

**No. 07 of 18.05.04**

***RODRIGUES FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY***

**Debate No. 07 of 2004**

**Sitting of Tuesday 18 May 2004**

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

*(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)*

**The National Anthem was played**

***RODRIGUES FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY***

**Tuesday 18 May 2004**

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## ADJOURNMENT

Debate No. 07 of 18.05.2004

### ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

#### ANSE AUX ANGLAIS – DRAINS

**(No. B/468) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member)** would asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he would inform the House about the state of the drains passing in front of Mr Meunier's or Mr Lelio Roussety's house at Anse aux Anglais and the measures he intended to take to remedy the situation.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, following complaints received from some inhabitants of Anse aux Anglais about the blocked state of the drains passing in front of Mr Meunier's or Mr Lelio Roussety's house at Anse aux Anglais, disposition was taken for a team of manual workers as well as an excavator to be mobilised on site to first re-open the cross drain. The blocked cross drain was the major cause of water overtopping along the drain. The cross drain has already been cleaned and is now operational. The whole drain of about 50m in length has been included in the scope of works of drains to be cleaned. Moreover, the road section of my Commission is awaiting for good weather conditions to "re- asphalt" the cut across section of the road.

**Mrs Meunier:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner who monitored that work?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, it is the staff from my Commission.

**Mrs Meunier:** Can I ask the Commissioner again if he is aware of the consequence resulting from the action, which has just been taken to clean that drain?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I take notice of the question, because the work has not yet been completed.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether the work, which has been carried out at Anse aux Anglais was for a long term or short term?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as we are waiting for good weather conditions, it will be for short-term.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner when complaints were received and when was the work carried out?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** The work was carried out on 13 May 2004.

**Mrs Meunier:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he was aware that the soil that has been excavated from the drain has been placed by the roadside and this soil lies on water pipes and one of the water pipes is leaking because of that soil there? Is he prepared to do the needful to repair the water pipe?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I take notice of the statement made by the respected Member and my Commission will do the needful to reinstate the place where work has been carried out.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Is the microphone working? Has the Member understood the answer?

**Mrs Meunier:** I have not heard the answer.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** I have said that I take notice of the statement made by the respected Member and my Commission will do the needful to reinstate place where work has been carried out.

**Mrs Meunier:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner to take that as a matter of urgency? The Deputy Chief Commissioner said that the drain has just been cleaned – I can't say it has been cleaned because the work has been very poorly done. The real cause of the problem has not been dealt with, because it is found next to a bus stop.

Yesterday, a lorry got stuck there for hours. So, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner take that as a matter of urgency and do something about it?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the problem has occurred because of bad weather conditions that have prevailed; there were heavy rains, but I will look into the matter.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask a supplementary question. We continuously hear such answers like “we will look into the matter or I take notice of the question”, but in reality nothing is done. Who is the Commissioner responsible for public infrastructure? This specific question concerns Anse aux Anglais, but it is a problem, which, in fact, concerns nearly all the regions of Rodrigues. Everywhere you go, you see mud on the streets. The drains are filthy and are not cleaned. Is it the general policy of the Commission to let such a situation go on or will the Commission take urgent measures to see that these drains are cleaned?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is another question.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, the part, which refers to other parts of the island, concerns another question. But the part relating to Anse aux Anglais is relevant.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I agree that I am generalising, but I am referring to Anse aux Anglais. This is in front of Mr Lelio Roussety’s house, a Commissioner of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Mr Meunier who, I believe, is a citizen and a taxpayer of this country. I would like to know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he intends to remedy the situation. He said that the drains are blocked and now he comes to the House and says that he will look into the matter. We would like to know when he is going to look into the matter. Is it when people will catch cholera and die? What urgent measures does he intend to take?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, perhaps the Minority Leader wants to do miracles. This drain was cleaned on 13 May 2004...

**Mr J. Roussety:** On a point of order, Sir, this is not the way of answering Parliamentary Questions. The Commissioner is asking me if I want to do miracles. Last time, he told me if I could make money with my hands and now he is saying that I am proposing him to do miracles. This is not serious and this should not be allowed. I am not asking him to do miracles. My intention, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is to ask him to use public personnel to clean these drains.

**Mr Chairperson:** Minority Leader, this is not a debate; this is Question Time. You rose on a point of order. What is your point of order? I have not understood your point of order.

**Mr J. Roussety:** The Commissioner is saying that I want him to make miracles. I never intended to make him make miracles.

**Mr Chairperson:** This is a personal explanation. Can the Commissioner proceed with the answer? Have you finished?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Yes, Mr Chairman.

**Mrs Meunier:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner again if he has looked into the real problem, because only part of the drain beneath the road has been cleaned. But the real problem has not been dealt with. The drains are going to be filled again. I think the Commissioner should see that it is properly done.

**Mr Chairperson:** Please, ask a proper question and not a request. Your question, please?

**Mrs Meunier:** Does the Commissioner think that the real nature of the problem has been dealt with?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, the work has not been completed. We just had a weekend and today is Monday. My Commission is looking into the matter together with the Global Consultancy Services to find ways and means to improve the drainage system of Port Mathurin and the villages, which are found near Port Mathurin.

**Mr Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, does the Commissioner mean to say that to clean drains, his Commission needs the services of Consultants?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, you can clean drains, but there are other physical parameters that have to be considered, for example, the gradients of drains, the tides because Port Mathurin and the villages are found near the seaside. There are other parameters, which need to be looked into so that we can properly manage the drains of villages nearby Port Mathurin.

### **PORT MATHURIN – STREETS – OVER FLOODING**

**(No. B/469) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the problem of over flooding in the streets of Port Mathurin during rains, he would say -

- (a) what is the cause of its occurrence;
- (b) what actions have been taken to remedy such a situation, and
- (c) what ultimate action he intends to take to avoid the recurrence of such a problem in future.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the occurrence of flooding in the streets of Port Mathurin during rains are due to several reasons and are mainly due to -

- (a) the altitude of Port Mathurin with respect to sea level;
- (b) the frequent blocking of drains by some people;
- (c) the absence of drain in some areas;
- (d) the direct discharge of storm water on the road;
- (e) the lower level of certain yards with respect to the road level thus causing flooding of those yards.

Meanwhile in order to alleviate the situation, pumping of these flooded areas is being carried out by the Fire Services. Moreover, regular larviciding and disinfection are carried out. Cleaning of existing drains is also being carried out.

In the long run several scenarios are being envisaged to mitigate the impact of flooding. However, we shall bear in mind that Port Mathurin is a low lying area between Mt. Fanale and the sea. The possible solutions are –

- (a) construction of a main drain at the foot of Mt. Fanale to intercept all the flow of water from the slopes of Mt. Fanale;
- (b) construction of lateral drains along the streets of Port Mathurin. However, in several cases, either the road width will have to be reduced or land acquired to cater for the construction of such drain.

The different scenarios are being studied and a decision will be taken after a cost analysis of each scenario has been carried out.

**Mrs Prosper:** I heard the Deputy Chief Commissioner talk about drains which are blocked by certain people, but I want him to say who is normally responsible for the maintenance of the state of these drains?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally Maxi Clean is responsible for the cleaning of these drains.

**Mrs Prosper:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Deputy Chief Commissioner say why some of the drains are covered and some are not?

**Mr Chairperson:** Has the Commissioner understood the question?

**Mrs Prosper:** I would like to know from the Commissioner why some of the drains are covered and some are not.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is logical. Normally in a town, there are some drains that need to be covered and there are others, which do not need to be covered.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether his Commission has the required staff to monitor all the drains at Port Mathurin and to make necessary recommendations so that appropriate actions are taken?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said Maxi Clean is responsible for the cleaning of drains and as I have said before, I am working with Global Consultancy Services to see how we can manage the proper cleaning and maintenance of all drains. After the result of such a study, it will be possible for us to have a group of workers to deal with it.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not think the Deputy Chief Commissioner has answered my question.

**Mr Chairperson:** Put your question again, please.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** I asked him whether at the level of his Commission he has the required staff, inspectors or a unit, which looks after all the drains at Port Mathurin to monitor the state of the drains. I would also like to know whether recommendations were made to him so that he could take appropriate actions.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we cannot do duplication of work. Maxi Clean is already doing the work. We are not here to effect double payment for the same work. We are here to manage the construction properly when it will begin.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is astonishing.

**Mr Chairperson:** No statement, please. Put your question.

**Mr J. Roussety:** This is not a statement, but a question. The Deputy Chief Commissioner says that Maxi Clean is responsible for the cleaning of these drains. This side of the House has been asking him since a few minutes whether, at the level of his Commission, there are workers or officers responsible to see whether the job has been done; and secondly, when Maxi Clean cannot remove all the filthy matters blocked in the drains, I think it is the responsibility of his Commission to repair the drains with construction materials. Is this being done? Is supervision being made as a preventive measure?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** I have just replied to this question, Mr Chairperson, Sir. As I have said, we are doing a whole study of all the drains in Port Mathurin. We cannot repair drains while, at the same

time, other drains are blocked throughout the town. We are doing a complete study of the matter and after this study, we will liaise with the Consultants and the Executive Council of the Regional Assembly to seek for funds for a proper management and proper construction of these drains where need be.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, after heavy rainfall, there has been any work carried out by his Commission on the drains in Port Mathurin?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, heavy rains just stopped on Sunday. A group of workers are cleaning the road segment where there have been debris due to the heavy rains.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a fact that the drains and the roads of Port Mathurin are cleaned everyday by Maxi Clean. Every person can witness that. But the fact that at certain places, although it rains or not, water remains stagnant, especially at a place at Port Mathurin, in front of the ancient bakery, not far from the workshop. People living there call it Port Mathurin Waterfront. This problem, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is a real one and should meet the concern of the Commissioner responsible. I do not know why no urgent action is being taken to tackle this problem, because we cannot allow water to remain stagnant, especially in a street where the drains remain open. It is for that reason that we are insisting that the Commissioner finds a real and true solution to that problem.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** What is your question?

**Mr Grandcourt:** The question is, what solution the Commissioner is going to bring?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have just said that pumping of these areas is being carried out by the Fire Services, but there are the physical conditions of the town that need to be considered too. Many areas of this town are marshy land and it is very difficult to avoid flooding of some of the places in Port Mathurin. This is why, as I have said, we are doing a complete study of all drains in Port Mathurin to manage this study of the different gradients, because Port Mathurin lies just near the sea.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner a last question. He has mentioned long-term actions. Will he inform the House whether the preliminary work for these long-term actions will start in this present financial budget or in the forthcoming one?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, different studies have already started; we will have to pay consultancy fees to the Consultant concerned and we will see after a cost analysis if it can be done this year or during the forthcoming year, subject to availability of funds.

### **LATE MEVILDA ERNEST - PLAINE CORAIL**

**(No. B/470) Mrs M. T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Health whether with regard to late Mevilda Ernest of Plaine Corail, he could state –

- (a) the last date she was released from hospital;
- (b) in what weather conditions she was brought home and if there was any problem during the transfer home, and
- (c) what was the cause of her death.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed that the last date late Mevilda Ernest (aged 71) was released from Queen Elizabeth Hospital was on Tuesday 27 April 2004.

As regards part (b), usually entries regarding weather conditions are not entered in the logbook. I am informed that it was a rainy day, but no particular problem was reported to the Health authorities.

Concerning part (c) of the question, the death is attributed to Uraemia.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Health said that the patient was discharged on Tuesday 27 April. Can I ask him at what time she was brought home?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of that question.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner for Health whether, when any patient is discharged from the hospital, provision is made for a person to accompany him or her? Because we all know that in many cases, ambulances cannot get access to houses easily. We know also that sometimes when a patient leaves the hospital, he or she is still not in good physical condition to go home alone. Is a patient who is discharged normally accompanied up to his or her home?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, usually this is done and sometimes one of the parents does accompany the patient.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to tell the Commissioner for Health that when late Mevilda Ernest was discharged from hospital, she was left one kilometre from her home at night during heavy rainfall. She could not walk. I would like to ask the Commissioner for Health whether there was an *aide-chauffeur* in the ambulance that day.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Sir, as I have just said, I am informed that no problem was reported to the health authorities.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question is whether there was an *aide-chauffeur* when the lady was brought back home?

**Mr Sooprayen:** As far as I know, the ambulance attendant always accompanies the driver.

**Mr Grandcourt:** For his information, I should like to tell the Commissioner for Health that there was no *aide-chauffeur* in this ambulance on that day.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** In that case, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner responsible for Health whether he is prepared to set up a commission of inquiry to see why no *aide-chauffeur* accompanied the driver to convey that patient back home.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will come with a Statement next week.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Sir, suppose the ambulance...

**Mr Chairperson:** No hypothesis, please! Be precise.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Grandcourt:** Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Health whether it is usually the case to bring patients from hospital back to their homes during heavy rainfall.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Sir, I will find out and inform the House.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Of course, this is out of the scope of this question. How can the Member expect the Commissioner to answer all these questions? He needs notice of the question.

**Mrs Meunier:** Referring to that question, I would like to say that many cases have occurred in the past where patients are left on the road because of unpassable roads or the driver does not want to go through the place. Is he prepared to make provision for an attendant to accompany patients to their home when this problem arises?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, provisions are already there, that is, ambulance drivers are always accompanied by an ambulance attendant, but I will look into the matter...

