

No. 1 of 2005

RODRIGUES

FIRST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 1 of 2005

Sitting of Tuesday 15 February, 2005

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

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 15 February, 2005

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The Executive Council
(Formed by Mr. Louis Serge Clair)

Mr. Louis Serge Clair Chief Commissioner responsible for
Central Administration,
Civil Aviation (administration), Education
(administration), Customs and Excise Duties
(administration), Environment, Fisheries,
Forestry, Industrial Development, Judicial
(Administration), Legal Services, Marine
Parks, Marine Services (administration),
Meteorology (administration), Registration,
State Lands, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues,
Tourism, Town and Country Planning.

Mr. Jean Daniel Speville Deputy Chief Commissioner
responsible for Agriculture,
Food Production, Housing. Infrastructure
including Highway and roads and Public
Buildings and Utilities Plant and Animal
Quarantine, Transport, Water Resources.

Mrs. Arlette Perrine-Begue Commissioner responsible for Arts and
Culture, Child Development, Community
Development, Family Welfare, Library
Services, Women's Affairs.

Mr. Andre Lelio Roussety Commissioner responsible for Civil
Status, Employment, Information Technology

& Telecommunications, Museums, archives,
historical sites and buildings, Postal services
(administration), Vocational Training.

Mr. Soopramanien Sooprayen Commissioner responsible for Co-
operatives, Fire services,
Health (administration).

Mr. Nicolson Lisette Commissioner responsible for
Consumer Protection,
Handicraft, Trade, Commerce and Licensing,
Youth and Sports.

Mr. Roberston Mercure Commissioner responsible for
Labour and Industrial
Relations, Social Security
(administration), Prisons and Reform
Institutions (administration).

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr. Chairperson Lamvohee, Mr. Joseph Chenlye

Clerk Vithilingem, Mr. Soocramanien

Serjeant -at-Arms Louis, Mr. Jorgenson

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members a warm welcome to you all specially after the small recess we had and I hope that we are starting year 2005 with the same respect and decorum that we had had last year.

Thank you.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

DANS JAMBLON – LATE JEAN NOEL PERRINE – CORPSE

(No. B/1) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner for Health, with regard to the discovery of the corpse of late Jean Noel Perrine at Dans Jamblon in January last, whether he would say –

- (a) what sanitary measures were taken while transporting the dead body to the mortuary;
- (b) whether the spot was disinfected immediately after the corpse had been removed and if not, why, and
- (a) whether his Commission has the necessary equipment including transport to deal with such a situation.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that following a telephone call on Sunday 09 January 2005, the officer in post in the Medical Records Section of Queen Elizabeth Hospital gave instructions to the driver of ambulance GMR 644 to call at Jamblon for an emergency. The officer was not aware that the ambulance was being required for the transportation of a corpse as the caller did not specify.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that in Mauritius the Police has its own mortuary van with drivers trained for the conveyance of corpses. The Police is responsible for the corpse from discovery up to time of disposal.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in this particular case the body of the Late Jean Noel Perrine was put in a hermetic disaster bag and conveyed to the mortuary at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the ambulance.

With regard to part (b), the spot was disinfected in the morning of Wednesday 12 January 2005.

As for part ©, the Commission has a spray apparatus, appropriate disinfectants, respiratory mask, overall, boots and glove at the Health Office in Port Mathurin and a Mortuary Van (GMR 548).

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House the reason why the authority decided to disinfect the spot after three days, that is, on 12th, that the corpse was discovered?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have just said it was a Sunday and the Principal Health Officer was aware of it on Monday morning. On Monday morning a team went to the hospital to disinfect the ambulance and it was on Tuesday morning that everything was made ready to go for the disinfection at the spot there, as it is very inaccessible and it took time. I am informed that in Mauritius this is not done currently. Once the police take the corpse and go to the mortuary, often there is no disinfection.

Mr Jabeemissar : Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner stated that an ambulance carried that corpse which was apparently in very advanced decomposition. Can the Commissioner inform the House whether that ambulance is especially meant for the transport of such corpse or is it meant for other purposes as well?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have just stated that when the Medical Records Office received an emergency call to send for an ambulance, the caller did not specify whether it was a corpse; this is why the ambulance went there. Once the ambulance was there, the SMF, the Commander division, every one was there with a group of villagers of Vangard and they helped a lot. The corpse was taken by the SMF to the jeep. When the ambulance was there, then it was said that they should go in

the ambulance instead of the jeep of the SMF. We do have a mortuary van. But at no time was there a request for same.

Mr Jabeemissar: In that case, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when they were in presence of the real situation, could the authority not call for the mortuary van?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it was Sunday afternoon; there was a crowd there, you could see in what state of mind the people were. The Divisional Commander, Mr Pierrot Noel, was there; I was there with many other persons; and at the request of the Commander and mine as well, I said, it was an emergency case we could not do otherwise...

(Interruptions)

The corpse was in an advanced decomposition state; we had to do things very quickly and this was done.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House about the exact spot where the corpse was discovered? Was it in the forest, in a river bed or somewhere else? Can he be precise and give the exact location where the corpse was?

Mr Sooprayen : M. le président je ne peux pas dire exactement où se trouvait le corps, mais c'était dans un précipice.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, they waited four days after to disinfect the spot. Can the Commissioner say whether the day after the corpse was discovered, it rained and the spot where the corpse was found, was filled with water which then went downstream to the villages down the slope?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I can assure the Member that there were no such things. *Il n'y avait pas tout cela. Il ne pleuvait pas. Je suis d'accord qu'il y avait une odeur. Le Sanitaire est parti faire son travail. Le membre parle de quatre jours. On a trouvé le corps dimanche vers une heure ou deux heures. La découverte été faite le mercredi matin.* Let me tell you, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that this case concerns solely the Police. The Police had to inform us.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said that he was there. He is the Commissioner responsible for health and he is aware that GMR 644 is an ambulance being used conventionally for the transport of and assistance to patients. Why did he accept that a body in an advanced decomposition state be placed in a vehicle which is normally used for the transport of patients? *Pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'a pas appelé le Mortuary Van ? Vanguard est à peu près 5 ou 10 minutes de Crève Coeur. Il y a le téléphone portable. Il y a des gens de Vanguard qui étaient sur place. Pourquoi n'a-t-il pas exigé que le Mortuary Van vienne à la place de cette ambulance qui normalement est utilisée pour le transport des malades ?*

Mr Sooprayen : M. le président, je viens de dire qu'il y avait des villageois là-bas, il y avait des gens qui ont commencé à marcher de Vanguard depuis peut-être quatre heures du matin pour aider la Police dans son travail. Ce n'est que vers onze heures qu'ils ont pu trouver tout ça. Quand on m'a téléphoné, je suis allé directement là-bas et il y avait le Commandant et les autres ; l'ambulance aussi était là-bas. On m'a fait comprendre qu'on a demandé une ambulance. *They didn't know whether there was a corpse there. So, there was an emergency.* Moi, je pense qu'on a fait un bon travail, il faut nous féliciter pour cela. On est à Rodrigues ; ce n'est pas comme à Maurice. À Maurice, comme je vous ai dit, il y a un transport special pour ces cas. *This is what we are going to do in a near future.* On apprend à tout âge.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, when was that vehicle used again to transport patients? Was that vehicle used on the same day, after the transport of that corpse?

Mr Sooprayen : M. le président, excusez-moi, le vehicule est arrivé à l'hôpital un dimanche. Le lendemain matin avant le nettoyage, il y a eu désinfection par l'équipe sanitaire. Mardi matin on est retourné pour relaver puis redésinfecter. Ce n'est qu'après qu'on a utilisé le véhicule.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner seems to tell us that it was the first time that we faced such a situation. In the past, as far as I know, there were such cases. The Commissioner also said that there is a mortuary van. Can the Commissioner say who normally drives the mortuary van? He said that in Mauritius, there are drivers specially trained for such cases. Being given that there is a mortuary van, why has not anybody been trained to drive it?

Mr Sooprayen : M. le président, normalement - je l'ai dit, et je le répète - c'est l'affaire de la police avant tout. La Police a son véhicule, ses chauffeurs *trained for such cases*. The mortuary van of the Health Commission does not handle cases of a criminal nature. I contacted the office of the Commissioner of Police before coming here. Therefore, if it is a criminal case, the mortuary van of the health sector will not carry the corpse. The mortuary van carries corpses and coffins also of cases which are not of a doubtful criminal nature.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Yes, last question. A member is on his feet.

Mr Sooprayen: If there are doubtful criminal cases, this is done by the Police. Usually, the mortuary van is used to carry dead bodies of persons who die in the hospital.

Mrs Prosper : M. le président, est-ce-que le Commissaire pourrait nous dire pourquoi il a été là-bas si ce n'était pas son affaire ?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am the Commissioner responsible for Health. *Si je dois faire l'historique de cette affaire, cela va prendre beaucoup de temps*. There is a procedure to follow. Il faut voir la Police avant. *Comme je viens de vous dire, M. le president, on apprend à tout age*.

Mr Chairperson: A last question.

Mr Agathe: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I want to ask the Commissioner responsible for Health, quelle est la raison pour laquelle les officiers du bureau sanitaire n'étaient pas là-bas le jour même, c'est-à-dire, le dimanche ? Pourquoi ils ont attendu trois jours après pour désinfecter l'endroit ?

Mr Sooprayen: I have already answered the question.

Mr Chairperson: Well, this is far from the main question, of course. Yes, Commissioner, you should wait for my ruling as to whether the

question is admissible or not. And you maintain that you have answered the question, this is your reply.

Mr Soopraben: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir,

Mr Chairperson: Yes, I heard him say that. Next question.

WESTERN REGION - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/2) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, as regards the shortage in the domestic water supply which prevailed especially in the western Region in December last, whether he would –

- (a) explain to the House the measures he took to face the situation;
- (b) say what were the private suppliers involved in the distribution of water and the mode of selection for same, and
- (c) table the operational cost for such activity, giving a breakdown of the sum payable to each supplier and the cost of participation of government vehicles in the operation.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the shortage in the domestic water supply which prevailed in the Southern and Western region in December last, my Commission has taken several measures to tackle the situation. These are amongst others –

- (i) the exclusive use of the water from Mont Lubin borehole to be distributed to the Southern/Western Region;
- (ii) the re-scheduling of water supply from Petit Brulée reservoir to feed Quatre Vents reservoir;
- (iii) the treatment of water from Reposoir dam to meet the demand of the neighbouring houses, and
- (iv) the hiring of private water tankers to supply water to those areas.

As regards part (b) of the question, a quotation was launched amongst five holders of water tankers namely;

- (1) Mr Marcel ALLAS

- (2) Mr Mario GUILLAUME
- (3) Mr Jocelyn ROUSSETY
- (4) Mrs Marie Louise Loule LAMVOHEE
- (5) Mr Benjamin REMY

The tenderers were requested to submit the capacity and number of their water tanks as well as the number of trips that they will be able to supply before the 31st December 2004. On the closing date, four (4) offers were received and on the basis of the prices quoted, the ranking of the offers were as follows –

- (1) Mrs M.L.L. LAMVOHEE - Rs 1000 for a capacity of 7.7m³ (1 vehicle)
- (2) Mr Jocelyn ROUSSETY - Rs 1000 for a capacity of 7m³ (3 vehicles)
- (3) Mr Mario GUILLAUME Rs - Rs 1000 for a capacity of 6m³ (1 vehicle)
- (4) Mr Marcel ALLAS - Rs 1200 per tank of 7m³

Please note that Mr. Benjamin REMY did not submit any offer

As regards part © of the question, Mr Jocelyn ROUSSETY has carried out a total of 63 trips whereas Mrs LAMVOHEE has carried out a total of 25 trips. The government tankers have carried out a total of 65 trips during the same period starting on the 25th December 2004 up to 31st December 2004.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I understand that the Deputy Chief Commissioner did not reply to part (c) of my question. I asked him to table the costs, but he mentioned only about the trips and not the cost.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, what is your question?

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, on page 2 of the order paper, there is part (c) of the question which has not been answered.

Mr Chairperson: Yes

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the member asked me to table the operation costs of such activities which I have already answered. It is too simple; it is Rs1000 per lorry and Mr Jocelyn Roussety and Mrs Lamvohee were awarded the contract. Mr Jocelyn Roussety has carried out a total of 63 trips for a sum of Rs63,000 and Mrs Lamvohee has carried a total of 25 trips for a total of Rs25,000.

As far as the cost incurred by Government is concerned, I cannot give the costing now because the overtime of drivers has to be tabled before I can give the sum spent by the Government.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there were 63 trips by one supplier and 25 trips by another supplier. How was the delivery of this water checked to see that effectively there has been delivery before payment?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a Water Unit Office at La Ferme and there is an Inspector responsible for this sector. The distribution of water in that region by these private water tankers was supervised by the Inspector, the Valve Operator and Gangman involved in that region.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I see that there are 25 trips for Mrs Lamvohee. Can the Commissioner tell us how many trips were supposed to be done by Mrs Lamvohee and Mr A. L. Roussety according to tender documents? And have they fulfilled the terms and conditions of this tender?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of trips in the original document was not specified. The tenderers, as I have stated in my answer, were asked to submit the number of water tanks as well as the number of trips that they would be able to supply before the 31 December 2004. I have already answered that part of the question.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner say how was the distribution decided? Has there been a

selection of households to which each supplier had to supply water prior to the distribution?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in some villages of that region water had already been distributed by normal pipes distribution and Government water tankers. But there were some villages that have not been able to have water during the end of year period. I have taken the policy decision for my Commission to hire private water tankers to supply water to some of the villages, not all. We have made an effort to supply water to the people of these regions. But I have to inform the House that in the exercise, we have not been able to touch all the inhabitants in that specific region on that specific time, that is, from 25th December to 31st December 2004. But in January all the villages, I think, have been supplied with a reasonable amount of water.

