

PAPERS

The Chief Commissioner: **"The Accounts of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year ended 30th June, 2005"**.

QUESTIONS (ORAL)

Chairperson: The Fourth Island Region Member.

ROAD TRAFFIC DURING THE WEEKS PRECEDING THE END OF YEAR FESTIVITIES

B/208 The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr. PIERRE-LOUIS) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he could inform the House whether his Commission intends to close temporarily certain streets in Port Mathurin to vehicular traffic during the period of end of year festivities as a matter of security to allow shoppers to move safely and freely?

Chairperson: Yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to question B/208, I presided a Road Safety Committee on 2nd December, 2005 and the committee took the decision to close temporarily certain streets in Port Mathurin to traffic as was the case over the past years to allow shoppers to move safely and freely. In that context, the following streets will be closed to traffic as from 12th December, 2005 to 31st December, 2005 as from 9.00 a.m to 16.00 hours:

- (a) Rue de la Solidarité; from Cassam's Shop up to near Rodrigues College;
- (b) Rue Mamzelle Julia; from the Granary to near Galaxy Shop; and
- (c) Rue Adibhai Fatemamode from new office block to Administration building.

It has been, further, decided that the first three (3) streets named earlier will be closed until 23 hours or earlier depending upon circumstances on the 24th and 31st December, 2005.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I thank the Deputy Chief Commissioner for the measures taken and I would ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether

in his Commission, they are prepared to provide parking space for the public?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as mentioned on the radio, it has been said that the reclaimed land in Port Mathurin will be used as parking for vehicles.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, could the Commissioner state what are the reasons behind so many vehicles coming to Port Mathurin everyday?

Chairperson: Well, it's a little bit far from the question. Yes, reword the question, please.

Mr. Agathe: Yes, yes, I'll make it clear, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The reason for so many vehicles coming to Port Mathurin is for fueling. I would ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner if he could consider either to transfer the filling station or having another filling station in the rural areas so that people's vehicles can be refueled better.

Chairperson: Yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will ask the member to come with a question on this issue.

Chairperson: So we move to the next, the First Local Region Member.

UPGRADING OF SAINT FRANCOIS PUBLIC BEACH

B/209 The First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres (Mr. FRANCOIS) asked the Chief Commissioner, as regards the upgrading of Saint François public beach, could the Commissioner inform the House

- (a) about the scope of work;
- (b) when work is due to start; and
- (c) whether the site will be closed to the public as a matter of security when work will be in progress?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the information is as follows:

(a) The project for the upgrading of the public beach at St. François consists mainly of the construction of infrastructural facilities and the scope of the works includes:-

- (i) construction of entrance kiosk, changing rooms, public toilet in blockwall, reinforced concrete slab and profiled sheetings with

all timber works and services;

- (ii) construction of a Fish Landing Station;
- (iii) construction of external works, walkways, septic tank and soak-aways; and
- (iv) construction of retaining wall to the existing natural drain.
Parking areas, a bus terminal and plots reserved for agriculture have also been planned.

(b) The whole site was handed over to the Contractor on 30th November, 2005. The Contractual commencement date is set up as at 14th December, 2005 and the whole of the works should be completed within 210 calendar days, that is, 14th July 2006.

Mr. Grandcourt: M. le Président, je voudrais demander au Chef Commissaire, le fait qu'il a dit que les travaux vont commencer vers le 14 décembre – si j'ai bien compris – est-ce qu'il croit que c'est bien vu, le fait qu'il y a des festivités la fin de l'année tout ça, de commencer un travaux sur une plage à la fin de l'année, vers le 14 décembre ? Est-ce que ça n'empêcherait pas les gens d'aller fêter sur la plage et puis il y a d'autres activités qui peuvent être faites sur cette plage ?

Chief Commissioner : M. le Président, nous avons un plan de travail, donc, il y a un budget qui a été prévu pour ce projet, donc, il y a eu un appel d'offre, il y a eu des règlements qui dit qu'il faut remettre le site à partir de telle date et que le travail doit commencer. Cependant, il est aux risques des personnes d'aller sur cette plage. Mais les gens peuvent y aller, c'est à leurs risques et périls, mais ne pas venir sur la partie où les travaux vont être faits. Donc, il y a toute une partie de la plage, la plage elle-même, le sable et une partie de la plage, où les gens peuvent aller. Mais il va y avoir des clôtures pour empêcher à ce que les voitures – l'autre jour on a vu, malgré ça, au lieu de mettre leurs voitures au bord de la route, ils sont partis à l'intérieur avec leurs voitures – ce sont de mauvaises habitudes des gens, on ne sait pas pourquoi, de vouloir tout dégrader nos plages. Donc, il y a la possibilité pour les gens d'aller sur les plages et aller du côté des plages mais pas à l'intérieur où les travaux vont être faits. Nous avons des engagements et nous ne pouvons pas retarder un travail qui a été fait, qui a été commencé et selon les règlements, le travail doit être fait, doit être commencé à partir de telle date.

Mr. Jabeemissar : M. le Président, je voudrais demander au Chef Commissaire, étant donné l'importance de la plage à Saint Francois, si les travaux qu'il a mentionnés, qui vont être commencés bientôt, vont débiter sur tout le long de la plage ou bien sur quelle partie de la plage ; s'il n'y a pas moyen pour que une partie de cette plage soit vraiment clôturée pour ne pas

entraver les travaux, ou laisser l'autre partie de la plage libre aux pique-niqueurs, surtout en cette période festive ?

Chief Commissioner : M. le Président, quand on a remis un site à un contracteur, c'est au contracteur de limiter l'espace sur lequel il va travailler. Nous avons ici, je soumets ici un plan des travaux qui vont être faits (Appendix A) – peut-être ça pourrait donner une idée aux les honorables membres et donc, il faut quand même, même si, que ce soit cette année-ci, même si on commençait l'année prochaine, dont, il va y avoir quand même, des moments où une plage sera mobilisée pour les constructions. Après Saint François, nous irons à Pointe Coton. Ça va être un peu la même chose, mais je dis que il y a un travail à faire, donc c'est aux gens de voir. Il n'y a pas simplement Saint François, il y a Pointe Coton, il y a Gravières, il y a Mourouck ; donc ; les gens peuvent aller sur ces plages. Mais à voir des quantités de gens sur nos plages sur les sites où les travaux vont se faire, donc c'est assez difficile. C'est très difficile et le contracteur a l'engagement et doit terminer les travaux, et nous, selon les règlements du contrat, on doit remettre le site et le travail doit commencer à telle date.

Minority Leader : M. le Président, cet aspect d'exclure le public d'une plage, d'un site où un contracteur fait des travaux, est-ce que c'est un aspect qui s'applique aux plages ou bien c'est un aspect général ?

Chief Commissioner : M. le Président, c'est à tous les sites, à tous les sites qu'on donne ; le public n'a pas accès à ces sites. Parce que c'est une question de sécurité. Si quelqu'un vient sur ces sites et c'est pourquoi en principe, les contracteurs, ils clôturent l'espace sur lequel ils vont travailler. C'est une question de sécurité. Quand vous voyez M. le Président, à Maurice, il y a une plaque de coffrage qui est tombée d'en haut, qui est tombée sur la tête d'une personne et qui a tué une personne, donc, c'est une question de sécurité. Alors, si demain quelqu'un pénètre dans l'espace qui est alloué pour les travaux et s'il lui arrive quelque chose, c'est aux risques et périls de cette personne. Mais il appartient au contracteur de clôturer l'espace sur lequel il va travailler. Et c'est pourquoi nous disons que les gens peuvent avoir accès à la plage, mais pas sur le site. Et ça c'est au contracteur de délimiter le site de son travail, soit par des clôtures, soit par une corde, c'est à lui de voir. Mais nous ne pouvons pas, nous, aller dire que c'est partout ça. C'est une question de sécurité.

Minority Leader : M. le Président, est-ce que le Chef Commissaire est au courant que le Mouvement Rodriguais a déposé une demande pour l'utilisation de cette plage, le lieu de Saint François, qui traditionnellement, ainsi que Pointe Coton, Saint François, Gravières, Mourouck, en début d'année, M. le Président, sont utilisées comme des plages publiques pour soit des pique-niques ou des activités ayant lieu au festivités de fin d'année et début d'année. Je voudrais demander au Chef Commissaire, quand le Mouvement a

déposé sa motion et quand le contracteur qu'il parle a décidé de fermer le site, je ne sais pas quoi, les restrictions qu'il a dites, les restrictions mises d'après vous, d'après le Chef Commissaire sur ce site ? When MR deposited its demand, its request for the use of that site and when the contractor took possession of the site and that the... I'm still speaking, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when the decision to restrict access to the public was taken?

Chief Commissioner: M. le Président, I need notice of this question because I don't have the information about the question put to me concerning this request for the use of Saint François public beach. Mais ce que je sais, nous suivons, nous suivons depuis plusieurs mois, et presque tous les mois, nous avons des séances de travail avec les techniciens à propos des appels d'offre, à propos de l'entrée et l'évaluation des contrats et quand il faut allouer ces contrats. C'est là-dessus que nous travaillons. Ce qui vient à côté de cela, ça, évidemment, doit tenir compte de travaux que nous avons entrepris sur tel ou tel site. Il ne sera pas simplement pour une plage, ça peut être aussi pour une école où il y a des travaux, ça peut être aussi pour n'importe quelle autre plage aussi. Nous ne tenons pas compte des demandes des gens, les demandes des gens, c'est à côté. Donc, il y a des travaux à faire, et selon ce qui est écrit dans le budget, nous avons des travaux à faire et ça aussi, justement, M. le Président, et c'est comme la même chose que Madame avait fait un rassemblement des enfants à Malabar et nous avons dit au contracteur, « il faut que tout soit nettoyé à la fin de notre contrat », pas un bout de planche, pas un bout de l'échafaudage et ainsi de suite et que le projet soit remis avant et qu'il n'y ait pas de risques pour la sécurité des personnes à Malabar. Et c'est tout ça, M. le Président, il n'y a pas de question de telle affaire de demande et ainsi de suite, c'est à propos, par rapport au projet et la continuité du projet, ce que nous suivons, nous suivons le projet pas à pas jusqu'à sa réalisation.

Minority Leader : M. le Président, le plan que le Chef Commissaire a présenté date de *January 2005*. Et c'est en janvier 2006 maintenant, que le Chef Commissaire veut faire des travaux. Maintenant je voudrais demander, je vois les plans, je ne suis pas architecte, mais je vois une route qu'on devait faire – proposed bus terminal, alignment of field, parking, reserve area for agriculture, parking, etc – *all this has already been done*.

Can I ask why is it now that part of the work is going to carry on again ? The work has been closed, according to this plan, there was a road, the road has been built, why is it now that they want to go ahead again with the extension of the works? Why have the works not been completed once and for all?

Chief Commissioner: Oh la la! M. le Président, c'est un projet en deux phases. La première phase c'était la construction de la route, en 2004/2005, et la deuxième phase, c'est 2005/2006. Mais parce qu'une question d'argent.

(Interruptions)

Mr. Agathe : Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Chairperson: Yes, time is up for this question, I will allow the last one.

Mr. Agathe: Yes. In Mauritius, in the Republic of Mauritius we have an authority, what we call the Beach Authority Act 2002. The Beach Authority Act 2002 takes into consideration the management and control of public beaches in Mauritius and Rodrigues. And, according to the Board, there is a Board; there is a representative of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on the Board. Now, I would ask the Chief Commissioner whether the powers, the powers of the authority have been delegated to his Commission.

Chief Commissioner: M. le Président, question of powers, Beach Authority, le Beach Authority gère les plages ou bien construit des plages. Nous ici, nous avons l'environnement, et l'environnement concerne les plages, concerne tout le pays. Nous avons le « *policy* » en ce qui concerne l'aménagement de l'environnement. L'aménagement des plages, laissez-moi vous dire, M. le Président – le Beach Authority est venu ici l'autre jour, a remis un cheque de Rs 75,000 – « *eski ou capav faire ène zafair avek Rs 75,000 ?* ». Est-ce qu'on peut faire un projet avec Rs 75,000, hein ? Alors, M. le Président, excusez-moi, cette histoire de toujours avoir l'autorisation de Maurice et ainsi de suite et d'ailleurs on a mis, oui je sais que vous présentez ça, mais nous avons le droit, nous, d'aménager notre pays au niveau de l'environnement, nous avons l'autorité, le pouvoir d'aménager notre pays au niveau de l'environnement. Et si le Beach Authority, est-ce que le Beach Authority va nous financer Rs 7 m pour l'aménagement d'une plage à Rodrigues ? Alors si on allait attendre le Beach Authority, eh bien à ce moment-là, peut-être le Beach Authority est même content quand ils sont venus l'autre jour, des dispositions qu'on est en train de prendre de notre côté pour pouvoir aménager les plages et autres.

Chairperson : Yes, next. The First Local Region Member.

**"CENTRE DE FORMATION" FOR FOOTBALL
FOR YOUNG CHILDREN**

B/210 The First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres (Mr. FRANCOIS) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports, whether, as regards the "*Centre de Formation*" for football in Rodrigues for young Children, the Commissioner could inform the House

- (a) about the number of children attending the courses at present and their age group;
- (b) the number of children who left the "*Centre de Formation*" at the age of 15; and

(c) what his Commission intends to do for the leavers?

Commissioner Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, presently, there are ten "*ecoles de foot*" which are providing training to some 500 youths around the island. I have been informed that about some 100 of them, aged 15 years old are leaving these "*ecoles*" every year and it is impossible for the only existing "*centre de formation*" to absorb all of them. The existing "*centre de formation*" is able to accommodate only 25 young "*stagiaires*" for the time being. As they are still very young, these youths find it hard to integrate a team at the regional, second or first division level and some of them are thrown out of the system

With a view to allowing a continuity in the training of these adolescents and to prevent loss of resources, both financially and humanly, my Commission is moving forward with the setting up of two additional "*centres de formation*". The three (3) "*centres de formation*" will be located in the eastern, western, and northern parts of Rodrigues and will accommodate some 75 young footballers. It is hoped that this measure will upgrade the level of football in the medium term as these "*centres de formation*" will act as feeders for the different teams in their respective regions in coming years. The "*stagiaires*" will be trained in these "*centres de formation*" up to the age of 18, when they will be physically and technically mature to integrate any team. The project is expected to start by January 2006 and an estimated amount of about Rs 200,000 will be used for the purchase of equipment and other facilities for the start of the project.

Mr. Chairperson: Next.

DECREASE IN THE PRICE OF THE MAURITIAN SUGAR

B/211 The Second Local Region Member for Maréchal (Mr. AGATHE) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the major decrease in the guaranteed price of the Mauritian sugar that is from about Rs 19,000 to about Rs 11,578 per ton by the year 2009/2010, he would state how this decision will affect Rodrigues and the steps taken by the Regional Assembly in collaboration with the central authorities to diversify the economy?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the information is as follows:-

As members are aware, the sugar industry will be greatly affected in terms of revenue from the reduction in the price of sugar obtained from the European Union and this will have an adverse effect on the economy.

However, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 provides clear criteria for the allocation of financial resources to Rodrigues and these are enshrined in the Act at Section 46. The Central government gives due consideration to the financial and development needs of Rodrigues and takes into account,

among others, the following criteria:-

- (a) the physical separation of Rodrigues from the island of Mauritius;
- (b) its isolation from the principal national growth centres;
- (c) the absence of multiplier effect from expenditures and investments (private and public) in Mauritius;
- (d) the restricted opportunities for employment and career fulfillment in Rodrigues;
- (e) the lack of sustained development in Rodrigues;
- (f) the special needs of Rodrigues in terms of accelerated development; and
- (g) the state of public finance and the economy of Mauritius in general.

As in the past, consultations will be held with the Central Government regarding our proposals for the forthcoming budgets and our priorities for the sustainable development of the island. Rodrigues is part of the Welfare State of the Republic of Mauritius and the RRA acts on behalf of government to extend all welfare services to the population as a whole. With a view to continuing to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship, the Rodriguan population is called upon to increase productivity in all sectors of the economy and in particular the tourism, fishing, agriculture, agro processing, livestock and SME's sectors. The regional government will facilitate, by all means, the integrated and sustainable development of the island.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards the contribution of Rodrigues in the budget, would the Commissioner state whether the revenue collected in Rodrigues, whether it has been increased or decreased since autonomy?