*(Interruptions)*

I am being interrupted, Sir.

**Mr Chairperson:** No interruption from a sitting position, please! How can the Commissioner answer if there is so much noise.

**Mr Sooprayen:** I will look into the matter so that in future this incident does not occur again, that is, the ambulance attendant will accompany the patients.

**FIRE SERVICES - RESPONSIBILITY UNIT, OFFICERS, ETC.**

**(No. B/471) Mrs M.T. Meunier (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible, *inter alia*, for Fire Services with regard to Fire Services whether he would inform the House -

- (a) about the number of units under his responsibility;
- (b) the areas of responsibility of each unit, and
- (c) whether officers can be transferred from one unit to another and, if not, the reasons therefor.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the answer is as follows -

- (a) There are two units at Fire Services. I am responsible for one unit of Fire Services based at Camp du Roi. The other unit namely Airport Fire Safety Unit, based at Corail Airport is under the Civil Aviation Division which falls under the responsibility of the Chief Commissioner;
- (b) The areas of responsibility of the Fire Services include -

Fire fighting;  
Fire prevention, and  
Fire precaution throughout the island including the harbour.

In addition, the Fire Services provide assistance to the Airport Fire Safety Unit as and when required. The latter has similar responsibilities which are limited to the Plaine Corail Airport zone and its immediate surroundings.

- (c) So far both Fire Services fall under the aegis of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly with the Island Chief Executive as the Responsible Officer, the transfer of officers of the same grade between the units can normally be done on administrative ground.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has said that the area of responsibility which is based at the airport is limited to the Plaine Corail Airport and its immediate surroundings. This implies that the officers

who are posted there have specific training and are, therefore, specialists in aircraft accidents, fire or any other fire related accidents at an airport. Have there been transfers recently? If yes, who was transferred? Is it a good policy to transfer people who are specialists in a specific field to other areas? Skills are lost and are not put to their best use.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, all the firemen should have special training be it at the airport or at Camp du Roi.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am asking whether there has been any transfer and whether it is the policy of the Island Chief Executive, or his Commission to transfer staff with specialisation when he himself said that the responsibilities are limited to Plaine Corail airport and immediate surroundings. How can he allow these officers to be transferred to other places when they have acquired experience at the airport?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, they are all public officers. As I have just said, they can be transferred on administrative grounds.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, has there been any transfer recently from Plaine Corail Airport to Port Mathurin, and, if yes, the names of the officers and the reasons of their transfer?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I'll come with a Statement next week as these are administrative affairs.

**Mr Chairperson:** Minority Leader, you wanted to ask a question.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Yes. I am referring to the transfer of public officers from Plaine Corail Airport to the Port Mathurin Fire Station. The Commissioner said that they are transferred on administrative reasons. Does this term "administrative reasons" include punitive reasons?

**Mr Sooprayen:** I do not know what the respected Minority Leader means by punitive. These officers fall under the purview of the Civil Aviation Dept. and under the Chief Commissioner's Office. Questions should be put to the Chief Commissioner.

**Mr Chairperson:** Next question, please!

## RICE "*RATION*" - NORMS

(No. B/472) **Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Licensing with regard to "*riz ration*" on sale in Rodrigues, could he say –

- (a) whether it satisfied the required norms and, if not,
- (b) what measures he intended to take to remedy the situation.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that "*riz ration*" on sale in Rodrigues is the same as that in Mauritius and it satisfies the specification as per the tender of the State Trading Corporation.

However, any consumer who is not satisfied with the quality of rice and feels that it is not within the norms may bring it back to his supplier who, in turn, will liaise with the State Trading Corporation for exchange if need be.

**Mrs Prosper:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, could the Commissioner inform the House who is responsible to inspect whether the rice satisfies the required norms?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I stated in my reply, when rice is bought from abroad, tenders are launched by the STC and the rice sent to Mauritius should be as per the norms and standards specified by the STC in the tender.

**Mrs Meunier:** Does the Commissioner mean that, if the rice has satisfied the norms in Mauritius, we have to eat it here as well?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the answer to the question is self-regulatory, because it is said that if the consumer is not satisfied, he has the right to give the rice back to the retailer or supplier who, in turn, is going to liaise with the STC, notifying it of any improper rice on the market.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the respected Commissioner whether he has received any complaint about this type of "*riz ration*" in Rodrigues.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, so far, my Commission has not received any complaint about the quality of rice.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he can tell us right now, in this House, if he has received any complaint about this “*riz ration*” in Rodrigues.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, my Commission has not received any complaint with respect to the quality of rice on the market.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we know that, once the rice comes from Mauritius, it has satisfied the required norms. But, by the time it comes to Rodrigues, what is being done in Rodrigues to ensure that the rice, which is put on the local market, is consumable?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that any rice that reaches the Mauritian market should be in conformity with the tender set by the STC. I don’t see any reason for a crosscheck inspection in Rodrigues.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this means that if the rice has been stored for one year in Mauritius, no inspection is carried out when it comes to Rodrigues. So, nothing will be done by the Commission if, for example, the rice has been stored in Mauritius for a long time.

**Mr Lisette:** If the rice is stored in Mauritius and is in a bad state, as I have said, the system is self-regulatory because once it reaches the market, the consumers are going to complain.

**Mrs Prosper:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether he consumes this rice?

**Mr Chairperson:** This question is not allowed. It is a personal issue.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would just like to inform the respected Commissioner that this rice does not satisfy the norms and is not consumable. Perhaps he does not eat the rice, but I would like to inform him of this fact.

**Mr Chairperson:** This is a very serious statement that the Member is making. Have you made any complaint? Next question, please.

## **VEGETABLES & FRUITS IMPORTATION – PHYTOSANITARY CONTROL**

**(No. B/473) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to diseases affecting crops in Rodrigues, he could state if there is a strict phytosanitary control on the importation of vegetables and fruits to Rodrigues.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Agricultural Services has a unit which deals with Plant Quarantine and Phytosanitary Control according to Plant Act 1976. The unit has the following main objectives -

- (1) Control of plants, animals and animal parts import to Rodrigues.
- (2) Carry out phytosanitary control at airport and seaport.
- (3) Check stores of fruits and vegetables importers for presence of pest and diseases.
- (4) Seize and destroy all suspect plant or animal part.

The normal work of the unit includes control of imported fruits and vegetables at each ship arrival, control of passengers coming from Reunion Island and frequent check at importers stores. The unit presently falls under the Crop Research Section of the Agricultural Services and consists of a Technical Officer and four Technical Assistants working on a part-time basis. Moreover, a Technical Officer from Mauritius has been posted on a tour of service to strengthen the unit and to train Rodriguan Officers. An officer from the Ministry of Agriculture is presently in Rodrigues to review all the existing procedures in order to strengthen the existing control system.

### **“TI PIMENT” PLANTATIONS - DISEASES**

**(No. B/474) Mrs J. Prosper (Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to diseases commonly known as “*flétrissement*” and “*papillon blanc*”, which severely affect “*ti*

*piment*” plantations in Rodrigues, he would say what measures his Commission is taking to remedy the situation.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, Rodrigues has a special variety of chilli, which most probably is a result of the acclimatisation of the crop to our local dry condition. Chilli is a biannual crop of the solanaceous family, which regroups potato, tomato and brinjal. Unfortunately, the whole solanaceous family suffers from numerous pests and diseases, which are transmitted to all members of the family by numerous vectors. Among the most severe diseases, which are known to be lethal to the family, is bacterial wilt (i.e. *flétrissement bactérien*). Bacterial wilt is a soil borne/seed borne bacteria known as *pseudomonas solanacearum*. Once the bacteria is present in a soil, crops of the solanaceous family can no longer be planted. There is no known chemical treatment for the disease. Strains of chillies, which show tolerance to bacterial wilt, are not known up to now. The Agricultural Service is starting a selection work towards such strains while performing selection for purity restoration of our local chilli. Moreover, a mapping of areas infested by the bacteria has been carried out by the MSIRI. Planters are being advised neither to plant chilli on those soils nor to plant chilli after the soil has been planted with a crop of the solanaceous family.

As regards the Spwalling white fly, commonly known as “*papillon blanc*”, this pest affect numerous crops and trees locally, including local chilli. The pest has been recorded on several plants worldwide. Widespread use of insecticide is not being encouraged due to several risk factors such as

—

- Negative impact on the environment
- Danger to public health
- Destruction of natural enemies of the pest, which then causes resurgence of fly
- Rapid development of resistance occurs

The local chilli growers have been advised to use the following products to control the spreading of the flies —

- (i) Spraying of detergent
- (ii) Use of insecticides

Moreover, planters have been advised to remove and burn all infected branches and leaves. Regular pruning has to be carried out. In the long run, the Agricultural Service is looking at the possibility of introducing a reliable predator of the pest to control its proliferation. The predator *nephaspis bicolus* has already been introduced in Mauritius and is presently being bred and released by the Entomology Division of the Ministry of Agriculture. My Commission is liaising with the Ministry for Agriculture to study the possibility of introducing such predators in Rodrigues.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether there is a special unit at the level of his Commission to deal with the problems of *flétrissement* and *papillon blanc*.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I said, at the Commission for Agriculture, some officers are working on the problem of diseases affecting crops.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a wise decision on the part of the Deputy Chief Commissioner to advise planters to take certain precautions. I would like to ask him what is being done at the level of his Commission and what facilities he is offering to these planters, so that they can address the problem.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, worldwide experts in the field of agriculture are working on this problem. As I have said, there is no known chemical treatment for the disease. We can only have preliminary prevention measures. We can have solutions to such diseases, but there are several risk factors. This is why experts from the Ministry of Agriculture are studying the possibility of having a real solution, while at the same time limiting its dangers.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could state again what were the two solutions he advised the planters to use? Because he has said that there is no chemical solution. As far as I remember, he said that he advised planters to use detergents and insecticides. Could he please state that again?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, these are short-term solutions. We can act upon the proliferation of such diseases for one or two months. But, we cannot stop the total proliferation of such diseases.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the policy to make the local planters produce '*ti piment*' has flopped! The planters cannot rely on '*ti piment*'. What is the alternative if ever no solution can be found and no more '*ti piment*' can be grown in Rodrigues? It means that, in the long run, Rodrigues, being well known for its '*ti piment*', will no more have '*ti piment*'! What will be the long-term policy of the Commission?

According to the answers given by the Deputy Chief Commissioner, himself, not only the '*ti-piment*' is at risk, but all the family of plants fall into the same category. I think this is a very severe problem. The whole agriculture of Rodrigues will be at stake if the necessary measures are not taken right now. And, that's why I would ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner what measures are being taken to ensure that there is no proliferation to the other crops as well?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is proactive on this issue. Talks are being held in villages and broadcast on the radio concerning this issue. As I have said, temporary measures include the spraying of detergent and the use of insecticide. Moreover, they are also advised to remove and burn all infected branches; and as soon as a solution is found by experts from the Ministry of Agro-Industry, the needful will be done in Rodrigues.

#### **AREA HEALTH CENTRES AND QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL - BIRTH AND STILLBORN - JAN 2004 -18 MAY 2004**

**(No. B/475) Mrs J. Prosper (The Sixth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether he could inform the House about the number of birth as from January 2004 to date and the number of stillborn for the corresponding period as far as the Area Health Centres are concerned, including Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the number of birth since January 2004 is 354 of which -

|                                   |   |     |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----|
| (1) Queen Elizabeth Hospital      | : | 331 |
| (2) La Ferme Area Health Centre   | : | 12  |
| (3) Mont Lubin Area Health Centre | : | 11  |

There were 10 stillborn at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and none in the two Area Health Centres.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner give some of the causes of stillborn at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed that causes of stillbirth are mainly due because would-be-mothers suffer from hypertension; they do not follow or go late for the pre-natal treatment and, very often, they are very young mothers or teenagers.

#### **QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL – MATERNITY WARD**

**(No. B/476) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to the “gynae” room of the maternity ward at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he could inform the House about -

- (a) the size of the room and its intake capacity, and
- (b) the sanitary facilities offered to patients there.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the size of the “gynae” room is 27.6 sq. mts, that is, 6.50 mts x 4.25 mts and the intake capacity is seven beds.

With regard to part (b), there is one bathroom and one toilet, but designs for the upgrading and extension to the maternity ward with additional bathrooms and toilets are being finalised.

**Mr J. Roussetty:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the dimension of the room is 6.50 mts by 4.25 mts and there are seven beds. Could the Commissioner responsible for Health explain how seven beds can fit into such a room?

*(Interruptions)*

Firstly, I would like to know whether his information is correct in so far as the number of beds, which are accommodated in that room. And, if yes, doesn't he think that this room is overcrowded given the number of beds there?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the area is 27.6 sq. mts. I invite respected Members on the minority side of the House to have a visit there. It may be a bit overcrowded for the time being, but I must say that designs for the upgrading and extension of the maternity ward are being finalised and it will be done soon.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I welcome the invitation of the Commissioner. In fact, if I have put this question, it is precisely because I visited that room. Seven beds are too many for such a small room, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

I would like to ask the Commissioner who are those patients, who, normally, are admitted in that specific room, because it forms part of the maternity ward. Some patients are in the larger block. If actually there are only seven beds, this means that only seven patients are admitted in that room.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, they are patients coming from the gynaecological ward. They come to this specific room when they have bleeding problems.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we cannot expect that type of patients to be limited to seven only, because there might be more patients suffering from bleeding problems. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner where he proposes to put them in case there are more than seven patients suffering from such type of problem?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I was informed that formerly there were only five beds in this room. Now, it has come to seven. Since the respected Member put the question, if there are more than seven such cases - which may be once in a blue moon - the maternity room is put to use.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I consider this as a real problem. A maternity room is for mothers awaiting birth or for those who have already given birth. I don't think there is sufficient room to keep patients with bleeding problems there.