Mr Chairperson: We have got 32 questions today on the order paper for three hours and we have exhausted nearly 25 minutes for 2 questions. I will not limit the number of supplementary questions, but this is a guideline. At any time if I feel that there are too many supplementary questions as far as a question which has been given notice is concerned, I will stop the member and not allow any more questions on the matter. Yes, last question.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the reply of the Deputy Chief Commissioner speaks for itself. He said he thinks that all the regions have been supplied with water. But I can assure him that after December 2004 the same situation prevailed in all the affected regions. Why did he continue with his policy to provide these affected regions with the same facility, especially when he knows that not all the inhabitants have been able to be provided with water?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the policy decision taken was to provide an adequate amount of water to a maximum number of inhabitants in that specific region for the end-of-year period. We know that at the end of year we have Christmas and the New Year. We have made an effort to provide an adequate amount of water to a maximum number of inhabitants and this, I think, has been welcomed by the inhabitants. But, my Commission is making efforts as far as water development is concerned so that in the near future we depend less on these short-terms measures.

Mr Chairperson: Last question.

Mr Grandcourt: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner talks about the treatment of water from the Reposoir dam. Can he tell us when it was done and whether it is still being done right now.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the treatment of water from the Reposoir dam was done during the week of 25th December to 31st December. We had thought it necessary to treat water from the Reposoir dam because we have commissioned two mobile water treatment plants. As I have said on the radio, we will continue with this exercise in other spots where water is available. For the time being this exercise will be carried out at Manges and at the Reposoir dam. We are able to monitor this water problem because it is raining for the time being. As there is a shortage of water in these regions, we will continue with this exercise.

Mr Chairperson: A last one.

Mr Grandcourt: The very last, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he feels that it is safe to treat stagnant water which has been there for one year. The water has remained in that dam for one year and then last week it has been decided to treat this water. I would like to ask him whether it is safe and then whether there has been any protest from the inhabitants.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, at the level of my Commission, we have not got any complaints concerning the quality of water. Furthermore, I should like to inform the member that this dam gets its water from a source from roseaux bush. If water comes to a dam from a source, therefore the water is not stagnant.

Mr Chairperson: Next question?

LORRIES – WASTE TRANSPORTATION

(No. B/3) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner, as regards the carrying of waste from the different localities to the Roche Bon Dieu dumping site, whether –

- (a) the lorries satisfy the required norms;
 - (b) the workers dealing with the collecting of waste are provided with the necessary protective equipment, and
- (9) these workers have regular medical check-ups.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, vehicles transporting wastes should normally possess a Waste Carrier Licence issued under the Local Government (Dumping and Waste Carriers) Regulations 2003 by the Ministry of Local Government. Presently, there are 8 privately owned vehicles which have been issued with such a licence and are involved in the daily transport of wastes in Rodrigues.

In addition, two Government vehicles attached at the Environment Unit are also involved in waste transportation. All the vehicles meet the required norms and are closely monitored by Enforcement Officers of the Environment Unit and the Police de l'Environnement to ensure compliance in this respect.

Concerning part (b), the workers of both the private contractor and the Government Service involved in waste collection are provided with overall clothes, gloves, masks and boots which serve as protection. This is a condition of the contract for the private Contractor to comply with.

As for part ©, the workers at the Environment Unit involved in the transport of waste undergo medical check-up on a regular basis (once yearly). The last medical check-up was undertaken in September 2004 and all the workers were found medically fit. As regards the workers of La Voirie Ltée, I am informed that the Contractor has already made medical check up arrangement for once every year with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for his employees. Some of the workers have already undergone the medical examination and others are actually on appointment. It should be noted that the Contractor should abide by occupational Safety and Health regulations as per the conditions of the contract.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, can the Chief Commissioner tell us what are the norms that these lorries should satisfy before carrying waste?

The Chief Commissioner: I will give the additional information concerning norms –

- (i) The lorry basket caisson forwards carriers should not be less than 150 cm high raised with metal sheets.
- (ii) For vehicles carrying bulky waste, green waste and all other waste except constructions, demolition and hazardous waste, a proper device to contain leachate to be provided at the bottom of the vehicle's basket.
- (iii) The vehicles should preferably be a tipper vehicle lorry.
- (iii) The vehicle should be provided with a proper tarpaulin to cover the waste during conveyance and transit.
- (iv) The vehicles should be registered with NTA as a private B or a public A carrier.

Mr Jabeemissar : M. le président, le Chef Commissaire a dit que les travailleurs ont les équipements nécessaires lors du ramassage d'ordures. Or j'ai souvent vu que certains camions transportant les déchets ne sont pas couverts. Il a aussi dit que les travailleurs sont pourvus de masques, mais tel n'est pas le cas. On n'a jamais vu ces travailleurs portant des masques soit lorsqu'ils sont sur les camions ou lorsqu'ils ramassent les ordures. Je voudrais lui demander qui s'en occupe au niveau de sa Commission et pourquoi jusqu'ici rien n'a été fait pour obliger ces travailleurs de se protéger convenablement lorsqu'ils font ce travail.

The Chief Commissioner : M. le président, ce que le membre de l'autre côté souligne est exact. On donne des bottes, des gants et même des masques à ces travailleurs. Très souvent on reproche aux autorités qu'elles ne donnent pas ces équipements. Les autorités rappellent à ces personnes de porter les équipements qu'on leur donne, mais ils ne les portent pas ; c'est cela le gros problème. La dernière fois nous avons demandé aux Enforcement Officers de faire des rapports sur ces personnes parce qu'il y a une question de santé.

Quant aux camions qui n'ont pas de préart, les Enforcement Officers doivent faire savoir aux contracteurs qu'ils doivent transporter les déchets d'après les normes. Je remercie le membre d'avoir soulevé cette question ; je l'ai moi-même soulevée à plusieurs reprises. Dans des réunions j'ai dit

qu'il faut insister à ce que ces personnes portent les équipements qu'on leur donne. Que font-ils avec les bottes, les gants et les masques ? Cette question a été soulevée ici, on va doubler les instructions auprès des officiers de l'environnement ; les travailleurs qui n'obéissent pas doivent être rapportés et ils vont devoir répondre. Il faut qu'ils portent les équipements qui sont à leur disposition.

Mr Chairperson : Last question.

Mr Grandcourt : M. le président, je pense que la question n'est pas de parler aux travailleurs ; je pense que la question doit être adressée aux contracteurs. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether any enforcement notice has been provided to the contractor concerning these employees not wearing boots and so on.

The Chief Commissioner: I was replying to the question in respect of government vehicles, not for the private vehicles. I shall find out whether any notices have been delivered to the contractor of the private sector.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

Mr Jabeemissar: Mr Chairperson, Sir, a last supplementary question on that issue. The Chief Commissioner has talked about the norms for the carrying of waste. Can he tell us about the norms for the workers? Very often we cannot make the difference between the waste and the workers.

The Chief Commissioner: As far as the government lorry is concerned, there are some modifications so that the workers can sit in front. But they don't sit in it. We will see whether a sort of trailer can be provided. We will see whether the other lorries have been modified so that the workers can sit in front and not in the *caisson*. We have this at Rodnix, at the CEB. These are the norms now that the workers' seats should be separated from the goods or from the waste.

Mr Chairperson: Next question please?

Mr Jabeemissar: With your permission I would like to reply to his answer because ...

Mr Chairperson: You can't reply. It is question time, you can put questions.

Mr Jabeemissar: Yes, can I put a question following the reply given by the Chief Commissioner?

Mr Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Jabeemissar: The contractors have already agreed to regulations as far as the norms are concerned. New regulations should be brought for them to abide by, but this will take time because here we are concerned with the health of all these workers. So, will the Chief Commissioner take this as a matter of urgency?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the legislation is there, but we are working on regulations concerning waste carrier licence. The regulations for the norms are already there, that's why we are applying the norms.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, are there tractors with a *caisson* being used or being registered in government as waste carriers? And if yes, can the Chief Commissioner confirm whether the workers travel with the uncovered waste without any protection?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of the question as to whether government vehicles with waste carrier licences need to have this. We have a tractor and a trailer, we know that the workers stand on the trailer, and this is not according to the norms. But we have made modifications to the first one and we are trying to make modifications to the other one. But the problem is that we need another lorry instead of a tractor and a trailer. I don't know whether the actual trailer can be modified. So, we are going to see whether it can abide by the norms.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: No more question, please. Next question. The Second Region Member for La Ferme.

TSUNAMI – REGIONS AFFECTED, GEOLOGICAL/SEISMIC STUDY, ETC.

(No. B/4) Mr G. Jabeemissar (The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner, as regards the Tsunami which affected our Island recently, whether he would state –

- (a) which parts of the Island were affected and table a list of all damages caused;
- (b) what compensations, if any, will be given to the victims;
- (c) if any geological or seismic study has ever been conducted on Rodrigues, and if yes, table same, and
- (d) the effect of such a natural even on our economy and the preventive measures taken to face such a situation in the future.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the tsunami which affected Rodrigues on the 26th December 2004 resulted from an earthquake that took place around 05.00 a.m to the west of Sumatra Island near Indonesia. It was only three to four hours later that long waves travelling at a very high speed reached the coast of Rodrigues and Mauritius.

The phenomenon was observed in Rodrigues around 11.00 a.m where there were high speed waves of up to 3m and water flowing in and out of the bays of the northern part of the island including Baie aux Huîtres, Anse aux Anglais, Port Mathurin. Graviers also was affected by the waves. The damages caused were as follows –

- Twenty fishing boats around the island were damaged. Details are being tabled.
- The coastal roads at Anse aux Anglais, Baie aux Huîtres and Port Mathurin were inundated and vehicles' movement was disrupted.
- Some houses and commercial centres in Port Mathurin and Anse aux Anglais were inundated.
- The ground floor and yard of the Rodrigues Administration, the Police Headquarters at Camp du Roi and several « habitations » at Port Mathurin were inundated.
- All the dispensing pumps at the Port Mathurin Filling Station were damaged by sea water.

- The tide gauge situated in the Port premises was completely damaged.
- Some fibreglass water tanks from the boatyard at Pointe Monier were transported to the lagoon.
- The tidal waves have also caused the deposition of algae, solid objects and other debris on several places on the coasts.
- The Diego Rodriguez at the Fisheries Research and Training Unit was damaged.

With regard to part (b), Mr Chairperson Sir, the Executive Council during its meeting held on 05 January 2005 has taken the decision to compensate for the repair of the twenty fishing boats that have been damaged during the Tsunami.

With regard to part (c) to my knowledge, there are no geological or seismic studies carried out in Rodrigues so far.

As for part (d), fortunately, the Tsunami effects have not been so devastative for Rodrigues.

The Fisheries Research and Training Unit with the collaboration of the Rodrigues Underwater Group and Shoals have been requested to undertake a survey to determine any effect on our coral reefs system especially in the northern part.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards preventive measures to face Tsunami, one should recognize that our reefs systems have played a very important protective role. The Executive Council has already decided to undertake a study on our coastal drainage system, especially in Port Mathurin, Baie aux Huîtres and Grand Baie to avoid flooding of these areas. We have also decided not to grant leases on the coastal frontage around the island for construction purposes including hotels.

Moreover, the international community has agreed during the SIDS Conference, held in Mauritius recently, on the need to set up a Global Disaster Early Warning System with a view to reducing the impact of natural disasters including Tsunamis.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the aftermath of the tsunami, one expert in the newspaper “Week End” emphasised that there is a risk of a major earthquake arising out in the sea only three hundred kilometres from Rodrigues, in the eastern part of Rodrigues. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he will undertake, together with central government, to give serious consideration to this potential risk.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been invited by the Prime Minister after the tsunami to participate in a meeting, and it has been decided that a Technical Committee will be set up, of which I am a member. And this technical Committee is going to look into all the aspects of the disaster, whether Tsunamis, earthquakes, everything that can cause a disaster to our island. The Technical Committee is going to decide on the studies to be undertaken, what information it can have from the different countries which have accepted to set up an information and warning system here in the Indian Ocean. I think this is a good thing that I am a member of this Committee; I read the article in the newspaper “Week End”. I think what the expert said concerning the question of three hundred kilometres from Rodrigues has to be studied. He said it can be an earthquake or a sea water earthquake; and I think that this Committee is going to meet in a few days time. I am going to meet the Prime Minister this week; we will talk about the tsunami and also about our budget here. I think the setting up of this Committee will help us here in Rodrigues.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the earthquake occurred on 26 December 2004 at 5.00 a.m. It was broadcast worldwilde on CNN, on the internet but the first tidal wave hit us here at about 11.30 a.m, that is, about five hours later. I was on the quay at that time; boat owners were having difficulty with their boats. Being given that it was broadcast on the CNN and it was on the internet – they knew that it was going to come – why is it that no measures were taken, no announcement was made on the MBC radio, which is the national radio, to tell people that a tsunami was coming that they should take their precaution and that there was a risk of a disaster? Mr Chairperson, Sir, fortunately, “Mauritius Pride” or the “Trochetia” ship was not at quay, otherwise, we would have had a major disaster. I would

like to know why no announcement/warning was given, despite the fact the tsunami occurred five hours before it reached Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner : M. le président, ce que le *Leader* de la Minorité est en train de dire, cela a été dit dans ce comité à Maurice. Personne, même la météo à l'île Maurice, ne savait pas ce qui allait se passer. Tout le monde a pris connaissance du tsunami à travers le CNN. Les autres pays de la région aussi ne savaient pas. Comment avertir les gens ? Mais quand on a su, j'ai été personnellement à la MBC pour leur dire d'émettre une annonce pour dire aux gens de ne pas circuler dans Port Mathurin, de ne pas être au bord de la mer, de ramasser leurs bateaux. Il n'y a aucun système dans l'Océan Indien. Dans le Pacifique il y a un système ; cela a été dit au SIDS – le *Minority Leader* était au SIDS – que dans le Pacifique, le Japon et l'Australie en ont. L'Australie, les Etats Unis et les autres pays ont proposé que ce centre d'observation, the Early Warning Global Disaster System, soit introduit ; ce système coûte beaucoup d'argent.

Même à Maurice ils ont appris cela par le CNN. Alors il ne faut pas venir nous accuser. Tout le monde n'est pas obligé de regarder le CNN...