Chief Commissioner: No tax has been levied on any items in any sectors, except what has been voted here in the regulations last year.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has just said in his reply, that the government of Mauritius is giving due consideration to Rodrigues. Does it mean that here in Rodrigues, the regional government is going to content itself with that, or doesn't he think that it is – he has talked about *“ses droit tout à l'heure quand on parlait de l'environnement”* – but what is our duty here? Are we going to content ourselves with the money which is given to us by the Central Government or are we here, in this country, going to

do something to increase our revenue?

Chief Commissioner: Well, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, revenues have mainly come from the entrepreneurship sectors, tourism, as I said and the population is called upon to increase productivity in agriculture, fishing, agro-processing, livestock, SMEs sectors. Well, in Mauritius also we see guidance which has been given to the private sector or to local authorities. It is said that to adopt measures to ensure sustainable public finances, the existing economic base will need to be strengthened to enhance productive capacity in key areas like agriculture, fishing, tourism and SMEs. Yesterday, I received a delegation on fisheries policy in Mauritius and Rodrigues and Mr. Hanoomanjee, one of the members of the delegation, told me we'll discuss about what will be the economy of Mauritius in the future. He just said this question of fishing, when tourism, where SMEs, so the population of Mauritius and Rodrigues are now invited to get involved in economic activities.

Mrs. Prosper: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I should like to ask the Chief Commissioner, what is being done to attract investors?

Chief Commissioner: Well, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, everyday, every week, we have people from Mauritius coming to invest in Rodrigues and we've discussed all this. Yes, we have just received a fax from someone saying that there are consultants and people are likely..... Well, we say two weeks ago a delegation of investors who would like to invest in fishing in Rodrigues. I think now and then we are having people interested in Rodrigues and the main problem, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are people in Rodrigues, who, I think, would like to be much more professional in the approach concerning the business in Rodrigues and this comes from our system of education or training at large and it seems that those coming from abroad would like to have Rodriguans participate in their investment in Rodrigues.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner just said earlier that people in Rodrigues are being called upon to get involved in economic activity. But what is the regional government putting at the disposal of these people as facilities in agriculture, in fishing, in SMEs, so that these people get really involved in these economic activities?

Chief Commissioner: Well, we have taken a lot of initiatives to encourage people in off-lagoon fishing and through the IFAD project, because we are paying the loan for IFAD. In agriculture also, we are trying to hand, my colleague is going to hand over planter's card and there will be a professional following of those planters and we are also talking about the question of irrigation. This question, I think, must be taken into great interest because of the irrigation and we would like to introduce a new system of irrigation; the drip system and the question also of training the planters. We are also looking at the different projects on breeding - we have about, a quite number of

projects on breeding – the planner is looking on different areas when breeding can be done, especially pig breeding and poultry breeding, because there is a question of environment. And we are also going ahead with the agro-industries company. And agro-industries, as you know, in Mauritius now, the Ministry of Forest and Agro-Industry, so that we are going forward also with this training centre at St Gabriel and this also is a good thing and also I think it's a question of the system of education. We are trying to go ahead with the, we have already started with a group of teachers, on a question of "*orientation professionnel*" in secondary schools. I think all this question of interest of productivity and engaging to business in Rodrigues, it's a question of how we can change the mindset of the young people in our colleges so that they can get involved in those different projects to enhance the economy of Rodrigues.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner is talking about Rodrigues. But, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would remind the Chief Commissioner that we are living in a global village now and we must think globally. We have in the Indian Ocean what we call the Indian Ocean Rim, the Indian Ocean Commission. Would the Chief Commissioner send representatives or memoranda to the Prime Minister about what we can do in Rodrigues about, for example, trade comparative, things that we, we can do in Rodrigues itself.

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have made a request to the Prime Minister's Office so that Rodrigues can participate in all those economic blocs in the Indian Ocean and Africa, the SADC, la COI or any other economic blocs and even Rodrigues is represented in all, what we call, all the different organisations in Rodrigues, where my colleague in agriculture has presented on the Non-Sugar Strategic Sector. And we are involved in that, we are getting involved in all the different committees, all different co-ordination committees concerning Rodrigues and we are working very closely with different organisations in Rodrigues, under different ministries, especially the Ministry of Agriculture and now I think that we are going ahead. But the best way to go ahead with that is that we train the people to be integrated in this policy for the future.

Chairperson: Next. Same member.

CENTRE FO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AT BAIE AUX HUITRES

B/212 The Second Local Region Member for Maréchal (Mr. AGATHE) asked the Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Women's Affairs, Family Welfare, Community Development, etc, whether, with regard to the proposed centre for victims at Baie aux Huîtres, he could state

- (a) the amount earmarked for the centre;

- (b) what will be the strength and nature of the staff that will provide service to the centre;
- (c) when it is proposed to make the centre operational; and
- (d) whether she has explored other alternatives to this strategy?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

Provision of Rs 500,000 is made in 2005-2006 Recurrent Estimates under item 04-102.230 for the shelter of victims of domestic violence at Oyster Bay.

As it is done in Mauritius, two (2) Family Welfare and Protection Officers, are those, according to law, habilitated to determine the persons who should be admitted to the shelter. These officers start the legal procedures at the level of my Commission, for the admission of those persons and oversee the day-to-day management of the shelter. A Clerical Officer will be posted full-time at the centre. He will be assisted by eight (8) Caretakers on roster (two (2) during the day and two (2) at night. The staff may be increased depending on the number of victims who would be admitted to the Centre. Arrangements have been made for the Nursing Officer of Oyster Bay Dispensary to call at the shelter whenever his services are required there. Security services will be available round the clock (one (1) officer during the day and two (2) at night). The Police will effect regular patrols in the neighbourhood. Four (4) of the caretakers as well as two (2) Family Welfare and Protection Officers have received training at 2 shelters in Mauritius. The shelter will be operational before the end of December 2005. The law provides for victims of domestic violence to be sent to shelters following an emergency protection order for short periods, pending the determination of their cases by the court. Certain victims, e.g babies and small children, may have to be kept for longer periods in the absence of convents or orphanages in Rodrigues. My Commission has taken steps to set up foster families (*familles d'accueil*) in Rodrigues to take care of victims of domestic violence neglected or abandoned children. As regard prevention, an "*Association de Soutien aux Victimes de Violence Domestique*" has been set up since last year and the members of that association as well as benevolent social workers and the staff of my Commission have received formal training at workshops conducted by professionals.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, would the Commissioner state whether both men and women would attend the centre?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the second phase of the shelter, some space will be allocated for men. But as we are all aware and I have explained here many times, all the statistics prove that women and

children are those who suffer domestic violence. These are truth around the world, in Mauritius and in Rodrigues, so that to start the project, we are starting with women and children.

Mr. Grandcourt: M. le Président, Madame la Commissaire a parlé de familles d'accueil. Est-ce qu'elle peut élaborer un peu plus là-dessus, nous expliquer comment est-ce que ça va se faire et comment les enfants vont être accueillis dans ces familles ?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are working on the project at present; I, myself, I have it next to my bed, hein, I am working on the file since a number of weeks. In fact there is a law which governs the "*familles d'accueil*"; there is a call for people who are interested into accepting these families. And then there are inquiries, I don't have all the information, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, but if the respected member wants to come with the – you know – a separate question, I would be more than happy to give him all the necessary information.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the centre is used to be opened so many times. But I would ask the Commissioner, what are the reasons behind, why the centre was not opened till now?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: In fact, we started monitoring the project since January, but we have not given the contract for this project. People, technicians and workers from the Public Infrastructure, are working on this site. And we had fixed the date for inauguration on the very day of International Day Against Domestic Violence, i.e on the 25th of November, but unfortunately we have had a last moment of problems, especially with the veranda so that we have preferred – we could have opened it – but there would have been some leakage of water, which has been found lately by the engineer so that finally we are trying to correct the problem on site and have delayed the inauguration for two weeks.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we know where the centre is found, it is in a forest. Does the Commissioner consider the centre, the proposed centre as safe for victims?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I must say that the ombudsperson publicly said on the radio, that she is very happy with the location as well as the way the shelter is. Everybody who wanted to hear must have heard the intervention of the ombudsperson, it was clear, I myself, I heard it. She went there with my officers as well as myself and my Departmental Head; she went inside the shelter and what she approved, appreciated mostly about this project, is that it is found in an environment which will allow children to play, etc. Whereas in Mauritius, these shelters, they are generally kept hidden so that those who are after their victims do not

go there to meet these persons and in Rodrigues, we well know that Rodrigues is large like a hand, so that we will not be able to put the shelter somewhere and keep it a secret. We have chosen to, we have chosen, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to construct the shelter and on the other hand, to insist on security. We have discussed, I have discussed with the C.O.P and there has been communication between the C.O.P of Rodrigues and the Commissioner of Police as regards whether we will be having police in the shelter; because it was considered even in Mauritius. But then, it has been seen that, for the dignity of these persons who are inside, who are not prisoners, it's best that we put private security, and we would be insisting on private security; early in the morning, one (1) officer, as I mentioned, and two (2) officers during the night. I will say that we have also constructed, erected a fencing with barbed wire at its end, and I don't know the height but I know that we considered it as very important for the security of these persons.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, would the Commissioner give a little bit more detail about the facilities offered to the victims; babies as well as women, inside the center itself?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Yes, you will see that since we do not have all the Family Welfare and Protection Officers, so many as in Mauritius; I think there they are twenty-two (22) and I still have posts which are vacant, awaiting for appropriate candidates. We have, in the meantime, recruited caretakers. Caretakers are expected to give supervision, cooking, preparing and serving meals to these persons, ensuring that rules and regulations of the shelter are adhered to by inmates, controlling, having regular checks on inmates, especially at night, providing emotional support and information to the inmates, identifying, following up any irregularity of problem and taking remedial measures promptly, providing help to inmates who are not in good health or are wounded physically and referring the matter to Health Centre, hospital in case inmates require medical care and providing care and assistance to inmates who are handicapped, ensuring that inmates are well-cared for and ensuring cleanliness and security for the inmates, contributing and participating actively in the day-to-day running of the shelter, because we would be asking those who do not have any physical or health problem to give a helping hand to the caretakers, carrying out educational creativity outdoor activities and here, the "*Association de Soutien aux Victimes de Violence*" will give a helping hand; they have just been trained and I am happy that one of the members found the course so interesting that he stayed during the whole course, performing laundry duties, cleaning of premises, carrying out such duties as may be assigned by the Officer in charge of the shelter. That is it. So, I would like to say that we have also, on top of all these duties that are expected of persons who would look after these persons, these inmates, we have also asked for a clerical officer, full-time, to look after these caretakers and we will be asking the two (2) Family Welfare and Protection Officers to oversee, so that they will take their transport and go and

oversee what the clerical officer is doing in terms of management and what is happening and there would be a nursing officer of Baie aux Huîtres who will be looking after these persons.

Chairperson: Next question.

THE RECENT PRB REPORT

B/213 The Second Local Region Member for Maréchal (Mr. AGATHE) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the recent PRB report, he would state

- (a) the number of new posts created since, and whether all these posts have been filled accordingly, and, if not, state the reason therefor; and
- (b) the number of workers on actingship and since when; and table the relevant data for parts (a) and (b)?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the number of posts created following recommendation made by the PRB amount to six and that only one (1) post has been filled up to now. The five other vacancies have not been filled due to the fact that the schemes of service for these posts have not yet been prescribed. Five officers are being paid ad-hoc allowance for performing the duties of the five vacant posts. The effective date of assignment was the 1st July 2004 for four (4) of them whereas the fifth one was since 1st July 2005. **I am tabling the relevant data with regard to the grade, the number of posts, the date it was created and other information related thereto. (Appendix B)**

Mr. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner, since he said that the schemes of service have not yet been prescribed, so I would like to ask him, who is supposed to prescribe these schemes of service?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it's another process. The process first of preparing the schemes of service, sending it to the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Civil Service Affairs send those schemes of duties to different trade Unions; for Rodrigues we have about three, the GSA, the two others in Rodrigues and sometimes the different trade Unions give different opinions or correct schemes of service and those who are sent to the Civil Service Affairs, are again discussed, and the Civil Service Affairs, you know, now return this to us for our approval, and if it approves and sent back to the Civil Service Affairs to be prescribed. This sometimes takes a long time. That depends on when the scheme of service had been prepared. Sometimes it is prepared very early as seen here, a scheme of service, sometimes of 2004 July,

July, August, August 2004 and August 2005. That depends and sometimes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I must say, the different ministers in Mauritius, they have also changed. When we had worked our scheme of service according to existing schemes of service in Mauritius, sometimes there are some amendments. And now the different ministries of Mauritius have now changed their original schemes of service and that's why it takes some time for us again to readjust to the new scheme of service in Mauritius. As we say, all these are in process and the different posts, the persons who are going to be, have been proposed by the PRB, the different posts, they are receiving ad-hoc allowance relating to the post.

Mr. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may be the Chief Commissioner has not been quite clear in his answer. But does this mean that the scheme of service is prepared originally in Rodrigues and then sent to Mauritius? Is this the case?

Chief Commissioner: It's the duty of the Departmental Heads to prepare the scheme of service. Usually the preparation of the scheme of service is based on the scheme of service existing in Mauritius. But there are certain amendments in the scheme of service in Mauritius so that we can put the scheme in the Rodriguan context. And also according to the qualifications, to the work to be executed and this is being sent to the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and this is a long process. I've been, when I was minister in the past, it took a long time; three years sometimes; Mr. Vithilingem is here, the Clerk of the public service. Sometimes it takes three years to finalise a scheme of service, whereas when I see there, some of the schemes of service had started last year and since now we are working on it and it seems, according to information, all the others will be prescribed in a short time. Thank you.

Chairperson: Time is up. Yes, last question.

Mr. Agathe: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, here, I have a copy; I see that the officer in charge – we have two officers in charge – one for forestry and one for fisheries. They are both officers in charge and if you have a look at the recommendation of the PRB, it is a great, i.e for example for the forestry; it is the grade of officer in charge forestry to be in proportionate to the officers in the grade of Forest Ranger. We have only one Forest Ranger, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. So, how is it that only the fisheries one has been prescribed and not for the officer in charge for forestry?

Chief Commissioner: Well, the proposed scheme of service was submitted to the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs with the establishment form on the 20th November, 2003. This is establishment, this is administration. Whereas the establishment clearance, I say, establishment clearance for the forestry was obtained on the 10th August, 2004 for the creation of the post by the CFA. The proposals submitted on the 21st December, 2004, for the restyling of the post of

Forest Ranger into that of officer in charge in Forestry to facilitate recruitment procedures was not approved, it was not approved for the restyling of the post from Forest Ranger to officer in charge. Now, there has been also, we must say, you all know that we have come here with statements concerning the Rodrigues Civil Establishment Order, there has been a period where we had to work out the Rodrigues Civil Establishment Order and no recruitment and no promotion was done during that period. It took about six months or seven months to work out this Rodrigues Civil Establishment Order. That's why the prescription of those schemes of duties have suffered a little delay or a lot of delay. Thank you.

Chairperson: Next, same member.

**INCIDENT WHICH HAPPENED DURING A 2nd DIVISION
FOOTBALL MATCH AT GRANDE MONTAGNE**

B/214 The Second Local Region Member for Maréchal (Mr. AGATHE) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports whether, with regard to the incident which happened during a 2nd Division football match at Grande Montagne recently, where there was an aggression on a football referee, he would state whether Grande Montagne is still a safe place for playing football and give the reasons therefor?

Commissioner Lisette: Mr. chairperson, Sir, I am informed that an incident took place on 25th November, 2005 at Grande Montagne, whereby a football referee was aggressed after a football match. A case was registered at the Police and an inquiry is still underway. Following the incident, a meeting was held with my Commission, the Police, the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee and the Referee Association. All the partners unanimously agreed that violence during football matches should be dealt with most urgently as it is still at its teething stage in Rodrigues. A series of measures were proposed to provide more safety during football matches and these include:

- (a) to increase the presence of Police officers during the last 15 minutes of every match;
- (b) to reinforce the presence of Police during certain matches as it is noted that there are spectators and fans from specific teams who cause trouble;
- (c) to upgrade the fencing around the football ground; and
- (d) to have sensitisation campaigns and regular meetings with the "*dirigeants*" of football teams by the Referees Association to inform them of latest changes on referees' rules.

In light of the measures envisaged to be taken, I am of the view that football matches can still safely be played at Grande Montagne football ground. In fact, as per discussion held during the meeting, football matches were to be resumed on Wednesday 14th December, 2006.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is a problem here. Last time, the Commissioner mentioned that football matches can't be played at Maréchal, La Ferme, Rivière Cocos, except at Grande Montagne because Grande Montagne is a safe place and a referee had been beaten at La Ferme. And now the same incident happened at Grande Montagne and the Commissioner is still saying that Grande Montagne is a safe place. There is a problem here, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Is the problem with the spectators or with the referees?

