lease. That is why for some people, instead of waiting for the lease, we give a letter of intent to allow them to go ahead. A lot of people have the means to build a house. They

have money at the bank and they just start the building until they have the lease whereby they will go ahead for a loan. This is the policy, just to allow people to go ahead instead of waiting for the lease which sometimes takes some months.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given the undue hardship this young Rodriguan has been facing, will the Commissioner ensure that his lease be granted very soon?

The Chief Commissioner: The lease has been sent for approval and when it will be ready, he will be granted his lease.

"LA JOURNEE DE RODRIGUES" - EXPENDITURE

(No. B/463) Mr J. Roussety (The Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner of Arts and Culture as regards expenses incurred for "*La Journée de Rodrigues*" in 2003, whether she will state -

- (a) whether any payment in any form whatsoever has been made to the following persons: Anne Marie Levêque, Christio Auguste and Bernardin Meunier, and if yes;
- (b) what are the respective amounts paid, what are the procedures regarding disbursement of Government funds at her Commission and whether they have been observed in the above cases, and
- (c) the exact purpose for which such sums have been issued.

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), payment has been made to Messrs Bernardin Meunier and Christian Auguste.

Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, disbursement of government funds at my Commission are made strictly in accordance with the procedures laid down in the Financial Management Manual and these procedures help in promoting the above cases. These payments, Mr Chairperson, Sir, were grants made to four zones of Rodrigues for the purpose of popular evaluation exercise and celebration of the first anniversary of Rodrigues accession to autonomy.

It is the practice in the Republic of Mauritius that grants are made to associations through their presidents and also to individuals, for example, fishermen, for funeral grants, students, village committees etc.

In the present cases, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the payments were made to the presidents of these zones upon submission of their programmes of activities and budgets and after approval by the Executive Council, the organising committee, and a special finance committee set up. On the advice of the Director of Audit, payments were effected through the usual finance procedures, that is, preparation of certification by my Commission, verification by the Examination Section of Finance and payment by cheques by the Finance Section. The different indications on the papers tell us at which office the papers have been sent and have never returned back according to the Financial Manual.

To conclude, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to add two things. First, all quarters of the population had been invited to form part of the organising committee for the Rodrigues Day, including Members of the Opposition, but the latter did not turn up.

Secondly, for the constitution of the zones, the Executive Council met the population at the passengers terminal and those interested were free to affix their names in their respective zone as members of the organising committee.

As you can see, Mr Chairperson, Sir, transparency was present throughout the organisation of the Rodrigues Day.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, may we know on which ground the money was paid to Messrs Auguste and Meunier? The Commissioner has referred to procurement in the Financial Manual. Has procurement been made before the payment was effected?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards these payments, grants were made to NGOs, religious bodies and individuals. These grants were effected after the persons concerned had submitted their programmes of activities and budgets.

Mr J. Roussety: Has the money been paid to them, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: I have already answered that the money was paid to the committees through the president of zones as it is done to any association or individual, according to the Financial Management Manual.

Mr J. Roussety: Have receipts been submitted to certify that expenditure has been met according to what was provided?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson, Sir. For example, when grants are given to people, the Government does not require submission of receipts. But, in this specific case, we have paid part of the grants directly to some of the shops. For some activities, people were required to submit receipts and we have compiled at least four files for all these receipts.

Mr J. Roussety: Did the people use all the money that were disbursed to them?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, of course, Mr Chairperson, Sir. As I said, all the receipts tally with the sums of money that have been given to these persons.

Mr J. Roussety: Did both persons spend Rs40,000?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr J. Roussety: C'est une coïncidence que ces personnes ont dépensé exactement la somme de Rs40,000 qui leur ont été allouée et pas un sou de moins ou de plus! Est-ce que vous ne trouvez pas cela bizarre, M. le président? Est-ce que ces personnes ont fait de sorte - je ne fais pas d'allégations - que ces sommes *tally*? I understand there are two ...

Mr Chairperson: The Member should put his question, please!

Mr J. Roussety: I understand that Mr Auguste and Mr Meunier come from two zones, but has money been paid to the other zones?