(Interruptions)

Il ne faut pas venir dire des choses dont on n'a pas les possibilités. Même Maurice n'avait pas cette possibilité de savoir ce qui allait venir. Le Premier ministre, à un certain moment, n'était pas content, mais après les explications, il a compris la situation et c'est pourquoi on a mis ce comité technique en place. Cette annonce a été diffusée à la radio, publiée dans tous les journaux pour justement étudier comment être averti avant un tsunami ou tout autre catastrophe. Et c'est ce que ce comité technique et tous les autres pays voudraient aider installer dans l'Océan Indien.

Mr J. Roussety : M. le président un danger potentiel existe, le Chef Commissaire dans l'île Rodrigues autonome continue à se fier au comité technique qui se trouve à Maurice. La météo de Rodrigues comme si ne doit rien savoir ; on doit se fier à la météo de Maurice dans l'île Rodrigues autonome. Est-ce que vous savez, M. le président, qu'actuellement l'activité sismique dans le bassin de l'Océan Indien est très active ? Around the Nicobar Island, at present, there are daily movements of tectonic plates causing major movements of underground water and under the water earthquakes. There is a saying which says "think globally, act locally". It is difficult to know, of course. But suppose we have one tidal wave which hits

Rodrigues now, is there a protocol of action? Is there a protocol of warning which has been established by the regional Government to cater for this emergency, to ask the MBC of Rodrigues to immediately give warnings to tell people not to go out at sea, to be careful? A number of months have elapsed. What is being done at our level here to establish a protocol of warning? Even at our level, we don't have a technology to know what is happening.

Do you know Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the US Geological Survey sends e-mail to whoever wants within minutes that an earthquake or a tsunami is coming? What about giving the meteo the possibility of checking these? So, I would like to know whether there is a protocol. The big countries are here to help; we have the technology today. What is the protocol which has been established? For example, Mr Chairperson, Sir, one protocol could be established to ask the meteo to check on an hourly basis what is the state around us on the different official sites which give information on earthquakes, etc. What protocol has been established ?

The Chief Commissioner : M. le président, si nous voulons être indépendents en ce qui concerne la météo, il nous faudrait investir des millions de roupies. La météo centrale de Maurice n'a même pas cette possibilité dont nous sommes en train de parler. Et c'est pourquoi, c'est à partir de ce centre d'information dans l'océan Indien, qu'on peut avoir les informations. Je ne suis pas prêt à dire comment ici nous allons mettre en place un protocole pour savoir, indépendamment de Maurice, un type d'information. Même la météo de Rodrigues reçoit des informations provenant de Maurice, car Maurice a tous les équipements qu'il faut. Ces informations de Maurice sont transmises ici ; c'est ce qui a été fait pendant le tsunami. C'est ainsi qu'on a été mis au courant et la MBC a diffusé des annonces. M. le president, pourquoi investir des millions alors que Maurice a les équipements qu'il faut – nous sommes dans la même république de l'Océan Indien – et que dans un clin d'oeil ils peuvent *liaise* avec nous ? Je dis tout simplement que Maurice a toutes les facilités requises et les informations sont transmises ici ; c'est tout a fait normal.

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

Mr Chairperson: One minute, please. I have been very flexible about this last question, but I have to remind all members that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has responsibility for meteorology as far as only administration is concerned but not policy wise. So this is the first thing I have to point out. The second point is that, we have spent one hour and the

fourth question is not yet over. If we proceed at this speed, we will exhaust only twelve questions over thirty two. I understand that the first member for Local Region Member No. 2 is not very appreciative of this idea. But you should remember and consider that the Member whose question appears on the Order paper as a last question has the same right to have his question answered in this Assembly as the Member who's got his question numbered 1. So, I have in a sort of way an invidious task to do. I would have to manage the time of the Assembly. Yes, a last question, Minority Leader.

Mr J. Roussety : M. le président, le Chef Commissaire semble avoir la mémoire courte. Après le cyclone Kalundé, nous avons été coupés de Maurice pendant des jours. Now the Chief Commissioner wants information to go to Mauritius then to come back to us! If there is a major disaster, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask him how Mauritius is going to communicate the information to us if the network is down. What I am saying, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is not to invest in buoys in the sea; we should invest millions of rupees in seismic detection materials. There should be a protocol between the Commissioner's office, the MBC, the emergency services when there is a first wave or something like that hitting Rodrigues. We don't need millions of rupees for that. He said *boucoup ti dimounes dans beaucoup ti l'endroit capave faire beacoup grand kichose*. This is what I am telling him.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, on vient maintenant sur le cyclone. Pour le cyclone on a tout les moyens ; on peut même savoir la vitesse du vent et ainsi de suite, et on est équipé pour cela. Mais pour le tsunami, sommes-nous équipés ? Non, il ne faut pas sortir du tsunami qui n'existe pas dans l'Océan Indien au niveau de l'observation et aller au cyclone.

(Interruptions)

Alors qu'est-ce que c'est que cette histoire là ? Le gouvernement a tous les moyens pour prévenir la population en ce qui concerne les cyclones. Même s'il n'y a pas de communication de Maurice, ici on peut faire des observations avec le générateur. En ce qui concerne le tsunami, beaucoup de pays n'ont pas de centres d'observation. Alors, M. le président, il ne faut pas sortir de quelque chose qui n'existe pas, dont on n'a pas les moyens. Pour les cyclones on a tous les moyens ; on a la Météo et le satellite. Donc, les investissements par rapport aux cyclones sont différents de ceux des tsunamis.

Mr Chairperson: Let us move to the next question? Yes, the First Local Region Member for La Ferme.

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY/BODIES – MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

(No. B/5) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner, whether, with regard to the memoranda of understanding signed by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly with other bodies, he could give details of the number, the dates thereof and the names of the partners/bodies with whom same have been signed since November 2002.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, up to now, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has signed three Memoranda of Understanding as follows –

- (a) a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between my office and the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation on 10 December 2003 to coordinate and integrate the activities of Government and Non-Government Organisations for mutual benefits in achieving conservation objectives;
- (b) The Commission for Education, Employment, Information Technology and Telecommunications, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings, Postal Services and Vocational Training has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Industrial and Vocational Training Board on 06 February 2004. The objective of this Memorandum of Understanding with the Industrial and Vocational Training Board is to promote development and co-operation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit and to define by mutual consent the areas of co-operation according to the needs, interests and experience of the Industrial and Vocational Training Board and to share such knowledge and experience. The potential areas of co-operation include -
 - (i) running of the IVTB Training Centre at Le Chou,
 - (ii) management of the National Apprenticeship Scheme in Rodrigues,

- (iii) conduct of Training Needs Analysis for Industry in Rodrigues,
- (iv) conduct of other Training Programmes which will be of national interest.

(c) a second Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Commission for Education, Employment, Information Technology and Telecommunications, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings, Postal Services and Vocational Training and the Mauritius Institute of Education on 07 September 2004 with the objective of providing training for teachers at the pre-primary, primary and secondary levels and all decision will be mutually agreed upon.

I am tabling copies of the three Memoranda of Understanding for the information of the Assembly.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, discussions are also ongoing for the signature of Memoranda of Understanding between the relevant Commission of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Central Electricity Board, the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Organisation, the National Transport Authority, the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, the University of Mauritius, the “*Institut Supérieur de Technologie*”, the National Handicraft Promotion Agency and the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture for mutual collaboration in respect of the responsibilities of these organisations in Rodrigues.

Mr Grandcourt: I remember I asked a question last time and we were supposed to have a Memorandum of Understanding signed between the RRA and the Ports Authority according to the Ports Act. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner why is it that that Memorandum of Understanding has not been signed yet? We pointed out last time that there are things illegal happening in the Port here. The workers are Government workers whereas the equipment, vehicles belong to the Ports Authority. I would like to ask him why is it that this agreement has not even been mentioned in his answer.

The Chief Commissioner: I think there is an omission in the list. The Ports Authority is working on the Memorandum of Understanding.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, next question.

**REDCO COLLEGES – PRE-VOCATIONAL STUDENTS –
ADMISSION (2005)**

(No. B/6) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education, whether, with regard to the admission of pre-vocational students this year in REDCO Colleges, he could give details –

- (a) of the number of students admitted in each college;
- (b) the number of classes existing in each college for these first-year students?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that in January 2005, 197 first year prevocational students were admitted to eight different classes located at the five secondary schools as follows –

		No. of Students	No. of Classes
(i)	Rodrigues College	24	1
(ii)	Le Chou College	50	2
(iii)	Mont Lubin College	27	1
(iv)	Grande Montagne College	24	1
(v)	Marechal College	72	3

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Education stated in his answer that there are three classes at Maréchal College with 72 students. Can he explain why there are so many students at Marechal College?

Mr A. L. Roussety: The optimum number of students in a class is 25, but this may be exceeded by one or two as in the case of Mont Lubin. Marechal College has 72 students for 3 classes. We divide this by 3, we have, I believe, 24 per class which is within the optimum number.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally we have 3 pre-vocational classes at Marechal. According to the PSSA rules and regulations, there should be 2 classes. When you have 2 classes in Form I, there should be 1 class of pre-vocational, that is, a ratio 2:1. But now at Marechal College, you have 4 classes in Form I, with 3 pre-vocational classes, which does not make the ratio 2:1. I would like to ask the Commissioner for Education whether he is aware that he is infringing the rules and regulations of the PSSA.

Mr A. L. Roussety: I take notice of the question and I will say that because the number of classrooms at Marechal College are available to take in the students and in the other REDCO Colleges classrooms are at a premium. And it is good to understand that otherwise children would have integrated a college which is nearer to their place of residence.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

MONT LUBIN COLLEGE – STUDENTS, STAFF, ETC

(No. B/7) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education, as regards the Mont Lubin College, whether the Commissioner can state –

- (a) when the college became operational;
- (b) the number of students and staff presently at the college;
- (c) whether the college was properly equipped with all necessary facilities such as Library, Laboratory, furniture and office equipment.

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform this Assembly that Mont Lubin College started its operation on the premises of Le Chou College in January, 2003. However, the New Complex of Mont Lubin College at Mont Lubin became operational in April, 2004.

To date the college accommodates 425 students as follows:

- (i) Mainstream - 360
- (ii) Prevocational - 65

The College has a staff of 23, excluding three cleaners employed by Alpha Cleaning, as follows –

- 1 Principal;
- 15 Normal Stream teachers;
- 3 Prevocational teachers;
- 1 College Clerk;
- 1 Word Processing Operator, and
- 2 Attendants.

Mr Chairperson Sir, in my reply to part © I would state that the construction of the Mont Lubin College, similar to other colleges of REDCO, has been generally financed and monitored by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of the Public Infrastructure, Land Transport respectively. As from Rodrigues accession to autonomy, a Capital Budget is voted for the construction, renovation and extension of the five REDCO Colleges and most of the funds earmarked are swallowed up by the capital projects, thus leaving my Commission with limited financial resources. Outstanding payments are also borne by my Commission.

In spite of the prevailing situation, the Mont Lubin College is presently equipped with a minimum amount of furniture and equipment to enable the college to carry out its basic activities. Neither the library nor the laboratory are yet operational as fixed furniture are still being dealt with by the contractor. I will add that the furniture on the awarding of contract has got to be inspected by the MPI in Mauritius and awarded a certificate before it can be put in place. However, my Commission has already awarded tenders for the supply of 200 chairs and desks for the students and shipment of same is expected by the end of February 2005.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Mont Lubin College was opened at Le Chou in January 2003. It was opened at Mont Lubin on its site

in April 2004, before the budget for this year; and no provision was made for library, laboratory, furniture, computers, cookery room, etc. Can I ask the Commissioner for Education, who is an educator, Mr Chairperson, Sir, how is it that students at secondary level, under his responsibility, are being educated without laboratory, without library, without cookery room, without appropriate furniture? What kind of education is being dispensed at this College?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a well-known fact that the contractor was late in carrying out the building for commissioning. They were about fifteen months behind before the children integrated Mont Lubin in April 2004. I will also add that it is only on the insistence of the Ministry of Education that the children had to integrate part of the buildings that were certified as fit for occupation.

(Interruptions)

Zotte en retard fine enan la pluie, fine enan mauvais temps. You have got to understand, they were late in completing the building. As far as fixed furniture is concerned, the contract was awarded by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure in Mauritius to Capricorn Ltd in Mauritius.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, Order!

Mr A. L. Roussety: It is not our responsibility, it has not been vested in us, it comes out from our budget but the responsibility lies with the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

(Interruptions)

Qui role, mais zotte conné qui role la été ! For fixed furniture, the date of start was 16th of April 2004 and the completion was set for the 15th of September, 2004; and they are still late. I am informed that the the number of bookcases are already in the library at Mont Lubin.

(Interruptions)

The bookcases are there; books are on the table and that class libraries are being successfully operated. As for the other parts of the fixed furniture, some parts have arrived, certified by MPI as conforming to the norms. As for the laboratory, the fixed furniture has got to be installed before the contractor, Edison Services, can start doing its work for the installation of fittings in the lab.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Education talked about the contract being awarded to a company. Can we know to which company, first of all, the contract has been awarded, for the fixed furniture? He has said that there is late delivery of this furniture, has there been any letter from his Commission being sent to the company concerned and, if yes, can he table one of these letters?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the contractor is not our customer. Capricorn Ltd. For fixed furniture has to do with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. They are not answerable to us directly. And I mentioned earlier that Capricorn Ltd. For fixed furniture, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and Edison Services for equipping and installing all fittings in the Lab.

Mr Chairperson: Last question, yes.