Commissioner Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to put things straight. First of all, I said it in the last question that was asked in the last sitting. I said it was my policy and it remains my policy that football be played all around the island. In fact I did mention it – that for the regional tournament, football should be played all around the island and in fact I have had discussions with the Regional Football Committee for same to be applied. Second thing, Mr. Chairperson Sir, I also stated that for football matches of the second division teams, the referees are mostly from the eastern part of the island. This is why they refuse to go and arbitrate matches which are being played on the eastern part of the island. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I feel with respect to the different measures mentioned and with respect to the guarantees given by police during the meeting in the presence of the referees, in the presence of the Regional Football Committee, football can still be played at Grande Montagne.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, why not at other places?

Commissioner Lisette: I think I have been clear with the reason given, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, would the Commissioner state whether the police are paid during each match at Grande Montagne?

Commissioner Lisette: For the time being, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the police is providing free service for giving service during football matches.

Mr. Grandcourt: M. le Président, mis à part les mesures prises par la Commission, j'aimerais demander l'avis du Commissaire ; j'aimerais lui poser la question, lui demander si c'est dans l'esprit sportif, moi je pense dès le départ, M. le Président, on a pris un mauvais départ. On a dit que dans telle telle région on peut jouer, d'autres régions on ne peut pas jouer. Là on voit que le problème a surgi à Grande Montagne ; pas une fois ! J'aimerais lui poser la question si c'est dans l'esprit sportif, s'il croit que c'est ça l'esprit

sportif et c'est ça sa « *policy* » dans la Commission ?

Commissioner Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not agree when it is said that we have had a bad start. Let me put things straight. When we came here in 2002, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there was no football which was being played on this island. As from December 2002, we started with discussion with the Regional Football Committee, with the setting up of the new Regional Football Committee, we started to play football all around the island, and I should say, that at the time that we started, there were at some time, during the weekends, we had up to 8 matches which were being played all around the island, remember in 2003. So, this means, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that problem does not lie with the policy. Because I have said the policy remains that football could be played, so, in fact, the problem is that referees should agree to play and arbitrate matches which are being played here. Second thing, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at the level of my Commission, we have taken measures to ensure that we have a number, we increase the number of referees for arbitrating matches all around the island. In 2003, we provided referee training sessions, for all teams around the island who would like to have one referee per team. Not later than August this year, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we invited all teams, all football teams to send one person, so that they can at least have one referee per team so that the problem of referee of arbitrating whether in the eastern, western, northern or southern part of the island remains not a problem. So, unfortunately, some, I should say, that not all teams were interested in sending one representative to follow the courses. So, I am sure that the problem remains and that the problem can only be solved if we have qualified referees from the western part of the island who can arbitrate matches in this part.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I understand that, it's the referee who decides the policy for the Commissioner or the Commissioner who decides the policy for football in Rodrigues?

Commissioner Lisette: I have been very clear, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, yes, and I think that the member should understand it; football matches should be played all around the island, o.k. But if the referee is refusing, that does not mean we should stop playing football in this island. They are refusing to go on one part of the island, so, as a matter of fact, we should see in what conditions we are working and in this situation, this is why we have to divert all football matches to Grande Montagne.

Chairperson: Yes, next question, the Sixth Island Region Member.

AIDS DISEASE IN RODRIGUES

B/215 The Sixth Island Region Member (Mrs. PROSPER) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to the AIDS

disease in Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he would state

- (a) the number of people identified as HIV positive to date; and
- (b) the measures taken by his Commission to educate the population in the prevention of same.

Chairperson: Yes. Commissioner for Health.

Commissioner Sooprayen: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that six (6) persons have been identified as HIV positive.

1 in 1998;
1 in 2003;
2 in 2004; and
2 this year, 2005.

- (b) Measures taken by the Commissioner to prevent HIV/ AIDs:
 - (1) A Rodrigues Strategic Plan (2004-2007) has been set up in collaboration with the National Aids Unit. An AIDs Unit has been set up in December, 2004 with a hotline service (832 0425) for the public to get information on AIDS.
 - (2) A Nursing Officer has been posted on full time to run the Unit. Procedures are underway to fill a post of Officer in Charge and an Educator to reinforce the Unit.
 - (3) A training course was organized in August 2005 by the National AIDS Coordinator, Dr. Ng Man Sung to train paramedical officers, police, youth, social workers, health agents and NGOs. At the same time, 100 HIV rapid tests were effected in 5 regions, targeting 3 groups, namely community, hotel workers and prison and we are pleased to note that no HIV POSITIVE cases were detected.
 - (4) A Rodrigues Regional AIDS Committee is being set up. It will be a multisectoral body which will make recommendations on HIV policies to the Executive Council and guide implementation of the Strategic Plan.
 - (5) Prevention and sensitisation programmes are organized for students in secondary institutions.
 - (6) Prevention programmes at community level, targeting young women and adolescents to promote safer sex behaviour.
 - (7) Frequently, talks are delivered on radio by qualified resource persons to sensitize the population on that subject.

The Commission is empowering health agents and other organisations dealing with monoparental families to put emphasis on family life education. We also have prevention campaign in hotels. Pregnant women are encouraged to attend antenatal clinic, where they are screened systematically for HIV. Several activities such as a march from Grand La Fouche Corail to La Ferme and sketches were organized on Saturday 3rd December, 2005 to celebrate World AIDS Day – c'était pour le public. The process of educating the population in the prevention of HIV/AIDS is ongoing.

Chairperson: Yes.

Mrs. Prosper: Six (6) cases in Rodrigues, it is alarming. Now, could the Commissioner for Health inform the House how these persons were identified? How?

Commissioner Sooprayen: There are four (4) of them who are females, between 1988 to 2005 and they have been identified when they came to the hospital.

Mr. Grandcourt: M. le Président, le Commissaire a parlé de Rodrigues « Strategic Plan » de AIDS ; « Strategic Plan » de quoi ? Est-ce que ce « *plan* », c'est déjà existant et si c'est le cas, est-ce qu'il peut nous donner, nous soumettre une copie de ce « plan » ?

Commissioner Sooprayen : M. le Président, le « HIV Strategic Plan », c'est là.

Chairperson : You are now tabling the document. Yes. (Appendix C)

Mrs. Meunier: M. le Président, puis-je demander au Commissaire à la santé, M. Sooprayen, il a parlé tout à l'heure de promouvoir un « safer sex ». Est-ce que il peut expliquer comment ça se fait et puis est-ce qu'il a veillé à ce que les campagnes de sensibilisation qui se fait dans l'île, dépassent un peu les tabous et les convictions religieuses aussi, parce que je pense que le plus gros problème qu'il y a à Rodrigues concerne les tabous, l'accès à l'information, l'accès aux méthodes, à la prévention, est-ce qu'il peut donner un peu plus de détails ?

Commissioner Sooprayen : M. le Président, nous savons vraiment ici, c'est encore un sujet tabou, comme on dit, et comme quelqu'un a bien dit, il faut pas trop blesser la sensibilité des gens à Rodrigues, surtout les Rodriguais. Mais c'est pourquoi, en août le Dr. Ng Man Sung est arrivé avec une équipe, il y avait une formation concernant les personnes, les organisations que je viens de mentionner et puis au fur et à mesure, ces personnes-là vont dans les villages, dans les centres communauté, etc, expliquent et donnent explication – il y a Action Familiale, il y Family Planning, il y a le Youth Councelling, Social Workers, Health Agents and so on. They are getting some, they have already

been trained, yes.

Chairperson : Yes, time is up. Yes, last question.

Mrs. Meunier: Oui, je comprends qu'on parle de Family Planning, social workers, mais je pense qu'il y a un gros problème, parce que le problème ne concerne pas peut-être, mais les jeunes, au niveau de la jeunesse, il y a un gros problème. Est-ce que les jeunes sont vraiment conscients, est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire, est-ce que les jeunes sont vraiment conscients du danger et est-ce que ils ont accès à cette prévention, parce que moi je sais, il y a beaucoup de tabous parce j'en ai été témoin à l'école, partout, les jeunes n'ont pas accès à la prévention, parce que, sinon on a vu que le nombre tend à l'augmentation hein. Parce que auparavant c'était un, ça devient deux Peut-être il y a deux multiplié par vingt, ça fait beaucoup quand même.

Commissioner Sooprayen : M. le Président, je suis entièrement d'accord. Ce que madame est en train de dire, c'est un problème, aujourd'hui c'est un grand problème. Que ce soit les petits pays, les grands pays, partout comme Maurice, Rodrigues, on est très concerné. C'est pourquoi nous, ici nous sommes en train de préparer les gens. Nous allons vers les jeunes, je viens de vous parler de Youth Counselling et des autres organisations, il y aura d'autres formations encore qui vont venir au début de l'année prochaine.

Chairperson : Next question. Same member.

AMBULANCES IN THE DIFFERENT HEALTH CENTRES

B/216 The Sixth Island Region Member (Mrs. PROSPER) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether he would inform the House about the number of ambulances in good running condition and the number posted per Health Centre and whether in emergency cases a nursing officer accompanies the driver to fetch the patient concerned?

Chairperson: Yes, Commissioner for Health, it's again, you.

Commissioner Sooprayen: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that 8 ambulances are in good running condition. Four are posted at Q.E.H, two at Mt. Lubin Area Health Centre and two at La Ferme Area Health Centre, one is serving La Ferme to Corail and to Airport.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as a routine, Nursing Officers do not accompany drivers to fetch patients. Normally patients are brought by relatives or ambulances to the nearest point, to Mt. Lubin Area Health Centre, La Ferme or Q.E.H.

From Mt. Lubin or La Ferme Area Health Centre, the patients are accompanied by Nursing Officers to Queen Elizabeth Hospital. On occasions, especially

maternity emergencies or injuries and accidents, when patients or somebody else inform that they are on the verge of delivery such as for maternity case, or other complications like bleeding, then a Mid-wife or Nursing Officer is sent in the ambulance.

Mr. Jabeemissar: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner for Health, for cases like cardio-vascular cases, people suffering from hypertension and so on – you know these cases are very severe cases sometimes – when they are accompanied to the road or to the point where the ambulances will have to fetch them, sometimes may be it's too late when these persons reach the hospital. In these cases, for example, normally, these people should know that they have the right to request for a Nursing Officer. Will the Commissioner see to it that for these types of cases, although the requests are not made, to see to it that these ambulances are accompanied by a Nursing Officer?

Commissioner Sooprayen: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the Assembly, that the Commission has already decided on this matter. And in the future, with the Rodriguan Nursing Officers coming, we'll be able to satisfy the patients.

Chairperson: Next. Same member.

OLD-AGED PERSONS IN RODRIGUES

B/217 The Sixth Island Region Member (Mrs. PROSPER) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security whether, with regard to the old age persons in Rodrigues, he would state

- (a) the number thereof per age group and sex (60 – 70 yrs), (71 – 80 yrs), (81 – 90 yrs), 91 and above;
- (b) whether his Commission has received representations regarding the poor living conditions of some old aged persons; and
- (c) if yes, what measures he intends to take to remedy same?

Chairperson: Yes.

Commissioner Mercure: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to apprise the Assembly that the number of old-aged persons is as follows in Rodrigues:

60 – 70	-	Male	-	1,051
	-	Female	-	1,175
71 – 80	-	Male	-	419

	-	Female	-	555
81 – 90	-	Male	-	105
		Female	-	208
91 – 100,		Male	-	9
	-	Female	-	43
101+, we have,		Male	-	0
	-	Female	-	2

Which makes a total for Male – 1584 and Female - 1983, 3567 elderly.

As regards part (b), Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have learnt of the poor living conditions of some old-aged persons. Most of the time some old-aged persons use to complain, at my Commission, about their living conditions, that is the houses are in bad conditions and treatment inflicted on them by their respective carers.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I also wish to state that my commission is committed to make available and accessible appropriate support and adequate services to the vulnerable segment of the society, inclusive of old-aged persons. A survey on the living conditions of the most vulnerable old-aged persons has been carried out with a view to implementing an Elderly Housing Scheme. The survey has to date revealed that there are some 169 old-aged persons who need to have their house, either renovated, repaired or rebuilt. The assistance of the Commission of Public Infrastructure is accordingly sought to remedy the situation. I am pleased to inform the House that procurement of materials is under way.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission also intends to take legal actions against the ruthless carers who do not attend to the needs of the bedridden persons, though they are paid monthly carers' fees to cater for the welfare of those bedridden people. However, legal actions against the carers could only be taken after the promulgation of the appropriate legislation by the parent ministry.

Mrs. Prosper: M. le Président, je connais une personne à Citron Donis, près de chez moi; je voudrais demander au Commissaire concerné, s'il a déjà rendu visite à cette personne. Il s'agit de Madame GASPARD, Roseline GASPARD.

Commissioner Mercure: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all throughout the year we are receiving members of the public, complaints, lots of persons – I don't have the names of all the persons who came to my office to make complaints – but I must assure that almost every Friday, we are visiting elderly, I don't remember exactly the names of Mrs. GASPARD or thing like this.

Mrs. Prosper: M. le Président, mais si la personne ne peut pas se déplacer,

est-ce que le Commissaire ne peut pas rendre visite à la personne concernée ?

Commissioner Mercure: Yes, officers sometimes go, sometimes go to visit elderly, but sometimes also, the different clubs, elderly clubs, give some indications and then we go visit together with them but anyway, if the person cannot come to my office, this time, they normally have a carer for bedridden so they come and tell that there is something like this or the different clubs in different villages are taken into consideration that there are some people who have carers who are ruthless, who don't want to come to my office to make complaints but the different clubs around Rodrigues – there are around 64 of them – that come and give complaints and then officers from the Network Support Services go and have their report and then we are taking actions.

Mr. Prosper: M. le Président, je voudrais informer le Commissaire que moi-même, j'ai déjà parlé à Madame Gontran, je crois que c'est elle qui est responsable de cette région, je lui est déjà parlé de cette personne dont je vous parle. Mais cette personne-là, elle vit dans un état déplorable – il faut la voir. Mais je voudrais rendre une visite à la personne concernée, vous-même, voyez de vos yeux, pour voir. Et surtout, je crois que le *carer* avait perdu ses documents. Je crois que vous...

Chairperson : Yes, we move to the next question. Time is nearly up. Yes? One more, please.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner, who would be responsible for the construction or renovation of the house to be given to the old-aged and also who will supervise the work?

Commissioner Mercure: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there have been meetings with the Elderly Federation concerning the construction of the house and they have agreed that government will not provide labour for the construction of the house, that sometimes the community will have to give a hand, but of course, when we are giving materials for the construction of houses, there will be supervision of public officers from the Commission of Public Infrastructure.

Chairperson: Yes, next question, same member.

SEMINAR IN CONNECTION WITH THE EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

B/218 The Sixth Island Region Member (Mrs. PROSPER) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education whether, with regard to the seminar held recently in Mauritius in connection with the educational reforms, he would state

- (a) whether Rodrigues was invited;

- (b) what has been the official proposals of Rodrigues; and
- (c) table a copy of the proposals?

Commissioner Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform this Assembly that the National debate on Curriculum Reforms about orientation organised by the Ministry of Education And Human Resources was held during the period 30th of November to the 1st of December, 2005 at the Mahatmah Gandhi Institute in Mauritius. Discussions centered on 3 main themes; (a) notion of schooling in terms of the profile of learners in the local and global context, (b) competencies to be developed in learners at the end of every cycle; lower primary, upper primary, lower secondary and upper secondary, and (c) implementation of new curriculum teaching and assessments.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources invited organisations, institutions, to submit their proposals on the basis of the abovementioned themes by the 11th of October. Unfortunately, my Commission was informed of this debate only on the 25th of November 2005, hence, it was not possible for my Commission to timely submit any proposals for the conference which was held on the 30th of November. As an aside, I would like to say that when the officers of the Ministry of Education were looking at the various propositions coming from the various regions in Mauritius, somebody, used to dealings with Rodrigues made the remarks that there was nothing for Rodrigues. It was then that they realised that Rodrigues had not been invited. But never too late, never so bad; we were invited on the 25th of November, as I said, too late to prepare any proposals for submission. However, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the committee, comprising of the Senior Primary School Inspector, Head Teachers of both Government and R.C.A Schools, as well as the Manager of the R.C.E.A schools, has been set up to work out the proposals for the review of the curriculum textbooks for the primary sector so as to make it more pupil-friendly in Rodrigues. And also, we've mention of Rodrigues within the geography textbook.