*(Interruptions)*

That's why they are kept in a "gynae" room...

*(Interruptions)*

The Commissioner, himself, said that formerly there were five beds and now there are seven beds...

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, I agree with the respected Member that he has to put questions, but he should not make supposition or to take things for granted.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I asked about the intake capacity, the Commissioner responsible for Health said seven. He has just said that formerly there were five beds, which means that initially the intake capacity was five. It is because they met with problems that two more beds were added. Are they going to add more beds in this room? There is a problem of space. So, may we know what measures will be taken?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is why I said that we are going with the upgrading and extension of the maternity ward.

### ***"CARAVANE DE SANTE" – ACTIVITIES***

**(No. B/477) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health

with regard to the “*Caravane de Santé*” in Rodrigues, whether he would inform the House -

- (a) about its schedules of activities for 2004 starting from January, and
- (b) whether due to the outburst of STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases) in Rodrigues, new responsibilities can be assigned to the “*Caravane de Santé*” in order to help in overcoming this scourge.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that from 03 to 05 March 2004, only one NCD (Non-Communicable Disease) screening for officers of the Rodrigues Administration has been carried out in Port Mathurin. The “*Caravane de Santé*” has already been to 146 sites over the island and 8,666 individuals aged 18 years and over have been screened. The “*Caravane de Santé*” is now going to visit other worksites.

The activities of the “*Caravane de Santé*” have been slowed down as there is no community physician in post since February 2004, and there is a shortage of nursing staff especially female nursing officer.

With regard to part (b), I am informed that there is at present no outburst of sexually transmitted diseases. Facilities for the screening of STDs are available at all our centres. Laboratory specimens are regularly sent to Mauritius for some of these screening tests. The “*Caravane de Santé*” is mainly concerned with the screening of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). It is not proposed to include STD screening in the programme of “*Caravane de Santé*” as aspects related to privacy and confidentiality will be difficult to ensure.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, may be because of privacy problems this cannot be done in the programme of “*Caravane de Santé*”. As far as STDs are concerned, we know that this has become a serious problem in Rodrigues. When I put the question I wanted to know whether the Commissioner could see to it that the “*Caravane de Santé*” could go to villages to do counselling work. We also know that in Rodrigues there is a

problem of blood donors. Can't the "*Caravane de Santé*" do blood collection in villages? We know that the activities have slowed down, but if no new assignments are given to the "*Caravane de Santé*" it would mean that it will be of no use in Rodrigues. Indeed, that would be the death of the "*Caravane de Santé*". Can't it be given new assignments? Is the Commissioner prepared to go in the direction I just mentioned a moment ago?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I take into account the suggestion of the respected Member.

**Mrs Meunier:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the "*Caravane de santé*", can its activities be extended to schools and colleges as well?

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are looking also in that direction.

#### **FATEHMAMODE BAKERY/VICTORIA SNACK BAR – WASTE WATER**

**(No. B/478) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Chief Commissioner with regard to the waste water coming from the bakery of Fatehmamode and the Victoria Snack Bar at Port Mathurin, which remains stagnant in the open sewer along the streets, causing a nauseating smell and health hazard, what remedial steps he is contemplating to address the problem.

**The Commissioner for Health (Mr S. Sooprayen):** With your permission, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I will reply to this question.

I am informed that no wastewater has been seen coming from the bakery of Fatehmamode and the Victoria snack bar.

The Environment Unit has reported that -

- (a) In front of Fatehmamode bakery, the road is a bit inclined and whenever there is rainfall, all the water gather in the said canal and, in addition, there is also the problem of drain obstruction which prevents the water to flow away, and

- (b) Along Victoria Street, rain water flowing either from Montagne Fanal and some housing units flow into the canal. In order to facilitate the flow of water, the contractor responsible for cleaning of drains in Port Mathurin is removing all deposited soil and debris which are obstructing the drain. The works have already started.

Meanwhile regular larviciding and disinfection of all drains with stagnant water are carried out by the Public Health Office.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I visited the place myself. I think that the respected Member on the Minority side has seen a pipe coming out of the bakery. But let me inform the House that the pipe is used solely for pumping diesel for breadcrumbs.

I am informed - and I visited yesterday itself - that the bakery has its own septic tank to dispose of its liquid waste.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I thank the Commissioner for this precision, but anyhow he said that there is a problem in front of the bakery. This is an environmental problem and I got the information from the owner of the bakery itself. I have seen young people working there using "*lamok*" to pump that waste water in the canal in front of the bakery where everyday, morning and evening, people come to buy bread and it's the only bakery in this island.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, when this water is not pumped for at least one day, a very nauseating smell comes out of this, especially that there is a pre-primary school next to that bakery. That's why I asked the question. And the owner told me that on many occasions she asked help from the Commission and nothing has been done. She even proposed to give a pipe so that the water can easily flow into the next drain because the water remains stagnant in the drain in front of the bakery. That's why I wanted the Commissioner to say what immediate action can be taken so that the water remains no longer stagnant in front of the bakery.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commission for Infrastructure is looking into the matter.

## PLASTIC MATERIALS/DEBRIS DEPOSITS ON COASTS

**(No. B/479) Mr G. Jabeemissar (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards deposits of plastic materials and other debris on several coasts by waves viz at Petite Butte, which cause environmental problems in these places, he could say what measures he intends to take to remedy same.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a fact after heavy rains, large quantities of plastic and other wastes are deposited along the coast. These wastes which come from indiscriminate littering throughout the island are carried away by rivers towards the sea and are spread on the coasts at several places. The coastal zones including Petite Butte are normally cleaned by the Environment Unit in the light of reports from the Environment Officers.

Regular sensitisation campaigns are being carried out on the radio and at community level by the Environment Unit and the "*Police de L'Environnement*" to inculcate into the population sound waste management practices.

The "*Police de L'Environnement*" is also strictly enforcing regulations with respect to littering and illegal waste dumping.

It is also expected, Mr Chairperson Sir, that the launching of the pilot project for the collection of plastic bottles by Rodnix at the beginning of the next month will help in reducing the amount of plastic bottles which are being disposed in an uncontrolled manner.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner said that at the beaches of Petite Butte, there are people working to ensure that it is clean. But when we go to Cité Patates, on that part of the coast, very often, fortunately, the waves carry the plastic materials from the shore, otherwise it would have been dumped in the sea. I would like to know whether regular visits of the Maxi Clean are carried out on that part of the shore where it is accessible, of course, in Rodrigues, in order to remove these wastes. In parallel with the action, which is being taken to sensitise people, I would like to know whether cleaning actions are also being taken to ensure that plastic materials are not found, especially along the coast because these are visited by tourists.

**The Chief Commissioner:** I agree with the respected Member. I'll find out whether it is the duty of the Maxi Clean to clean all the coasts around Rodrigues. We are contemplating allocating small contracts to people in the vicinity of those beaches. I will also ask the Environment Officers to pay visits to those different places and take necessary actions in the future.

### **FISHERMEN - BOATS, SAFETY EQUIPMENT, ETC.**

**(No. B/480) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to equipment delivered to people in possession of a boat, he could state -

- (a) the number of boats registered in Rodrigues;
- (b) table the list of people who had received such equipment;
- (c) the reason why some people had not got theirs, and
- (d) the steps he was taking so that the latter can receive same.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), one thousand four hundred and ninety nine (1499) fishing boats are registered with the Fisheries Protection Services in accordance with the Fisheries and Marine Resources Act.

With regard to part (b), I am tabling a list of 421 professional fishers, owner of fishing boats, who have received safety equipment which were distributed to professional fishermen on 03 and 04 May last. (Appendix I)

As for part (c), some seventeen (17) fishers did not attend the distribution exercise and have not called at the Fisheries Protection Services to collect their equipment. Safety equipment was also not distributed to fishers whose boats have been severely damaged or destroyed. Equipment which are available in stock will be handed over to the second group of fishers as soon as their boats would have been repaired. Another forty-eight (48) fishers who did not specify that they are registered fishermen when registering their boats were not included in the list of 498 beneficiaries.

As regards part (d), a comprehensive survey will be carried out to confirm eligibility after which remaining equipment will be distributed to deserving fishers. Additional equipment will be sought from the Ministry of Fisheries, should the need arise.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner tell us the number of equipment received?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Details on the safety equipment which were distributed are as follows -

- Tarpaulin - 498
- Lifebuoys - 498
- Radar reflector- 498
- Radar - 498
- Hand flares - 498

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner say whether the equipment is meant for all people who are in possession of them?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Usually, it is for professional fishermen who have got fishing cards and who are owners of a boat.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, concerning the equipment given to the fishermen, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether provision has been made say, for example, if a fisherman has used his hand flare...

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally, it is used once. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether provision has been made to provide the fisherman with a new hand flare in the future.

**The Chief Commissioner:** I don't know what the respected Member means, whether the fisherman had a problem at sea, so, he has used his flares. So, I think another one will be handed over to him. I'll find out with the Ministry of Fisheries. Not only that, there was also the question of

whether they have lost their radars and so on. So, I'll find out what are the conditions, whether when they have lost one of those items of safety equipment, they will be handed over another one. I think that a declaration must be made when their tarpaulin, their flares or their radars are lost. There must be a declaration to the Police so that we can rely on this declaration to hand over another safety equipment.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask how the Chief Commissioner would reconcile the fact that there are 1499 fishing boats for professional fishermen, out of which 48 are not sure that they are professional fishermen. That is, we are left with 1451 professional fishing boats, whereas only 421 fishermen have been concerned with the donations. What about the others? Why is it that only part of the fisherman population who have boats have received the equipment. They are, I would say, 30% only?

**The Chief Commissioner:** I must say that they are professional fishermen who are owners of boats. As I have said, there are fishermen who have registered themselves as fishermen, they have registered their boats, but they have not registered themselves as professional fishermen. That's why a comprehensive survey will be carried out to confirm eligibility. Those fishermen who are owners of boats perhaps they possess a fisherman card, but they have not said whether they have a fisherman card. I think, there is a problem. When they register their boats, they should also mention whether they are professional fishermen and owners of fisherman cards. This is the problem here. That's why I said that 48 fishers have not specified whether they are registered fishermen when registering their boats. I think it is a question of whether or not the officers, responsible for registration, have put the question. This is a question of communication between the fisheries officers and the fishermen.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Chief Commissioner, who is responsible for fishing admitting that, out of the fishermen population who have boats - he said there are 1,499 boats - he doesn't know who are professional fishermen and who are not?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a list. I have handed over the list. It is not my duty to tell everyone who are the fishermen who have got boats or not. I just asked for the list of fishermen, which I have tabled. You can be a fisherman, but not a professional one. That is why I say

there are about 1,499 fishing boats, but there are not 1,499 permanent fishermen with a fishing card. Those fishing equipment are meant for professional fishermen who are owners of a boat and of a fishing card as professional fishermen. The equipment are meant for them.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't know whether my knowledge of registration of fishing boats and other boats is wrong, but I believe that registration provides for registration of fishing boats and boats for leisure purposes, that is, pleasure crafts. If a boat is registered for fishing, it is for fishing. How can the Commissioner say that a boat registered for fishing is not for fishing? Are there only 421 fishermen with fishermen cards? Because he has given safety equipment to only 421. First, are there only 421 professional fishermen, as he is saying, with fishermen cards in Rodrigues? And second, if these boats are not fishing boats, what are they? They have been registered as fishing boats and he says they are not fishing boats! Which is which?

**The Chief Commissioner:** I am sorry, Mr Chairperson, Sir. My answer was very clear. This equipment is meant for fishermen who are owners of a boat and a professional fishing card. They are not meant for people who have a boat, who register themselves as amateur fishermen, for pleasure crafts and so on. This equipment is not meant for them. It is meant for the professional fishermen holding fishing cards.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand the criteria to have this equipment is: you have a fishing boat and you have a fisherman card. Now, those professional fishermen who have a fisherman card, but who don't have a boat? Mr Chairperson, can I ask the Chief Commissioner how do these persons go fishing?

**The Chief Commissioner:** You put equipment in a boat. Two or three fishermen can't go fishing in a boat. I'll stop replying to those questions.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, obviously they must go fishing in a boat unless they can walk on the sea. Mr Chairperson, Sir, an owner of a boat is given equipment. But the others who go fishing with him are not the concern of the Commissioner? For example, *la bouée de sauvetage c'est pour une personne; est-ce que huit à neuf personnes, qui vont pêcher en*

*haute mer, peuvent s'accrocher à une seule bouée de sauvetage? C'est ce qu'il veut nous faire croire.*

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this equipment is meant for the boat. You have a tarpaulin for the boat. If there are three or four fishermen in the boat, so they get under the tarpaulin. The radar reflector is for the boat, four or five cannot be put on the boat. And the hand flare is for the boat; you cannot make *feux d'artifice* with flares. There is the lifebuoy whenever someone falls in the sea. These are for a fisherman going in the sea.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask him how is it that after distribution of the equipment, he is now going for a survey for eligibility?