Mr J. Roussety: Would the Commissioner confirm that the fact that there is no Library, no laboratory, everything there seems to be up to the standards except the building, does not concern his Commission? *Est-ce que tous ces problèmes, d'après ce qu'il a dit, ne concernent aucunement sa Commission ?*

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I said that it is a very rash statement to make to say that it is not the concern of my Commission. It is indeed the concern of my Commission. But the Minority Leader has got to be aware that in many cases I am rendered powerless for taking a direct action. It is true that we act as facilitator and mediator. We do everything in our power to hasten things along and I would say that the last site visit with the Ministry for Public Infrastructure from Mauritius was carried out on the 12 January 2005. And the same Ministry issued a certificate to Capricorn for fixed furniture on the 30 January 2005 for a sum of Rs1.1 m. But it has got to be understood, that even though we act as facilitators, we attend the meetings, but the thing is, that it is the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure that deal directly with the

contractors, in spite of the fact that the money comes from the budget of the Commission for Education.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, what is the impact, the incidence of all these problems on the academic programme, on the education of those children being educated there?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am as concerned as the Minority Leader as a member of the teaching fraternity concerning those children. But I can assure him that some kind of skeleton service – I said that earlier on but I'll use a different word this time – being provided as far as library service is concerned. And I will also add that inquiries are being made whereby we will follow arrangements for the children concerned who are studying Science to be conveyed to Le Chou College for laboratory practices. Everything humanly possible is being done. So you can't sit and demand that we move heaven and earth to do what doesn't lie in our hands.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

BAIE AUX HUITRES/ACCACIA – RECLAIMED AREA

(No. B/8) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (The First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner, whether he would provide explanations as to why the reclaimed area at Baie aux Huitres/Accacia is being cleared and the intended use to be made of these lands.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the reclaimed land at Oyster Bay/Accacia has been parcelled to accommodate small industries. The Cadastral Unit, in conjunction with my Commission, is clearing the area along which the road alignment will fall to enable the different promoters who are local small entrepreneurs to have access to their sites. Moreover, an area of about 2 acres is being cleared to accommodate the different workshops of the Public Infrastructure.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a workshop of the Public Infrastructure in Port Mathurin on the ex football ground, what we call the marine. Is what is being planned at Baie aux Huitres, an extension of what is there or will the unit which is there be transferred to Baie aux Huitres?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the answer, it is not the Mechanical Workshop that has been specified. It is Public Infrastructure workshop but for the time being it will deal with workshop storing items of the Commission of Public Infrastructure. In a second phase, perhaps we will come with the transferring of the whole Mechanical Workshop to the site at Baie aux Huitres.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, why is the Commissioner contemplating to transfer an established workshop operating efficiently, I believe, from Port Mathurin – there is a big building there – to Oyster Bay? What will happen to the place where the workshop is situated now? What will happen to that place? What will be the use? Why is the need to transfer Mechanical Workshop to Baie aux Huitres? What alternative use will be made of the building which exists there, of the land of the site?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, at my Commission, we have taken the decision to assemble all the services, Mechanical Workshop and other services, on the reclaimed land at Accacia/Baie aux Huitres to provide a better customer service. As we all know, there is a lack of space in Port Mathurin; and we are opting for a decentralized service, a more customer-oriented service. As for the alternate use of the site after the transfer of the Mechanical Workshop to Accacia/Baie aux Huitres reclaimed land, this falls under the purview of Commission for Land.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware of the fact that the Chief Commissioner stated, at the inaugural ceremony of the new plant of the CEB, at the end of last year, that after the transfer of the Mechanical Workshop to Oyster Bay, the site will be given to Rodnix? Is he aware of this fact?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. But we will not use all the space at Baie aux Huitres/Accacia. There will be space to cater for the relocation of Rodnix; not all the space will be used to cater for the relocation of the Mechanical Workshop. The space there is not only 2 acres, it is more than 2 acres.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I don't know how these people from the other side of the House feel.

Mr Chairperson: You should address them as Members, please.

Mr J. Roussety: They are people first of all.

Mr Chairperson: No, in the House, you should address as Members.

Mr J. Roussety: My problem is with the government site which exists now, on which investment has been made and which is working properly. Est-ce-qu'ils vont démanteler le Mechanical Workshop pour l'envoyer a Baie aux Huitres et pour donner le site à Rodnix ? Dans ce cas là, ils confirment qu'ils sont en train de vendre les biens de l'Etat. Pourquoi, M. le président, le conseil exécutif, le Chef commissaire et son commissaire responsable des infrastructures publiques doivent démanteler une unité du gouvernement qui fonctionne, qui est accessible, qui est établie pour la transférer, ainsi engager d'autres coûts, dépenser l'argent du gouvernement, de l'Etat pour ensuite donner le site qui est libre à un promoteur privé ? Quelle est la raison derrière tout cela ? Alors que le promoteur privé est établi à Pointe L'herbe et fonctionne convenablement. Qu'est ce que c'est que ces arrangements-là ? C'est louche, M. le president ! Pourquoi est-on en en train de dilapider les biens du government ? Pourquoi donne-t-on cela à des compagnies privées, des capitaux externes ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are a Regional Government; I have a Commission and I have taken the policy decision to relocate the services under my Commission on the reclaimed part at Accacia/Baie aux Huitres. If the Minority Leader wants to know what will be the use of the site left by the Mechanical Workshop, he should come with a substantive question to the Chief Commissioner who is responsible for land. We have our priorities, we have our policies and we decide in line with our policies to give a direct customer service to the population.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question was about reclaimed land at Accacia. The Commissioner mentioned that he would transfer the Mechanical Workshop there. Objectively we must ask what would happen to the site there. This is in the light of his answer. Why is he saying *qu'on ne peut pas lui poser des question?* Il a déclaré que le site sera transféré, donc on lui demande ce qu'il va faire du site et il doit le dire ici ; il ne l'a pas dit encore.

The Deputy Chief Commissionr: He should have mentioned it in his question.

Mr J. Roussety: How would I mention it when he mentioned it in his answer? Mr Chairperson, Sir, how silly can he be?

Mr Chairperson: This word is not parliamentary. Order, please!

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

Mr Chairperson: No, no, this word is not warranted.

Mr J. Roussety: This is not parliamentary, why? Open your Erskine May and see. Give it to me, I will tell you.

Mr Chairperson: What?

Mr J. Roussety: Give your Erskine May to me, I will show you, why I can say silly. He is silly in his answer.

Mr Chairperson: You have to mention?

Mr J. Roussety: Give me your Erskine May, I will show you.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, you cannot say a person is silly because it is a personal...

Mr J. Roussety: In his answer.

Mr Chairperson: You have to specify?

Mr J. Roussety: The Commissioner is silly in his answer. This is what I said. He is a silly Commissioner? Not as person as a Commissioner, as public office. Open your Erskine May and see it, give it to me.

Mr Chairperson: You are not going to teach me what.....

Mr J. Roussety: I am not going to teach you anything.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, take your seat, please. You can't comment on the conduct and character of a Commissioner. As far as his office is concerned, this is alright, you can say so. He is an incompetent Commissioner, but you cannot say a Commissioner is silly, you have to qualify what is silly. This is my ruling. Yes, you had a question.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, my question is: will he confirm that Rodnix Ltd. Will come on that site which is being freed by the Mechanical Workshop?

Mr Chairperson: Yes, please wait. This question is not allowed on the ground that it is far, I can say it, from the main question. The purpose of supplementary questions, I understand, is clear. You can put supplementary questions for the further elucidation of the information requested in the main question. I do understand that the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned the transfer and what will be the use of the previous premises. But this in no way opens the door to a lot of exhaustive supplementary questions. The fact that I ruled that this question is not allowed does not mean that it cannot be discussed in this Assembly. Of course, if you give notice of it, then the Commissioner will have to answer.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the site is being cleared. This site falls under the purview of the Public Infrastructure Commission. They are proposing to transfer the Mechanical Workshop to the reclaimed land. O.k. this is policy decision. But what will happen to that site? Will it the building be closed, demolished? Or will it be used for another government service, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

Mr Chairperson: I just ruled that this is not allowed. Deputy Chief Commissioner, if you do have information, of course, it will be for the benefit of the House.

(Interruptions)

The question is not allowed. But there is a difference, if the Deputy Chief Commissioner has information, he wants to respond to the question, of course he is free to do that.

(Interruptions)

Well, I have to go by the Standing Orders. Next question, please?

RIVIERE BANANE/OTHER PARTS OF THE ISLAND – PUBLIC TRANSPORT

(No. B/9) Mrs M. T. Meunier (The Second Local Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, as regards public transport linking Rivière Banane to other parts of the Island, what measures his Commission has taken to remedy the situation especially for school children.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, following complaints received from the Village Committee of Riviere Banane to the effect that students were encountering transport problem to attend school, the National Transport Authority has favourably considered the application for a Public Service Vehicle (Contract) bus licence. A special permission has been granted to the owner further to carry out three school trips both in the morning and afternoon from Rivière Banane to Grande Montagne College., Le Chou and Brulé RCA School.

I have been informed that application for taxi services will be advertised shortly. This will help to remedy the situation with regard to the other villages. The possibility of having a bus service along this line is being investigated by the National Transport Authority.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether it is true to say that the transport problem at Rivière Banane occurs because of the state of the road, the sloping of the road?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, the National Transport Authority is making a global road test at Rivière Banane and it is after that test that I can reply to the question of the Member.

DRUG TRAFFICKING - POLICE CASES & DRUGS SEIZED

(No. B/10) Mrs M. T. Meunier (The Second Local Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner, with regard to drug trafficking in the Island, whether he would obtain information as to:-

- (a) the number of police cases in this matter since July 2004 to date, and
- (b) the types of drugs seized, if any, and the amount of same.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, I am informed by the Divisional Commander of the Police in Rodrigues that, from July 2004 to

date, there has been only one case in which a provisional charge of possession of gandia with an averment of drug trafficking has been levelled against the accused. He was in possession of twenty six parcels of gandia. Police investigation has not yet been completed.

During the same period, there have been eight drugs cases where provisional charges of Possession of Gandia were levelled against the accused and one case of possession of dangerous drugs. There have been also four cases of uprooting of gandia where accused is unknown.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Chief Commissioner what preventive measures are being organised, like campaigns etc. to combat this plague?

The Chief Commissioner: A committee has been a set up last year chaired by an officer here in Rodrigues, comprising Fisheries, the tourism, the Forest and ARTO in order to see exactly how to control drug trafficking in Rodrigues. And, it was also a sort of Security Committee concerning everything.

(Interruptions)

May I ask the Member to withdraw the name of the person he has just mentioned?

Mr Chairperson: Of course, it is against the practice of the House to interrupt from a sitting position when a Commissioner is on his feet. I did hear vaguely some words, but I could not understand what was really the name of the person mentioned. Had I identified the purpose of what the member has said, then, of course, the Chief Commissioner is right in his point of order.

The Chief Commissioner: There was the “Vigilant” last time, there will be a Police headquarters at Plaine Corail and it has been requested that a helicopter be posted there just in case there is a plane crash. That is why we have to take security measures to save these people. At the same time the helicopter will be used to detect gandia plantations all over the island. So, this Committee – sometimes I attend this Committee – is looking into preventive measures as to how to prevent gandia or any other drugs from entering Rodrigues through the Airport, the quay in Port Mathurin. But

unfortunately, we have seen that gandia is being spread in Rodrigues and we have to take a lot of precaution.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner is speaking about helicopter, Police security, etc. But what concerns us most here is how do the drugs reach the people in Rodrigues and what measures are being contemplated – he talks about precaution, policy measures – so that the drugs do not reach, especially our youngsters and to get them informed about this problem?

The Chief Commissioner: I don't know whether the Police is having talks on the radio or on TV. I take note of the question and shall ask the Chief Officer of Police here in Rodrigues whether they can have talks on the radio. Sometimes the *Police de l'Environnement* and other policemen go to colleges in the villages to give talks on certain matters and also talks concerning drugs.

Mr Chairperson: Next question, please.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL/MAURITIUS – PATIENTS – TRANSFER FOR TREATMENT

(No. B/11) Mrs M. T. Meunier (The Second Local Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health, with regard to the transfer of patients from Queen Elizabeth Hospital to Mauritius for treatment, whether he would inform the House about:-

- (a) the number of patients sent to Mauritius since July 2004 to date;
- (b) the nature of their illnesses, treatment and the outcome, and
- (c) any deaths which occurred and what facilities are granted to relatives for the repatriation of the corpse to Rodrigues.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, the number of patients sent to Mauritius since 1st July, 2004 to end January, 2005 is 77;

With regard to part (b), the nature of illness by type of case were as follows –

Surgical	15
Medical	12
Cardiology	11
Ophtalmology	7
Orthopaedic case	5
Neurology	4
Orthopaedic Workshop	4
ENT	2
Radiotherapy	2
Psychiatry	4
Gynaecology	4
CT Scan	1
Oncology	3
Oral Surgery	3

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that cases are investigated and treated accordingly in Mauritius and if they are found fit to continue their follow-up treatment in Rodrigues, the specialist in place sees them on out-patient clinics or patients are reviewed with visiting specialist who come thrice yearly. Those patients needing follow-up in Mauritius are sent on appointment to be seen by their respective doctors.

As for part (c), during the period July, 2004 to date (8) eight of the 77 patients sent, passed away in Mauritius while (1) one patient died while in flight for Mauritius. The following facilities are granted to relatives for the repatriation of corpse –

- (i) specially designed, hermetically sealed coffin for transportation. In some cases the corpse is embalmed before transportation;
- (ii) repatriation of corpse by Air Mauritius or Dornier plane of the National Coast Guard in case the coffin cannot fit the Air Mauritius Luggage compartment;

- (iii) mortuary and cold room facilities at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Rodrigues;
- (iv) Medical and Health Services ensure that transport facilities are made available from the Hospital to Airport and from Plaine Corail airport to the hospital or place of residence.

All costs are borne by the Commission for Health.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, often patients who go to Mauritius do not have any relatives there to do the administrative procedures for the repatriation. Can I ask the Commissioner what measure he is contemplating to take at the level of his Commission as far as this problem is concerned?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, such cases are dealt with by the Ministry for Rodrigues. There is someone there who looks after such cases.

Mrs Meunier: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner explain how is it that most of the time the corpse stays in Mauritius sometimes for three/four, even five days? Relatives here have to wait and this is heavy burden for them as well.