Mr Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, first of all, I would like to react to the first part of the comments made by the Minority Leader, namely, that it is clear that both of them used Rs40,000. I would like to say that this is the sum that we were ready to give to them. For example, all other zones used more money. In the organising committee, the private sector and the NGOs were called upon to sponsor our activities. In all the zones, there was sponsorship of more than Rs100,000 by the private sector and other activities were organised by these NGOs *en faisant des levées de fonds*, I would add that for zone two, all the payments were made directly to the

shops that were ready to supply on credit. In that zone, almost all the shops agreed to supply on credit whereas for the other zones, it was not the case.

We paid Rs20,000 on 01 October to the president of zone four, Mrs Antoinette Azie.

Mr J. Roussety: I understand, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that for some zones, the respected Commissioner and her officers were able to obtain credit sales from shops. But Mr Auguste and Mr Meunier who are responsible for zone one and zone three were not able to obtain credit sales whereas for zone two and zone four, they were able to get credit sales from shops. Mais, mystérieusement, pour la zone une et la zone trois, le paiement a été effectué à M. Auguste et M. Meunier. M. Meunier est un politicien et était un candidat OPR. Comment est-ce que la commissaire va justifier que dans certaines zones, il a été possible d'acheter à crédit et de payer directement aux fournisseurs tandis que dans d'autres zones, la commission a accepté de payer aux personnes qui n'ont rien à faire avec la gestion financière du gouvernement? Comment se fait-il que pour certaines zones, on a pu acheter à crédit et, pour d'autres, on n'a pas pu le faire?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: M. le président, j'ai déjà dit que pour la zone quatre, on a payé R 20,000 également à Mme Antoinette Azie. Je voudrais apporter cette clarification que le comité organisateur avait approuvé un *grant* de R 100,000 à chaque zone. Mais c'est seulement dans les cas où les boutiques, les petites entreprises, qui ne pouvaient pas attendre les procédures gouvernementales pour le paiement que l'argent a été donné *by way of grants*. Pour les zones une, trois et quatre, il a fallu avoir recours à ce moyen de *granting*. De toute façon le *granting overall for all the four zones a été fait according to the Financial Management Manual and we even set up a specific financial committee on the advice of the Director of Audit*. It is only in zone two that the members did not feel the need to call for cash money to do a number of activities. For example, when you have to give Rs1000 to a village president for organising an exposition of what has happened during the first year of Rodrigues autonomy, do you think that he will be able to give receipts for each single item? He will be able to do it after he has done a number of little things and the receipts are submitted thereafter. These procedures are normal, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr J. Roussety: Is the Commissioner saying that it is normal now for Government to disburse money and the receipts submitted later?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I said, it was a grant. For example, when the laureates go abroad, we never ask them receipts for

the money that has been disbursed in their case. In this case, it was done on the basis of grants.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it appears that these *comités de zone* were elected. Can we know what were the election procedures and when did they elect their *comité organisation de zone*?

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I said, we organised a public meeting first. The members of the Executive Council called for a public meeting at the Passengers Terminal. All members of the minority were invited and if they had come they would have known when these elections took place. These persons give their names publicly and afterwards to subcommittees. Is the Minority Leader saying that all these persons are OPR agents? All these persons were free to participate in the activities which were organised at zone level, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, I am being disturbed.

Mr Chairperson: Members should not interrupt from sitting position, please! Please proceed!

Mrs Perrine-Bégué: We have 130 village committees in Rodrigues which are divided into four zones. Representatives from all these villages are called upon to form a zone organising committee and it is these zones which elect the presidents. When people do not think that they are patriots or fought for the autonomy, they did not participate in it. This is their problem.

Mr J. Roussety: M. le président, est-ce que Mme la commissaire est en train de dire que de ce côté de la Chambre, les membres n'étaient pas pour l'Assemblée Regionale?

Mr Chairperson: The Member may come with a statement at Adjournment time. We are at Question time, please.

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Mr J. Roussety: My question is: according to a copy of a letter which has been leaked to the press, it is said that ...

(Interruptions)

.... signed by Mrs Levèque, it is said that "*une somme de R 100,000 a été distribuée parmi les comités du village, Mme la Commissaire a dit "to meet expenses." Est-ce-que cet argent a été effectivement distribué parmi les comités du village ou ces deux personnes ont effectué les dépenses de leur propre gré?*"

Mrs Perrine Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are turning round and round. As I said, 130 villages are divided into four zones and when you make the account you will see how many of these villages join together to form one zone. We require from these zones that all assembly, that is all those who wanted to form part and be representatives of these zones, call upon the secretary to sign a letter and to send to our Commission along with the budget to be approved by the organising committee and the Executive Council before any disbursement. That is what we are saying. Every single petty little rupee is to be scrutinised by these sub-committees at zone level.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, according to the FMM, when grants are being given to any NGOs, any people, they have to be registered to the Registrar of Association. How can it be that money has been granted to these people?