**The Chief Commissioner:** No, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The Minority Leader has not listened to my reply. Please listen to the reply.

‘Another forty-eight fishers who did not specify that they are registered fishermen when registering their boats were not included in the list of 498 beneficiaries’

There are 48 fishers, who are owners of a boat and, at the same time, have not registered themselves as professional fishermen. To be eligible for this equipment, one must be owner of the boat and also, at the same time, possess a fisherman professional card. We are going to have a survey for those 48 fishers to see exactly whether they are boat owners and, at the same time, whether they possess a fisherman card.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this equipment is given to save the life of people at sea. Is the Chief Commissioner saying that accidents happen only to professional fishermen or any people in a boat?

**Mr Chairperson:** Well, this is outside the scope of the question. This is a hypothetical. Be clearer, please.

**Mr Agathe:** The equipment is given to save lives of people. It can be fishermen...

**Mr Chairperson:** Which equipment you mean?

**Mr Agathe:** The equipment that have been given to owners of boats. Is the Chief Commissioner saying that accidents, which happen at sea, happen only to professional fishermen?

**Mr Chairperson:** This cannot be allowed. The question refers to equipment. If you want to go into the dangers at sea, you can come with notice, of course.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has said in his reply that 17 fishermen have not come to collect their equipment. Can I ask him whether all fishermen have been informed to come and take their equipment?

**The Chief Commissioner:** I'll find out.

**Mr Agathe:** Can the Chief Commissioner state the number of equipment that is left now?

**The Chief Commissioner:** We have received 498; I know that 17 fishers did not attend the distribution exercise and we have 421 professional fishers. In the last part of my answer, I said –

‘additional equipment will be sought from the  
Ministry of Fisheries, should the need arise’

So, if we find out that there are more than 498, we will go back to the Ministry of Fisheries for another set of equipment.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the fisherman card is one of the criteria to benefit from the equipment. It is a fisherman card for the fisherman. The fisherman must have a boat. As far as fishing is concerned, can I ask him whether there has been a policy to stop delivering fishermen cards?

**The Chief Commissioner:** The Minority Leader should come with a substantive question.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, they have stopped delivering fishermen cards. There are canals of 20 metres deep in our lagoons in the

south. Therefore, if they have stopped delivering the fisherman cards - and a fisherman is a fisherman even though he does not have a fisherman card - what has been provided for those persons who are still fishing in the lagoon? Even those, who are in the deep-sea fishing, don't get the cards, though they have been registered? What is provided for these persons?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is the policy of the Central Government, of the Ministry to give safety equipment to professional fishermen, not to amateur fishermen. We have raise this point with the Minister of Fisheries. He is coming with a paper in the Cabinet Office concerning those fishermen owning a boat, but who are not professional fishermen. There is also the question of safety. As you know there is a law concerning pleasure crafts. This question also has been raised as to whether those amateur fishermen must have a pleasure craft licence. These questions are being discussed and no decision has been taken yet, because we are all talking about safety at sea, either in the lagoon or off the lagoon. I think it is a policy decision and we talked to the Minister of Fisheries when he was here. We also raised the question of amateur fishermen, who, sometimes, do not have life belts in their boats whereas licensed pleasure crafts, going to Île aux Cocos et Île au Sable, should have life belts in their boats for the passengers. This is a question of policy. Now the question of amateur fishermen is being dealt with at the level of the Ministry of Fisheries; and we have made our proposals on that issue.

### **SPORTSWEAR (KIMONO) – TENDER – SPECIFICATIONS**

**(No. B/481) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal)** asked the Commissioner for Sports whether, with regard to sportswear (Kimono) bought for judo, he could state if a tender was launched and, if yes, state -

- (a) the date it was launched and the specifications of the sportswear;
- (b) the number of bids received and the name of the bidders;
- (c) the amount proposed by the bidders and who is the successful bidder, and
- (d) the date and mode of delivery of the equipment to the Commission.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, tender for the purchase of kimono was launched on 15 December 2003 for 108 kimonos of sizes '00', '0' and

‘1’ and was sent to eight suppliers. Bids were closed on Friday 09 January 2004.

As regards part (b) three bids were received from Zenco Marshall Arts Ltd, All Sports Ltd and K. Sunassee & Sons.

As regards part (c) amount proposed by the bidders, Zenco Marshall Arts Ltd Rs524.83 per unit. All Sports Ltd, size ‘00’: Rs485 per unit, size ‘0’: Rs526; size ‘1’: Rs600 unit. K. Sunassee & Sons Rs525 per unit. Once the bids were opened all the different bidders were requested to submit samples to the Commission. Acting on the technical advice of the coach, the samples sent by All Sports Ltd were found to be of better quality and were chosen.

However, kimonos supplied afterwards by All Sports as per Store Form 1 562490 were not the same as the samples furnished and were returned at its own costs. As a consequence, the Tender Committee met on 07 April and the following suppliers were appointed: Zenco Marshall Arts Ltd size ‘00’ and ‘0’ K. Sunassee size ‘1’.

As regards part (d), I am informed that kimono from suppliers Zenco Marshall Arts Ltd were received on Thursday 08 April through Store Form 1 at the Commission and the batch from K. Sunassee & Sons were received by the store section on 17 May 2004.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner for Sports state in what newspaper or newspapers the tender notice was published and on what date?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have stated the tenders were directly sent to the different suppliers.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have asked in what newspaper...

**Mr Agathe:** Was it according to tender procedures and law?

**Mr Lisette:** This is according to the Financial Management Manual, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want to know who was eligible to send tenders?

**Mr Lisette:** Normally, tenders are prepared at the Commission and sent to suppliers who we think may provide us with kimonos that we are looking for, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Agathe:** Can the Commissioner state where the tender documents were sent?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the tenders were sent to eight suppliers. This is mentioned in the answer.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner table all the tender documents regarding the sportswear?

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I can provide the Assembly with all the information regarding the suppliers to whom tenders were sent. As I have stated, there are eight suppliers to whom tenders were sent. The names of these suppliers may be tabled here. But with regard to what the Member is saying, I don't think this is possible.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Order, please!

**Mr J. Roussety:** This is the second time that we have this issue here. This Assembly is the highest Authority of this island according to the Regional Assembly Act and we must be aware of what is happening as far as public authorities are concerned, unless it is secret matter or judicial matter. The Commissioner has launched tender for kimonos and he does not want to table the tender. Why? Is this of a secret nature? Were they meant for the SMF, for soldiers in Rodrigues? I would like to ask the Commissioner what are the reasons that we, elected representatives of the people, can't know what is included in the tender for the purchase of kimonos.

**Mr Lisette:** As I have stated, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the tenders were sent directly to the different suppliers whom we think may provide us with kimonos. I can, at this point, table the information with respect to the suppliers to whom the tender was sent.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Can we have copies of the tender which has been sent and with the names and addresses of the suppliers? We want the names and the addresses tabled here. We want the tender to be tabled here, unless the Commissioner has reasons justifying why he can't table this tender.

**Mr Lisette:** I see no reason why this cannot be tabled, Mr Chairperson, Sir. As I have stated, that was an open tender; the tender was sent directly to the suppliers.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that it is the practice to send tenders to more than three suppliers. The Commissioner has sent to eight suppliers. Good! Now, why can't the Commissioner table a copy of the tender documents?

**Mr Chairperson:** Did the Commissioner say that he will not table?

**Mr J. Roussety:** He said he would not table. Why will he not table? What are the reasons? Is it of a secret nature? Does he not wish to table it? Is it his wish as Commissioner? Does he have specific reasons? If it is his wish he should tell us so and we will see what we will do.

*(Interruptions)*

They will have to give the tender either to the ICAC or any other body. It is shameful that a Commissioner, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is not willing to table a tender for the purchase of kimonos. If they can't table such a tender, what will they not do for other things? This is an example that they want to hide things. Why does he want to hide the tender for kimonos? They should give us the reasons.

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes, Commissioner for Sports, have you understood the question? It is in two parts.

*(Interruptions)*

Order, please! There is a question addressed to the Commissioner for Sports.

**Mr Lisette:** Quotations have been sent to suppliers. Whatever be the tendering exercise, I have tabled documents in the Assembly. All the amounts stated by the different suppliers have been tabled in the Assembly. I don't see the need to table any further tender documents here as long as the amounts quoted by the different suppliers have been tabled ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Let the Commissioner answer first. Please wait!

**Mr J. Roussety:** We are not asking for the bids. We are not asking what has been tendered by each supplier; this is confidential. We are requesting for copies of the tender documents where it is specified that we need kimonos of such and such size and what are the specifications. The Commissioner seems not to understand between bids and tender documents. He is giving us an explanation on Financial Management Manual, of course.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is confusion...

**Mr Chairperson:** Please wait Commissioner! Let us hear the question of the respected Member in a very straightforward way.

**Mr J. Roussety:** We would like to know whether he would table the tender documents. I wish to add an addendum to my explanation.

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes.

**Mr J. Roussety:** We would like to have a copy of the tender document, not one that has been filled by a tenderer, the original one. Suppose I was a tenderer, what would you have given to me? A clean one. This is what we want.

**Mr Lisette:** I think there is certain confusion. I have stated in the answer that we have sent tenders directly to the suppliers. This means that there were no tender documents; there were departmental tenders by quotations sent to the suppliers.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said that tenders were sent, but there were no tender documents. What are we to understand?

**Mr Chairperson:** Is it really tender document or offers to buy?

**Mr J. Roussety:** Tender documents!

**Mr Chairperson:** Tender?

**Mr J. Roussety:** We speak of instructions to quote.

**Mr Chairperson:** The tender documents ...

**Mr J. Roussety:** When you send a tender you must have instructions to quote.

**Mr Chairperson:** Suppliers make tender documents.

**Mr J. Roussety:** No, Mr Chairperson, Sir, with due respect, you are wrong on this matter.

**Mr Chairperson:** Proceed then!

**Mr J. Roussety:** I have been working in tendering for a number of months - even most of them say it was a short time. I understand that when we ask for a supplier to tender we must give him instructions about what to tender. If it is for kimonos, then of which sizes, of which colour, etc. This is the information we want, the instructions, which were sent ...

**Mr Chairperson:** What is your question? Your question is about the tender document to the supplier, the instructions or the offer to buy to the suppliers?

**Mr J. Roussety:** Let us put it short. The Commissioner sent an envelope to the suppliers. Can we have a copy of what was in the envelope?

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes. These are not tender documents.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is what I was saying; they don't understand.

**Mr Chairperson:** But these are not tender documents.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Sorry!

**Mr Chairperson:** These are not tender documents. It falls in the same category but legally it is not tender document.

**Mr J. Roussety:** No, I am not speaking legally, I am speaking commercially. That's what you are arguing with me, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** I am not arguing with the respected Minority Leader. I want some precision.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that the matter has been cleared up now; it was not a matter of tender document, it was departmental tender by quotation. That is clear right now. They are arguing about tender documents which they will never have.

*(Interruptions)*

There is none! How can I table something that does not exist?

*(Interruptions)*

There are tender documents, Mr Chairperson, Sir, because one cannot tender by quotation.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, there was something which resembles something like an envelope. The information was...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** We would have problems in transcribing what you are saying if you want to take some concrete examples.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, there are eight tenderers. The Commissioner mentioned documents, departmental tenders. For us, it is tender documents that have been sent to these persons. Of course, attached to them was a form to specify the details insofar as the sizes, the number of kimonos, etc. are concerned. Can we have a copy - not the names or the covering letter - of the departmental tender which was sent to each of these persons? This is what we want, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

*(Interruptions)*

We are doing our job; we are paid for that. It would seem that some people don't want to give information to questions put by us. This is unfortunate for the sports community and also for the sake of transparency in Rodrigues. They don't want to give a simple document like that.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, what has transparency got to do with the document? Transparency deals with the amount of money to be spent on the purchase of kimonos.

*(Interruptions)*

Mr Chairperson, Sir, questions have been asked about suppliers who have tendered for sportswear and the answer has been given.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Commissioner table the information as requested?

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally, for a new tendering exercise, we do have a Tender Committee which works on it and I am going to seek advice as to whether this document may leave the office of the Tender Committee.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is flouting the authority of this Assembly, of all Members here! A Tender Committee has more powers than we do here. A Member is requesting a simple tender document and the Commissioner wants to consult the Tender Committee!

*(Interruptions)*

We are the highest authority. Members have been elected by the people and I, as the Minority Leader. We have our responsibilities, and one of our responsibilities is to look if procurement is done correctly, if finances are used correctly. As Opposition, we want to know what is the document that has been sent to them and the Commissioner doesn't want to lay a copy on the Table of the Assembly. If such a simple document cannot be tabled, we wonder what may happen to other matters!

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I invite the Minority Leader to look into the matter as deep as possible because I know for sure that all procedures, with respect to the tender exercise, had been done in the proper way.

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

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Please wait! Take your seat. This is a sort of challenge, which is not allowed in this House. This is Question Time. So, you put your question. You have to be brief; you can't be longer than the main question. Then, you wait for the answer. If the answer is not forthcoming ...