Mr. Grandcourt: M. le Président, le Commissaire de l'éducation a dit qu'on a oublié de l'inviter, d'inviter la Commission et par la suite on l'a invité, c'est ça. Je trouve un peu drôle comment on a pu oublier d'inviter Rodrigues. Est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire quand – même si c'était en retard – quand il a été invité, la Commission a été invitée et comment – par lettre ou bien par téléphone, et si c'est en écrit, est-ce qu'il peut soumettre la lettre par laquelle il a été invité, la Commission a été invitée ?

Commissioner Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir I just said that, a few seconds ago, that it was on the 25th of November that we were invited, just five days or four days before the event in Mauritius. And I am not really in a position to say why we were not invited. Was it a forgetfulness on the part of the officers or an officer at the Ministry of Education. But I am pleased to note, anyway,

that we were invited on the 25th for the 30th. Yes, we did receive a fax, a faxed letter and we did the same because I had time, I had time to inform the Executive Council of the invitation for the 30th of December.

Chairperson: Next. The Second Island Region Member.

“FESTIVAL CREOLE” FROM 4th TO 11th DECEMBER, 2005

B/219 The Second Island Region Member (Mrs. MEUNIER) asked the Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Women’s Affairs, Family Welfare, Community Development, etc, with regard to the “Festival Créole” held from 4th to 11th December, 2005, whether she would give and table a breakdown of

- (a) the sum of money earmarked for the whole event; and
- (b) the cost incurred or to be incurred for
 - (i) the payment of artists,
 - (ii) the purchase of materials for the construction of the podium.
 - (iii) the surfacing of land at Citron Donis, and
 - (iv) publicity made around the event?

Chairperson: Yes. Commissioner for Arts & Culture.

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

- (a) Like in previous financial year, an amount of Rs 1 m is provided in my Commission’s Recurrent Budget for the “Festival Créol” 2005.
- (b) The Festival is just over and many payments have still to be done.

As I mentioned previously in this House, my Commission, in a prior agreement with the international artists, does not pay any performance fee to artists from abroad as their “cachet” is generally beyond what we can afford. However, we pay a “per diem” of US\$ 20 to each artist as regard agreement made between the Ministry of Arts and Culture in bilateral agreement according to international standards. Individual Rodriguan artists are paid Rs 600 whilst each Rodriguan group is paid Rs 2500.

The Commission for Public Infrastructure has taken the opportunity of the Festival to construct a sizeable and standard and dismountable podium which can accommodate any type of activity. The podium has now been dismantled and kept in a store for further use by all Commissions. Previously the Commission for Public Infrastructure had recourse to eucalyptus poles

(*rondins*) which were not economic as used materials could not be utilized again. Furthermore, podiums constructed with “*rondins*” were not safe enough. Existing materials available at the Commission for Public Infrastructure were used for the construction of the podium. Some additional materials were also required, the cost of which is being compiled and will be circulated.

The development works at Petit Gabriel/Citron Donis included the upgrading, leveling and fencing of a football ground, the construction of volley ball and handball pitches, the construction of a concrete footpath towards the outskirts of the village and a tarred road. Such developments were planned in the Calendar of activities of the Commission for Public Infrastructure and the Commission for Youth and Sports. The opportunity has been taken to go ahead with the first phase of the projects.

The Commission for Public Infrastructure was responsible for surfacing works and the cost which is being compiled will be circulated.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, could the Commissioner tell the House how many international artists there were at the festival and as well as local artists?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that we had some 500 artists in general, but we have received – yes, 7 artists from Reunion, 8 artists from Seychelles, 8 from Mauritius and 7 from Komikos; that is 8 plus 7 Madagascar, yes, we had also some 11 artists, two (2) totally paid. But I will say that we did not pay one cent for the artists from Madagascar. So, that we had 11 persons from Madagascar, 7 from Reunion, 8 from Seychelles, 8 plus 7; 15 persons from Mauritius.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may be I didn’t hear clearly or I missed this part; I did not hear the Commissioner talking about the amount of money used for publicity or which is to be used for publicity around the event?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, for the design of the posters, we paid to Mr. Eric Kwet On, Rs 19,900, and in fact his request was much more, according to what he usually claimed, but we discussed with him and we paid him Rs 19,900 and for the printing of the posters in Mauritius, Rs 30,000.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner explain why the poster has been printed in Mauritius, why tenders had not been launched locally for the printing of this poster?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Well, I can come with further information on that.

Minority Leader: I would ask, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whether consideration was given to the printing of the poster in Rodrigues?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Yes, as I said, I will come for the whole information or with a statement on this, may be, as regards the quality or things like that, may be the posters in Rodrigues cannot respect the different colours. I think that some posters, generally, even e.g for our coat-of-arms, I remember that people who were expert in that talked about the degradation of colours, there are specifications, etc. I prefer to come forward with specific information.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner talked about the podium which was constructed at Citron Donis earlier and there was a podium which was constructed last year at Grand Bay, what was done with that one. Was it used to fit in the new podium or was it for standard?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Yes, of course, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I said, the podium there was not really standard, we used a mixture of materials. Some of them, which have been "*récupérable*", which could be used, have been used, yes, because, as I gave in my answer, existing materials available at the Commission for Public Infrastructure were used. In fact, during the course of the year, all the materials that had been used at Grand Bay have been reused for different types of ...

Minority Leader: M. le Président, si je comprend bien, la Commissaire ne sait pas exactement le coût du podium.

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I have just said, we are compiling for the rest of the materials which the Commission for Public Infrastructure, yes, but they are compiling the information to be given to you.

Minority Leader : M. le Président, est-ce que le gouvernement aujourd'hui, je voudrais demander à la Commissaire, est-ce que le gouvernement décide de faire quelque chose, ensuite on regarde le prix ou bien « *it is the practice in government that the cost, the estimate be evaluated and then the project be put to execution* », M. le Président ? Parce que sinon, qu'est-ce que nous avons en face de nous, des gens qui exécutent des travaux, des projets financiers et qui, par la suite, viennent nous dire ici à l'Assemblée « we don't know what is the cost ». If they don't know at present, what is at least, I was not asking for the exact cost, but for the estimated cost which should have been put in that podium. And it is very very, extremely unsatisfactory, that a Commissioner, and this course of action, I think, needs to be blamed for, not the Commissioner, the course of action. Because, I would like her to explain, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, how is it that no consideration was given to at least an estimate of what would be the final cost of this podium and whether she

would confirm that this is not the general practice at her Commission?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I didn't say we don't have the answer. Well, I said – and I asked my Departmental Head about it – in fact, my Departmental Head is working with my Commission as well as with the Commission for Public Infrastructure for some time, until Mr. Davis comes again. What I am saying is that he did not have the exact information and he is compiling exact information for circulation.

Chairperson: Yes, next question. Time is up, last one.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would remind the Commissioner that for the "*Journée Festival des Créoles*", Rs 2, 250,000 has been earmarked, not 1 m. First of all, here it has been reallocated; it has been reallocated, yes. Take a copy, here it is – Rs 2,250,000 – and I would ask the Commissioner where will she stock the materials which have been used at Citron Donis?

Chairperson: Yes, there is a question actually in this House. Order, please, order! There is a question in this House, any answer?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, he is talking about earmarking, what I am saying is that, he has said, the question was put, how much money has been earmarked for this item, it is Rs 1 m provided.

Minority Leader: May I draw your attention that the Commissioner is persisting in inducing the Assembly in error, because with your permission, I will site the statement of reallocation for expenditure and...

Chairperson: This document was tabled at the last debate?

Minority Leader: Yes, this is why we have it – financial year, yes, and Rs 2,250,000 – reallocation.

Chairperson: Yes, yes, would the Commissioner for Arts & Culture, yes, any response, no? Yes, if the Commissioner won't respond, what do you want me to do?

(Interruptions)

Chairperson: Next question, please, the Second Island Regional Member

"SEMAINE RODRIGUAISE" HELD AT REUNION ISLAND

B/220 The Second Island Region Member (Mrs. MEUNIER) asked the Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Women's Affairs, Family Welfare, Community Development, etc, whether, as regards the "Semaine

Rodriguaise" held at Reunion Island recently, she would inform the House of:-

- (a) the sum of money earmarked for this project;
- (b) the number of people involved in the event, their names, in what capacity they represented Rodrigues there, and
- (c) the outcome of the visit?

Chairperson: Yes.

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, with you permission I am replying to the question.

Chairperson: Yes.

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the information is as follows:-

A Rodrigues week was held in Reunion Island from 14th to 21st November 2005 to promote Rodrigues as a tourist destination and to tap the potential tourist's market of the island.

The budget earmarked for the project comprised the contributions of several parties as follows:-

- (a) Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA) – media and poster campaign.
 - (b) Air Mauritius – free air tickets for a number of participants.
 - (c) Municipality of St Pierre – accommodation and transport.
 - (d) Municipality of St Denis – transport.
 - (e) The Rodrigues Regional Assembly – air tickets, accommodation, transport, stipend, workshop, cocktail and dinner.
- (a) A sum of Rs 813,400 was earmarked as contribution of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to the budget.

As at to-day, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has disbursed an amount of Rs 417,107 being cost of air tickets and stipend for participants.

(b) The delegation comprised 2 coordinators, 6 cooks and 18 artists and the list of participants is at Annex. (Appendix D)

(c) The Rodrigues week was organized in the context of the launching of a series of direct flights by Air Mauritius from Pierre Fonds to Rodrigues, starting from the 23rd December.

According to information, the flights scheduled are already fully booked.

The potential tourist market of Reunion Island is very promising for our tourist industry and efforts will be deployed to attract tourists from Reunion/France. It is to be noted that the number of tourist arrivals from Reunion/France has increased from 12,421 in 2003 to 14,630 in 2004.

RFO Reunion, Antenne Reunion and the Local Newspapers covered the activities during the week. Rodrigues has to be present in Reunion to continue promoting the island as a unique tourist destination in the region.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner talked about the impact of such an activity on tourism, but what about this year, this activity was organised this year. So, has there be a positive impact on the arrival of tourists to Rodrigues after this activity?

Chief Commissioner: Well, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have not even tried to look for information but we'll see after this "*festival de Rodrigues*" à La Réunion, nous allons voir si vraiment ce type de promotion de Rodrigues à La Réunion, porte son effet. Mais à la suite de cette festival de Rodrigues à La Réunion, le rapport qui nous a été soumis par les co-ordinateurs, nous démontre que à l'avenir, il faudrait aller cibler des secteurs bien importants, des groupes d'âge bien importants à La Réunion. Et nous avons remarqué que depuis quelque temps, beaucoup de gens du troisième âge de La Réunion viennent sur Rodrigues, donc, et même il y en a plusieurs qui viennent régulièrement. Nous souhaitons ce type de promotion de Rodrigues à La Réunion – parce que nous allons cibler d'abord Maurice, Réunion et les pays européens ; France Angleterre, l'Allemagne et l'Italie. Voilà un petit peu les grands axes de nos promotions touristiques pour que Rodrigues soient une destination de découverte.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether local press, local media were invited to this "*Semaine Rodriguaise*"?

Chief Commissioner: No, there was no invitation to local newspapers here, not even in Mauritius and the MTPA, in Reunion Island, was responsible for all media and poster campaign in Reunion Island.

Mrs. Prosper: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner for tourism if he participated in the activity in Reunion?

Chief Commissioner: No, I did not accompany the delegation in Reunion Island because my participation was in relation with certain meetings with the Regional Council of Reunion Island and other politicians in Reunion Island and they were all absent at the period.

Chairperson: Yes.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, does the Commissioner consider then that the activity held this year was a success?

Chief Commissioner: Ça a été un succès d'après le rapport qui nous a été soumis, les contacts reçus, toutes les activités, il me semble, je dois dire ici – ce n'est pas simplement cette fois-ci – mais toutes activités que Rodrigues organise à La Réunion, ça a un succès extraordinaire. Je dois dire aussi que de La Réunion vers Rodrigues, ça aussi il semble qu'il y a une grande relation même au niveau des gîtes et des chambres d'hôtes, il semblerait que vraiment il y a une grande relation, une grande collaboration entre ces deux îles.

Chairperson : Yes, last question. Yes. Order, please!

Minority Leader: If all the appointments...

Chairperson: Order, please!

Minority Leader: The Chief Commissioner, I believe, according to the answers given, has proceeded to Reunion to meet officials, politicians. We all know that Reunion Island, for us, for the Republic of Mauritius, is a foreign country, it is France, it is the European Union. Well, I believe that the office of the Chief Commissioner, for the Chief Commissioner, the normal thing to do is to confirm appointments or to look for other appointments, other rendez-vous with the people in Reunion before moving there. If all the appointments were cancelled, if he could not meet anybody, how first could he move to Reunion Island, using public funds, gaining...

Chairperson: Yes, next question, please. Second Island Region Member

JEAN REMY FLORIAN SAMINADEN

B/221 The Second Island Region Member (Mrs. MEUNIER) asked the Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Women's Affairs, Family Welfare, Community Development, etc, whether with regard to Jean Remy Florian Saminaden born on 26 March, 2005, she would state

- (a) where the child is presently dwelling; and
- (b) seek information from the relevant authorities as to whether any

member of his family or any relative has obtained custody of the child, and, if not, why?

Chairperson: Yes, Commissioner for Arts and Culture, understand this is a question for you.

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

- (a) Jean Remy Florian Saminaden, who had apparently been abandoned by his mother is presently at the Paediatric ward of Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which is a place of safety under the law.
- (b) The mother of Jean Remy Florian Saminaden, as I said last time, had been arrested and sent to Mauritius in the course of another inquiry and in her absence, someone purporting to be the biological father has acknowledged this child as being his own. The Magistrate of Rodrigues has not yet given his ruling on this acknowledgement, which he considers as being potentially invalid, having been made in the absence of the mother.

On the 6th December 2005, the case was heard again before the Court of Rodrigues but the man having acknowledged the child failed to attend Court although he had been summoned.

The Magistrate has extended the Emergency Protection Order up to 20th of December 2005. No decision has yet been taken by the Court as to any member of the Child's family or relative concerning the child's custody.

Mrs. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we hear that this child has been in the hospital since he was abandoned, for a very long time and does the Commissioner think that according to law it is a safe place. Doesn't she think that at the hospital, the child run risks of contracting diseases, of being, like we say, exposed to the eyes of the public, because we know that people go there to see him, just like *"aller dans une foire voir quelque chose de curieux hein"*, as a curiosity and doesn't she think that something should be done to really place the child in a place where he would feel affection, love from a family?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as you well know, there has been some allegations made as regard to this child and the case is subjudice. As such, it is the court which disposes of the child. As regards orphanages or convent, we don't have any. So, we would have no other alternative than to put him in the shelter when it will be ready, that is by the 20th of December. In the meantime, even to bring him to the shelter, we will have to have recourse to the court because it has to be stated in the Emergency Protection Order. I myself, I think that at the same time, as regard to exposure, that's why for the moment he is in the pediatry for just some time because I

think he has caught flu or things, but the child was put not at pediatric ward but during discussion with the direction of the hospital, in the maternity ward, where children are kept; children, new-borns are kept. Those new-borns in the maternity – this is called a safe place – because women who come there are not women who are ill, but women who come for delivery. And the babies of these women are safe babies generally, if they are ill, they are sent to the pediatry. So, we have judged it safer to keep the baby at the maternity ward rather than at the pediatry where we have babies who are ill sent there. So, it's true when it is said that the hospital is a place of safety, we keep the person in a place where there is more safety than in another one.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I don't know whether the Commissioner is looking at the humanitarian side of this problem because the child cannot indefinitely live in hospital and most of all, be deprived of his parents, when these persons have expressed their will to get their child and there is evidence, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the man who wants the child was the partner of the woman who had been arrested. And there are, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, international conventions, the Convention on Children, there is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; there is an article which says "that every child has the right to his parents". I would like to ask whether she will see to it that these provisions are being respected, it is not only a question of law, it is a question of the proper development, the physical and mental well-being of this child.