Mr Chairperson: Does the Member have a copy of this regulation?

Mr Agathe: It is at the Registrar of association, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Chairperson: No, I am talking about the FMM.

Mr Agathe: I do not have it with me now.

Mr J. Roussety: On this matter of FMM - I personally came here with the Member, who is also a Member of PAC - at the Assembly and the Library there is no FMM. There are also no laws of Mauritius. I will make an appeal because we cannot work like that.

(Interruptions)

Nothing is available at the library, things important like the FMM, the Personnel Management Manual and the laws of Mauritius and even the Constitution are not in the library. We cannot work like that.

Mr Chairperson: I have my own personal books in my office. I will, of course, look into the matter and see whether our finance allows us to purchase all these important documents and books. Your question is that grants are to be made to Registrar of Association. Is that what the Member means?

Mr Agathe: Yes, Sir.

Mrs Perrine Bégué: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if I follow the logic of this person this means that when you give, for example, funeral ...

Mr J. Roussety: On a point of order, Sir, the Commissioner should not address 'this person' as if it is a person ...

Mr Chairperson: Take your seat, please.

(Interruptions)

Mr J. Roussety: The person is an elected Member, the Second Region Member for Maréchal, she must address the person with dignity, Mr Chairperson.

Mr Chairperson: I think that the Minority Leader is right on this point, but he has to consider also that personification in the Assembly is not allowed by practice. But in all the questions, I heard the Members from the minority side referring to Commissioners as he or she, this is not allowed. So, both sides are now made aware that any reference should not be made personally, but to the post the person occupies or to the seat he or she occupies.

Mrs Perrine Bégué: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, if I follow the logic of the Member, for example, in funeral grants, before the person gets dead, he or she has to get registered to the Registrar of Association.

(Interruptions)

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Member is making a mockery of us! She is searching ways to justify that public funds have been allocated to political agents. Considering granting money to organise festivities which are justified with granting money for funeral grants, for scholarships, etc. This money which is granted for funeral grants or scholarships, there is no need for audit. We are not concerned what these persons are doing to do with that money. But in this specific case, we need to know what they have done with that money. If you grant money for funeral, you want to audit afterwards? Here the case necessitates that there is an audit, there is a proper control; and I am severely criticising the practice of granting money just like that to political agents.

Mr Chairperson: I have to inform the Members that we are only fifteen minutes to exhaust the four questions that we have. Next question, please.

STATE LANDS LEASE - TOURISM AND HOTEL PROJECTS

(No. B/464) Mr J. Roussety (The Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the granting of State lands in general and more specifically for tourism and hotel projects, whether he will state what measures are being taken to prevent speculative and project/company reselling practices and involving transfer of such rights granted through the lease agreement by Government.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, any transfer of State land lease requires my approval which preclude any possibility of unauthorised transfer of State land leased for tourism purposes.

In addition, with a view to preventing speculation of State land promoters who are granted leases are required to pay a cash deposit of Rs50,000 for hotel project per *arpent*. Such cash deposit is forfeited if the project is not started within two years and completed within 42 months as from the date of signature of the lease agreement.

Moreover, in case of failure to develop the tourist project within the time frame specified, the lease can be terminated.

All these measures are specified in the letter of intent and the deed of lease.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in case of leases being granted to private companies and that the original shareholders of these companies sell the majority of the shares of this company to other persons, the problem remains the same. What is being done at this level? I do not know if the Commissioner understands me clearly.

Mr Chairperson: Do you mean the change of shareholders?

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, a private company, somebody holding the majority of shares, the lease is granted to the company, the right holder is the company and not the person and when the majority shareholder - this can be done easily - sells the shares, it is as if he is selling the company and as such is selling the rights also, because the rights are on the company. Is he aware of that possibility first; and second, what is being done at this level?