**Mr J. Roussety:** I agree with you. The Commissioner says that he has nothing to hide and that there is transparency. Then, let us know; share the transparency with us, table the document here so that any member of the public can come and see how his Commission has proceeded with tender documents. What is he hiding? *C'est quand on a des choses à se reprocher que l'on agit ainsi, M. le président.*

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Please wait! Let me have the question first. So much has been said that I am at a loss. What is the exact question?

*(Interruptions)*

Don't expand any further on the question. Just put your question.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Being given that the Commissioner has nothing to hide, for the sake of public transparency for which we fight, would he, please, table a copy of what was included in the envelope? Of course, erasing every confidential matter that could be included in that - the names of addressees - on the Table of this august Regional Assembly.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am going to seek advice on the matter.

**ANSE RAFFIN FOOTBALL GROUND - FLOODING**

**(No. B/482) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal)** asked the Commissioner for Sports whether, with regard to Anse Raffin football ground, he could state –

- (a) if it is according to the norms;
- (b) whether it is mowed at regular intervals, and
- (c) whether he is aware of water flooding the playing fields and, if yes, what steps are taken to remedy same.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed that Anse Raffin football ground is 98 metres long and 65 metres wide, and it is according to norms.

With regard to part (b), the ground is mowed regularly.

Insofar as part (c) is concerned, Mr Chairperson, Sir, water normally accumulates on the ground during heavy torrential rains, but I have been informed that it normally evaporates away and is absorbed within a relatively short period of time.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I want the Commissioner to say whether he, himself, has been on the playground to see.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally, there are technicians who go on the field and inspect football grounds.

## **BAIE DU NORD – WATER SUPPLY**

**(No. B/483) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the distribution of water to some families at Baie du Nord next to the A. J. Maurel site, he could state -

- (a) if there has been any problem in the water distribution network serving these families and, if yes, for how long the problem has existed, and
- (b) what his Commission had done to remedy same.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that a 32mm HDPE main was laid last year to supply water to consumers living at Plateau Roche. Since January last, the lateral has been damaged by vehicles of a contractor operating an asphalt plant while the latter was carrying out earthworks to upgrade the access road to the site. The Water Unit has been in contact with the contractor to repair the damaged pipeline. The pipeline has now been repaired.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he is sure that the network has been damaged January last.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. But there had been a delay in the repair by the contractor and the contractor did not even inform the Water Unit after the reparation of same. But, even though repair was made, there was again troubleshooting with the main. Some part of the main was blocked with sand. The Water Unit has investigated into the matter and studied every segment of the pipe of the main and the situation has returned to normal.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has just said that the problem has been solved. May we know when the problem was solved? And secondly, when did the people living in the vicinity receive water for the last time?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally, people in the vicinity were receiving water by lorries because of this problem. The Water Unit of La Ferme has investigated the matter and the matter has been solved last week.

**Mr Grandcourt:** The matter has been solved last week, Mr Chairperson, Sir, but it was only yesterday, after one year that the problem has existed, that they have received water. The Deputy Chief Commissioner said that they have received water yesterday and the problem has been solved. Can he inform this House how come this morning workers of the Water Unit are still working on the network?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** As I have said, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Water Unit investigated the matter last week. Yesterday the main was released, water was given to the inhabitants and ...

*(Interruptions)*

I know that the Water Unit was on the site yesterday. I phoned the Water Unit of La Ferme. You can go to the Water Unit of La Ferme and ask them about it.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't know why the Deputy Chief Commissioner is so nervous about it. It's a simple question.

I would like to ask the respected Deputy Chief Commissioner whether there still are problems on the network itself.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, mathematically speaking, from January to May, this does not make one year, but only five months. I would like to add that we have requested that the lateral of 32 mm diameter be upgraded to 63 mm diameter as the number of consumers has increased in this locality.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has not answered my question. I have asked whether there is still any problem on the network. Is it 'yes' or 'no'?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, after investigation, the workers of the Water Unit have learnt that the diameter of the pipe is too small and in some households the water flow is not enough. We have decided to change the pipe of 32 mm diameter to 63 mm diameter.

**Mr Grandcourt:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can we know when this pipe was laid?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the pipe has not been laid. We have decided to change it and it will be changed. It has not been laid. It is after investigation ...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr J. Roussety:** No, the original network.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** The original network was laid last year.

**Mr Grandcourt:** The Deputy Chief Commissioner was the Commissioner for Public Infrastructure. This year they want to change the distribution pipes after investigation. A network was installed and then they decide to make a change afterwards. How can this be so?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, even in America, we are still changing .....

*(Interruptions)*

We have placed a 32 mm diameter pipe because it was this type of pipe that was available. We have bought a bulk of different diameters of pipes and now that the pipes are available, we will change the pipe from diameter 32 mm to 63 mm.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am happy the Deputy Chief Commissioner takes America as model. It is the country of Mr Paul Samuelson. The pipe of 32 mm is being changed to 60 mm because of lack of pressure. If the pressure is low in the 30 mm pipe - and we know that water is not really available there and they don't even give the water

sometimes - will the pressure increase with a 60 mm pipe, Mr Chairperson, Sir, unless there are other changes?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, on a physical point of view, it is logic that pressure of water will increase.

### **BUS TERMINAL, TERRE BONNE - RESURFACING**

**(No. B/484) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the roads at the bus stop at Terre Borne, La Ferme, he could give reasons as to why the resurfacing and upgrading of that portion of the road has not been done up to now.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the resurfacing and upgrading of the Bus Terminal at Terre Borne, was not included in the contract for the resurfacing and upgrading of the La Ferme-Quatre Vents road. The design for a new bus terminal has now been completed. The bus terminal has to be redesigned to ensure maximum safety as the bus terminal is situated at a cross-junction. Particular attention has to be paid also to the drainage of storm water due to the fact that construction of building has already been completed around the site. Works Order for the works will be issued during next financial year. Meanwhile, depending on weather condition, a campaign of road patching will cover all the main roads of Rodrigues, including this part of Rodrigues.

### **PLASTIC BOTTLES - RECYLING FACILITIES**

**(No. B/485) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader)** asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the import in Rodrigues of all types of beverages and drinks, including water, bottled in plastic, metallic or pollution-prone materials of all kinds, whether he will give an account of the amount imported monthly over the past years giving details about the products, the importing firms or persons, the ways the resultant litter is disposed of after consumption, whether recycling facilities are being envisaged and whether he will consider the possibility of an environmental tax on each unit imported to provide money for cleaning and recycling.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson Sir, the amount of beverages in plastic bottles which is imported is being compiled and will be laid in the Library of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. I am tabling a list of importers with details of imported products. Most of the plastic bottles and containers are collected through the normal waste collection systems and disposed of at Roche Bon Dieu Solid Waste disposal site. Empty cans are recollected by Rodnix and returned to Mauritius for recycling.

Rodnix has submitted a pilot project which will be launched on the 05 June 2004 in the context of the World Environment Day for the collection of empty cans and plastic bottles against reward.

In the first instance, the project will involve ten villages and may be extended to the whole island. The collected bottles and cans will then be ground by Rodnix and re-exported to Mauritius for recycling. My office is providing its full support for the implementation of the project.

Depending on the result obtained with the pilot project, it may be extended to the whole island and Rodnix may be approached to extend the project to include other type of containers on conditions to be agreed upon by the parties concerned or other importers may be requested to adopt a similar approach. If no positive results are obtained with recycling of plastic containers, then other measures will be considered.

## **PETROLEUM PRODUCTS - IMPORTATION**

**(No. B/486) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader)** asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the consumption of fuel of all types in the island, whether he will give an account of the amount imported per product over the last five years and by whom; state whether there have been project proposals for the setting up of other filling stations on the island, where, by whom, since when, and where do matters stand.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, petroleum products are imported in Rodrigues by the following companies -

- (i) Consortium of Petroleum Companies in Mauritius (Shell, Total, Esso, Caltex) through their contractor AEL-DDS

Transport. They import all petroleum products for sale to the general public.

- (ii) Central Electricity Board for import of heavy fuel oil for their power station.
- (iii) Air Mauritius Ltd through their contractor for import of jet fuel for their aircrafts.

Official figures for the total import of petroleum products over the last five years are not readily available from the above sources and will be tabled in due course.

I am informed that the Central Statistical Office compiles data on import of petroleum product for the whole Republic of Mauritius and does not keep separate records for Rodrigues.

Three companies have applied for the setting up of filling station in Rodrigues as follows -

- (a) Mr Ayoob Ismael Mackoojee and Co. Ltd has applied in March 2002 for a site at Baie Lascars.
- (b) *Société Petrolière et Aerien (Rodrigues) Ltée* has applied in November 2002 for sites at Mont Lubin and Grand La Fouche Corail, and
- (c) AEL DDS Transport has applied in January 2004 for a site at Baie Lascars and Mont Lubin.

These applications are under consideration.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given the monopolistic nature of fuel distribution in Rodrigues, and in view to ensuring competition in the future, will the Commissioner ensure that those three companies which have submitted their projects will be given the necessary attention, especially in the light of the monopoly which exists now?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a great problem concerning the *stockage* of fuel in Rodrigues. Two applicants have

been asked about the possibility of stocking fuel. The problem is: where are they going to stock the fuel in Rodrigues? Only AEL DDS has got a *stockage* site in Port Mathurin. We are contemplating in the development of the Port to have a petroleum islet where all fuel importers will stock their fuel on that petroleum island outside the town. Are we going to wait for five years whilst people are buying vehicles and motorcycles and have to come from Port Sud-Est, La Ferme to buy fuel? That is why we are trying to find a solution to that and we are going to take a decision in the near future.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, fuel is important for the economy. If we do not get fuel in enough quantity for our engines, or in the proper manner, it will be a *goulot d'étranglement pour l'économie du pays*.

Etant donné la nature sérieuse et les difficultés auxquelles les opérateurs potentiels doivent faire face, est-ce que l'Assemblée Régionale, à travers des institutions comme la SIC, ou d'autres multinationales, pourra-t-elle envisager le stockage, pas individuel pour chaque compagnie, mais collectif? Etant donné que Rodrigues est une petite île, on ne peut pas se permettre d'avoir plusieurs unités de stockage. Est-ce que le chef commissaire qui est à la tête du conseil exécutif, envisage-t-il la possibilité de construire un site pour le stockage du fuel qu'on distribuerait par la suite à chaque compagnie qui opérerait une station d'essence dans l'île?

Je voudrais avoir plus de précisions sur ce *petroleum island*. Je n'ai pas toutes les informations, mais j'imagine qu'on a construit une île artificielle au Japon à un coût astronomique. Le chef commissaire vient de parler d'un *petroleum island*. *I do not know what would be the cost and whether this is really feasible, Mr Chairperson , Sir.*

**The Chief Commissioner:** Je vais d'abord répondre à la dernière question. The Mauritius Port Authority calls it petroleum island, because it is reclaimed land. This is in the Port.

**Mr J. Roussety:** It is part of the Port.

**The Chief Commissioner:** No. They call that petroleum island because the gas, petroleum products and fuel will be stocked on the reclaimed land. It would not be an island somewhere.

Le gros problème, M. le président, est: où va-t-on trouver un endroit, non loin de l'aéroport, pour construire un dépôt de fuel? Il faut que ce soit dans l'enceinte du port ou non loin du port. Nous avons réfléchi à ce problème. Il y a même des personnes qui sont venues ...

**Mr J. Roussety:** There have been planning for years.

**The Chief Commissioner:** *Alle guetté cote ou capave trouve li! Dire nous cote nou capave faire sa! This is the problem.* C'est facile de lire un peu d'histoire et de venir dire certaines choses. Mais la réalité est autre. Nous avons l'exemple du CEB à Pointe l'Herbe. On est en retard et c'est la raison pour laquelle on a des coupures régulièrement. Il y a un problème d'espace. C'est bien d'avoir des idées. Mais, physiquement, il faut avoir de l'espace pour le stockage du fuel. C'est pourquoi nous voulons aller vite avec le nouveau développement dans le port pour que nous puissions transférer AEL DDS du port. C'est une bombe. C'est une question de sécurité parce qu'il y a des personnes autour.

Où est-ce qu'on peut mettre un gros stockage de fuel que le SIC va distribuer à tout le monde? Je voudrais qu'on nous le dise!