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: M. le Président, je veux parler français pour être plus claire, parce que j'ai l'impression que « *there is a hearing problem here* ». Je l'ai dit, le cas est « *subjudice* », ça c'est 1, le cas est « *subjudice* ». Ensuite c'est dans la main de la loi. Comment moi, Commissaire, je peux aller dire au magistrat de rendre cet enfant à une mère à qui on a reproché d'avoir abandonner son enfant. Son cas est toujours en train d'être étudié par la cour. Ça c'est un. "*There is a convention of the child which sets out general guidelines.*" Mais les pays, hein, sur le plan national, il y a les instruments légaux et des instruments structurels pour assurer la protection de l'enfant. Sur le plan légal, "*the Child Protection Act 1994 provides for the child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, may be removed to a place of safety*". La personne, je viens de dire, que le papa, le papa a reconnu son enfant bien après, quand le cas a été déjà subjudice. Il n'est pas allé tout de suite, hein, il a fallu faire des officiers venir, etc, « *tardy declaration* », etc et puis ensuite il a *acknowledged that this is his child, and in the absence of the mother. There is law here, so how can I go inside ?* Il y a mes officiers qui vont en cour, il y a aussi des officiers du ministère qui descendent et qui viennent, parce qu'on est conscient du cas de l'enfant. Mais on ne peut pas prendre l'enfant comme ça, au nom de quel droit et de prendre l'enfant et de donner à n'importe qui. Il y aura d'autres allégations encore pour vouloir s'approprier l'enfant. L'enfant a été, n'oubliez pas, abandonné and then tardily declared by the other one who said that he is the biological father of the child. Dans les deux cas, c'est subjudice. Donc, c'est tout à fait normal qu'on attende que la cour décide du cas.

Minority Leader : M. le Président, est-ce que le Commissaire peut confirmer

qu'il n'y a pas un genre de représailles, soit contre le père, soit contre l'enfant, soit contre la mère, étant donné les allégations d'adoption frauduleuse qui ont été faites à l'égard de sa Commission, child trafficking ?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Ah Seigneur, c'est terrible ! Parce que moi je crois que quand on est en train de traiter avec des gens, on ne peut pas aller faire des représailles. On est là pour travailler, on est au service des gens. Il y a un petit bébé qui n'est même pas responsable de ce qui lui arrive. Comment peut-on faire des représailles ? Mais les faits sont là. S'il y a des représailles contre cet enfant, c'est des représailles de la part des ses progéniteurs, qui ont des choses à aller expliquer en cour dans les deux cas ; parce que le papa a fait une déclaration tardive et parce que la maman avait abandonné l'enfant. Il faut maintenant vérifier leur innocence et écouter leurs explications. Mais qu'est-ce que ma Commission a à faire si chaque fois qu'il y a « *court sitting, we are going there to give explanation* ? » Mais en même temps, comme je dis on ne peut pas, il y a la loi et l'esprit de la loi. On ne peut pas créer la loi et aller à l'encontre de la loi. Et c'est le magistrat qui décide.

Chairperson : Yes, before you ask your questions, a word of guidance. If the case is before the court and if decision is ending, normally it is not proper to dwell on the case in this House. Because this may cause sort of prejudice that come of the case that bring some new elements, some inadmissible things in light. Yes, if you want to proceed then. O.k, so we move to the next question.

TOURISTS WHO VISITED RODRIGUES TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE "FESTIVAL CREOLE"

B/222 The Second Island Region Member (Mrs. MEUNIER) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he would obtain information about the number of tourists who had visited the island in the period starting two weeks before the "*festival créole*" until now and whether the festival had had a positive impact on the arrival of tourists in our island?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the information is as follows:-

1. According to information obtained, data on tourist arrivals are compiled on a monthly basis.

A comparison of the figures for the year 2004 as compared to year 2005 would be carried out to determine the number of tourist arrivals during the months referred to.

2. The "*Festival Créole*" has each year been a success as a cultural and tourist event and has attracted the attention of journalists, TV stations, photographers, musicians and artists from abroad and coverage by the media has undoubtedly an important impact on the tourist image of the island and its

cultural values.

In particular, the event has been widely covered by RFO/Reunion in its news bulletins of 5th and 6th December with large extracts of the opening ceremony and the activities of the festival. Reporters of Antenne Reunion and Telemag were also in Rodrigues to cover the programme of the festival and that of Miss Ebony 2005/2006.

The French Association 'VIVR'Rodrigues' has also focused on its website www.vivrodrigues.com a special chapter on the "festival kreol".

For the past three years, a festival organiser from Grau-Le-Roy in France has been present in Rodrigues to select Rodriguan artists for his annual international music festival.

Professional photographers are also covering the event.

The "Festival Kreol" has therefore a positive impact on the promotion of tourism and the cultural values of its population worldwide.

Chairperson: Yes, may be it's a good time to break. I suspend the Assembly for 45 minutes, then resumption at 1.15.

(The Assembly was suspended for 45 minutes for lunch from 12.30 hours to 13.15 hours).

Chairperson: We have now reached question B/223, the Second Local Region Member for La Ferme.

HOUSING PROJECT FOR THE VICTIMS OF EX-CYCLONE BELA

B/223 The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. JABEEMISSAR) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the housing project for the victims of cyclone Bela, he would obtain information concerning

- (a) the number of housing units initially approved for construction and the sum earmarked for their completion;
- (b) the name of the responsible officer/s directly involved in the implementation of the project;
- (c) whether any losses of construction materials were identified and if disciplinary actions were taken against the officer/s concerned and, if not, why; and

(d) the state of these houses to date?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that with regard to the housing project for the victims of ex-cyclone Bela, that the programme was initially for the construction of 1000 units on a self-held basis with provision to be made in successive capital budget. Several officers have been directly involved in the implementation of the projects over the period 1995 to 2001; they are Messrs Finiss, Manan, Edouard, Milazar, Perrine and François. According to file, losses of materials were identified and according to police, the culprit could not be traced out and the case was therefore classified. The matter was referred to the relevant authorities and a departmental enquiry was set up to investigate the issue. The matter was referred to the Public Service Commission, who had subsequently decided that all disciplinary proceedings instituted against the officer concerned be discontinued. A report on the state of the house is being compiled and will be tabled shortly.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, would the Deputy Chief Commissioner state, out of the 1000 for units, how many have been built?

Chairperson: Yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the information in hand but I know that about 300 housing units have been built; about, I do not have the exact number.

Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. Jabeemissar: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given the housing problems faced by many of our compatriots now, many of these concern the ex-victims of cyclone Bela, I have been personally to many of these and the situation of these houses today are very much to be desired. Until the Deputy Chief Commissioner has all his statistics being compiled, will he see to it that the situations of these people are, that he feels concerned with the situations of these people and take necessary actions as needs may be?

Chairperson: Yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I understand that grievance made by the member. On a mis un comité permanent sur le logement en place et la question a été soulevée et on va prendre une décision après parce qu'il y avait un « *mismanagement* » du côté des bénéficiaires dans l'utilisation des matériaux. Il y a des bénéficiaires qui ont vendu leurs matériaux – ciment, sable, tout ça – mais on va prendre une décision après parce qu'il faut faire un état des lieux sur tous ces bâtiments pour avoir un vrai

« *cost estimate* », si on va poursuivre dans la réhabilitation des maisons Bela.

Mr. Agathe : Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned that there are problems with "*beneficiaires*". But unfortunately we see only, only 300 have been built. And I refer here, to a document, it refers to loss, of store losses; it happened on the 9th August, 1994. On the same day, the theft, the items that were lost; 237 bags of cement, 44 meranti, 52 flush doors, 313 meters batten and 214 meters meranti board, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. This seems very, this is very important. And...

Chairperson: I didn't get you, which day it was? I am sorry.

Mr. Agathe: 9 August.

Chairperson: 9 August, which year?

Mr. Agathe: 1994.

Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. Agathe: And the person who reported the loss, it was the watchman. How is it that the watchman has to report the theft? Why not the officer in charge?

Chairperson: Yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, there have been losses of materials, as I have said in my answer and normally when there is a case against public officer, same is referred to the police. The case has been referred to the police, as I have said, and has been also referred to the Public Service Commission and it is the verdict of these institutions which determines whether these officers will remain in the public service. And as I have said, the cases have been classified and the Public Service Commission also has discontinued with the cases and there is no further action upon this issue.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the case has been classified. Therefore, can the Commissioner state whether action can be taken against the officer again, renewed again?

Chairperson: Yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, the Public Service Commission and police have already given their verdict. To take other action, there should be complaint, there should be complaint from the public to the police so that another action can be taken. We cannot go and take action against anyone if there is no complaint against the person concerned.

Mr. Jabeemissar: Mr. Chairperson , Sir, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner, in the policy of the Executive Council to have that, to see to it that everybody in Rodrigues has got a house, how does he view the fact that 1000 houses which, since 1995, were earmarked to be built to lodge all these victims, only less than one quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) of it has already been built. Therefore, three quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of these houses which have been earmarked are still to be built. Does it not contribute to the huge problems that people are facing with houses nowadays and in their policy to have that everybody gets a house, do they take into consideration that that problem, where lots of money has been invested, many materials have been lost and what are their feelings about this?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, as I have said, the construction of the 1000 units, which were built on a self-help basis, was made in successive capital budgets. The money was not earmarked at one go. The then government decided to make provision for the 1000 units under successive capital budgets. But I don't know, the government, I think, has not continued with providing the budget in the other capital budget and there has been other housing policy by the government of Mauritius, for example, Trust Fund for Vulnerable Groups which has supplemented the 1000 units that was decided to be built in 1994, the 1000 units.

Chairperson: Yes, next question, same member.

CONSTRUCTION OF HANDRAILS ON ALL ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE AND OTHER PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IN RODRIGUES

B/224 The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. JABEEMISSAR) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, as regards the construction of handrails on all the road infrastructure and other public infrastructure in Rodrigues, whether he would

- (a) give a breakdown of expenses and extent of all those already built since the inception of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and those under construction; and
- (b) say if tenders were launched for all the projects and to table the names of the successful contractor/s and the cost per contract for the different projects?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that with regard to the construction of handrails on all the roads on the information requested at part (a) of the question is being compiled and will be laid in the library shortly. I am further informed that tenders and quotations were launched and **I am tabling the names of the successful contractors as well as**

the cost of the contract. (Appendix E)

Mr. Jabeemissar: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether the handrails which are found near the coast, opposite the airport – I don't know the exact location, not far from where the sand extractors deposit sand – was it built by his Commission or by other private enterprises?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this project; the installation of handrails, was in the project of the airport, it was built by AOR (Airport of Rodrigues Limited).

Mr. Jabeemissar: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner why is it that the different quotations launched for periods November 2005 and, i.e quotations 3, 4. and 5. Why is it that the same bidder, on what criteria has the same person been awarded the same contract?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, normally for the installation of handrails, for the supplying of handrails, “dans la commission on envoie des quotations à différents contracteurs qui sont enregistrés auprès de la commission” and these contractors bid. At the closing date, *au niveau de ma commission, il y a un Tender Committee qui évalue les offres et normalement, l'offre est donnée à celui qui a quoté le plus bas.* But it happens that a contractor can have the bid at each time that he quotes. It depends on the value that the contractor earmarks on his quotation form. The choice of the contractor is independent of the evaluation of the Tender Committee. If it happens that someone quotes less, he is the one who will get the contract as specified in the contract tender documents.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I refer to number 5 of the report; here we have a quotation No. 62 of 2004-2005 – the project – the project is all around the island, project all around the island. Can the Commissioner be clearer, please?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, normally after cyclone Kalundé, a survey was made all around the island to see all damaged handrails in Rodrigues and we have launched a contract so that all these damaged handrails get repaired.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, does this mean that the contractor has obtained the contract to repair all the handrails all around the island and how is it that we have another contract for Reposoir, Piments, Administrative Bloc and so on?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are two types of contract. There is a contract, a quotation which has been launched for repairs of handrails on roads and bridges all around the island. And for La Ferme, it is

concerned with buildings, it is concerned with buildings and the form of the handrails as per specification, is not the same.

Mr. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think, for quotation No. 5, I think that there is a sort of error for the closing date. I would like to know if the Commissioner can confirm this. The date launched – 15th November, 2005 and closing date 19th November, 2004.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a typing error, I thank the member for this clarification, it is 2005.

Mr. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it's 2005, but as my colleague just said, est-ce que c'est possible, d'après lui, de donner des contrats dans un même lapse de temps – ces trois (3) contrats, on peut dire que c'est presque en même temps – d'où on voit un contrat de 1.2 millions qui va être approuvé, biensûr, mais est-ce que c'est la bonne, c'est bon de donner trois contrats en même temps à quelqu'un ? Est-ce qu'on aura satisfaction avec ce qu'il va faire ?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is no restriction on this issue as per the FMM and the CTB Act, there is no restriction on this issue.

Chairperson: Yes, next question. Second Local Region Member for Ferme.

WATER NETWORK IN RODRIGUES

B/225 The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. JABEEMISSAR) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the water network in Rodrigues

- (a) there is a monitoring unit to assess the working state of water pipes in order to minimize leakages and water wastage; and
- (b) table any report concerning same?

Chairperson: Yes, Deputy Chief Commissioner.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that there is no monitoring unit as such to assess the working states of the water pipes in order to minimise leakages and water wastage with the Water Unit. However, it is under the scheme of service of all Valve Operators to report leaks along piped network to the officer responsible for each of the three sections of the Water Unit. However, inspectors at the level of my Commission have been briefed to present all grievances concerning leakage in pipes in our usual Water Steering Committee and decisions are taken to change these pipes depending upon their availability.

The Water Resources Unit has a maintenance scheme to attend to all reported leakages. I would like to make a special appeal to the population to avoid any act of vandalism on the piped network and to refrain from allowing the animals to damage the network. Meanwhile, my Commission has embarked on a programme of upgrading all water distribution networks in each section. Every year, we are purchasing about Rs 5 m of polypipe. Water meters are being installed islandwise at consumer level, whereas the water production is presently metered. This will enable the Water Unit, in the near future, to assess the loss level in its network.

Mr. Jabeemissar: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has mentioned the assignment of monitoring the conditions of water pipes by valve operators. But as far as I know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when water is being distributed in many places, very often, the distribution has to be stopped on the way due to defaults, due to leakages or disruption of the whole network and according to the Valve Operators themselves; this doesn't form part of their job; i.e the beneficiaries, those who have to wait for water, especially for long periods, then they have to wait again, sometimes for days, until the Water Unit sends - we call this - for people to mend the network and this causes a lot of problem of course, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Will the Deputy Chief Commissioner see to it that - because now we know that in many places, especially at night, we can see water flowing everywhere; in many places because of the defaults in the pipes- will he see to it that henceforth, a special unit is set up? Because I don't think the water, the Valve Operators can do that job. The network are in such a way that they are left on the ground, exposed to animals, as you said, exposed to animals and this, of course, everyday you cannot monitor this, unless you have a special unit to do that work. Will he see to it that this type of work is done, to see to it that we have a special unit to monitor the network everywhere?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: As I have said, Mr. Chairperson, it is not the work of the Valve Operator to have the network repaired. The Valve Operator reports the leaks, he reports the leaks to his Supervising Officer and there is a team at the level of the Water Unit who attends to all these leakages. But normally the leakages are reported before the team attends the place where there are leakages on the pipes. But I would also note that, we have noted that there are many acts of vandalism on the piped network. People use to cut pipes with knife, people use to attach their animals with piped network and this sometimes causes much damage to our network. But however, in some regions where it is possible, we are trying to bury the pipes, but as we know, the topography of Rodrigues is not so easy to have pipes buried in all the regions of the island and we are trying to do so where in need.

Chairperson: Yes, time is up, last question on this.

Mr. Jabeemissar: Yes, may I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether he

is aware that in some places like at Baie du Nord and Corail, some water pipes date as far back as some 20 years ago; old galvanized pipes. When is he prepared to have all these changed?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, since the advent of autonomy, a great effort has been made to replace galvanised pipes. Every year, as I have said, we are purchasing about Rs 5 m of polypipe to have all these galvanised pipes replaced and it is in our policy to upgrade the water network all around the island. We have a report from Stra Consult, from Lux Consult and we are working on this report to upgrade the whole water network in Rodrigues and we have just launched tenders for purchase of pipes and we are waiting for its commissioning before we have same replaced in other regions of the island.

Chairperson: Yes, next question, same member.

PROTECTED AREA UNDER FOREST PLANTATIONS AT POINTE SOURCE

B/226 The Second Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. JABEEMISSAR) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the protected area under forest plantations at Pointe Source, whether

- (a) the decision to grant this portion of state land to a promoter for tourism purposes is still maintained; and
- (b) any agreement has been signed between the promoter and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and, if yes, table a copy of same?

Chairperson: Yes, Chief Commissioner.

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the information is as follows:-

(a) The land surrounding the hotel site will not be granted to the promoter but will be the subject of a Memorandum of Understanding to provide for the management of the valley at Pointe Source and, in particular, for reforestation and conservation of endemic species and the promotion of ecotourism.