The Chief Commissioner: I think that in a lease agreement, whenever the majority shareholders sell their shares, the company remains, because the lease is given to the company. However, I take notice of this question and will find out what can happen whenever a shareholder sells his shares to other persons. But according to the lease, this is given to the company and that is why there cannot be any transfer of assets or lease to other persons. Now, if you want to transfer the lease, there must be approval

from the Commissioner for land. It is stated in the Finance Bill that whenever a person wants to sell the hotel, he must have the authorisation in order to transfer the lease. We can refuse a transfer of the lease whenever you sell the shares. This does not apply to hotels, or any business, but also to simple citizens of this island. A lot of people here have tried to sell their house without authorisation of either the Ministry of Housing and Land or the Commission for Land.

RESTAURANTS LICENCES - OPERATION - PERMITS, APPLICANTS, ETC.

(No. B/465) Mr F. A. Grancourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Commerce and Trade whether, with regard to licences to operate restaurants in Rodrigues, he could state -

- (a) the number of permits delivered since October 2002, and
- (b) the number of applicants awaiting a permit to operate.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I have been informed that no licence has been delivered since October 2002 for operating a restaurant. First of all, I would like to bring to the notice of the Member that as per the Tourism Act of 2002 a restaurant is now considered as a tourist enterprise.

As regards part (b), the number of applications that are being considered at the Court in Rodrigues is six. I have further been informed that three of the applicants do not hold the appropriate land lease for such activity and the other three applications are awaiting the technical report of the Tourism Committee.

LOUBINE - FISHING

(No. B/466) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the fishing of "*Loubine*" in Rodrigues, he could state whether the practice is prohibited by law and the reasons therefor.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, fishing of "*loubine*" is not prohibited by any law.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, maybe the Chief Commissioner has not understood the question. He should give the reasons why.

Mr Chairperson: Your question is "whether it is prohibited" and if prohibited, why?

(Interruptions)

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am being disturbed. There are only two minutes left.

Mr Chairperson: No more interruptions, please.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, fishing of *loubine* is not prohibited, it is very good. But it seems to be that the *loubine* comes into the lagoon when the net fishing activity is closed. It is approximately in November and December. Fishermen come to fish, but it is illegal fishing. I would like the Chief Commissioner to see to it that permits are given to people for the fishing of *loubine*. Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is also another problem, as I stated in my speech on the budget, a sort of '*mafia*' operates around this activity. Each year, we receive complaints from fishermen. During this period it is very dangerous to practise line fishing. So, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner to either legalise the fishing of *loubine* or see another alternative.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the fishing of *loubine* is not prohibited by any law. It is on the list of authorised fishing. But at close season, no net fishing is allowed. It is illegal. So, whenever someone does net fishing, it is illegal. As you know, during close season, some frauds can come along, but the Fisheries Department has given instructions that even during the fishing season it is not allowed to fish after 18.00 hours or during the night. I understand the preoccupation of the Member. I'll take note of what he said.

POULTRY REARING - EXPORT

(No. B/467) Mr F.A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade & Commerce whether with regard to local poultry rearing in Rodrigues for export, he would state -

- (a) what has been the production for the last five years, giving the figure annually, and
- (b) what is the buying procedure at present and the number of registered buyers.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the production of local poultry is as follows -

Year	No. of baskets of poultry
1998	571
1999	518
2000	530
2001	490
2002	409
2003	409 (not yet official)

As regards part (b), there are no registered buyers and there exists no specific buying procedures. It is simply a mutual agreement between buyers and breeders.

Mr Chairperson: I understand that there is only one statement coming from a Commissioner and then we have the motion. The Assembly may take very little time in order to finalise the agenda. Can we complete the agenda and then we'll adjourn.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER

The Commissioner of Youth & Sports (Mr Lisette): Mr Chairperson, I would like to make the following statement about matters that have been raised in this Assembly especially during the last Budget Speech. Much has been said about my Commission. I would like to come here to dissipate all these matters that have been said.

It has been said during the debate on the Budget Speech that my Commission has used only 10% of its Budget from the Budget allocation for financial year 2003/2004.

I would like, Sir, at this stage, to state the capital expenditure incurred so far as regards my Commission. For capital expenditure, Sir, the total voted provision for first year 2003 was Rs32 m and after re-allocation Rs10 m was re-allocated after approval by the Executive Council. This re-allocation was due to the compulsory procedures that we have to follow and, as a matter of fact, implementation of the swimming pool project was somehow delayed.