**Mr J. Roussety:** M. le président, je ne suis pas un devin et je ne regarde pas dans la boule de crystal. Ce n'est pas mon rôle de dire au chef commissaire ce qu'il doit faire. Je voudrais demander une question que j'ai déjà posée la dernière fois. Dans l'intérêt supérieur de Rodrigues et au-delà des considérations partisans, est-ce que le chef commissaire veillera à ce que toutes les unités nouvelles de stockage ne soient pas le monopole d'une seule compagnie? On ne sait pas où stocker le fuel, mais si comblage il y a lieu, on pourrait le faire là-bas. Est-ce que le chef commissaire qui sera là jusqu'en 2007, veillera à ce qu'il n'y ait pas de monopole parce que c'est dangereux pour les consommateurs et la compétition? Est-ce qu'il fera en sorte qu'il y ait une unité de stockage collectif? L'essence sera stockée et tous ceux qui veulent lancer des stations d'essence à Rodrigues pourront s'y approvisionner et ce ne sera pas le monopole d'une seule compagnie. A la limite, on peut faire de sorte que l'unité de stockage soit la propriété en partie de l'Assemblée Régionale et les grandes compagnies pétrolières qui existent à Maurice. Si on a le monopole, encore une fois, ce sera le même problème et on aura un seul opérateur qui pourra un jour faire la pluie et le beau temps et prendre l'économie du pays en otage. Si vous allez à la station d'essence qui existe actuellement, vous devez faire la queue pendant quinze

minutes à une heure; et je ne commente pas le service et les conditions d'emplois de certains travailleurs! *All these problems should be taken into consideration because of the monopolistic nature of that business environment in Rodrigues.*

**The Chief Commissioner:** M. le président, nous avons reçu plusieurs demandes et il y a eu même une demande de la part d'Indian Oil pour s'installer à Rodrigues. Si demain on trouve un site pour le stockage de fuel en toute sécurité, il n'y a pas de problème.

Le *Petroleum Island* sera un endroit ouvert à tout le monde. AEL-DDS n'est pas le seul importateur de gaz; il y a d'autres compagnies comme Shell, Maurigas qui vont desservir tout le monde. C'est un lieu où des personnes intéressées auront la possibilité de s'installer. Si Indian Oil est intéressé à venir s'installer, il pourra le faire avec les conditions nécessaires.

**Mr J. Roussety:** M. le président, le Chef Commissaire n'a pas très bien saisi ce que j'ai dit. En parlant de *Petroleum Island*, je n'ai pas voulu dire que chacun doit avoir sa portion de terrain et son unité de stockage. Si chacun vient faire ce qu'il veut sur un bout de terrain, cela va revenir à la même chose et nous devons penser à ceux qui voudraient s'installer à l'avenir. On doit *promote competition* et pour qu'il y ait une compétition, il faudrait l'amélioration du service. C'est ce que le Chef Commissaire n'a pas très bien compris.

**The Chief Commissioner:** M. le président, le *Petroleum Island* doit venir avec ses stations d'essence et ils font le stockage à travers toute l'île. On ne peut pas aller à une station d'essence s'il n'y pas de stockage. La question d'installer un réservoir d'essence sans stockage n'est pas possible. C'est aussi une question de bateau qui transporte le fuel. Je ne sais pas si à chaque voyage il y a un transport de fuel, mais je pense que cela se fait au fur et à mesure. J'espère que le *Minority Leader* a maintenant compris ma réponse et je pense aussi comprendre l'idée du *Minority Leader*. Il est en train de penser au monopole. Ce n'est pas bien de sa part de faire des insinuations contre notre vision de faire les choses. AEL-DDS est là depuis longtemps et si Indian Oil et les autres n'arrivent pas à trouver un endroit pour faire le stockage, qu'est-ce-que je pourrais dire? Il faudra attendre cinq ou six ans.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Next question, please.

### **QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL - COURTYARD**

**(No. B/487) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, in the interest of Public Health, he will provide explanations to the House as regards the dirty and unpleasant state of some areas of the courtyard of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital especially around the kitchens, the mortuary room and behind the female ward, account for the continuous presence of stray animals such as cats and dogs in the hospital compound especially in the vicinity of the kitchens and, state who is responsible of the removal of litter and at which interval, if any.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is not correct to state that the courtyard in certain areas of Queen Elizabeth Hospital is dirty and unpleasant. I recognise that due to some major development works at QEH such as resurfacing of the alleys, installation of an underground electrical network and survey works to improve the sewerage disposal, some excavation works have been carried out. These are unavoidable at all work sites where civil works are in progress.

Contractor Maxi Clean is responsible for the removal of litter daily.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that stray animals enter the hospital compound through the water drains and defective fences and all measures such as new fencing all round are already being implemented by the hospital administration to ensure that these animals do not enter the hospital premises.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to disagree with the Commissioner and I am telling him that the bad state of some areas of the courtyard of Queen Elizabeth Hospital does exist. I, myself, visited the hospital on Sunday the 16 of May. I am tabling, Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, for the information of the Commissioner, a few photographs showing stray dogs near the kitchen and dirt including used tyres, debris of leaves in the yard, which are not concerned with the construction. There is also a picture of the water evacuation system covered with dirt, and least but not last, a picture showing a broken *balançoir* near

the paediatric ward of the hospital. I am tabling these pictures in order that all Members of the Assembly see what is the state of the courtyard of the Queen Elizabeth hospital. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he is still defending the case that it is not correct to say that this courtyard is dirty and unpleasant.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I still say that we are taking necessary measures to improve the state of the hospital, but I do not agree that it is dirty and unpleasant.

*(Interruptions)*

No, it is not correct to say so, because actually the maintenance group is doing good work. It will take one or two more weeks, but works are in progress.

**Mr J. Roussety:** M le président, mon voeu n'est pas de causer des problèmes directes au Commissaire. Il y avait un décès dans la famille d'une de mes connaissances et je suis allé à l'hôpital. Comme par hasard, je suis passé à l'arrière de l'hôpital et où j'ai constaté que c'était très sale. J'aimerais donc demander au Commissaire de faire le nécessaire pour mettre de l'ordre. Est-ce qu'on peut compter sur lui?

**Mr Sooprayen:** M. le président, ce n'est pas la peine de me dire qu'il faut faire le tour de l'hôpital pour constater s'il est propre ou non. Le travail a déjà été commencé et on va continuer à le faire. Je suis d'accord qu'il y a eu négligence dans certains endroits ...

*(Interruptions)*

We are all human beings. J'ai fait le tour et je l'ai constaté, mais vous pouvez compter sur moi, le travail sera fait.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to thank the Commissioner, because it is a matter of health and we are all concerned.

## **PORT MATHURIN - SITES - PRIVATE PROMOTERS**

**(No. B/488) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader)** asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the area in Port Mathurin stretching from the current CEB power station to the Filling Station and including the Mechanical Workshop, whether there was any proposed transformation of

any kind by private promoters or by public authorities and, if yes, give the name of these promoters or authorities and the proposed purpose.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, my office has received applications from three promoters namely -

- (a) Citronelle Ltée, a subsidiary company of Rogers for the setting up of a warehouse/distribution centre. They are asking the site now occupied by the Mechanical Workshop or the Livestock Transit Park.
- (b) Rodnix for the relocation of its warehouses and offices as they have been approached by the Central Electricity Board who has indicated that they would require the site presently occupied by Rodnix at Pointe L'Herbe for future extension of the new Power Station which is under construction.
- (c) AEL DDS Transport, for the storage of liquid petroleum gas (LPG). The company is asking for a temporary permission to store LPG in a concrete building under corrugated iron sheet roof now occupied by the Mechanical Workshop.

The additional storage is required since with the application of the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code, LPG will be shipped to Rodrigues only once monthly as compared to presently where LPG is shipped on (almost) every trip of the Mauritius Pride and Mauritius Trochetia.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, all three requests are being considered by my office and no final decision has yet been reached on any of them.

**Mr J. Roussety:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand that there are three companies who have made their intentions known to take part of these sites. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner if his office or any other authority in Rodrigues expressed to these companies, in one way or another, their will of privatizing these sites concerned? Have they expressed at any time the wish of giving away that part of Government property?

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a wish from the Commission for Infrastructure to move to Oyster Bay and to have a

bigger storage of their equipment there. That is why those promoters are making application as to whether they can have the actual Mechanical Workshop for their business. All this is being considered and we are looking forward whether they can settle themselves elsewhere. But all this is being studied. We had meetings with the Mauritius Ports Authority concerning the port itself where the Citronelle Ltd has made a request for a portion of land there. All this is being discussed and no decision has been taken yet.

**Mr J. Roussety:** M. le président, je vois que les choses sont arrivées à un stade avancé et il y a même eu des discussions. Mais le chef commissaire vient de dire, suite à la question précédente, qu'il y a un problème de site pour construire des unités de stockage, un Petroleum Island.

Et maintenant il veut qu'une compagnie comme Citronnelle Ltée qui fait de la distribution de *consumer goods*, prenne la place du *Mechanical Workshop*. Est-ce que ce n'est pas un paradoxe de bouger le *Mechanical Workshop* pour faire place à une entreprise commerciale dans cette zone?

**The Chief Commissioner:** M. le président, le *Minority Leader* a parlé du site pour le stockage de fuel. Nous sommes en train d'enlever tout ce qui est explosif du secteur résidentiel de Port Mathurin. Mais comment revenir avec un dépôt de fuel? Ce sont des requêtes qui sont au stage de discussion et ce n'est pas par rapport à n'importe quoi, c'est par rapport à quelque chose qui touche l'emploi, le *duty-free zone*, parce que nous voudrions que le rodriguais jouisse du *duty-free zone* que les commerçants qui veulent mettre sur pied à Rodrigues. Donc, il y a des discussions à ce niveau afin de savoir si on donne un emplacement à un des promoteurs, comment est-ce que cela va être bénéfique pour la population et pour tout le monde?

**Mr J. Roussety:** M. le président, la zone concernée par ma question, le parc de transit, le *Mechanical Workshop* et la station d'essence est une zone portuaire que M. le Chef Commissaire semble vouloir transformer en zone commerciale. Si une zone portuaire est perdue, elle l'est pour toujours tandis qu'une zone commerciale peut être à Plaine Corail, à la Ferme, Anse aux Anglais ou n'importe où. Au stade actuel des discussions et vu que ce sont des *public properties*, je pense que tout le monde a droit à une part si jamais il y a une distribution. Est-ce que c'est logique, M. le président, de rentrer dans le jeu de certaines compagnies commerciales, qui veulent avoir des profits, de brader les terres les plus intéressantes, les plus stratégiques à

Port Mathurin? Ce n'est pas moi qui ai parlé de *petroleum island*, j'ai compris que c'est une zone, *highly protected, highly securised* pour stocker le diesel, les produits pétroliers. C'est là qu'on devrait faire cela. La mer est en face, le port est à une centaine de mètres et je ne vois pas la nécessité d'avoir une stratégie commerciale sous prétexte que c'est duty-free. Le développement commercial peut se faire à Baie aux Huitres, à La Ferme, dans les parages de l'aéroport.

**Mrs Perrine-Bégué:** On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir. As you know, according to the Standing Orders, the Minority Members do not have the right to make long statements. The Minority Leader has been commenting for about three minutes on what the Chief Commissioner just said. So, I would wish that Minority Members be asked to put questions straightforward and not even allowed to put more than three questions in one.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Wait for my ruling. The point is well taken. The attention of the Minority Leader is drawn to the point raised.

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr J. Roussety:** Thank you, Sir. A question can have three parts. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner, who seems to appreciate the ideas compared to her colleague, Commissioner Mrs Perrine-Bégué, on this question of the number of companies applying for these sites, how would they differentiate between these companies? Will they take the land and lease it? If ever they come forward...

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** On a point of order, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The Minority Leader is still making a statement.

**Mr Chairperson:** The Deputy Chief Commissioner considers it to be a statement...

*(Interruptions)*

**The Chief Commissioner:** The Minority Leader could come with a substantive question on what has been just said. I think this does not relate to the original question.

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes. The Minority Leader was just on the point of introducing his question. Be brief, please. Finish your question.

**Mr J. Roussety:** M. le président, si on veut me museler ici, dans la rue on ne pourra pas le faire.

**Mr Chairperson:** Do you have a question actually?

**Mr J. Roussety:** You are the Chairperson of this House...

**Mr Chairperson:** Yes. Be brief!

**Mr J. Roussety:** It seems that some Members do not like seeing other people speak here. It is Parliament and they do not want to hear me speaking...

*(Interruptions)*

**Mr Chairperson:** Order please! Well, you have not understood my ruling.

**Mr J. Roussety:** I was in Mauritius and the first time I went to Parliament, hon. Dulloo was asking a supplementary question. He took 15 minutes and he was allowed to do so. This is a relevant issue. If they do not want to listen, it is up to them. That's ok. I abide by your ruling...

**Mr Chairperson:** I asked you to proceed with your question.

**Mr J. Roussety:** How do you think I will proceed if every time they are interrupting me?

**Mr Chairperson:** Let us move to the next question! I have been very indulgent. Time has now elapsed and we are probably left with ten questions. I have not counted them yet. Let us move to the next question.

**CAMP DU ROI STADIUM - "FOOTBALL FEMININE"**

**(No. B/489) Mr J.C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal)** asked the Commissioner for Sports whether, with regard to “football feminine” held at Camp du Roi Stadium in Rodrigues, the Commissioner for Sports would state –

- (a) the total amount of gate money paid to the teams to date;
- (b) the amount each feminine team received, and
- (c) if same has not been paid, state the reasons therefor.

**Mr Lisette:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have stated in a previous question that gate money which is collected at Camp du Roi Stadium during football matches are divided as follows -

|                                         |       |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|
| Rodrigues Regional Football Committee - | 25%   |
| Comité de Gestion                       | - 25% |
| Each team                               | - 25% |

As regards feminine teams the matches are normally played *en lever du rideau* and hence the issue of gate money does not arise for the time being.