The development of the areas will be at the expense of the promoter to cater for social and recreational amenities for the public at large who will have free access to them. Facilities include a plant nursery, ecotourism activities such as nature watch, guided pedagogic tours, fauna and flora conservation programs, introduction of live java deer in their natural environment, creation of a green belt, a handicraft village on site, aviaries and ponds for fish and ducks.

(b) The draft memorandum of understanding has been submitted for legal

clearance prior to its signature and may be tabled once the agreement has been signed.

Chairperson: Yes next, the Third Island Region Member.

SPORTS ATHLETIC MEET FOR CADETS HELD IN RODRIGUES

B/227 The Third Island Region Member (Mr. GUILLAUME) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports whether, with regard to the Sports Athletic meet for Cadets held in Rodrigues, he would state

- (a) the number of participants coming from Reunion Island and the island of Mauritius;
- (b) where they were lodged and the amount of money paid for board and lodging of the non-Rodriguan participants;
- (c) the amount disbursed for that event and table a breakdown thereof; and
- (d) the item of the Commission's vote to which the expenditure was charged?

Chairperson: Yes.

Commissioner Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

(a) In connection with the Inter-Island Cadet Championship which was held on 3rd and 4th September, 2005, 82 participants proceeded to Rodrigues. These included 41 participants from Mauritius and 41 from Reunion Island.

(b) They were accommodated as follows:

- (i) 15 officials at Le Port Paradis;
- (ii) 41 participants from Reunion Island at Auberge Anse aux Anglais; and
- (iii) 35 participants, including 9 athletes from Rodrigues at Le Flamboyant Hotel.

The total amount paid for board and lodging is Rs 168,510.

(c) **The breakdown for expenses is being tabled. (Appendix F)**

(d) For part (d), the expenses for board and lodging was met under recurrent budget, item 07-101.178 – Major International Sport Events and funds for the purchase of equipment were met from Capital Budget, item 30-106.004 – Sports Infrastructure, Equipment and Furniture.

Chairperson: Yes, supplementary?

Mr. Agathe: Yes, would the Commissioner state whether there had been any sponsors who had helped to organise that event?

Commissioner Lisette: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, actually there were many partners who were in the organization of this activity, namely La Federation d' Athlétisme de Maurice, *il y avait aussi la Commission et aussi le Comité Régional. Donc*, as regards sponsors, these sponsors dealt with the Federation. My Commission worked merely for the organisation of the activity in Rodrigues and for the accommodation and lodging for the athletes in the island of Rodrigues.

Mr. Agathe: So, would the Commissioner be able to state what amount exactly, the total amount exactly the athletic meet has cost, the total cost?

Commissioner Lisette: I have tabled the amount, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think it is – the total amount which my Commission spent on the organisation, because as regard to sponsor, I have said the sponsors dealt with the Federation. So, I don't know about the amount of money with regards to how much money the sponsor gave to the Federation, because for the payment of medals, for the payment of tracksuits, that was given by the Federation with the help of sponsors. But with regard to the expenses that was met by my Commission, as tabled, the total amounts to Rs 877,480.81.

Chairperson: Next question. The Third Island Region Member.

ANSE RAFFIN DAM (LEAKAGE SINCE ITS CONSTRUCTION)

B/228 The Third Island Region Member (Mr. GUILLAUME) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to Anse Raffin Dam, he would state if the Dam has been leaking since construction and give the reason therefor together with a copy of the supervising consultant's conclusion and table same?

Chairperson: Yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the dam was practically completed since 30th September, 2004. On the 5th April, 2005, there was noted a flow of water at the toe of the dam near the wash-out of the pipeline. The consultant was immediately notified to investigate the

matter and to submit his conclusions. In a correspondence dated 13th April, the consultant has stated that:

- (a) at the end of February 2005, when the level of water was about 4 m no seepage of water downstream of the dam was apparent;
- (b) as a first conclusion, it was concluded that water can be leaking either through the concrete facing or the toe slab or from the sides of the dam as a result of the increase in the water table level;
- (c) a V-notch was installed to assess the amount of seepage. The V-notch was subsequently installed in July 2005; and
- (d) in a report dated 24th November, 2005, following site visits on the 23rd and 24th November, 2005, no flow of water was observed over the V-notch. In the light of above, it was concluded that the flow of water is not through the toe slab or through the dam body below level 7.3 m.

Moreover inspection of the concrete cladding above level 7.3 m has revealed no visible defect.

The flow of water at the toe drain could result either from seepage behind the spillway crest body or through the rise of water table around the dam which occurs as the water level behind the dam increases. The situation will be further monitored during the next rainy season before arriving at a final conclusion.

I am tabling the different correspondences received from the consultant on that subject. (Appendix G)

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been to Anse Raffin just lately. I have seen workers there, near where there is leakage - I would ask the Commissioner what are the workers doing there now?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, in a letter dated 24th November, 2005, the consultant has said there will be further monitoring and on this project, the final, the practical conclusion certificate has not been issued. We have a defect liability period and the retention money has not been released and for further monitoring, it is the contractor who built the dam who should monitor the leak if ever there is a leak. And this is why there are workers at the site now, to deepen their investigation on the flow of water behind the dam, in the toe drain.

Chairperson: Last question, time is up.

Mr. Agathe: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at Anse Raffin now, according to the report of the Director of Audit, it says that 86,400 litres of water is going to the sea per day; a loss of 86,400 litres of water, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. How can the Commissioner explain this loss – per day?

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I have said, there is a V-notch apparatus that has been installed at the toe drain, at the extremities of the toe drain to monitor the flow of water into the toe drain. Mais là il y a le contracteur qui est en train de travailler sur le site, ils sont en train de faire des travaux d'excavation pour voir s'il n'y a pas d'autres sources d'où l'eau provienne, parce que Anse Raffin, le barrage d'Anse Raffin se trouve dans une cuvette, entourée d'un « *catchment* » area qui vienne depuis Eau Vanée et Citron Donis, et il y a beaucoup de sources alléviaux dans cette partie de la région entre Anse Raffin et Tamarin et ils sont en train de faire des travaux d'excavation parce qu'il y a de la terre au côté droit et au côté gauche du barrage pour voir s'il n'y a pas des sources d'eau qui proviennent de ces deux côtés du barrage.

Chairperson : Yes, next question. Time is up, yes.

DONATION MADE BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

B/229 The First Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. GRANDCOURT) asked the Commissioner responsible for Education, would the Commissioner of Education state

- (a) when the European Union made a donation of equipment such as television set. Photocopying machines, video camera, etc to the Human Resource Centre;
- (b) who was in charge of this unit at that time;
- (c) whether any case of loss or burglary was reported to the police; and
- (d) whether any enquiry was initiated and where matters stand?

Commissioner Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to state to this Assembly that as the information available the European Union made a donation of equipment such as television set, photocopying machines, video camera, etc to the Rodrigues administration in 1997, which were destined to the future Human Resource Centre. The Human Resource Centre was found to be set up at the end of 1997 and I will also point out, as an aside, that the office was based at Citronelle.

As regards part (b), I am informed that Mrs. Jeanine Yeung Chin Yeung was the then Adviser/Project Manager of the Human Resource Centre.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a case of loss of equipment was reported to the police by the then Adviser/Project Manager in February 2000. Over and above, a departmental board was set up to investigate into the matter and it submitted its report on the 19th of April, 2000. The following losses were identified:

- 1 photocopying machine;
- 1 trolley;
- 2 cameras VHS Panasonic;
- 3 radio cassette Sharp;
- 2 video cassette players JVC;
- 1 fax machine Oliver-T;
- 5 electric fans; and
- 3 fixed overhead projectors with 2 screens;

the value of which amount to a total of Rs 364,590.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am made to understand that on the 10th of May, 2002, the case was classified by the police because the author of the theft had remained undetected. In this respect, legal advice was sought as to the course of action to be initiated through the write-off of the lost equipment. However, the approval to write-off is still being awaited.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has mentioned some items. I know, I have a copy here, of another items also which have been lost; we have 12 heavy duty office chairs and so on. Is the Commissioner aware of that?

Commissioner Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like the respected member on the minority side to repeat what he's just said, because I did not quite catch the gist of it.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have a list here, I will add again; we have 12 heavy duty office chairs, 11 black metal-framed chairs Type D, 1 black metal-framed chair with writing tablet, 3 writing tablets, 4 black metal-framed chairs vinyl which have been lost. Are you aware of that?

Commissioner Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I regret to have to say that are not in my possession. I have been informed that the theft took place in 1997, well before the advent of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, and therefore, the birth of the Commission for Education.

Chairperson: Yes, next question, time is up.

FISHERMAN CARDS ISSUED DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER THIS YEAR

B/230 The First Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. GRANDCOURT) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to fisherman cards issued during the month of November, this year, he can table the list of names of fishermen who have received permanent or conditional fisherman cards?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the information is as follows:-

During the month of November 2005, 56 new fishermen cards were issued as follows:-

- (a) 21 for conditional off-lagoon fishermen to enable them to benefit from loan facilities at the Development Bank of Mauritius under the off-lagoon fishing scheme for the purchase of appropriate boat and equipment; and
- (b) 35 for permanent off-lagoon fishermen who have been monitored during six consecutive months and have satisfied the set up criteria for a fisherman card.

Besides, 15 lagoon fishermen cards were reissued during the month. These applicants were deregistered as professional fishers but have again restarted their fishing activities and are eligible for a fisherman card. They could have been either on medical treatment, involved in bank fishing, jailed or absent from the country.

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The list of names of the fishermen is at annex.

Annex I – List of Conditional off-lagoon fishermen.

Annex II – List of Permanent off-lagoon fishermen.

Annex III - List of fishermen cards reissued. (Appendix H)

Mr. Grandcourt: M. le Président, je me rappelle dans la dernière session mon collègue M. Emilien avait posé une question similaire et je crois comprendre que le Chef Commissaire a dit que les « *conditional fisherman cards* », on va essayer d'éviter de donner ces « *conditional fisherman cards* ». Donc, je suis surpris de voir qu'il y a maintenant 21 « *conditional fisherman cards* » et je voudrais demander pourquoi, le pourquoi de tout ça ?

Chief Commissioner : M. le Président, ça a toujours existé. C'est-à-dire – les personnes qui veulent aller à la banque de développement pour avoir un emprunt et la banque de développement exige une carte de pêcheurs. C'est

pourquoi on leur attribue une carte de pêcheur conditionnelle, mais qu'il ne reçoivent pas le *bad weather allowance* et lorsqu'ils ont terminé leurs bateaux, à ce moment-là, on va leur donner un *fisherman card* et ils peuvent bénéficier de « *bad weather allowance* ». Je ne comprends pas comment j'avais dit que, la fois dernière, qu'on avait – non, je n'aurais jamais pu dire ça – parce qu'en principe, les *provisional cards*, *provisional cards are for a loan at the Development Bank of Mauritius*. Je ne comprends pas comment j'aurais pu dire – et ça a été une décision de notre part, et justement, en discussion avec le manager de la banque de développement à Rodrigues et c'est pourquoi même lorsque ces personnes ont été à la banque de développement, nous avons demandé au manager de faire savoir au département de pêcheerie que vraiment ces personnes ont été à la banque de développement pour avoir leur *loan*. Alors, je ne comprends pas comment j'ai dit, la fois dernière, qu'on ne doit pas donner. C'est automatique, il faut qu'ils aient, il faut qu'ils aient ce *fisherman card* pour avoir le *loan*. C'est une condition de la banque de développement, la banque de développement ne doit pas donner un *loan* à un pêcheur tant qu'il n'a pas sa carte de pêcheur. C'est ça la grande condition au niveau de la banque de développement.

Mr. Grandcourt : M. le Président.

Chairperson : Last question.

Mr. Grandcourt : On comprend bien qu'il y a 21 *conditional fisherman cards* qu'on a données, or, d'après ça on comprends qu'il doit y avoir 21 bateaux, d'après ce que le Chef Commissaire explique. C'est ça le problème, c'est ça le problème. Où est-ce qu'on va mettre – si jamais on donne, disons, dans deux ans par là on donne 100 *conditional*, ça veut dire qu'il y aura 100 bateaux dans le lagon. Où on va mettre tous ces bateaux ? Donc, c'est ça le problème. Et autre chose, M. le Président, ces personnes qui reçoivent ces « *conditional fisherman cards* », on parle avec ces gens. Vous savez, la pêche illégale dans le lagon, tout le monde sait, tout le monde en parle, mais si jamais on donne à ce quelqu'un-là son allocation, je pense que ça va diminuer la pression de la pêche illégale dans le lagon. Donc, ce qu'on comprend, M. le Président, c'est pourquoi on a passé par ça. Et ce qui arrive c'est que là, on est en train d'avoir 21 *fishermen conditional*, là il y aura 21 bateau dans le lagon. Donc, ça va être, je pense que là le Chef Commissaire doit voir d'autres alternatives pour palier à ça.

Chief Commissioner : Si je comprends, le membre de la minorité parle de bateaux pêchant dans le lagon ; je ne parle pas de ça. Hors lagon, mais c'est la question de mouiller les bateaux quelque part. Alors, donc, nous sommes en train de prévoir ici là, et à Port-sud-est et à Baie aux Huîtres, tout ça on va voir, mais il y a beaucoup d'endroits à Rodrigues où il y a des baies où ces bateaux-là peuvent mouiller. Alors, tant qu'à la condition, le problème n'est pas là, le problème c'est justement le nombre de bateaux d'amateurs, et c'est ça que la politique du gouvernement est en train de voir comment ceux qui

pêchent dans le lagon – le gros problème c’est le lagon, ceux qui pêchent dans le lagon. Alors ceux qui veulent aller pêcher dehors pour amener des poissons dans leurs bateaux de 24 ou 30 pieds, et ça, à mon avis, nous sommes en train d’encourager ça, et hier, justement, avec cette délégation de l’Union Européenne venant pour voir quelle est la politique du gouvernement régional concernant la pêche, nous avons appuyé sur le fait que nous allons vers la pêche hors lagon.

Chairperson : Next question, First Local Region Member for La Ferme.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT FOUND AT MALABAR GYMNASIUM

B/231 The First Local Region Member for La Ferme (Mr. GRANDCOURT) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports whether, with regard to sports equipment found at Malabar Gymnasium, he can

- (a) table a list of all the equipment present there giving their number per category; and
- (b) state whether there has been any loss of equipment reported to him and, if yes, table the number per category?

Commissioner Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there has been no loss of sports equipment reported at Malabar Gymnasium since my coming into office. The list of the equipment is being compiled and will be tabled.

Mr. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, would the Commissioner state whether there has been loss of store forms?

Chairperson: Store forms, it’s not in the question but anyway.

Commissioner Lisette: Loss of equipment, not Mr. Chairperson, Sir, for store forms, I’ll need notice of the question.

Chairperson: Next question. Minority Leader.

SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS MADE FOR THE CASTING OF ROOF SLABS (L’ARGENT DALLE) FOR THE PERIOD STARTING FROM 1st JANUARY, 2005 TO DATE

B/232 The Minority Leader (Mr. ROUSSETY) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards subsidies and grants made for the casting of roof slabs (l’argent dale) for the period starting 1st January, 2005 to date, he would

- (a) inform the House about the criteria and procedures to obtain

same;

- (b) give the list of applicants, indicating for each applicant the date the application was made, the amount granted and, where no amount has been granted, the status of the application; and
- (c) state where matters stand for Mr. Antonio Momus who has applied for “l’argent dalle”?

Chairperson: 232, yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regards to the grant for the casting of roof slabs, I am tabling the criteria and procedures for same. (Appendix I)

As regards part (b) of the question, it is not proposed to give the names of the applicants. However for the period starting 1st January, 2005 to date, 284 applications have been received for casting of slabs. The status of the applications are as follows:-

- 127 cases have been approved;
- 52 cases have been enlisted for the next committee;
- 47 cases have not yet submitted their building permit;
- 46 cases have not yet submitted their land lease and tenure; and
- 12 cases have been rejected as they do not fulfill the criteria stated.

The case of Mr. Antonio Momus has already been approved by the committee and sent to Mauritius for payment.

Chairperson: Yes, next question, next question Minority Leader.

THE RETAIL SUPPLY CAPACITY OF FUEL PRODUCTS IN RODRIGUES

B/233 The Minority Leader (Mr. ROUSSETY) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he would consider as a priority the necessity of expanding the retail supply capacity of fuel products in Rodrigues, especially in view of the increasing difficulties faced by buyers in terms of queuing and congestion at the only existing filling station on the island?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the information is as follows:-

The installation of a second filling station in Rodrigues has been a high priority

on the agenda of my Commission since 2004.