Mr Sooprayen : M. le président, cela dépend d’Air Mauritius et aussi le jour du décès de la personne ; parfois l’avion est retardé ou le vol est annulé. Parfois il y a un retard à cause du mauvais temps. Par exemple, il y avait un cas où un cadavre est arrivé ici après presque trois semaines. Air Mauritius ne pouvait pas transporter le cadavre parce qu’il dépasse 6 mètres. A ce moment précis, le Dornier était en réparation ; le cadavre devait être transporté par bateau. C’est pourquoi le rapatriement avait pris du temps. *But anyway, we are dealing with such issues; we are trying to see in what way we can help the relatives.*

Mrs Prosper: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said that a patient died in flight. Was it during the flight going to Mauritius or coming back to Rodrigues?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the patient died while going to Mauritius.

Mrs Prosper: Mr Chairperson, Sir, why wait when the patient is dying to send him to Mauritius?

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please!

Mr Sooprayen : Cela dépend du spécialiste ; on a regardé le cas avant de l'envoyer.

Mr J. Roussety : M. le président, un autre problème auquel les familles doivent faire face est les coûts du séjour de la personne. Bien souvent il y a une personne qui accompagne le malade à Maurice. Premièrement, cette personne doit aller habiter chez des parents s'il a des parents ou chez des amis, ou bien il doit payer un appartement ou un hôtel. En sus de cela il doit payer le transport qui est très cher, R 50, R 60. *They have to incur for their living expenses in Mauritius.* Est-ce qu'il y a une aide qui est donnée à ces personnes qui accompagnent un malade à Maurice ? Mais s'il n'y a pas cette aide, est-ce qu'on peut envisager, à l'avenir, offrir une aide financière à ces personnes pour qu'elles puissent soutenir leur malade ?

Mr Sooprayen : M. Le président, on a déjà décidé qu'on ira dans ce sens.

Mr Chairperson: Has the Commissioner finished with his answer? Next question.

REDCO – STUDENTS – PROTESTS

(No. B/12) Mrs M. T. Meunier (The Second Local Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education, as regards the recent protests of students of REDCO, whether he would state –

- (a) the reasons therefor, and
- (b) what measures were taken by his Commission in the matter?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to apprise this Assembly that, according to information gathered during the demonstration, the recent protests by students of three REDCO Colleges on 31 January and 02 February 2005 were mainly due to the transfer of teachers from one REDCO College to another in Rodrigues. However, in the wake of the protests, reference was made to the management of REDCO schools by a company with its seat in Mauritius. Another element of concern was the administration of the REDCO colleges by a Manager resident on the main land of Mauritius.

As regards part (b) Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to state that my Commission is vested so far with the administration of primary education only. All aspects pertaining to policy are still with the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research. On the other hand, the secondary sector is still vested in the Rodrigues Educational Development Company Ltd, which is a private company. Though the costs payable for the construction of secondary schools fall under the responsibility of my Commission, the management is not vested in my Commission. This constitutes major constraints for effective management and supervision of this sector.

I would also say, for the edification of the House, that since the advent of the Regional Assembly in October 2002, my first mission to Mauritius was to approach the Minister of Education and Scientific Research concerning the management, administration of secondary schools in Rodrigues. The response has been rather slow and it has been part of the response to my several overtures concerning exactly the management of secondary schools that eventually we were given as a sort of consolation prize two Directors on the Board of REDCO, which is a Board of 12 members?

With a view to thrashing out the above issues, I met the Federation of Parents Teachers' Association on two occasions during the students' protests. I even held discussions with the Manager and the two Directors of REDCO in Rodrigues. Further, I personally intervened with the students and pleaded for their collaboration peacefully so as to come out with a workable solution.

After hours of deliberations, on Wednesday 02 February a win-win solution was reached to the satisfaction of one and all, particularly on grounds of safety and security of the students in Rodrigues.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner says that he is responsible only for primary education. We understand, Mr Chairperson, Sir, why there are so many problems at secondary level, because the Commissioner is an ignorant, *un ignorant. Il ne connaît pas quelle est la responsabilité de sa Commission. Premièrement, il est un incompetent.* Section 26 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act *définit les zones de responsabilité et nous dit* in the Fourth schedule, *11^{ème} item*, « Education » - *et ce n'est pas mentionné* primary education - « Education includes primary, secondary, tertiary ». *Le Commissaire vient ici pour nous dire qu'il n'est pas concerné.* Insofar he is not concerned with secondary education

Mr Chairperson: Question please?

Mr J. Roussety: Will he maintain Mr Chairperson, Sir, that statement?

Mr Chairperson: You mean the answer.

Mr J. Roussety: What he stated in his answer.

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am fully aware of what the Minority Leader says concerning the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 about the responsibilities for education. It is true that the law, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001, gives the administration of education to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. This is true. We have the primary but in the secondary it is the REDCO which manages the five colleges.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I feel that ...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, Please! There is a question and an answer has been given. Members should behave; not every word is allowed in this Assembly.

Mr J. Roussety : Mr Chairperson, Sir, l'embarras du commissaire et de l'équipe en face de moi confirme qu'il y a cafouillage. M. le président, le

pouvoir a été donné. Section 26 définit *the areas of responsibility* de l'Assemblée Regionale de Rodrigues qui comprend l'Education, l'administration de l'Education. Une approche littérale, l'interprétation de la loi – il ne faut pas être expert en droit, il ne faut pas aller au State law Office pour comprendre cela - nous dit *éducation means what it means, that is, primary, secondary, tertiary, all sorts of education*. Le Commissaire se cantonne, M. le président ; le conseil exécutif s'est cantonné....

Mr Chairperson: You cannot say the Executive Council.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with all respect that I owe to you, there is also the concept of collective responsibility. What one Commissioner says binds all of them.

Mr Chairperson: This is not as clear as you said it.

Mr A. L. Roussety: I must say that our involvement in the secondary education has been to work in close collaboration with the company, with REDCO, which is managing the five secondary schools apart from Rodrigues College. We work in fairly close collaboration with them, acting as facilitator and go-between.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, who is responsible at the Commission for Secondary education? Because secondary education in Rodrigues does not only sum up these institutions. There is REDCO, there is Rodrigues College; and secondary education does not mean institutions only; it means more than that. Who is responsible? Is there a unit, a section at the Commission for secondary education?

Mr A. L. Roussety: In my Commission we deal directly with the Ministry of Education, the Institute of Education and the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate. The Commission deals globally with all those institutions and sections of the Ministry of Education.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know whether there is a unit, a section, a staff at the Commission that is responsible for secondary education just like they have staff who are responsible for primary education. They do have staff for primary education, a section, a unit. They have Senior Primary School Inspector, Inspectors for primary education. But

what technical staff do they have as far as the RRA Act is concerned to administer, to deal with secondary education in Rodrigues?

Mr A. L. Roussety: The Education Commission has a section dealing particularly with all aspects of education: tertiary, secondary, primary and pre-primary; and all these matters are dealt with by one particular section through the Departmental Head of the Commission.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the protest concerned transfers of teachers in February after the school resumed in January, after the academic year for 2005 started. Why did the Commissioner tolerate this? The Commissioner has two representatives on the Board of REDCO, the company which manages these schools. The Commissioner has said that he has two representatives, two Board members; and the decision was taken by the Board to transfer these teachers, and following that, there was a protest. Why did he accept that transfer of teachers being made in the middle of the term? Then he came and intervened on the radio and said he is not aware. How can he not be aware when officers of his Commission are represented on that Board and concurred with that decision?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the transfers were approved by the Board of REDCO on the 28th of January with the intention of being put into practice on the 2nd of February. When I said I was not aware, I was not yet aware of what was happening. I was not informed. There was no correspondence between REDCO and myself on that matter; and in a reply given by the Minister in the National Assembly, he did say that there has been a lack of communication between REDCO and the Commissioner for Education. What I am saying is the absolute truth. I was not made aware of this until the eleventh hour.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said that there are two Board members; and they are not Clerks or Executive Officers at the Commission. It is the Departmental Head and another high ranking officer. He said that the decision was taken in January. Am I to understand that there is a complete disconnection between what these two persons have been doing on that Board and the political Head who is the Commissioner, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I was made aware of the transfer very late in the day before the Board meeting was to take place on

the 28th of January. The two Directors were briefed to oppose the transfers, but then, of course, they are only two against ten; it is a Board of 12 members. But they did make their voice heard and they did not agree to the transfers.

(Interruptions)

I will try to impress upon the House that we have only two members on a Board of 12 members and everybody was present on that day.

Mr Chairperson: We are left with roughly 45 minutes and we have 20 questions left.

(Interruptions)

You are saying from a sitting position that there is no problem, but you have to make a statement that you withdraw your questions. If you do so, then I have to manage the time. I will allow a last question on this before breaking for lunch.

Mr Jabeemissar : M. le président, le Commissaire avait dit que tout a été fait en un *win win situation*. Il y avait un communiqué à l'effet que seulement les professeurs qui avaient demandé un transfert allaient bouger. Peut-il dire maintenant si tel a été le cas ?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Yes, this has been the case, in particular, for some teachers who have applied for a transfer, for reason of ill health. For example there is apparently one lady teacher who has asked for transfer, because she is expecting a baby and she cannot travel very far. There are one or two teachers who have asked for transfer for reason of bad health. Some transfers by teachers who have made such request have already taken place. Not necessary all.

Mr Chairperson: I suspend the sitting for 45 minutes.

At 12.40 hours the sitting was suspended

On resuming at 13.35 hours with Mr Chairperson in the Chair

Mr Chairperson: During the recess the Commissioner for Education has intimated to me that he needs to provide some personal explanation further to the answer given by him to Question B/12. Being given that I have not yet called Question B/13, I'll authorise him to do.

Mr J. Roussety: With your permission, being given the time left for questions I will propose, if the Commissioner will agree, that he comes with his personal explanation after Question Time, because this will impinge on Question Time. And I believe there is no urgency; I suggest that we give priority to questions and then immediately after questions he can make his personal explanation.

Mr Chairperson: There is a request and there is a counter request. You should understand that when something has been misunderstood, it is of course for the benefit of the House that the matter be cleared not after but immediately and simultaneously. Of course, the Commissioner for Education is allowed to do so, but he should be brief and should understand that no new matters should come forthwith.

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I promise to be brief, but I wish to elucidate on a point raised in the supplementary question from the minority benches. Although the RRA is vested with the administration of education in Rodrigues, i.e. to implement the National Policy in this sector in Rodrigues, the management of the five colleges is vested in REDCO. This is what I meant to say; and I am sorry if there has been a quid pro quo on my part between the words administration and management.

Mr Chairperson: We move to question B/13. The Sixth Island Region Member.

ROCHE BON DIEU – DUMPING SITE

(No. B/13) Mrs J. Prosper (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner, with regard to the dumping site at Roche Bon Dieu -

- (a) whether he is aware of the effect of pollution on the immediate Environment, and
- (b) what measures he is contemplating to solve this problem?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), the Roche Bon Dieu dumping site was constructed in 1993 to cater for the disposal of solid wastes generated throughout Rodrigues. Unfortunately, it is just an open pit and has given rise to pollution problems such as smoke emissions due to accidental fires and wind blown wastes causing eyesores.

With regard to part (b), with a view to reducing the impact of these pollution problems, the Environment Unit has been requested to strengthen supervision and monitoring of the daily management practices of the site. A new contract for the disposal of wastes in the dumping site has been awarded since January 2005. There is regular cleaning operation of the wind-blown wastes by a team of workers of the Environment Unit. Moreover, the actual dumping is reaching its full capacity.

Another site has been identified at Pointe au Sel for the construction of a proper sanitary controlled landfill Site. Funds have already been earmarked under this present financial year for this purpose. Preliminary design and Engineering Report have already been prepared by Gibbs Ltd. The latter will be requested to proceed with the preparation of the detailed design and the EIA study. The new site will be operated in conformity with international standards.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

MARECHAL COLLEGE – NOUVEAU COMPLEX

(No. B/14) Mrs J. Prosper (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Education, with regard to the inauguration of the “Nouveau Complex de Marechal College”, whether he will state on what date the inauguration was held and states the reason thereof.

Mr L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, The *nouveau Complex de Marechal College* of Phase II was inaugurated on Thursday 13 January 2005. This was arranged to coincide with the visit of Mr Manuel Tonnar, Head of Development Co-operation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, as the new complex of Marechal College was financed by Lux Development. The inauguration could not have been held earlier, due to general elections in Luxembourg and the unavailability of any representative of the Government of Luxembourg to travel to Rodrigues to take part in the inaugural ceremony.

Mrs Prosper: Mr Chairperson, Sir, would the Commissioner say if all the pupils and parents were invited on this occasion?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Yes, indeed radio communiqués were broadcast and parents and children were invited to attend this ceremony.

Mrs Prosper: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner for Education tell the House who honoured this function?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Invitations were sent out to teachers especially those who had worked at Marechal, Departmental Heads, Commissioners, minority members, members of the majority. But unfortunately on that day, the weather was not so good and there were only a few people there.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner explain why the inauguration was held during the school holidays?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Unfortunately, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it did not depend entirely on us. It depended on the availability of the Representative from Luxembourg to perform the ceremony. It had been intended for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to come, but all these were not possible; and we had been trying to arrange for an inauguration during almost a year. But in the end we had to go ahead with a Representative who travelled in the morning. He arrived at 6 o'clock in the morning at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Airport; he caught the plane for Rodrigues and went back and caught the connecting flight to Paris the same afternoon.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner says that the dignitary, who came from Luxembourg, came expressly for this inauguration. Is it the case? Or did he come also to attend the SIDs Conference in Mauritius and then he jumped to Rodrigues for that inauguration?

Mr A. L. Roussety: He didn't come to attend the SIDs Conference in Mauritius. He travelled purposely for the inauguration.

Mr Chairperson: Last question on this.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, will the Commissioner confirm that the name of the Chief Commissioner, Mr Louis Serge Clair, GCSK, appears on the commemorative plate, which was unveiled at the College on the occasion of the inauguration? If so, will he confirm that on that day, at that particular moment, Mr Serge Clair, Chief Commissioner, was absent, he was at Pailles in Mauritius attending the SIDs Conference? Is he aware of that? How can he explain that on the plate it is written the Marechal College inaugurated in the presence of the person from Luxembourg and the Chief Commissioner. So, I don't know whether they are doing miracles, whether there were two Chief Commissioners. How can it be that the Chief Commissioner is absent but on the plate it is written "has been made in the presence of the Chief Commissioner"?