## **VULNERABLE GROUPS - NETWORK SUPPORT SERVICES**

**(No. B/490) Mr P. François (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres)** asked the Commissioner for Social Security whether, as regards the setting up of a Network Support Services Unit also known as “Project Reseau” for the vulnerable groups, he could inform the House –

- (a) when the project was due to start, and
- (b) who were the officers, groups and organisations to be involved in the project.

**Mr Mercure:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), I refer to the Chief Commissioner last Budget Speech where mention was made of the setting up of a Network Support Service Unit in Rodrigues. The aim of this project is to promote the social integration of persons in situation of social difficulties by co-ordinating and facilitating their better access to existing services and schemes. These persons will be encouraged where possible to identify projects with a view to helping them achieve the socio-economic independence.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the implementation of the project has already started as per the following schedules of activities -

- (i) Training of two Rodriguan officers in Mauritius as from April 2003 to April 2004. The training was funded by the Lux Development programme and the two officers have already resumed duties at the beginning of this month. They are now based at Mont Lubin;
- (ii) Training of Community Health Agents as from Monday 24 May to 04 June 2004. These persons will be one of the main actors in the implementation of the project;
- (iii) Setting up of a Data Bank system comprising of all relevant information concerning services provided by stakeholders including NGOs and Government services.
- (iv) A seminar to be held in mid July with stakeholders to define and agree on a charter that will provide the basis of framework of collaboration in the context of this project.
- (v) Official opening of the services to the public on an experimental basis by the end of July 2004 for a period of three months, only the regions of Mont Lubin and its vicinity will be concerned in the pilot phase.
- (vi) Evaluation of results by the end of September 2004 and if found concluding, the services will be then extended to the whole island, probably by the beginning of October 2004.

With regard to part (b), as stated above, the officers involved in the project are those who have received a specialised training funded by the Lux Development. These officers consist of one Higher Social Security Officer and one Community Health Rehabilitation Officer. They will be responsible for the functioning of a Unit and, at the same time, will act as a mediator and facilitator to enable better access to services by the persons in difficulties.

The Community Health Agent will be also involved in the identification of susceptible cases in the community and will report to the above officers for appropriate follow-up action.

The contribution of Government services through the different Commissions, funding agencies in Rodrigues and NGOs will be solicited as and when required according to the nature of individual cases reported.

Village committees will be called upon to participate actively in the identification of cases and assisting the person in difficulties to implement the individual projects.

### **PAPAYES RESERVOIR - CONSTRUCTION**

**(No. B/491) Mr P. François (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards Papayes Reservoir which had been blown down by cyclone Kalundé, the Commissioner could inform the House on how his Commission intends to dispose of the debris.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, following Cyclone Kalundé, financial assistance was obtained from the European Union for the construction of a new reservoir at Papayes. Provision has been made in the contract for the safe dismantling of the iron sheets and proper stacking of the materials. My Commission is looking at the possibility of using the iron sheets which are still in good conditions for the erection of a new reservoir for irrigation purposes being given that the roof has been completely damaged. A survey in that respect is being carried out and a site is being identified for that purpose.

### **POINTE AU SEL - SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SITE**

**(No. B/492) Mr J. Pierre Louis (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the creation of a proper solid waste disposal site near Pointe au Sel as mentioned in the draft Budget 2004-2005, he could inform the House -

(a) what has been done up to now, and

- (b) what measures are being proposed for the disposal of non-degradable waste.

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson Sir, as I stated in my budget speech, the existing solid waste disposal site at Roche Bon Dieu will reach its full capacity in a few months warranting the creation of a new disposal site.

In line with the recommendations of “The Feasibility Study on Solid Waste Management Project in the Republic of Mauritius” which was undertaken by the Japan External Trade Organisation at the request of the Ministry of Trade and Industry in March 2000, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has opted for the construction of a “Controlled waste disposal site” at Pointe au Sel with better operation and management practices.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to non-degradable wastes, we are looking into the introduction of an Integrated Solid Waste Management System where the population is encouraged to minimise waste production and waste sorting at source. This will favour the development of recycling activities. In addition, in the context of the World Environment Day, Rodnix will launch a project with the collaboration of ten village committees on a pilot basis in Rodrigues where all types of empty bottles of water and soft drinks and empty cans will be collected and returned against reward. This initiative is fully supported by my office and depending on the result of the exercise, the project will be extended throughout the island and importers of other commodities in plastic bottles may be encouraged to adopt this approach.

Furthermore, the Environment Protection Regulations 2003 on Plastic Carry Bags which was recently promulgated for the control of the import, manufacture and sale of plastic bags under which only degradable plastic bags are allowed, also applies to Rodrigues. These regulations will contribute significantly in the reduction of non-degradable waste.

The possibility to ban the import of plastic bags in Rodrigues is also being looked into.

## **GRANDE MONTAGNE FOOTBALL PITCH**

**(No. B/493) Mr J. Pierre-Louis (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the increasing sports activities and the number of spectators and vehicles involved at Grande Montagne football pitch and the forthcoming construction of a gymnasium in the region, the Commissioner would consider the possibility of providing parking facilities nearby.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the house that my Commission is presently working on the design for the construction of a new road linking Grande Montagne and Coromandel via Grande Montagne Youth Centre. This road which is about 300m long will be a 10m wide road with parking facilities on both sides of the road. The construction is being scheduled so that the road is completed in the same period as the new sports complex at Grande Montagne.

## **QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL – MALE WARD**

**(No. B/494) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Health whether, with regard to difficulties faced by patients in the male ward of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital due to lack of pillows, bed covers and clean mattresses, he could state -

- (a) the date and year these mattresses were purchased and table the relevant receipts;
- (b) the condition of these mattresses today;
- (c) how many beds there are in this ward and if all of them are equipped with a pillow;
- (d) the number of bed covers to which each patient is entitled during his stay as an inmate, and
- (e) if he intends to destroy all the pillows which smell bad in the store.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the information is as follows -

- (a) These mattresses were purchased on 29 December 1999. Receipts will be tabled during the next sitting.

- (b) These mattresses are in usable condition, but since last March decision has been taken to cover them with leather marocain in order to make them better.
- (c) There are 28 beds. Usually, all beds are equipped with pillows. At times, patients prefer to bring their own pillows and their own bed sheets.
- (d) Depending on the patients' conditions, a patient's cover can be changed several times a day, while others every day.
- (e) Bad smell pillows are not kept for long, but are usually destroyed when same is required.

### **MAXI CLEAN - WORKERS – CONDITIONS OF WORK**

**(No. B/495) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to difficulties faced by the workers of Maxiclean due to the bad smell from the dustbins in the islands, he could state -

- (a) if all these dustbins have been constructed in conformity to health regulations;
- (b) how many people work for this company, and
- (c) if all of them are properly vaccinated and equipped with effective protective masks.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed as follows -

- (a) No regulations exist on the construction of dustbins.
- (b) Maxiclean Ltd. has a force of 47 employees, including drivers, scavengers, supervisors, pesticide sprayer men, bush cutter operator, dumping ground attendants, etc, amongst others.
- (c) They are all already vaccinated. All workers usually undergo medical check-up once every six months. According to Health and Safety Act, company provides protective equipment, which

include rubber and leather gloves, rubber boots, overalls and respiratory masks.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, in his reply, the Commissioner for Health said that no regulation covers the construction of dustbins. What is meant in the question is whether there are health regulations to ensure that the disposal of rubbish and waste is not accessible to animals like stray dogs. This is why in the question it is asked whether the way these dustbins have been constructed is safe, so as to prevent stray animals to get access to them.

**Mr Sooprayen:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have just said, I am informed that no regulation exists as far as the construction of dustbins is concerned. So far, I know the dustbins will be redesigned.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, have these dustbins been constructed in conformity with health regulations? I think there are regulations as to the way dustbins should be designed.

**Mr Chairperson:** The Member is referring to regulations, which are normally published. Can he exactly refer to the regulation he is thinking about?

**Mr Jabeemissar:** Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Chairperson:** Are there any specific regulations? These are public documents; they are published in the Government Gazette. Do you have any specific provisions in mind, so that the Commissioner may, at least, understand what you mean?

**Mr Jabeemissar:** The question is whether there are regulations or not!

**Mr Chairperson:** There are regulations.

**Mr Jabeemissar:** The Commissioner knows that there are regulations! What I would like to know is whether these dustbins have been constructed in conformity with the regulations. The Commissioner just has to say yes or no.

**Mr Chairperson:** The Member cannot direct a Commissioner on the way he has to reply. I cannot.

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

**HIGH SECURITY AGENCY – EMPLOYEES – NUMBER,  
CONDITIONS OF WORK, ETC**

**(No. B/496) Mr D. L. Guillaume (Third Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Labour & Industrial Relations whether with regard to the people who work for the High Security Agency, he would state -

- (a) how many persons work for the company, and if possible table their names, and
- (b) whether their work conditions are in accordance with the labour law and other relevant laws.

**Mr Mercure:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the High Security Agency employs a total of 37 members of the staff, comprising 15 full-time and 22 trainee/part time Security Guards attending duty on a roster of one day-on followed by one day-off, i.e an average of 15 days work per month.

As regards their work conditions, there have not been any formal complaints registered at the Labour Office regarding non-satisfactory conditions. However, some of the workers came in my office at the beginning of May 2004 to request detailed information on the provisions of laws concerning wages and conditions of employment.

I have then had a meeting at the level of my Commission on 07 May 2004 to discuss the issue. An in-depth inquiry has already been initiated at the Labour Office and involves a fresh and routine book inspection at the company.

A first investigation concerning salary conditions has indicated that all the employees of the High Security Agency are remunerated at rates lower than the minimum prescribed by the Security Guards Remuneration Order.

The Labour Inspector is presently having a subsequent meeting and interviews with the workers, with a view to securing evidence and their stand regarding this issue. If confirmed, appropriate action will be initiated to ensure compliance with existing legal provisions governing payment of salaries to this category of employees.

The inquiry is also looking into other aspects of work conditions and a full report will be submitted to this Assembly in due course.

Meanwhile, I have convened a meeting with both the employer and representatives of the employees and staff of my Commission to discuss the issue. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday 20 May in my office.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner say what is the basic/top salary of a security guard according to the Remuneration Order 2003?

**Mr Mercure:** According to the Remuneration Order, the basic salary is Rs6,070 and the top salary is Rs8,565.

**Mr Agathe:** What will be the stand of the Commissioner of Labour & Industrial Relations if ever a security guard makes a formal complaint regarding his meagre salary?

**Mr Mercure:** According to law and the common practice in Mauritius, I will verbally inform the company about the discrepancy observed and request them to remedy the situation and to make the necessary adjustment. If no remedial action is taken, a written recommendation will then be issued and if there is no compliance, evidence will be secured for appropriate legal action.

**Mr Agathe:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have not heard about sick leave, vacation leave, etc.

**Mr Mercure:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is to be found in the Remuneration Order for security guards. If the respected Member wants to have more information, he may come with a substantive question.

**Mr Chairperson:** Question time is over. Next item, please!

## STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

### AIRPORTS OF RODRIGUES LTD - ACTIVITIES

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have two statements to make.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, following the oral reply which I made to Parliamentary Question B/439 on 27 April 2004, I would like to make a statement as additional information for the attention of my learned colleagues.

ARL is a public company with Central Government as main shareholder (99.99%) and State Investment Corporation (0.01%). Its activities are governed by the Companies Act and its appointed directors have duties and responsibilities to manage the company in the most efficient and professional manner.

ARL took loans from the National Pensions Fund to the tune of Rs260 m. and Government guaranteed both the loans and also agreed to service the capital and interest repayments on behalf of ARL. It was subsequently agreed that ARL would issue shares to Government upon Government servicing the NPF loans on behalf of ARL. This is at present done for all repayments up to date.

All development works have now been completed and ARL derives income from activities carried out within the airport premises, for example, passenger service charge, parking fees, rental of commercial premises, etc. ARL has its own management team to operate the airport under supervision of the Department of Civil Aviation. However, the Ministry of External Communications has to declare ARL as the Aerodrome Operator and administrative formalities are underway.

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly will have no responsibility in the day to day operation of the airport once ARL is declared the Aerodrome Operator.

However, Rodrigues Regional Assembly employees, for example, Customs and Excise Officers, Phytosanitary Officers, Health Inspectors, etc, will continue to exercise their official duties at the airport. ARL has put

offices and services at their disposal and in return Rodrigues Regional Assembly pays to ARL a grant of Rs300,000 each year to meet recurrent expenditure in relation with the facilities offered to Rodrigues Regional Assembly and not as a straight grant-in-aid. Expenditure includes electricity bills (regrouped under ARL account), common expenses such as cleaning or standby generator, free parking facilities, etc.

## **TOURISTS – ASSAULTS – IMPACT ON TOURISM SECTOR**

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make a statement with respect to my replies to Rodrigues Regional Assembly Questions B/456 and B/460 from the Second and Sixth Island Region Members concerning assaults on tourists and its impact on tourism sector.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as we all know, tourism is a viable economic option, which is growing into a powerful engine for the socioeconomic development of Rodrigues. Our island is being promoted as a remote, safe and authentic eco-tourism destination meant for relaxation far from the crowded cities.