Following consultations with the company AEL DDS Properties Ltd, a new filling station will be erected on an extent of 936 m³ at Mt Lubin reclaimed area to enhance the services, ensure the smooth distribution of petroleum products over the island and prevent any slow down in their supply to consumers.

The Company has also invested in the acquisition of a mobile filling station for refueling at a dedicated area at Baie Lascars and Grand La Fouche Corail. This service is expected to be in operation by early January 2006.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson.

Chairperson: Yes.

Minority Leader: The question was not related to one specific company. But rather, to promote, most of all, competition, because we have a company operating a filling station here, and this company, I believe, decides what to do in a situation of monopoly; when to close, when to open, the opening hours, etc. This causes a very big problem because if we have a fuel problem at 6.30 p.m in Port Mathurin.

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Point of order, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Chairperson: Yes. Yes, one minute. Yes.

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Yes, the Minority Leader is explaining and he is not questioning. Thank you for ruling out.

Chairperson: Yes, your question, Minority Leader?

Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

Chairperson: Bear in mind it is question time, please.

Minority Leader: Yes, thank you. Yes, my question is whether he will engage discussions with a wider range of suppliers. We have new companies in Mauritius like Indian Oil, like Caltex, all these companies are interested in Rodrigues. And it should be, whether the Commission will go in that way, to see to it that these companies also are involved in the process of the development of fuel supply in Rodrigues?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have been approached by, especially by Indian Oil. We have requested the "*demarcher*" to send for their engineer here to see where they can stock the fuel, this is the problem. They have not yet come to Rodrigues and the main problem is the stockage of fuel in

Rodrigues. This is the problem. That's why you know talking about petrol and it's a future project, we are working on it and Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we all here have seen what has happened in England, when an oil depot near villages; that's why our great problem is to discuss with the government so that we can start this development port area, so that we can have this petroleum island and any, and another petroleum company can come to Rodrigues. Even for that we are going to have a new container park so that there may not be a monopoly in the container transport from Mauritius to Rodrigues. The main problem is where to stock this petrol, this fuel and this, we have asked, there have been people coming to ask us "please, tell your engineer in the company to come and see, have a look where they can have a depot, a place to stock their fuel in Rodrigues. This is the main problem.

Chairperson: Yes. Next question.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have a supplementary question.

Chairperson: Yes, last one.

Minority Leader: Can we know what you have been hearing of this affair or concept, the hypothetical petroleum island? Can the Chief Commissioner be more explicit about his idea of this, what he means by petroleum island?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a place where there will be a reclaimed part of a lagoon – this is called, by the Mauritius Ports Authority as Petroleum Island – a place outside the Port Mathurin where we can stock the petroleum. It's a reclaimed place in the lagoon, according to the master plan.

Chairperson: Yes, next question.

THE EARTHQUAKE WHICH OCCURRED ON 22nd NOVEMBER LAST IN THE MID INDIAN OCEAN RIDGE

B/234 The Minority Leader (Mr. ROUSSETY) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, being given the risks for the inner boundary and the coastal population of the island, he will inform the House about the details of the earthquake which occurred on the 22nd November last in the Mid Indian Ocean Ridge at about 645 km from Rodrigues especially as regards the following

- (a) whether his office or any other authority was informed thereof and, if yes, on what date and at what time;
- (b) whether due consideration was given to the risk of tsunami and the estimated time taken after the quake that any waves would

have hit the coast of Rodrigues; and

- (c) whether there is any plan for warning the public in Rodrigues whenever that risk occurs?

Chairperson: Yes, Chief Commissioner?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the information is as follows:-

(a) The Meteorological Services Headquarters received information on the earthquake at 15.20 hours local time on 22nd November 2005. At the request of my office, the Meteorological Services gave the details of the earthquake on 23rd November at 10.49, confirming that it occurred near the Mid Indian Ocean Ridge around 640 km to the north-east of Rodrigues.

(b) A full report was submitted to my office stating that the event was continuously monitored and no repercussion was expected in the region. A constant monitoring of the tide gauge at Port Mathurin was also conducted.

It was also decided not to provide a false alarm to the population in Rodrigues as the intensity of the earthquake estimated at 5.5 magnitudes Richter scale does not give rise to Tsunami.

(c) The Meteorological Services have the responsibility to issue warnings if the risk occurs.

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A pamphlet issued by the Meteorological Services on Tsunami will be made available for the information of the public regarding measures to be taken, following the warning of a tsunami.

Chairperson: Yes, we are short of time; I will allow only 1 supplementary per question now. We've got only 4 minutes for the 4 questions.

Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have been told here that the Meteorological Services in Mauritius were informed at 15.20, whereas the quake, according to information of the West Geological Survey in their report about this earthquake was that the earthquake occurred at about 14.00, 14.00 heures, local time, Rodriguan time and therefore, if we take, Mr. Chairperson, Sir – I need to explain my question first and then put it – if we take the time taken by the earthquake in South East Asia in December last, being given the distance, the waves travels at about 600 km per hour; if there were a Tsunami, the risk, one hour only, after one hour only, we would have had the first waves, whereas the Meteorological Services were only informed at 15.20 i.e more than one hour later. I would like to ask, what plan there is here, in Rodrigues, because the Chief Commissioner has admitted himself that he contacted, his office contacted the Meteorological Services and then they

informed him. They did not inform him automatically about that and the day after the quake. So, I would like to know whether he will see to it that there is a better mode of communication, of emergency reporting between the Meteorological Services and the authorities in Rodrigues, because we never know, M. Chairperson, Sir, when a disaster will come.

Chief Commissioner: I am of the view that we must consolidate the quick, urgent communication between Mauritius and Rodrigues. And I think all this has been discussed in different Tsunami's meetings in Mauritius and in Paris. And we'll find out, in the next Tsunami meeting in Mauritius, whenever the new government is going to have one, so that we can take up this problem of communication. Well, we have been apprised of the earthquake at such time and it could have been earlier than that. So, I think it's for the use of anybody here that a quick communication can be done between Mauritius and Rodrigues. And I would like to add that we should fight, that Rodrigues itself, can have its own equipment so that we can know exactly the time, a sort of, if it happens in the east of Rodrigues and then Mauritius is far away, so we are supposed to have the information first, before Mauritius. We are supposed to know first that there is an earthquake somewhere before Mauritius. I think what had happened for the tsunami and for this earthquake, we should fight for what we call, a sort of station here, with sophisticated equipment so that we can be aware, we here in Rodrigues in the future. It is not a question to depend on Mauritius. I think we should try, with the help of Mauritius and international organisations, to create sort of – I don't say it's a research unit here – but an information unit here much more quicker than in Mauritius. And I must say also, as I mentioned in my paper, that we have this tide gauge which is installed here and which is communicating straight to the satellite.

Chairperson: Yes, next.

THE REGIONAL CULTURAL AND LEISURE CENTRE

B/235 The Minority Leader (Mr. ROUSSETY) asked Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Women's Affairs, Family Welfare, Community Development, etc, whether, as regards the Regional Leisure and Cultural Centre whose construction was originally planned at Lataniers, she would give all the details about expenditure which has already been incurred on the site at Lataniers or pertaining to that location, including expenditure for the laying of the foundation stone?

Commissioner Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, only Rs 2,000 have been incurred at Lataniers. They were spent on materials for the fixing of the foundation stone. The Consultant did not charge anything for the foundation plaque.

Rs 840,000 have been paid to the Consultant in accordance with his contract for the architectural design of the project now ongoing at Mon Plaisir. The same design is being used except for very minor changes to suit the topography of the new site and these changes did not imply additional cost of the project.

Chairperson: Next question, the Third Island Region Member.

DRIVERS FALLING UNDER THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

B/236 The Third Island Region Member (Mr. GUILLAUME) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he would inform the House

- (a) about the number of drivers working under his Commission;
- (b) if all these drivers work overtime, and, if not, why; and
- (c) whether drivers from other Commissions are sometimes required to work in his Commission?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are presently 23 drivers working under the different divisions falling under my office.

Depending upon the circumstances and whenever the need arises, the drivers do work over and beyond their normal working hours and are, therefore, paid overtime.

I am informed that no drivers from other Commissions are required to work in my Commission. However, my office has sometimes been requested to post a driver in other CommissionS to cover absences or increase in workload. In order to minimize the use of vehicles, a driver from one division within my office may be requested to work for another division within my office.

Chairperson: Yes, next question.

THE PROBLEM OF HYPERTENSION IN RODRIGUES

B/237 The Third Island Region Member (Mr. GUILLAUME) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health whether, with regard to the problem of hypertension in the island, he could state

- (a) how many people died from December 2003 to November 2004 and from December 2004 to date and how many of hypertension during these periods; and
- (b) a brief statement on the cause of deaths through disease in

Rodrigues and what actions are being taken to improve the situation?

Commissioner Sooprayen: Mr. Chairperson, Sir,

(a) I am informed that from December 2003 to November 2004, there have been 209 death cases and from December 2004 to November 2005, the number of cases is 215.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am also informed that people do not die directly due to hypertension, but if untreated, high blood pressure increases a person's risk of developing:

1. Heart disease (heart failure or heart attack);
2. Kidney (renal) failure; and
3. Cerebrovascular accident.

People die of the complications mentioned above. So, I am informed that it is not right to associate deaths directly to hypertension, because most patients suffering from hypertension have other diseases such as diabetes or cardiac problems.

(b) Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the main causes of death in Rodrigues are heart disease, cerebrovascular, diabetes.

To improve the situation the following actions are being taken.

- (a) Non Communicable Disease (NCD) programme (health education and health promotion) is ongoing.
- (b) Sensitization campaigns on healthy food habits/ exercise are carried out in schools, health centres and community centres. The team has been reinforced by the recruitment of a Nutritionist who delivers talks regularly on diet and aspects of healthy living throughout the villages.
- (c) The Commission started a program with "*Caravane de Santé*" in villages and workplaces to detect new cases of NCD diseases. It is an ongoing programme but unfortunately, due to shortage of doctors on an off, the programme has had intermittent break periods.

Any way the Health Sector is reorganising everything to continue with the program as from early next year.

Chairperson: Yes, time is up, next item on the Order Paper, please.

Chairperson: Yes. Two Commissioners will make statements, I understand. Yes, Commissioner for Arts & Culture.

STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner for Arts & Culture - Rebuttal of allegations made by a member of the Assembly on matters falling under the control of her Commission.

Commissioner Arlette Perrine-Bégué: M. Chairperson Sir, I wish to refute certain mis-information given by the second member for Maréchal, Mr. Agathe, in statements he made in this House on various occasions.

First it was alleged by the respected member, that his colleague the second member for la Ferme, Mr. Jabeemissar, did not receive any invitation for the official commemoration of the Rodrigues Day on the 16th of October last. The matter, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it would seem, does not deserve mention in this House and could have been raised directly with my Commission, being given that invitations are, since 3 years, automatically sent to all members of the Assembly all the time even if it is noticed that they do not always honour same. However, I have to explain that on the eve of the event, we were informed that 5 envelopes were left undelivered, among which, one addressed to the respected second member for la Ferme. He was contacted by phone very early in the morning with apologies and informed that his invitation would reach him in the following 30 minutes. He accepted these apologies which were done.

Secondly the respected second member for Maréchal, Mr Agathe, stated that he received complaints from the Tamarin Women Association to say that they were discriminated against by me, in project of allocation of funds under the Women's Micro Project Scheme. Again, I wish to refute this allegation. I made an investigation after his declaration and met those concerned at Tamarin. Both the Village Committee and the Women's Association were not aware of such complaints raised on their behalf. As I stated, all Women's Association which submitted their projects under that scheme, had the chance to find their applications exceptionally approved this year, being given that it was the end of the financial year. All applications were entertained. In fact, our funds allow us to approve only 15 projects and this is what I said on the radio and this is what I said to the Federation of Women Associations. And there was a call for submission of projects, prior to that there was a training for the identification of needs before these projects, the scheme was set up. But since there were savings and we received more than 40 applications, we approved

all of them and there were no application; Tamarin Women's Association did not submit any application under this scheme. So, how could they complain? I have invited them to submit their application for this financial year, which they have agreed to do. And I must say that they are very furious about things that have been said in this Assembly which they were not aware.

Furthermore, M. Chairperson Sir, it seems that there is another misunderstanding on the part of respected member Agathe, in his intervention after adjournment, during the last sitting of this assembly, regarding payment made concerning the Regional Cultural Centre, now under construction on the boundary of Mon Plaisir/Lataniers/St Gabriel/Le Chou/Malabar. In fact, it is on this corner on this *"frontière"*. In fact no payment had been made to any Contractor, specifically for the Lataniers site. The four million three hundred and forty-six thousand seven hundred and twenty-three (Rs 4,346,723) (*instead of twenty-two that you mentioned*), which the member mentioned as having been paid, is in strict accordance with the terms of the contract between the Commission and the Contractor e.i the Allied Builders who was the successful bidder for Mon Plaisir and the amount represents an advance payment for mobilisation, as it is required under the law, *"payable to the Contractor for starting the works at the site"*.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish also to apprise the house concerning the Director of Audit Report concerning the IFAD project. The Auditor's Report refers to an average expenditure rate of 48% at 30th June, 2005. It must be noted that 63% of the Community Development Project had been completed at 30th June, 2005. All remaining projects have started in 2005-2006, some have, in the meantime, been completed and others expected to be completed by 30th June, 2006. The Director of Audit has noted the reasons put forward for the slow implementation of the some component of the IFAD Programme at the start, because I would like to say, that when we took over the project; the project was well before the arrival of the autonomy; at least no project started. And by 2½ years after that, we had spent, on the Community Project, for which I am directly concerned, we had spent 150% of the project and we have facts for that. I made a statement here. So, what I would like to say is that the Director of Audit has noted the reason, he didn't criticise, he just mentioned the reasons put forward for the slow implementation of some component of IFAD Programme, namely; the lengthily and slow procedures for staff recruitment and tendering and lack of motivation on certain projects regarding the beneficiaries who submitted the projects themselves.

The apparently low completion of rate regarding, for example, the component of Fisheries, is *"explicable"* and is attributable to the procedures for tendering, which took more time on account of technical specification which we awaited from the Ministry of Shipping and Fisheries for acquisition of community boats. The tender exercise is now well underway and by 30th June, 2006, the boats will have been supplied and relevant expenditure made, as planned.

As regards the micro-credit aspect of the programme, I would wish to draw the attention of the members, that this aspect of the project was not under the control of the RRA, but under the same envelope, under the control of the Ministry for Women's Rights as already mentioned by the Director of Audit and the funds had been used well before I took over the file. The funds had already been used well before I took over the file. And I am also pleased, like I say, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that as regard projects, Community Development projects, in 2½ years, we have approved and financed projects up to 150% so that as regards construction of community centres, women commercial projects, tract roads, footpaths, construction of pre-primary schools and training, etc, so, there was an additional 10 million rupees that we have asked for and received, after we explained that there were a number of important projects still in the pipeline which has been approved by the project.

As matters are now going on, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, , the whole programme which comprises three (3) components: community development, which has already been used and done, fisheries and agriculture, we think that the whole programme will have been completed by 30th of June.

Chairperson: Yes, Commissioner for Health, please.

“Bird Flu” or “Grippe Aviaire” – Preventive measures in Rodrigues

Commissioner Soopramanien Sooprayen: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the objective of this statement is to apprise the Assembly of the step taken to combat “Bird Flu/ Grippe Aviaire H5N1” if ever there happens to be an incidence in Rodrigues.

To begin with a technical committee comprising the Health Director, the Principal Health Inspector and the Departmental Head of my Commission have been set up to follow the situation.

3. A team (Dr. Bissessur and Dr. Ramjee) from the Division of Veterinary Services of Mauritius visited Rodrigues from Tuesday 8th to Friday 11th November, 2005 in connection with Bird Flu. In the meantime, the Veterinary Officer of the Commission for Public Infrastructure, Dr. Samois, had sent about 20 faecal samples taken from birds and local poultry from all over the island to the Veterinary Laboratory in Mauritius for investigation.

4. The team from Mauritius went to Ile aux Cocos on Wednesday 9th November, around the island on Thursday 10th November and on Friday 11th November had meetings with officers and people concerned.

The samples of faeces taken from Ile aux Cocos and around the island showed no sign of "Bird Flu". We have stepped up surveillance at the port and the airport and people coming from South East Asia are subject to follow-up for at least 7 days. Large scale poultry farms are also under close surveillance. The Health Director has ordered 25 doses of the drug Tami flu in case of need. The number of doses recommended by the World Health Organisation is about 30% of the population. However, the cost of stocking that amount of drug is quite prohibitive. For Mauritius 300,000 doses would cost Rs 45,000,000 and chances are that these may not be used. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life has in stock about 1,145 doses of Tami flu from which we have ordered 25.