Mr A. L. Roussety: That was due to one of those unexpected things in life. The Chief Commissioner, of course, was attending the SIDS Conference and he was due to travel on the same plane as Mr Manuel Tonnar on the Thursday morning, but unfortunately he had a late heatre on Wednesday whereby he had to meet Mr Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, on the morning concerned and Mr Shelshek, Ministre de la Corporation de Luxembourg. Hence, he was not able to be there at that moment.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS AND SPECIALISTS

(No. B/15) Mrs. J. Prosper (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health, with regard to Health Services in Rodrigues, whether he could –

- (a) name all the medical practitioners and specialists who were on call or on duty on the 26.12.04;
- (b) say whether any specialist was on leave on that date, and
- (c) whether there had been any case referred to the surgeon on that day and, if yes, at what time patients reached Queen Elisabeth Hospital and at what time the specialist attended to them.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the questions, on Sunday 26 December, 2004 the Medical and Health Officers on duty were as follows –

- (c) Dr. S. V. PLLAY,
- (ii) Dr. Sanjay BUCKTOWAR,

The specialists on call on that particular day were as follows:

Dr. S. SEEWOOSUNGKUR	-	Anaesthetist
Dr. O. TOOFANY	-	Paediatrician
Dr. D. LUTCHMUN	-	Surgeon
Dr. I. CHUNNOO	-	Orthopaedic Surgeon
Dr. BEEDASSY	-	Gynaecologist
Dr. MOHITH	-	Physician

With regard to part (b), on that day there was no specialist on leave. Specialists posted to Rodrigues do not go on leave without a replacement from Mauritius;

As for part ©, on that particular day four (4) cases were referred to the Orthopaedic Surgeon as follows –

- (1) Mr Eric Jean VOLBERT who was referred from La Ferme Area Health Centre was admitted in the male ward at 6.25 hours and seen by the Orthopaedic Surgeon at 13.45 hours.
- (2) Mr Hartley EMILIEN, who was referred from La Ferme Area Health Centre, was admitted to the male ward at 6.25 hours and was seen by the Orthopaedic Surgeon at 14.00 hours.
- (3) Mr Roussel CUPIDON called at OPD at 10.25 hours and was admitted in male ward and seen by the Orthopaedic Surgeon at 13.55 hours.

- (4) Mr Margeot MILAZAR was referred from Mont Lubin Area Health Centre and seen by Dr. S. BUCKTOWAR at 18.40 hours. He gave instructions for X-Ray examination; report was available instantly and necessary treatment was given; and patient was admitted in Male Ward at 19.55 hours and was seen by Orthopaedic Surgeon at 20.15 hours.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the first three cases the Orthopaedic Surgeon saw the patients during the ward round time as they were not emergencies. However, in the fourth case, the specialist was called immediately, as his presence was urgently required and he attended.

Usually, specialists are not on duty on Sundays and public holidays or week days, they are on call and it is the Medical and Health Officer on duty who, depending on the urgency of the patient, calls the Specialist.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if you will allow me my first question. I would like to ask...

Mr Chairperson: You never asked any question.

Mr Emilien: Yes, I did ask. But this is my first question of the year.

Mr Chairperson: Yes.

Mr Emilien: The Commissioner was talking about specialists on leave and specialists on call. I would like to ask him to clarify to me and to the House what is the difference between a specialist being on call and another being on duty.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, usually when a Medical Officer or specialist is on duty, it means he or she has to attend hospital from such time to such time. He should be in the hospital. There is a mess there, when he or she is on duty. But when he is on call, he is not on the hospital premises; he can be at his place, but, he has to come each time there is a call.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, being given that Rodrigues is a very small island what is the average time for the Medical services to lay hands on the Specialist who is on call for a case referred to him? In the present case the patients waited for 7 hours 20 minutes.

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have just said there was only one emergency case. The fourth one was an urgent case and the Specialist immediately came in less than one hour because there had been X-Ray and so on. But concerning the three other cases, they were there in the morning they were on, I would say, bed rest because they were not emergencies..

(Interruptions)

Yes “bed rest”». If the member does not understand the word, I can explain to him. I have been informed that when someone comes to the hospital, he is looked over by the Medical Officer first. If it is not an emergency case, he is sent in the male ward or the female ward on rest.

(Interruptions)

Let me finish, please. And then the Specialist comes because the case is not an emergency one.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, one thing is not clear,

Mr Chairperson: Does the Second Member wish to address the Chair?

Mr Agathe: Yes.

Mr Chairperson: You have the floor.

Mr Agathe: We have a problem of health here in Rodrigues. So we want to ask many questions in order not to have a lot of deaths in our Island.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, what is the point you want to make?

Mr Agathe: You asked me if I have something to say.

Mr Chairperson: I thought you wanted to raise something pertinent to the question. My ruling was that it would be the last supplementary question. I thought you would like to intervene on that point.

Mr Agathe: I also want to ask questions.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, but you are not allowed today.

Mr Agathe: Ah bon!

Mr Chairperson: Yes, the First Member for Local Region No. 1.

Mr Grandcourt: Mr Chairperson, Sir, one thing is not quite clear. For a patient to be referred from La Ferme to Port Mathurin, I don't think this is not urgent Mr Chairperson, Sir. The Commissioner talks about emergency, I think this is urgent and he has talked about bed rest, there is a male ward and a female ward at La Ferme. If these patients have been referred to specialists at Port Mathurin, this is serious, they are urgent cases. This is what I don't understand Mr Chairperson, Sir: why patients have had to wait for 7 hours before being examined by a Specialist?

Mr Sooprayen: Mr Chairperson, Sir, when a case is referred, when the patient comes to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, it is the Medical Health Officer who sees the urgency of the case and refers it.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Sooprayen: Once the patient has been sent to the male ward to Queen Elizabeth Hospital, it does not mean that it is an emergency case.

(Interruptions)

No, it depends on the urgency.

Mr Chairperson: Next question please. The Sixth Island Region Member.

GOVERNMENT EXCAVATING VEHICLE, GMR 586

(No. B/16) Mrs. J. Prosper (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner, whether, with regard to the Government excavating vehicle, GMR 586, he would state what has been the use of the vehicles over the last three months.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission I will answer question B/16. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the excavating vehicle ATLAS GMR 586 is on breakdown since 5th November 2004. The following spare parts were found defective -

- (1) Camshaft drive
- (2) Toothed belt
- (3) Push rod

The spare parts have been ordered directly from the trade representative in Mauritius namely Mecom Ltd on 8th November 2004. Same was ordered from United Kingdom and have reached Mauritius. The parts are being shipped to Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson: Next question, Minority Leader?

PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT – COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS

(No. B/17) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner, as regards commercial flights to and from Plaine Corail Airport, whether he will –

- (a) give a breakdown of all flights which have been cancelled or delayed indicating the date of the flight, the flight number, and if delayed, the length of the delay, and
- (b) inquire into the reasons as to why there is a relatively high recurrence of delays of flights to and from Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), of the question, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the fact that the schedules of airlines from and to Rodrigues are under the direct management control of Air Mauritius Ltd. Which is a private company. Moreover, the question does not specify the time period and my reply will cover the period 16 June 2004 to 04 February 2005, as per information obtained from Air Mauritius. Details of flights which have been cancelled and delayed during that period are being circulated (**Appendix**). Information concerning the length of the delay is unfortunately not available.

With regard to part (b), we neither have the information regarding the reasons for the high occurrence of delays and cancellation of the flights. My office has made a formal request to Air Mauritius in this respect and the Assembly will be informed of any development.

As for part (c), the incidence of these delays and cancellation of flights on the reputation of Rodrigues as a tourist destination has not been very significant. I am informed that the flights which are cancelled are usually re-scheduled.

In fact, there has been a slight decrease in the number of arrivals by air from 63,649 during 2003 to 55,592 during 2004. It is to be noted that this decrease may be also attributed to the increase in the price of air tickets that has occurred during last year.

My Commission is organizing a workshop with all stakeholders involved in the tourism sector during the incoming week with the objective of defining a strategy and a plan of action for the development of the tourism sector in Rodrigues. Representatives from Reunion Island, the Ministry of Tourism, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority and Air Mauritius have been invited to participate and this issue will be discussed.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, first of all I wish to mention that – and this is serious – in my fax that I sent to the Assembly I mentioned since 1st December 2004 and the Chief Commissioner is right in saying that there is no time period. There is no time period on the order paper, but if you would look at my fax you would see it is 01 December. I don't know if there is a problem, but I think that somebody somewhere is not doing his work; questions are not being written as Members send them. And this is serious; we will not tolerate such thing.

Mr Chairperson: You are right, I will not tolerate this as well. I would like to ...

Mr J. Roussety: If you go and look at my fax, you will see it.

Mr Chairperson: Of course, you mention a very good point. Questions unless edited have to appear as they are.

Mr J. Roussety: Each time I cannot check word by word whether what I have sent is there.

Mr Chairperson: I will enquire into the matter, and of course, you will be made aware thereof.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, secondly Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner again is following his Commissioner for Education in misunderstanding the Act. The fourth schedule, fifth item of the Act, Civil Aviation (Administration) states Civil Aviation (Administration). Administration of the Civil Aviation, so Administration means statistics on the flights, which are being cancelled and delayed. This can be asked here. I see Mr Chairperson, Sir, from the period June 2004 to February 2005, there has been a high recurrence of these flights. I wish to ask what has been the impact on tourism during that period.

The Chief Commissioner: I said that, in fact, there has been a slight decrease in the number of arrivals by air, from 63,649 during year 2003, to 55,592 during 2004. It is to be noted that – and this has always been raised by tour operators and hotel promoters – concerning the increase in the costs of tickets, either from Mauritius to Rodrigues or Rodrigues to Mauritius or from Reunion Island to Rodrigues and return, that this decrease may be also attributed to the increase of the price of air tickets that has occurred during last year. I remember I attended a meeting last year, before the Government of Mauritius took the decision to increase the airfare from Mauritius to Rodrigues and return. And I raised the point that we are starting to develop our tourism sector here; and I asked the Committee chaired by the Prime Minister, at that time, not to increase the airfare and then Air Mauritius said they are subsidizing air tickets and are making a loss on Rodrigues. That's why we can note that there is cancellation of or delays in flights. It seems that Air Mauritius is not taking a serious look at the tourism sector in Rodrigues. That's why we have decided, in a tourism committee, to organise a forum wherein the Ministry of Tourism, the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority and Air Mauritius will be invited to participate. And after this forum we are going to have discussions with the Prime Minister because he is responsible for tourism. I have been invited at a meeting concerning tourism marketing; and I will raise this problem of cancellation and how price increase has a certain impact on our tourism industry there.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, next question?

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

Mr Chairperson: Yes, do you have another supplementary?

Mr J. Roussety: You said next question.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, I said this; I thought you had finished.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, I have a question.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, of course.

Mr J. Roussety: Thank you. Mr Chairperson, Sir, is the Chief Commissioner aware of the fact that Air Mauritius tends to give priority to flights going to and from Reunion instead of flights coming to Rodrigues? Because we have information to the effect that they prefer to give priority to flights going to Reunion, because there is a lot of money there, whereas this is not the case for flights coming to Rodrigues; they will be penalised. Is he aware of this situation and will he inquire whether this is true?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, I am aware of this situation even when I was Minister for Rodrigues. The reason put forward by Air Mauritius is that air tickets from Rodrigues, as far as the distance is concerned, are subsidised, whereas flights to Reunion Island are not subsidised. I think that we should discuss this question of Air Mauritius in Rodrigues and that of subsidization with the Government of Mauritius as to whether Government is going to support the development of our tourism industry here or whether the Government is going to go ahead like that: leave Air Mauritius to do what it wants to. We are aware of that; I have always been told that – even by the tour operators – Air Mauritius prefers to go to Reunion Island; and we have seen that flights from Mauritius to Reunion Island very often are not cancelled, whereas flights from Mauritius to Rodrigues are being cancelled. We are all aware of that, that's why we will discuss this question in a forum and then go ahead, at a higher level, with the Prime Minister and see what we can do.

Mr Chairperson: I will not allow any more supplementary question on this; and from now on, we are left with 20 minutes and this time has to be shared among 15 questions. At most I will allow only one supplementary question if it is forthcoming. So, we move to the next question on the Order Paper.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if we don't ask supplementary questions here, we will have to wait for one year to ask them. Unless you want to penalise me and condemn me to wait for one year on this important issue, because I have questions to ask and I will personally insist to have the permission to ask them.

Mr Chairperson: You will all appreciate that there are laws that govern this Regional Assembly; there are Standing Orders that govern the internal business of this House and there is the confirmed practice as well. There is only a period of three hours which is normally given to questions and these three hours have to be managed in such a way that the last question can be asked in this Assembly. I have, over the past year, acceded to the request of the Minority side whereby supplementary questions have been allowed to be put; and I remember during one sitting there were as many as ten questions which were left untouched in this Assembly. Of course, if all the members wish to avail themselves of their right to ask questions, they should be aware that – and this since the inception of this Assembly – there are only three hours to be shared among all the questions. I remember I said earlier that I am left with this difficult task to do and, of course, I will have to do it. So, I will maintain my ruling, I will not allow more than one supplementary question on each question which appears on the Order Paper. Of course, if there are Members who feel that they will not exhaust all the issues on the questions, they will still have the opportunity to withdraw their questions and have them on the Order Paper for the next session. So, bear this in mind. Yes, the Second Local Region Member for Marechal.

Mr Agathe: I withdraw my question.

Mr Chairperson: Which questions are you withdrawing, please?

Mr Agathe: All of them.

Mr Chairperson: Questions B/25, B/26, B/27 and B/28. We are still left with 11 questions for fifteen minutes.

Mr Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, you know why I am withdrawing my questions.

Mr Chairperson: I acceded to your request, and I saw the questions as well.