Through the years, our population has been praised for its hospitality. It is hoped that the few assaults on tourists, which have been recorded recently, will remain as exceptions or else tourists may no longer be inclined to come to Rodrigues. Tourists who are coming, some of whom are returning to Rodrigues, have been charmed by the peaceful atmosphere which prevails in our beautiful island.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is obvious that any loss of safety will be a serious threat to tourism development since tourists are becoming more and more demanding, specially for their wellness. However, I am confident that the setting-up of a “*Police du Tourisme*” and the efforts put in by the Police, with the collaboration of ARTO, Forestry Services and Fisheries Department, would contribute to restore safety for tourists.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my office has requested Mauritius Telecom to instal public telephone on public beaches at Mourouk, Baladirou, St. Francois, Fumier and Pointe Cotton. Unfortunately, Mauritius Telecom has reported that, for the time being, no line is available in these regions and that they will, indeed, proceed with the installation of public telephone in these

places as soon as their network will be ready. This morning, I received Mr Lutchmeea, who is going back to Mauritius and is being replaced by Mr Bikoo. He told me that probably immediate action would be taken.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I thank you for your attention.

**FOOD SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMME –  
ST. THERESE DE L'ENFANT JESUS RCA SCHOOL –**

**The Commissioner for Education (Mr A. L. Roussety):** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make the following statement. The launching ceremony of the Food Supplementary Programme relative to the “*Zone d’Education Prioritaire*” took place at St. Thérèse de l’Enfant Jesus RCA School by the Chief Commissioner in the presence of the Commissioner for Education and Training, Miss Antoinette Prudence, President and Manager RCA Schools and Mrs Christiane Capdor, Senior Primary School Inspector. A sum of Rs10 is allocated to each pupil for a daily meal and fruit.

Provision is made for a special grant for very needy students. In that connection, the names of these pupils will be submitted by the schools to the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research through the Commission for Education.

Relative papers will be sent to the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research for the payment of allowances to teaching and non-teaching staff backdated from July 2003. The school will present a project, making use of the money earmarked in the Capital Budget.

Thank you.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that the Assembly be now adjourned to Tuesday 08 June 2004, at 10.30 a.m.

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.**

*Question put and agreed to.*

## **PORT MATHURIN – CENTRAL MARKET**

**Mr D. L. Guillaume (The Third Island Region Member):** Mr Chairperson, Sir, the central market of Port Mathurin is one of our major tourists attraction in the capital. Despite this, it is still in a very deplorable condition. I think that some more urgent actions must be considered, namely –

- (a) lighting inside and around the market;
- (b) condition of people having their stalls outside the market be reviewed;
- (c) people selling their vegetables along the roadside on the ground need to have stalls;
- (d) the construction of well-conditioned public toilet facilities at the market, and
- (e) the bad smell at the slaughterhouse needs to be addressed.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a shame to see people, who are contributing to our economy, being neglected by this Regional Government. The sellers at the market are on duty since very early in the morning and they are not provided with proper lighting.

Note that the market opens at 5 o'clock when it is still dark in winter. Not every stall owner has place inside the market where they can be sheltered from the rain and the sun. These people are paying rent for their stalls and yet sell their products in open air and are thus exposed to rain and to direct sunlight.

Note also that the ground there is not concrete and thus dusty and muddy when it is raining. Where is the political strategy a Government can give to encourage productivity? Mr Chairperson, Sir, furthermore, there is no toilet facilities at the marketplace. Where would you think people who have left their home at 3 o'clock in the morning go when nature calls?

Mr Chairperson, Sir, how can we even think about agricultural reform when agriculturists themselves are left behind? It is time to stop neglecting them and to start providing them with better working conditions.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, tourists are not willing to eat and buy our meat owing to the deplorable condition of the slaughterhouse. The problems to be noted are the bad smell and lack of proper hygiene. Pigs are slaughtered on the floor. The tables do not follow the sanitary norms. On top of that, some people sell vegetables along the roadside in front of the slaughterhouse, exposing their products on the floor.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the problems mentioned here are not new to this Assembly. It has been promised that the condition of the market will be improved.

*(Interruptions)*

Please, don't use mere words! Actions are better to prove our competence.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the agriculturists not only have to face great difficulties to sell their products due to the bad conditions prevailing, but no incentives are provided to them to produce.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, although presently there is an abundance of agricultural products due to favourable climatic conditions, the quantity of products sold are decreasing due to poverty on the island. In addition, the cost of production keeps on increasing, for instance, the cost of animal feed.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is also no export of animal products, for example, cows and pigs to Mauritius due to internal pressure and strict regulations. Exporters do not find these regulations attractive and are thus bound to abandon this particular activity. It is our country that bears the consequence.

M. le président, l'emphasis doit être mise sur un centre agricole efficace qui répondra aux besoins des acteurs de développement agricole et les acteurs de l'économie de Rodrigues. L'agriculture rodriguaise ne sortira pas de cette situation sans la mise en place d'un centre innovation transfert technologie agro-alimentaire PME qui agira comme support et formation

que ce soit pour le séchage, le fumage, la cuisson et le marinage des produits d'origine animal.

Deux questions auxquelles j'invite le Commissaire responsable de l'agriculture à répondre -

(1) Pourquoi des petites unités de transformation ne pourraient-elles pas s'implanter à Rodrigues et créer l'emploi?

(2) Pourquoi si peu de volume de porc et de poulet est commercialisé?

M. le président, l'agriculture durable, ce n'est pas venir devant une télé et de dire " faire ceci ou faire cela" sans un marché pour écouler les produits. Si, aujourd'hui, autant de poules et de porcs restent invendus, cela prouve qu'il y a un grand manque de communication entre les producteurs et les services agricoles. C'est triste de voir un gouvernement inefficace qui n'attire pas les investisseurs.

M. le président, presque tous les éleveurs rodriguais sont membres de la coopérative, mais ce n'est pas la coopérative qui résoudra le problème du marché. Il s'agit simplement de connaître les réseaux d'échanges, les filières des commercialisations. Tout d'abord, il nous faut -

- (1) Progresser vers une plus grande autosuffisance alimentaire.
- (2) Une proposition méthodologique pour connaître les réseaux de la commercialisation informelle.
- (3) Une animation à organiser pour simuler la transformation des produits agricoles.
- (4) Soutenir les cultures de l'exportation en réactivant les concertations au sein des filières agricoles.

Pour ce faire, il est incontournable de mettre en place un centre diagnostic et un marché pour évaluer les opportunités, productions et orienter les actions des recherches de développement.

M. le président, le centre diagnostic, la filière et le marché local, concerne le niveau de la demande, le niveau de l'offre, l'estimation du marché, volume et valeur, niveau de production, segmentation du marché,

menace sur le marché, opportunité du marché, facteurs clés de succès, les atouts et les stratégies à développer.

M. le président, pour que Rodrigues sorte de cette situation, il faudra de deux centres - centre innovation, transfert technologie et centre diagnostic, filière et marché. Avec la réalisation de ces deux centres, M. le président, tout de suite un troisième service prendra sa place dans l'île. C'est la Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie accueillant des entreprises agro-alimentaires qui viendront innover dans ce secteur. La transformation des fruits, des légumes et des poissons, produit animal et autres, la Chambre de Commerce et de l'Industrie pourra mettre sur le marché des petites quantités de produits pour tester le marché et son impact financier.

M. le président, la stratégie envisagée se fait sur la nécessité de coordonner des demandes et des potentiels liés à l'agro-alimentaire. Un travail agro-alimentaire pourrait être efficace avec la coordination entre les acteurs, c'est-à-dire, agriculteurs, entreprises, associations de transformation qui valoriseraient les moyens existants, relégueraient les informations techniques, scientifiques, réglementaires, accompagnerait les produits et gèreraient les moyens financiers incitatifs.

M. le président, aujourd'hui, beaucoup de charcuteries mauriciennes de grande taille sont en train de fermer leurs portes vu qu'il y en a trop à Maurice et, par ailleurs, les produits finis importés de France et de Zimbabwe accélèrent ces fermetures.

M. le président, donc Rodrigues ne pourra pas rester *baba tétée* et dépendre de l'île Maurice. L'exportation de ces produits charcuteries vers Maurice s'avère très, très difficile. L'implantation d'une grande charcuterie sans un centre diagnostic de filière ne survivra pas.

M. le président, concernant l'agro-export, l'étude de la filière d'oignon, l'ail, pomme de terre, pistache et haricots souligne l'intérêt des privilèges d'une part l'interprofession autour des redistributeurs de l'île Rodrigues et de l'île Maurice. Aujourd'hui, Rodrigues exporte quelques tonnes d'oignon seulement à R 10 kilo, mais importe douze fois plus la quantité à R 20 kilo. Les régions un et deux possèdent les meilleures terres agricoles de l'île. Avec la réalisation de Pistache *Dam* et autres *dams* de ces régions, Rodrigues pourrait être autosuffisant alimentaires. Il s'agit simplement

de bonne volonté et de construire des entrepôts modernes et régionaliser l'achat de ces denrées.

M. le président, la production de l'ail a presque disparu dans l'île, mais les Rodriguais achètent de l'ail à R 90 à R 100 le kilo. Qu'est-ce qu'on est en train de faire pour encourager ces producteurs? M. le président, quel rôle joue le service agricole à Rodrigues? J'invite le commissaire responsable de prendre connaissance du rôle de ce département et son intervention sur l'île devra être le suivant.

Premièrement, connaissance du milieu et de mécanisme de son fonctionnement. Par exemple, étude de système de production, typologie des productions, zonage, étude des filières, identification des stratégies des producteurs et identification de l'échelle d'intervention.

Deuxièmement, élaboration d'un référentiel technique, social et économique pour le développement, par exemple, acquisition des références locales, diffusion des systèmes performants, introduction innovation technique, rationaliser les filières, traduction des acquis à la recherche en terme de développement, mise au point des méthodes adaptées de vulgarisation.

Troisièmement, poursuite et réajustement des actions de développement, formation vulgarisateur aux méthodes de communication en milieu rural, interface, recherche, développement, vulgarisation, mise au point des méthodes de suivi, évaluation, outil et d'aide à la décision.

M. le président, il y a un grand manque de communication et de connexion entre le service agricole et les acteurs de l'économie de Rodrigues. M. le président, vu que l'agriculture Rodriguaise est presque manuelle en main d'oeuvre et en capital, les mutations en cours et à venir que l'agriculture Rodriguaise subira ou conduira seront mieux réussis s'il y a la volonté politique d'un gouvernement responsable et digne de leur fonction.

M. le président, que la place des agriculteurs dans la valorisation du patrimoine soit reconnue. Deuxièmement, que l'on tienne compte de la place qu'occupe l'agriculture Rodriguaise dans son ensemble comme le pilier de l'économie Rodriguaise.

Pour conclure, M. le président, il y a des acquis et des perspectives. La politique agricole du 21<sup>ème</sup> siècle, ce n'est pas *faire la bouche doux* car le développement agricole dispose d'éléments à différentes échelles géographiques et sociales, par exemple, la parcelle, la dynamique de nos régions, la pluriactivité et les acteurs du filière, la famille, le territoire de l'île et les contextes régionaux. Presque tous les volets du système dynamique agro Rodriguaise n'ont pas été étudiés.

M. le président, il faut consolider les connexions entre le travail agronomique et l'approche socio-économique. Malheureusement, M. le président, pendant 25 ans, Rodrigues n'a eu aucun agronome ou socio-économiste. Quelle honte pour une île autonome! Enfin, il s'agit d'intégrer ces éléments accumulés dans une vision prospective construite.

M. le président, le service agricole devra contribuer à la restructuration économique locale autant qu'à l'amélioration technique de la production végétale et animale. La méthodologie, M. le président, se fait sur la sociologie du développement d'un point de vue socio-économique. M. le président, un service agricole efficace peut contribuer à la stabilisation d'un conseil technique et d'un système d'information qualitatif, ainsi qu'à la mise au point des services envers les acteurs et des filières.

Premièrement, centre innovation et transfert de technologie PME agricole, centre diagnostic filière et marché pour diagnostiquer le marché local pour l'écoulement des denrées agricoles et la formation la Chambre d'Agriculture et de l'Industrie appuyant les entreprises agro-alimentaires.

M. le président, beaucoup de techniciens, vulgarisateurs du service agricole de Rodrigues, et moi-même, avons abattu un gros travail auprès du réseau agriculture durable Océan Indien, le Centre Innovation de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement. J'espère que le conseil exécutif s'engagera pour que le service agricole devienne efficace. C'est malheureux de voir un gouvernement qui n'a pas la vision et la volonté politique agricole.

Pour terminer, M. le président, le service agricole devra réitérer sa volonté et mettre à la disposition des acteurs de développement de l'île Rodrigues ses ressources techniques d'expertises, d'animation et de formation. L'approche territoriale et sociale de ce problème s'avère capitale pour éviter les erreurs de diagnostic et limiter des contradictions, des

superpositions entre différentes voies d'appui du développement de l'île Rodrigues qui soi-disant fait parti du réseau agriculture durable Ocean Indien.

This situation, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is going from bad to worse. If it is not given due consideration now, our country will fall into absolute poverty.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**Mr Chairperson:** Will the Deputy Chief Commissioner react now or later?

**The Deputy Chief Commissioner:** Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have taken cognizance of the contents of the theoretical statement of the Member. I will, therefore, analyse the contents and come with a statement at the next sitting of the Assembly.

*At 13.50 hours, the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 08 June 2004 at 10.30 a.m.*