As at 08 April 2004, there remains only a balance of Rs6 m. This means that my Commission has spent more than 70% of the Budget

provided after re-allocation. I have the pleasure also, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to inform the House that we have just received clearance from the Central Tender Board for the upgrading of the football ground at Oyster Bay. We believe that the project is going to start shortly since the letter of award will be provided to the successful bidder in the coming days, I should say.

Therefore my Commission will use all the money provided in the Capital Budget and the Executive Council has already given its approval for the re-allocation of additional funds to my Commission for the payment of ongoing projects. For the recurrent Budget, Mr Chairperson, out of the Rs4,829,000 that was provided the remaining balance is only now Rs1.7 m, that is less than 12% of the Budget amount. We forecast to spend all the available balance until the end of the financial year.

Let me now turn to one important aspect that has been raised in this Assembly with respect to Judo. Mr Chairperson, Sir, nowadays athletes in Rodrigues are participating in many tournaments in Mauritius whenever they are invited and depending on the availability of funds. Rodriguan athletes and coaches in all disciplines have never travelled as such to the main island of Mauritius and also abroad. Our athletes now have no more complexes to compete with their counterparts in Mauritius or abroad. Exchanges with athletes have been organised in Rodrigues and abroad.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is the real boost-up that is being given to the sports industry in Rodrigues. Everything is being done at my Commission to help both the young and the athletes of Rodrigues. People are appreciating what my Commission is doing in this island.

Since I took office in 2002, Mr Chairperson, Sir, judo in Rodrigues was composed of some 10 active judokas which were pre-selected for the Sixth Indian Island Games. The Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee was a one- man show and there has not been any judo competition in Rodrigues and some sports administrators were interested mainly in obtaining air tickets to go abroad. In March 2003, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we have received complaints from judokas around the island signed by some 60 judokas requesting the holding of a General Assembly. As such since the Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee was not operating, I had no other option than to step in to protect the interests of all the judokas on the island.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I undertook my first mission to Mauritius accompanied by my Departmental Head in April 2003, the main purpose was on the promotion of sports. We had several meetings with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Chairman and members of the *Comité National Olympique de Maurice*, Chairman of the Sports Council, the *Fédération*

Mauricienne de Judo and all have said that they are much concerned with the situation of judo in Rodrigues. Therefore, the matter was discussed with our counterparts in Mauritius and everybody agreed that the situation should be solved. A meeting was scheduled with the members of the Fédération Mauricienne de Judo, everybody agreed that it is essential to set up a Judo Steering Committee for the proper development of judo in Rodrigues and for the smooth running of judo competition by the team for the Sixth Indian Island Ocean Games at Malabar gymnasium. I would like here to say that at the level of my Commission, I did receive a letter from the Judo Federation itself stating that as a result of all these conflicts that were happening within judo in Rodrigues, they are no longer going to deal with the Regional Committee until the problem is solved. I can table this letter that was received in my Commission in March 2003, last year. As a result of these conflicts that were happening, I stepped in and a meeting was organised at Malabar gymnasium on Saturday 26 April 2003 with all stakeholders of judo and all judo clubs and judo schools were requested to submit the names of the representatives to form part of the Judo Steering Committee. Some 80 judokas and trainers were present. A Steering Committee of 11 members was appointed wherein all interested parties were represented. I should say, Sir, that was the rebirth of judo in Rodrigues because at this particular time, there were only 12 judokas who were training on that tatami. After the setting up of the Steering Committee, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is to be noted that a first activity was organised on 01 June 2003, that is a fun-run from Songe to Mourouk where we had some 200 judokas who took part. It is also worth noted, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the Rodrigues Regional Judo Committee has had a general meeting Assembly on 27 May 2004 to fill vacancies among membership of the Managing Committee because we know that formerly there were many members who have dismissed themselves from that committee. After the General Assembly of 27 May 2004, they appointed three additional members to join in the Managing Committee; and what is more surprising about the Managing Committee - which I would like to bring to the attention of the House - is that out of the seven members that constitute the Regional Committee, all the members are from only one judo club, namely Port Mathurin Judo Club. Is judo practised by only people in Port Mathurin? Nowadays, Sir, we have seven clubs, namely Port Mathurin, Songes, Allée Tamarin, Mangles, La Ferme, Grande Montagne and Malabar. When we look at the composition right now, Sir, of the Regional Committee, it is composed of only members from one club.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like here to bring to the attention of the Members in the House if really we should continue with a practice where we have a Regional Committee represented by only one club. We should note that after the setting up of the Steering Committee there has been a re-birth

and a boost-up of the activity of judo in Rodrigues whereby I should say we have almost 210-250 judokas who are practising the discipline.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the organisation of the judo competition for the Sixth Indian Ocean Island Games was a real success with the participation of all stakeholders.