Mr Emilien: Mr Chairperson, Sir, if you would allow me, owing to the fact that we are not going to have more than one supplementary question, I would like, with your permission, to withdraw my four questions.

Mr Chairperson: As well.

Mr Emilien: Yes.

Mr Chairperson: Questions B/21, B/22, B/23, B/24.

Mr Emilien: Yes, all the four.

Mr Chairperson: Of course, if you withdraw you will have to give notice again.

Mr Agathe: Can the questions be put as they are on the next Order Paper, please?

Mr Chairperson: No, you will have to give notice again. You just have to copy and send. So, we are left with seven questions with 15 minutes and more or less the same thing happens again. So, we are left with 2 minutes for each question. Yes, a little more latitude. Yes, Minority Leader.

(Interruptions)

Mr J. Roussety: I would like to remind you that.

Mr Chairperson: Remind me?

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, I can remind you.

Mr Chairperson: No, you can't. You can do so in my private Chamber but not in the Assembly. You can make a motion in whatever form you wish, but you are not allowed to do this here.

Mr J. Roussety : Est-ce que le Chef commissaire est au courant du stress qui est causé à ceux qui accompagnent les passagers et ceux qui viennent chercher des amis, des *tour operators*, à l'aéroport de Plaine Corail, à l'aéroport de Plaisance à Maurice ou à La Réunion, lorsqu'ils partent à l'aéroport pour un vol qui doit normalement arriver à 21 heures et d'attendre jusqu'à une heure du matin ? Est-ce qu'il est au courant de cette situation ?

The Chief Commissioner : M. le président évidemment quand un vol est retardé, il y a un stress. Cela m'est arrivé à moi aussi. Je devais partir à telle heure le matin ou l'après midi et quand je suis arrivé à l'aéroport on m'a dit que le vol est à minuit. Le vol de 2 heures est arrivé à 7 heures, le vol de 7 heures est arrivé à 22 heures. Nous sommes au courant de tout cela. C'est pourquoi nous avons dit que nous allons convoquer un forum ici pour discuter de tout cela. Il faut réunir tout ces gens là et trouver une solution, et questionner Air Mauritius. Les tours opérateurs, les promoteurs d'hôtel

aussi seront là parce qu'il y aura d'autres hôtels qui vont venir et ils se posent la question en ce qui concerne le transport des touristes et des passagers. Est-ce que Air Mauritius va pouvoir justement arriver à transporter le nombre de passagers qui va remplir les hôtels ? Alors il va y avoir une politique au niveau d'Air Mauritius. Si Air Mauritius va mettre d'autres vols sur Rodrigues, c'est toute une question qu'il faut discuter avec le ministre du tourisme, la MTPA, Air Mauritius et les autres promoteurs. Mais nous sommes au courant de tout cela. Nous savons que c'est un stress quand on arrive à un aéroport et que l'avion est retardé. J'ai une réunion à telle heure et quand j'arrive à l'aéroport, j'apprends qu'il y a un retard ou que le vol a été annulé. Evidemment c'est une situation qui ne peut plus durer et il faudrait questionner Air Mauritius. Nous allons le faire.

Mr J. Roussety : Etant donné que Air Mauritius semble être *the most concerned in this problem*, est-ce que le Chef commissaire va essayer - j'entends toujours que quand il a un problème on va faire une réunion - d'étudier la possibilité d'ouvrir l'accès aérien à d'autres compagnies, à Air Australe, à ceux qui ont les ATR 42 qui effectivement voudraient venir à Rodrigues ? Parce que si Air Mauritius fait sa loi, il faudrait envisager la possibilité de voir s'ils sont intéressés à ouvrir l'accès aérien sur Rodrigues. Est-ce que le Chef Commissaire pourrait envisager cela dans les discussions qu'il va avoir ?

The Chief Commissioner : Il y a eu la question d'Air Austral Réunion/Rodrigues Rodrigues/Maurice. Air Austral trouve que le tarif proposé par Air Mauritius trop bas. Air Austral exige beaucoup plus que cela. J'ai été dans cette réunion, où Air Austral a été invité à une discussion Air Mauritius/Air Austral pour que Air Austral vienne à Rodrigues. Il y a toute une question de tarif. C'est cela le grand problème. Nous avons rencontré M. Paul Verges à la Réunion qui est le président d'Air Austral. J'ai oublié de mentionner qu'il y aura une réunion où l'Isle de la Réunion, et Maurice participeront pour voir justement comment arriver à ce que Air Austral puisse compenser, soit sortir de la Réunion, passer par Maurice pour venir à Rodrigues et les Mauriciens aussi peuvent prendre l'avion d'Air Austral, comme les Rodriguais, pour venir à Rodrigues. Et cela aussi est une possibilité et a été pensé. Et parfois on dit 350/400 euros c'est peu pour Air Austral. Et pour la Réunion il demande 450 euros.

Mr Chairperson : Next question.

ANSE RAFFIN DAM – WORKS

(No. B/18) Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, whether as regards the Anse Raffin Dam, he will give a description of progress to date, a breakdown of costs paid and those which will be necessary to complete the works.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, Deputy Chief Commissioner I understand there is a question addressed to you.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, Sir, I would like to reply to both questions B/18 and B/29 at the same time as they relate to the same subject.

Mr Chairperson: Which ones please, I am sorry.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: B/18 and B29.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I am informed that with regard to Anse Raffin Dam, to date all works have been completed as per tender documents except for some landscaping works downstream of the dam, fencing of the dam and the marking of the graduation meter required to ascertain the level of water in the dam and, hence, the amount of water stored.

As at 16th December 2004, the total amount paid excluding VAT is Rs 107 m. The final cost of the project is estimated at Rs112 million excluding VAT. The contractor has not yet submitted his final claim. This is expected before the end of February 2005. **I am tabling the breakdown of costs as at 16th December 2004.**

The dam has been handed over to my Commission. The pipeline and the treatment plant have not yet been commissioned on account of lack of water. The commissioning of the treatment plant will be carried out when there is sufficient water behind the dam. Handing over of the treatment plant will be carried out upon its successful commissioning

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can we know since when the dam has been handed over to the Commissioner?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of the question as I do not have the information at hand.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are in the rainy season, cyclonic period and it seems that in the dam there is no water. Can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether there is a flow of water into the dam at present?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is some water in the dam, but the last rainfall was periodical and it was not intensive enough to fill the dam at the point that it can be filled. Moreover, as the rivers were not saturated enough, the rainflow has been reduced. The intensity of rainfall was not that much so that the dam can be filled.

Mr Chairperson: Next question please.

Mr J. Roussety: That dam is not being filled, is it not because first *on ne sait pas si le barrage est vraiment étanche?* The dam has been handed over, *donc le contracteur a terminé le travail. Est-ce qu'on a vérifié, M. le président, si le réservoir, le barrage est bien étanche ? Parce qu'il y a la pluie et aussi il y a l'eau qui coule. Mais le réservoir ne se remplit pas. On a investi R 112 millions, le triple de ce qui avait été initialement prévu. C'est comme un éléphant blanc dans le désert, M. le président ! Est-ce qu'il est sûr que le dam a été bien construit ? Et deuxièmement qu'est ce qu'il va faire avec ce dam si cette même situation continue ?*

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, normally there is a guarantee period on these types of infrastructural works. The dam has been handed over to my Commission, but there is an amount of retention money that has been earmarked as a guarantee for the water tightness of the dam. I do not have the time frame for this guarantee period; I can give it to the Assembly next time. But for all infrastructural contract works there is a guarantee period against retention money; and for the dam this guarantee concerns its water tightness.

Mr Chairperson: Next question?

LE PETIT PRINCE PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL – EX-PUPILS

(No. B/19) **Mr J. Roussety (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether as regards the ex-pupils of the Le Petit Prince Pre-primary school of Port Mathurin, whether he will –

- (a) state if all of them have been able to secure a place at the Port Mathurin government school;
- (b) state whether the personnel of that school has been enrolled elsewhere;
- (c) state whether meetings have been held with the parents by his Commission, the reasons there and the outcome, if any; and
- (d) state whether the pupils or some of them have been directed to another place instead of the Port Mathurin government school and, if yes, where.

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to apprise this Assembly that all the 43 ex-pupils from Le Petit Prince, who sought admission at the Basile Allas Pre-Primary Government School, were offered same, at a Government Quarters at the rear of the Mauritius Telecom in Port Mathurin which was put at the disposal of my Commission by the Commission of Public Infrastructure. All the ex-pupils were admitted at Les Chatons Pre-Primary School of Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School as from 19 January 2005. This Pre-Primary school operates under the aegis of the Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School.

As regards part (b), concerning the personnel, I am made to understand that none of the redundant teachers from Le petit Prince was enrolled since there were already two supernumerary teachers employed by the Pre-School trust Fund available to step in.

With regard to part (c), Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to state that one meeting was held on 12 January 2005 under my Chairmanship, wherein parents concerned were informed of all remedial actions being envisaged following the decision of the owner of Ex Petit Prince Pre-Primary School to close down as from January 2005. Parents were also apprised that tender procedures were already on for the construction of two pre-primary classrooms on the premises of Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government

School. However, the approval of the appropriate competent authorities was to be obtained prior to any award of bids to the successful tenderer.

Being given that the existing infrastructural set-up at Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School could not warrant the accommodation of the ex-pupils of Petit Prince Pre-Primary School as from January 2005, arrangements were made to house them at a Government Quarter in Port Mathurin, where all facilities and security were made available to enable the pupils to learn and play in a very conducive and pleasant environment.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as far as part (d) is concerned, I am informed that my Commission did not proceed with any diversion. However, I am made to understand that some parents sought admission of their wards in pre-primary schools within the ambit of their localities, viz Les Coccinelles (Mont Lubin), Les Abeilles (Malartic), Butterfly (Port Mathurin)

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, are a number of them having their pre-primary education at a place not within the compound of the Port Mathurin Government School?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Well, it is well known, I think, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that they are not within the compound of Port Mathurin Government School. It is an extension of Port Mathurin Government School in old Fisherman Lane and in the former quarters, next to the Civil Service Club.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner if he can remember what he said in this House at the sitting of 16 November 2004?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Well, I did say that 2 additional classrooms were to be built, but the time it took for the tenders to come back from the Central Tender Board was well beyond our expectation. There was a lot of delay and just as well we had recourse to crisis management. The children are happy where they are at the moment.

Mr J. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said in answer to B/633 of 16 November 2004, I quote: "The works will be completed by mid January 2005, in time for the beginning of the school year", new school year. And now he comes here and says that there have

been problems with tenders. What kind of management is he doing in his Commission, Mr Chairperson, Sir? And on what did he base himself? Has he liaised with the Commission for Public Infrastructure before coming to this House, engaging himself into things that he cannot sustain? How long, Mr Chairperson, Sir, will we have to bear such *mensonge sur la tête de ces enfants*?

Mr A. L. Roussety: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I object to the word ‘*mensonge*’ coming from the other side of the House to my position. We can only expect; and when the tenders were received, they exceeded a million rupees.

(Interruptions)

Non mo pas ti conne sa moi, mo pas constructeur moi. I didn’t not know that, I do not have a crystal ball.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Yes, no more interruptions from a sitting position.

Mr A. L. Roussety: All procedures were literally followed; the tender exceeded one million rupees and we had to go to the Central Tender Board for approval.

Mr Chairperson: Commissioner for Education, you rose and I understood that you wanted a relief from my part and then you continued. So I couldn’t understand what would be your point for me to rule, but I have to refer to one thing that just happened. Standing Order 19 (2) (b) says that “no question shall refer to any debate that has occurred or to any answer that has been given less than a year before”. All in all it was a question which put in juxtaposition your answer to this House and the previous answer. Without waiting for my ruling, you stood up and answered the question. Of course, I said earlier, in a previous sitting, that it is wrong and unparliamentary to say that a Commissioner is misleading the House.

Mr J. Roussety: He is misleading; he said the works will be completed by mid January in time for the beginning of the new school year.

Quand ou pas capave prend un engagement pas prend, ou ti dire ou pou capave faire li, ou pas ine faire li.

Mr Chairperson: Order please! I said it is wrong to say that a Commissioner is misleading the House. What you can say is that the information is misleading. If you have something to say, you stand up to say it and I will have to rule on what you are going to say. Yes, if you have something to say you stand up and you say.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, of course the rules of parliamentary practice require that we stand up unless we are invalid.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, according to my watch, question time is over. Can I have it confirmed from the Clerk?

Mr J. Roussety: Can I say something on your ruling?

Mr Chairperson: Please wait. Question time is over. No more questions.

Mr J. Roussety: I will say that some people want to talk so much in the Assembly here, especially when presiding. They should come and sit here next time, because if you are a Chairperson, you have to talk and talk, *vous épuisez le question time. Je vous invite de venir là la prochaine fois, parce que vous parlez tout le temps, on a perdu 20 minutes avec vous en argumentant. Laissez les autres parler.*

Mr Chairperson: You are right to say so; if you abide by the Standing Orders which say that my ruling are final and you stay silent and abide by the ruling, I think that not 20 minutes but a little more time could have been spared. Next item on the Order Paper.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

WORKERS – EMPLOYMENT BY A SWINDLER

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

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your kind permission, I would like to make the following statement with regard to the ill doing of a swindler.

Mr Chairperson Sir, we, on this side of the Assembly, are deeply concerned about the fate of those young persons, who have been taken for a ride by one unscrupulous person who was supposed to offer them employment. Instead, he pocketed their money, an amount of Rs127. from each of them which, according to the swindler and fictitious employer, represent premium for insurance in case of injury on site of work.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it would seem that some of the young persons were even brought on different sites of work for five days and that they were not paid for such attendance.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, when it came out to the notice of the police authorities of the alleged swindling, an enquiry was immediately initiated and the swindler was, subsequently, arrested. The police is actually investigating into the matter.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, we are really saddened by the unwarranted distress caused to those unemployed by the loss of their time and money and we strongly advise the population to be very careful to those kinds of unscrupulous persons in future and to report any doubtful and dishonest transaction of this kind to the police straightaway.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, at our level, the Commission of Labour and Industrial Relations has been requested to investigate into the matter and to take any appropriate action that is warranted.