As per the preliminary investigations carried out by the team from Mauritius, no case of Bird Flu has been detected in Rodrigues. Surveillance is maintained and the situation is being closely monitored. There is total collaboration between my Commission and the Commission of Public Infrastructure.

I am made to understand that the Commission of Public Infrastructure has received an information pamphlet from the Agricultural Services, Mauritius and in which are explained precautionary measures that need to be taken.

Up to now there has not been any suspected case of "bird flu" reported, either to the Agricultural Services, Citronelle or to the Public Health Service. C'est-à-dire, il n'y a pas de cas de grippe recensés ni à Rodrigues ni à Maurice à ce jour.

Merci.

Standard VI Examination – C.P.E results 2005

Commissioner André Lélío Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the 2005 CPE examinations were held during the period 17th to 24th of October, 2005 and some 1075 students from the 13 government and R.C.A primary schools participated in same. The CPE results were made official on Friday, the 9th of December, 2005 and appropriate arrangements have been made for the admission of the students, in January 2006, into Form I mainstream as well as pre-vocational classes.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, upon the receipt of the CPE results, all the Head Teachers of the primary schools collected the result slips at my Commission for onward distribution to their pupils at their respective schools. Subsequently, the parents were requested to fill in the admission forms, so as to enable my Commission to work out the admission list for January 2006 intake in secondary schools of Rodrigues. A team has been set up at my Commission to work out the admission formula.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the CPE results for the year 2005, clearly indicates that there is a slight progress in the rate of passes, when it has result from 52.86% in 2004 to 55.89% to date, i.e an increase of 3.09%. The percentage of the passes in terms of performance per school is as follows. I would also like to mention that the girls, once more, did better than the boys; the girls scored 61.13% of the passes and the boys 50.68%. I recap by saying the percentage of passes in terms of performance per school is as follows: *(I give this in rank of merit)*

1.	Notre Dame de Lourdes R.C.A	-	71.64%
2.	Marc Etienne Roche Bon Dieu Government School	-	64.52%
3.	Oyster Bay Government School	-	64.52%
4.	Basile Allas Port Mathurin Government School	-	59.35%
5.	Ste Thérèse de L'Enfant Jésus RCA School	-	56.6% and
I think that the whole House ought to give them a nice large applause, because they came up from 40% last year to score 56.6%.			
6.	Port Sud Est Gouvernement School	-	56.52%
7.	Ste Famille R.C.A School	-	56.32%
8.	Don Bosco R.C.A School	-	56%
9.	Mangues Government School	-	54.79%
10.	Grand La Fouche Corail Government School	-	51.4%
11.	St Esprit R.C.A School	-	51.06%
12.	Terre Rouge Government School	-	41.86%
13.	Batratran Government School	-	30.09 %

However, it is regrettable to point out that the results of some three (3) primary schools had gone down compared to their performance in 2004 and they are as follows:

1. Oyster Bay Government School went down from 75.4% to 64.5%
2. Terre Rouge Government School, from 44.2% to 41.86%;
3. Batatran Government School, 38.08% to 30.09%.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I mentioned above, the processing of both mainstreams and pre-vocational application forms is being carried out at my Commission and I am confident that on Monday the 19th of December, 2005, the admission list will be affixed on notice boards at primary schools and at my Commission as well as the list would be submitted to the Rectors of the five (5) secondary schools in Rodrigues. On Tuesday, the 20th of December, 2005, the registration of students for both Form I mainstream and pre-vocational will be effected at the secondary schools to which the students have been offered admission for the year 2006.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to state that the appropriate arrangements have been made by my Commission to facilitate the January 2006's submission in the five (5) secondary schools in Rodrigues and the seats have been allocated

as follows: Rodrigues College, 90; four sections, the pre-vocational 25; 1 section, Le Chou College is 130 for 4 sections, with 50 in the pre-vocational; 2 sections, Mont Lubin College, 140 for 4 sections plus 50 in 2 sections of pre-vocational, Grande Montagne 110 for 3 sections plus 25 in 1 section of pre-vocational, Maréchal College is 123 in 4 sections plus 50 in 2 sections of pre-vocational; the total being 593 children in the mainstream for 19 sections and 200 into the pre-vocational for 8 sections.

I also wish to point out, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that all the Rodrigues College expected that it would take 90 into four streams, there are also 10 + 10, that's 10, that they have the for needy cases, plus 10, that's to do with the schools of sports. And so, that is going to be 110 plus probably some repeaters.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to ensure every parent whose child has passed in 2005 C.P.E examinations as well as those children eligible for pre-vocational classes, that appropriate measures have been taken by my commission to guarantee them their respective seats at the secondary school level for January 2006 intake.

May I seize this opportunity, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on behalf of this Assembly, to heartily extend our congratulations to the Head Teachers, to the Deputy Head Teachers, teachers and parents for their unflinching support for the success of their pupils, of their children, without forgetting those who have not gone through and I wish them the best of luck for the future. I also wish the Chairperson, the Chief Commissioner and my colleagues Commissioners, Minority Leader and the members of the minority, the Clerk and the Staff of the Assembly a "Merry Christmas and Happy and blessed New Year 2006".

Chairperson: Yes, next item, please.

MOTION - Minority Leader

"This Assembly resolves that a Fact Finding Committee (Select Committee) composed of 5 members of this House be appointed by the Chairperson, which, in view of the astringent comments of the Director of Audit's report 2004-2005, shall investigate thoroughly, with the power to send for persons and documents, into the preposterously expensive contract of New Anse Raffin Dam project and to report its findings to this House within 5 months from the day of its constitution."

Chairperson: Please wait. Respected members, being given the tenor of the motion which appears on the Order Paper of today, I have to draw your attention that the Public Accounts Committee, which has been set up by this House, shall, by virtue of Standing Order 63(2), examine the audited accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by the Assembly to meet the public expenditure and other accounts laid before the Assembly together with

the Director of Audit's Report thereon. The committee moreover, may send for persons and records, to take evidence and to report from time to time. There is nothing, however, explicitly contained in the Standing Orders, which would preclude me from allowing the present motion on the Order Paper, which, in effect, pertains to set up a specific committee with specific terms of reference. Thank you.

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir. First one...

Chairperson: First one, the first one was, no, in reference to what I said, yes, this what you, yes. Yes, are you reacting to what I said?

Chief Commissioner: Yes.

Chairperson: Reaction to what I said first and then your motion.

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on the basis of what you have just said, I would like to inform the House that I am in doubt about whether the motion is receivable. I would like to table to this Assembly the legal advice...

Chairperson: Yes, there is a point of order, please.

Minority Leader: I think that the Chief Commissioner has mentioned whether the motion is receivable and this is exact, I think, this is a challenge to the authority of the Chairperson and to the whole House. I believe what he is intending to do or to bring to the attention of the House, is completely out of order and should not be allowed, because you have decided that the motion, the Chairperson, who has decided that the motion appears on the Order Paper, has deemed it fit that the – as you have explained – that the motion is correct to appear on the Order Paper and I think the member, the Chief Commissioner is coming to challenge this decision. This is a flouting of the authority of the Chairperson.

Chairperson: Yes, I think, I think the Minority Leader has got some points if the motion does appear on the Order Paper, this means that I scanned the motion and found it – not receivable – appropriate to appear on the Order Paper. Yes, I don't think this is a way to challenge the rationale of having it on the Order Paper. Yes, you may proceed.

Chief Commissioner: I don't want to challenge but I can remove in whether the motion is receivable, I remove it. I would like to table in this House, this Assembly, the Legal Advice I have obtained from the Solicitor General regarding same. I will tend to fully agree with the advice thereon. In fact, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Solicitor General has directly pointed out that there exists a Public Accounts Committee of this House, whose responsibilities is to examine Audit's report and the accounts of the RRA and has the powers to call

for persons and request for documents. You will appreciate that such motions, if accepted, will be a duplicate of the Public Accounts Committee. I am of the view that we should not proceed with the debate on the motion under the advice of the Solicitor General. Thanks.

Chairperson: Yes, you are tabling the advice?

Chief Commissioner: Yes. (Appendix J)

Chairperson: Yes, let me have a, yes, can I have it? Yes, any reaction to this. Yes.

Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I don't think, it would be proper, even for you, to look at the advice being given the late stage of proceedings in which we are. The mover of a motion is proceeding to move a motion and the Chief Commissioner just takes a paper to table here, and we don't know what is the exact authenticity of the document, what it contains and I believe that at this...

Chairperson: Please wait, please wait, you will be given the document.

Minority Leader: At this stage of the proceedings, where the minute before, the minute before, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in law, the point, we have passed the point of going to that motion. We have been doing all the preparatory acts to move the motion. Motion time has been called and in the minute, the seconds before the member stands up to move the motion, another member submits a paper, not only flouting the authority of the Chairperson, and coming, respected members, coming from the leader of the House, to flout the authority of the Chairperson. What is this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a photocopy of a letter, a photocopy, where is the original, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? I want to see the original, photocopies; I don't think they are true. I want to see the original for this letter if ever they want me to look at the letter. I would think that an original letter can, of course, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, coming from Solicitor General's office.

Chairperson: Before you proceed on this point, may I say that everything which happened here is not necessarily written. Of course the words of a member carries a lot of weight. There is a corresponding sanction if ever thing that have been tabled or given *viva voce* is not exact. So, this is why – I have looked at it – I saw that it was a document dated 12th of December, this means yesterday, may be you may have looked at it now, but it is receivable. There are no reasons why I should not act on it if ever I intend to.

Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I think Mr. Clerk.

Chairperson: Yes, tender the documents.

Minority Leader: I don't want, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to react about the appropriateness of the Chief Commissioner having recourse to Mauritius to have an interpretation about something which has appeared on the Order Paper. This is a lack of trust on the part of the Chief Commissioner in the presidency of this House. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a legal point, but I think that Mr. Dabee has followed, has looked at one part of the law. The law is a whole, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because if we look at – and I have lengthily discussed – if we look at our Standing Orders, Standing Order 1, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Chairperson: Yes.

Minority Leader: First of all, I have submitted a motion for a Select Committee and there is no provision for Select Committee in our Standing Orders. There are no provisions in our Standing Orders for Select Committee. Therefore, Standing Order 1 of our Standing Orders applies, Standing Order 1 of our Standing Orders applies – i.e where nothing is provided in our Standing Orders for us here, we have to refer to the Standing Orders of the National Assembly and this is supported, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, by Section 65(3) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act 2001 and by Section 64(5) of the same act, which grants to us the privileges and immunities of the National Assembly. Therefore, Standing Orders of the National Assembly apply where nothing is provided here. And what the Standing Orders of the National Assembly say; Standing Order 70 and Standing Order 71; they describe that there can be Select Committees about specific matters – this is Standing Order 70 – and Standing Order 71, of course, specifies this power to send for persons to take evidence. Therefore, I think that Mr. Dabee, the Solicitor General – I don't want to comment on his decision – I think that he has not studied all aspects pertaining to this motion, he has of course, looked at the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act but our Standing Orders make full provision for such a motion, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And I am surprised that I have to defend, here, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have to defend my position to fight for the moving of this motion when it has already been proposed, it has already appeared on the Order Paper; and of course I think, if this side of this House, had adopted such a course of action, it would have been completely rejected. I, therefore, beg to move, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the motion appearing on the Order Paper as scheduled.

Chairperson: Yes, let me react at least to what you said. Yes, give me the advice, please. The first point, of course, is that we are not in a court of law where we can delve a little deeper into the interpretation of the different provisions of the law. But of course, this is a place where we can have a go at the provisions of the Standing Orders. Of course, you made quite a few good points, but the issue is whether the motion should be debated or not. I find

nothing written as advice which concerns the admissibility of the motion on the Order Paper, but on the other hand, the advice stated in these terms, if that Committee has been set up, the motion to set up another Fact Finding Committee should not even be debated. We all know that the Solicitor General is at the head of the State Law Office; his main role is to advise the government of the day and act as such as the Principal Adviser to the government and, of course, all members are aware that we act on behalf of government and this advice, coming as it is, will be binding on this Assembly. I, therefore, rule that the debate will not be allowed to take place on the motion.

Minority Leader: I would like to react, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I will abide by your ruling on the non-admissibility at the last minute, the last second, this is a proof that we should expect everything in this House, but we have power also, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and I will inform you that I am tabling a request for a special meeting to examine a motion, to phrase the different manner, for tomorrow at 15.00 hours.

I thank you for your attention and wish we could see all members present here tomorrow for the debate. Thank you.

Chairperson: Yes, since you table the motion and you said that you want a special meeting for tomorrow, probably I would have to draw the attention that Section 60 states that the Clerk shall give each member at least 24 hours written notice of any special meeting and the agenda of such meeting. Of course, it will depend when the Assembly will adjourn and what will be the administrative time to be taken to prepare the agenda and to forward same to get, yes, I will probably ultimately have to decide on that issue. Well, we can move to the next item on the Order Paper, please.

Yes, I understand that this was supposed to be the last sitting for this year. Yes, Chief Commissioner, before moving the adjournment.

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have now reached the end of the last sitting for this calendar year. The first sitting was on the 15th February, 2005 and as at to-day we have had 14 sittings. This year has been marked in the sense that we have had 2 special sittings, this at the request of the Minority Leader.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this year has been quite remarkable as compared with the previous years. First the Select Committee empowered to enquire on the implementation of educational reforms in Rodrigues standing as the first Select Committee of this Assembly and completed its inquiry and its report was tabled on 26th April, 2005.

Secondly, the first Rodrigues Regional Assembly Bill, namely the Rodrigues Children's Council Bill, was adopted by this House. However, Mr.

Chairperson, we are still awaiting for its adoption by the National Assembly in Mauritius.

This Assembly has, in addition, passed two (2) regulations. The first one; the Dumping of Waste Carrier's Regulation 2005, was passed on the 19th July, 2005 and the second one, the Control of Road Advertisement Regulations 2005, was passed on the 27th September, 2005.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, during this year, including this sitting, 237 questions were tabled, all of which required oral answers, except one (1) which required a written answer. Myself and all the Commissioners, during both question and statement times, provided useful information to this House, including our policies – present and future – on many issues.

I now wish to express to you, Mr. Chairperson, my thanks and those from all the members on the side of the House for the way you have presided over the debates of this Assembly. I also wish to express my appreciation to all those who have participated actively in the debate.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I now be allowed to ask you, in my own personal name and in that of all members of the House, to present the season's greetings to the President of the Republic and Lady Jugnauth, to the Vice-president and Mrs. Bhundun and to the Prime Minister and Mrs. Ramgoolam.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I now convey to you and Mrs. Lamvohee, our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. My best wishes also go to all the respected members and their families, to the Clerk and his family and to all the staff of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and their families.

M. le Président, je voudrais présenter à toute la population de Rodrigues, les enfants, les jeunes et les adultes, mes vœux de Joyeux Noël et de Bonne Année et leur remercier pour son intérêt et dévouement pour le développement de Rodrigues, et à tous ceux et à toutes celles qui, durant cette année, ont travaillé avec volonté et courage pour la réussite de cette île Rodrigues autonome.

Thank you very much.

Chairperson : Yes, will there be any response from this side, no ?

Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have the conviction that we will meet again before the end of this year and therefore I will present my greetings when we'll meet again. Thank you.

Chairperson: Yes, I will associate myself with the Chief Commissioner, as expressed to the President of the Republic and Lady Jugnauth, to the Vice-president and Mrs. Bhundun and also to the Prime Minister and Mrs.

Ramgoolam. With great pleasure, we will convey the message of the House to them.

I thank the Chief Commissioner, on my behalf and on behalf of the secretariat of the Assembly for his kind words and best wishes to my family and to all members of the Secretariat and their families.

In return, I am pleased to express a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to the Chief Commissioner and Mrs. Clair, the Deputy Chief Commissioner and Commissioners, to the Minority Leader and to all members and their families.

Finally, I wish to assure all members that I am very grateful to them for their co-operation and understanding of this House. Once again, best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Thank you.

(Applause)

Chairperson: Adjournment?

Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that the Assembly be adjourned to Tuesday 14th February, 2006 at 10.30 a.m.

Chairperson: Yes, any secondment? Yes.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Chairperson: Question: that this Assembly be adjourned to Tuesday 14th of February, 2006 at 10.30 a.m. Those in favour say "aye", those against say "no". The "ayes" have it.

Any statement at adjournment? No?

The House stands adjourned.

On its rising at 15.00 hours, the Assembly stood adjourned to Tuesday 14th February, 2006 at 10.30 a.m.