Mr J. Roussety: Referring to Standing Orders 38 and 42..

Mr Chairperson: Please, I want to know which Standing Order you are referring to?

Mr J. Roussety: Standing Order 38 - relevancy in debate. My first point is that the Commissioner at the beginning of his speech said that he would intervene on matters referring to the Budget which he did first, but he is now going everywhere. Second, Standing Order 42, because we see that there is notice of a Private Member's Motion of No-Confidence in the Commissioner of Youth and Sports and it appears to me that the Commissioner is trying to defend himself to promote his Commission prior to the coming of this motion. I would invite him, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to wait for the motion because *il fait tout, il est en train de tout faire pour se redorer le blason, je ne sais pas si c'est parce qu'il y a cette motion. Je trouve cela comme une anticipation qu'il ne faudrait pas permettre.* Yes, it is right, but he is anticipating.

Mr Chairperson: Please wait, there is a point of order, do you want my ruling?

Mr J. Roussety: *I agree it is his right to make a statement. I have been listening to him for several minutes, il est en train d'essayer de se redorer le blason, c'est tout à son crédit mais je trouve qu'il est en train d'anticiper la motion de no-confidence et je l'inviterai à attendre la venue de la motion pour parler de ce qu'il fait. On va attendre la motion as it is a Private Member's Motion et non pas essayer de se redorer le blason et unduly taking the time of the Assembly.*

Mr Chairperson: Yes, Minority Leader, I understand that there is a problem not only in this House, but worldwide about Private Members' Motion when it has to be ballotted at the last sitting of each meeting. At times we do have Governments which take on Private Members' Bill or come up and comment what has been stated in Private Member's Motion. This is not normal, but this is not what is normally done. So, you stand the test of your technique in timing when you have to lodge your motion or not.

But I have no power to interrupt the Member or to tell him what has to be stated in his statement or not and moreover, this is not a debate.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is the time for statements by Commissioners and I believe that I have the utmost right to make a statement. As regards the motion that has been tabled in the Assembly, I don't know about the contents therein. I am reacting to what has been said about judo and many other things during the debates on the Budget. This is my objective. I don't know whatever motion has been tabled or not, but I would like to bring to the attention of the House ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: You do not have to defend yourself because I have already given my ruling. Proceed with your statement, please.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the last Budget Speech, I remember the Second Local Member for Maréchal said that there has been a purchase of kimonos at my Commission without following the normal stores procedure. I would like to state matters clearly and say what has actually happened.

When it was said last time in the Assembly, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I considered it as unnecessary to react and I considered it as, maybe, a slip of the tongue. But, the Member persists in saying that these matters have not been coped with in accordance with procedures. So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to bring to the attention of the Member as well as of the House that the tender for the purchase of kimonos was launched by my Commission on 15 December 2003. The tender committee received three bids and it decided to request all bidders to submit samples even though the latter were in Mauritius and will take more time.

After examination of the samples, Mr Chairperson, Sir, by the coaches in Rodrigues, the tender committee allocated the contract to the successful bidder. They have completed all the stores procedures and there has not been any purchase of kimonos at the Commission. It is only this month that the purchase of kimonos took place through an appropriate store procedure.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, for the information of the House, the tender Committee is chaired by the Department of Health and consists of a Finance Officer, the Purchasing and Supplies Officer and the Secretary.

I would also like to inform the House, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that all sportsmen are fully satisfied with sport equipment that have been provided by the Commission so far.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to the status that we now have in Rodrigues with the setting up of a Commission for Youth and Sports, I would like to bring to the attention of Members, specially to that of the Second Member for Marechal, that my Commission is an autonomous Commission with respect to budget that is allocated to my Commission. As a matter of fact, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't have to receive any authorisation whatsoever from any regional committees for the spending of this budget as long as procedures are followed.

(Interruptions)

This means, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that they are not understanding the real concept of autonomy.