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

TREE PLANTING CAMPAIGN

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make a statement, with your permission, to inform Assembly that my Commission will soon start a Tree Planting Campaign throughout Rodrigues.

The objective of the Campaign is to sensitise and increase the awareness of our population on the need to protect biodiversity and to provide adequate tree cover around their houses and buildings.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, we want to promote the concept of Community Forestry in order to achieve our goal of making Rodrigues an ecological island.

The collaboration of NGOs such as the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation and the Rodrigues Council of Social Services will be sought in this respect.

At the first instance, the Campaign will target 30 villages throughout Rodrigues, which have been selected, as they are newly established morcellements or agglomerations with a high number of buildings that require additional greenery to increase their aesthetic value and physical appearance. Approximately 1,800 households will be concerned and a total of 6,000 endemic plants and ornamentals will be distributed.

The Campaign will continue throughout the year depending on the rainy season to eventually reach all villages in Rodrigues.

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

CHAPITEAU – PURCHASE

The Commissioner for Arts & Culture (Mrs. A. Perrine Begue):
Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make a statement on the “Chapiteau” since the question was before the House and at the same time I am clarifying a number of qualms that have been brought before the House during question time.

The “Chapiteau” was purchased for an all-inclusive price of Rs335,000 from funds donated to us by the Ministry of Arts and Culture. It is new equipment. The procedure laid down in the Financial Management Manual has been followed for the purchase, that is, quotations invited from suppliers and approved by the Departmental Quotation Committee.

The Supplier was the “*Maison de Prelarts*” of Port Louis, Mauritius which was the lowest bidder.

The “Chapiteau”, Mr Chairperson, Sir, was ordered in September 2004 and was not meant specifically for Festival Kreol purpose but to shelter

an itinerant monthly local and general knowledge circulation and cultural programme designed by my Commission scheduled to be launched in October 2004 but had been postponed to the 1st semester of this year. This activity has been scheduled to touch all parts of the island and, given our infrastructural constraints, almost all the infrastructures in Rodrigues are not, cannot cater for more than one hundred seat, it can only be organised under a “Chapiteau”. Furthermore the “Chapiteau” can also be used for other official functions accommodating some 300 guests seated and a podium with a band of 20 persons performing. This “Chapiteau” Mr Chairperson, Sir, will also be very, very critical to theatrical drama activities, *c’est-à-dire la promotion du théâtre*, development of drama in Rodrigues in the absence of a formal theatre pending the construction of same in the coming months.

Thank you so much.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move the Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 04 of March 2005 at 4 p.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr Chairperson: I understand that there are some members who would wish to intervene at this point in time.

The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety): Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Je voudrais parler de ce qui s’est passé hier à Rodrigues concernant 300 travailleurs qui ont été recrutés par un contracteur. Ils ont travaillé pendant une semaine sur différents sites à Baladirou, Gravières, Port Sud Est, Montagne Chérie. Les 300 travailleurs, qui ont été recrutés par quelqu’un, ont été organisés en cinq équipes pour travailler. Ces personnes n’ont pas été payés ; et hier ils se sont rassemblés à Mont Lubin. A un certain moment ils sont descendus à Port Mathurin pour protester leur mécontentement vis-à-vis de la police. Mais en réfléchissant, M. le président, et en collant les éléments, nous avons découvert que la personne qui a été arrêtée par la police n’aurait, de toute évidence, pas agi seule. Il y a un schéma, que je

voudrais expliquer ; et ce matin j'ai eu la confirmation de ce qui s'est passé et c'est ignoble que des dirigeants politiques aient pu mener en bateau un contracteur et les 300 personnes qui dépendent de lui. Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé, M. le président ? Ces travaux de pose de gros tuyaux, étaient en train d'être effectués par une compagnie qui faisait ces travaux ; et nous savons qu'il y a des contrats qui vont être donnés pour continuer ces travaux. Malheureusement les procédures n'ont pas été respectés et des politiciens élus ont dit à la compagnie de commencer à travailler.

Mr Chairperson: Take your seat, please. This is one of these things on which I would have to intervene and take the time, unfortunately, of this Assembly. Matters raised at adjournment time have to conform to rules of Houses; and one of these is you cannot deal with controversial matters. I cannot give you a list of all that you can say at this point in time, but this rule has to be applied.

Mr J. Roussety: Yes, thank you. So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the problem is a problem of society. When the company was supposed to receive the contract, those governing this company have been given instructions to a person in Rodrigues to recruit persons. But the person here has not been able to get the funds from the company to pay his workers. We are aware, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that instructions have been given to this company to start this work. But unfortunately as there was no contract and the contract needed a regular approval, they couldn't go ahead. So, the company decided to withdraw and leave that person alone; and then they said that this person is being accused of swindling. How can one person, Mr Chairperson, Sir, recruit 300 workers, buy sand, buy macadam, hire lorries have the plans – he has the plans for the works, Mr Chairperson, Sir – work during one week, cut down trees, remove rocks from all sides of Rodrigues? And they say that there are not aware!

Mr Chairperson: I would have to interrupt you. I inform you ...

Mr J. Roussety: Why are you interrupting me?

Mr Chairperson: This is my right. Take your seat, please.

Mr J. Roussety: I would like to finish my statement.

Mr Chairperson: I ask you to take your seat. I inform you and all members politely that no controversial matters should be introduced in

matters raised at adjournment time. You don't seem to abide by this ruling, and, if you are going to pursue in this direction, I'm going to stop you.

Mr J. Roussety: Maybe, you should give me a document.

Mr Chairperson: You cannot; you are not allowed to tell me what I have to do.

Mr J. Roussety: You know that I am a politician.

Mr Chairperson: I gave my ruling and you have to abide by it.

Mr J. Roussety: What should I say? Polite things, that these guys are very good guys, they are Gods; we should give them flowers. You want me to say this here.

Mr Chairperson: I am not going to enter into any controversial matters with you. You have to abide by my ruling.

Mr J. Roussety: You have been interrupting us a hundred times today.

Mr Chairperson: Yes and rightfully.

(Interruptions)

Mr J. Roussety: Let me finish. With your permission, I will continue.

Mr Chairperson: I would not give you permission now.

Mr J. Roussety: Remove me if you want. The information I have is that the Chief Commissioner gave instructions to the Finance Department to pay Rs500,000 and this has been

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please!

(Interruptions)

Mr J. Roussety: He gave instructions to pay Rs500,000.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: I order the Minority Leader to withdraw from the House. Serjeant-at-Arms, execute my orders

Mr J. Roussety : La section finance a refusé de payer, c'est pourquoi ils se sont retrouvés sur le pavé.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Chief Commissioner, please.

(Interruptions)

Order please!

At 14.55 the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Friday 04 of March at 4.00 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FESTIVAL KREOL – CHAPITEAU

(No. B/20) The Minority Leader (Mr J. Roussety) asked the Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, as regards the big top (chapiteau) used by her Commission for the last festival kreol on the site adjacent to the Central Administration Building, whether she will state –

- (a) if that item has been purchased or rented and, in any case, at which cost;
- (b) whether it is a new or used equipment, and
- (d) ©which procedures have been used to procure/rent same together with the name of the supplier and his address.

(Vide Statement by Commissioners)

SCHOOL FEEDING PROJECT – MONEY BUDGETED, ISSUE, ETC.

No. B/21) Mr A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education as regards the School Feeding Project in Rodrigues, would the Commissioner inform the House -

- (a) what is the amount of money budgeted for this project for financial year 2004/05;
- (b) what is the frequency of the issue of foodstuffs to primary school children;
- (c) how much money has been paid to the supplier so far, and
- (d) has there been any change in the supply of foodstuffs to school children and, if yes, why.

(Withdrawn)

NHDC PROJECTS – HOUSING UNITS, LOCALITIES, ETC.

(No. B/22) Mr A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether with regard to

National Housing Development Company (NHDC) projects in Rodrigues the Deputy Chief Commissioner could say –

- (a) how many housing units have been built so far and state their localities;
- (b) how many units have been completed so far and, if any, state reasons for the non-completion of others;
- (c) how many units have been allocated so far and what have been the criteria for allocation;
- (d) have any housing units been handed over to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and
- (e) what measures have been taken or envisaged concerning the plastic septic tanks damaged at the Citron Donis site following the recent rainy weather.

(Withdrawn)

NDU PROJECTS

(No. B/23) Mr A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, since the inception of Rodrigues Regional Assembly, any NDU (National Development Unit) project has been implemented in Rodrigues, if yes, name all the specific projects and if not, why not.

(Withdrawn)

RIVIÈRE COCO – ROAD REPAIRS, BRIDGE, ETC.

(No. B/24) Mr A. L. Emilien (First Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner with regard to the road leading to the cemetery in Rivière Coco, could the Commissioner say –

- (a) what is the state of the road present, and
- (b) what measures have been taken or envisaged for the repair of the bridge situated at the upper part of the village which had been severely damaged since long.

(Withdrawn)

CYCLONE KALUNDÉ – LOW COST HOUSES

(No. B/25) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the low cost houses built or to be built in the aftermath of cyclone Kalundé, he would state the progress of work by the end of December 2004.

(Withdrawn)

GAS (COOKING) – SHORTAGE

(No. B/26) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade and Commerce whether, he could state –

- (a) if there has been a shortage of domestic cooking gas in Rodrigues during the last three months and, if yes, why, and
- (b)** whether any promoter has expressed his wish to fill gas in Rodrigues.

(Withdrawn)

WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/27) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner –

- (a) whether, with regard to water in Rodrigues he would state the volume and percentage of surface and underground water;
- (b) whether the impact of using underground water permanently has been evaluated and if so, what are the findings, and
- (c) what measures he is contemplating to reduce dependence on underground water.

(Withdrawn)

AGRICULTURE – MECHANICAL SERVICES

(No. B/28) Mr J. C. Agathe (Second Local Region Member for Marechal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the promotion of agriculture in Rodrigues, he would state –

- (a) since 1st July 2004, what are the facilities in terms of mechanical services given to the planters;
- (b) the number of demand for such services received and the number of demand met with dates and amounts paid and the acreage involved in each case, and
- (c) what other measures he is contemplating to help Rodriguans who are involved in agriculture (crops only).

(Withdrawn)

ANSE RAFFIN DAM - WORKS

(No. B/29) Mr J. Pierre Louis (The Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the Anse Raffin Dam, he would inform the House whether same has been completed and handed over to Rodrigues Regional Assembly and if not, what further works have to be done.

(Vide reply to Question B/18)

EASTERN REGION - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/30) Miss J. L. Castel (The Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner with regard to water distribution in the Eastern region, whether he would make a statement on the proposed development of the water network there.

Reply: With regard to the water distribution in the Eastern region, I would like to inform the House of the proposed development of the water network in that region. As you may be aware Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Petit Brulée Reservoir is a central pivot where all the harvested water is being transited prior to distribution to other reservoirs in that region. It is, therefore, a must that such water be rapidly and effectively delivered to other

reservoir in that region. In that context, my Commission has launched tenders for the installation of two primary networks as follows -

- (1) A primary network linking Petit Brulée reservoir to Roche Bon Dieu reservoir and the reservoir at Grenade as well as the one at Mt. Piquant.
- (2) Another network to link Petit Brulée via Coromandel reservoir to Mt. Cabris Est reservoir.

After completion of those two primary networks, it is believed that the water distribution in those regions will be greatly facilitated.

PAVÉ LA BONTÉ - DAM - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/31) Mr L. P. François (The First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards the construction of a new dam at Pavé La Bonté, would the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House -

- (a) whether a feasibility study has been made for that purpose;
- (b) and if yes, when it was submitted to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and
- (c) assuming that the report is positive, does the Commissioner intend to go ahead with the project?

Reply: A regards the construction of a new dam at Pavé La Bonté, I am informed that a feasibility study was carried out and submitted to the Executive Council of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in July 2004. The Executive Council has decided to proceed with the project. The tender documents are being worked out by the Consultant and the tender is expected to be out by the end of April 2005.

FISHERMEN (OFF-LAGOON) - REGISTRATION

(No. B/32) Mr L. P. François (The First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the registration of off-lagoon fishermen, would the Chief Commissioner inform the House about the number of such cases registered to date and whether there has been any modification in the procedures.

Reply: There are presently 1974 cases which have been registered as professional fishers, out of which 244 are restricted to the off-lagoon fishing. The normal procedure for registration requires a monitoring period of 6 months of the fishing activities of the applicant by Fisheries Officers after which a registration card may be issued.

I would like to inform the Assembly that it is not the policy of the Executive Council to continue with the registration of fishermen to operate in the lagoon as the latter is experiencing severe over-exploitation pressure. Instead, fishermen are being encouraged to venture into the off-lagoon fishing activities.

Appropriate loan facilities have been set up by Government at the Development Bank of Mauritius to enable registered fishermen who want to venture in the off-lagoon fishing activities to contract loan at concessionary interest rate of 3% per annum with one year moratorium to purchase appropriate boat and equipment.

We have noted that the normal registration procedure which requires a 6 month monitoring period is not appropriate for non-registered but experienced fishermen, especially those who practice the bank fishing. Since they are not registered, these fishermen cannot obtain loan facilities at the DBM under the Off-Lagoon Fishing Scheme and they cannot start their fishing activities.

With a view to easing up their eligibility to the loan facilities and in line with our policy to promote off-lagoon fishery, the Executive Council has decided to review the registration procedures. Henceforth, genuine fishermen who intend to apply for a loan at the DBM under the Off-lagoon fishing scheme and who produce documentary evidence proving their experience, the monitoring period of 6 months of their fishing activities by Fisheries officers is not applicable and will be granted a Registration Card to obtain their loan facilities.

The payment of a bad weather allowance under this registration card is conditional to the acquisition of boat and equipment under the off-lagoon fishing scheme at the DBM and is payable one month after the start of the off-lagoon fishing activity provided the fisherman satisfies the usual criteria of 50% attendance of the normal fishing days for the month and lands his catch on a fish landing station.