(Interruptions)

Why should I wait for someone who is not active in sports or is willing to help the stockage to wait for an internal budget to be allocated to the Commission when, at the same time, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are many judokas on the island who are willing to do competition. As a Commissioner responsible for sports, I'll see to it and I'll not allow anybody to hijack any discipline. Mr Chairperson, Sir, the budget is at the Commission and it is, up to me, together with all regional committees that are in compliance with the Sports Act to see how the budget is going to be spent. I am not going to be dictated, Mr Chairperson, Sir, by any regional committee, but I should say that my Commission is willing to work in harmony and in partnership with all regional Committees.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, Sir, before I end, I would like to say that Sports are taking such an *ampleur* since some time that only those who do not want to see it who are trying to say the contrary. I would like, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to thank all my staff, trainees, trainers, volunteers and those who have at heart the well-being of sportsmen in Rodrigues.

Thank you, Sir.

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

MOTION

HOUSE COMMITTEE - REVOCATION

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, j'ai le plaisir de présenter devant cette auguste Assemblée la motion qui figure sur l'Ordre du Jour en mon nom et qui se lit comme suit –

“This Assembly is of opinion that the House Committee appointed under Section 59(5)(f) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 be revoked forthwith and that another House Committee be appointed under Standing Order 65 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Standing Order and Rules to be composed of the following Members:

- (1) Mr Jacques Pierre Louis, Deputy Chairperson*
- (2) Mr Louis Philippe François*
- (3) Miss Marie Lindsay Castel*
- (4) Mr Gaetan Jabeemissar*
- (5) Mrs Jacqueline Prosper.”*

M. le président, cette motion est ainsi soumise à l'approbation de cette Assemblée en conformité au règlement 65 de cette Assemblée. Ce règlement prévoit la constitution d'un *House Committee* pour examiner toutes choses concernant la convenance des membres et d'en aviser le président de l'Assemblée.

Ce comité, communément appelé “*Select Committee*”, s'avère important dans le cadre du bon fonctionnement de l'Assemblée, non seulement quand l'Assemblée siège, mais aussi quand les différents comités siègent ainsi que dans l'administration du Secrétariat de l'Assemblée.

Les sujets que peuvent considérer ce comité sont innombrables; facilités de renseignement à la librairie, les déjeûners, les papeteries et aussi les avantages pécuniaires des membres. Ce comité est très important pour les membres. C'est un forum où ils ont la possibilité directement d'exprimer ses vues et de formuler des recommandations en ce qui concerne ces privilèges autres que ceux énoncés dans la loi. Ce fut ces mêmes raisons que le Chef Commissaire d'alors avait prises en compte, et ce, dès le départ.

Cependant, les règles énoncées dans la septième schedule de la loi, ne permettaient pas la création de ce comité, sur les mêmes bases de

l'Assemblée Nationale. Comme c'était impératif d'instituer ce comité, l'Assemblée avait approuvé un *House Committee* qui est actuellement en existence sous la section 59 de la loi du 25 octobre 2002.

M. le président, les travaux et attributions de ce comité ont été passés en revue par le *Standing Order Committee*. A la page 15 de son rapport, le *Standing Order Committee* note –

“It has been brought to the notice of the Committee that the House Committee has to sit every month and that it has to table a report in the Assembly in conformity to the sixth Schedule of the Act. Furthermore, being given the competence of the House Committee which is to consider and advise the Chairperson on all matters connected with the comfort and convenience of members, many of the recommendations have financial implications which falls foul of section 17 of the sixth Schedule to the Act.”

En se basant sur ces mêmes raisons, le *Standing Order Committee* avait recommandé l'insertion d'un nouveau règlement qui prévoit l'institution d'un *House Committee* sur les mêmes bases qu'à Assemblée Nationale. Le *Standing Order Committee* exprimait ses vues en ces termes-

“The Committee considers that upon the adoption of this recommendation, there should be a corresponding motion in the Assembly to dissolve the existing House Committee. The Assembly would be competent to elect, at any time, a new House Committee under Standing Order 65.”

M. le président, conformément à ce qui a été recommandé par le *Standing Order Committee*, je demande à tous les membres, ici présents, de considérer la révocation du présent comité pour les raisons énoncées et de considérer positivement l'institution d'un nouveau *House Committee* sous les prévisions du règlement 65.

Je vous remercie.

Mr Jean Daniel Speville Deputy Chief Comissioner rose and seconded

Mr Chairperson: Does anybody wish to take part in the debate? No!

The motion was, on question put, agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 18 May 2004 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 14.00 p.m. the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 18 May 2004 at 10.30 a.m.