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Debate No. 1 of 09. 02.2010

RODRIGUES

SECOND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 1 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 09th February 2010

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

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

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RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 09th February 2010

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The Executive Council
(Formed by Mr. Johnson Roussety, G.OS.K)

Mr. Johnson Roussety, G.O.S.K	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Finance, Economic Affairs, Central Administration, Civil Aviation (administration), Civil status, Customs and Excise (administration), Fisheries, Industrial Development, Information Technology and Telecommunications, Judicial (administration), Legal Services, Marine Services (administration), Meteorology (administration), Postal Services (administration), Registration, State Lands, Statistics in respects of Rodrigues, Town and Country Planning, Tourism, Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Handicraft, Consumer Protection.
Mr. Gaetan Jabeemissar	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Arts and Culture, Education (administration), Library Services, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and buildings, Vocational Training
Mrs. Marie Thérèse Brault	Commissioner responsible for Social Security, Child Development, Family Welfare, Social Security (administration), Women's Affairs, Poverty Alleviation
Mr. Franceau Aubret Grandcourt	Commissioner responsible for Environment, Housing, Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Marine Parks, Transport
Mr. Jean Christian Agathe	Commissioner responsible for Labour and Industrial Relations, Youth and Sports, Employment
Mr. Joseph Allan Ladd Emilien	Commissioner responsible for Community Development, Co-operatives, Fire Services, Health (administration), Prisons and Reform Institutions (administration)
Mr. Louis Ange Perrine	Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Food Production, Forestry, Handicraft, Plant and animal quarantine, Water Resources

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr. Chairperson	-	Lamvohee, Mr. Joseph Chenlye, C.S.K
Clerk	-	Gopall, Mr. Navin
Serjeant–at-Arms	-	Louis, Mr. Jorgenson

Debate 09.02.2010

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

RODRIGUES WATER COMPANY – MISSION STATEMENT, MANAGEMENT & PERSONNEL, WATER DISTRIBUTION ETC.

(No. B/1) Mrs. M.A. Perrine-Bégué (First Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards water situation and water reforms in Rodrigues, would he, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) when will the Rodrigues Water Company be fully operational in Rodrigues and what will be the final composition of its personnel and management;

(b) what will be the Company's top priorities;

(c) since when the first recruitment/nomination of officers has been made following the setting of the Company and what has been the role of those concerned and the budget used to date; and

(d) table a copy of the Company's mission statement and proposed organizational chart;

(e) pending the Rodrigues Water Company's full fledge operation what is being done by his Commission to improve the water distribution on the network since he took the portfolio in January 2009?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Rodrigues Water Company will take over the operation of water distribution in the southern section (La Ferme) on 1st April 2010 and it is contemplated that the taking over of the whole island will be completed by 2011.

The final composition of the personnel and management will be as follows:

Manager	-	1
Administrative Secretaries	-	2
Administrative Assistants	-	4
Secretary/Receptionist	-	1
Driver cum Office Attendant	-	1
Operating Engineer (Civil)	-	1

Operating Engineer (Electromechanical)	-	1
Technical Officers (Civil)	-	5
Technical Officer (Electromechanical)	-	1
Technical Assistants	-	5
Team Leaders	-	12
Field Technicians	-	60
Handyman	-	20

These figures may be subject to change depending on circumstances. It is also to be noted that the designation of some grades will be changed to be in line with the proposals contained in the Business Plan of the company.

As regards part (b), the Company's top priorities and other strategic plans are contained in the Feasibility Study Report/Business Plan of the Company. In a nutshell, the Business Plan outlines the institutional, technical, legal and social measures for an improved and sustainable water supply.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, enumerating the company's priorities may take the whole of this question time and therefore I am taking the opportunity of this question to table a copy of the Business Plan and the Annual Report of the Company in line with section 3(5) and 20(3) of the RRA (Investment Management) Regulations 2008. **(APPENDIX…)**. The Business Plan of the company spells out the priorities of the Company as well as all the other relevant information with regards to the setting up and start of the operations of the Company for the coming years whereas the Annual Report summarizes the activities carried out by the Company during the same period.

As regards part (c), the recruitment and appointment of staff on a one year contract renewable started on 1st February 2009. A skeleton staff was recruited comprising a Manager, one Technical Assistant and one Administrative Secretary.

The inputs of the staff recruited can be summarized as follows:

1. Design of the structure of the Company, drafting of the schemes of service, interview and recruitment.

2. Setting up of the logistic support of the Company – Procurement of vehicles, lorries, computers, furniture, etc…

3. Provide technical assistance to the Commission for Water Resources; project management and supervision of works for reservoirs at Rivière Coco, Montagne Patate and rehabilitation of Cascade Pigeon and, as from January

2010, maintenance of pumping stations and reservoirs and pipe laying, and joint water distribution with the Water Resources Unit.

4. Assist the DCP Consultants in the preparation of the feasibility study/business plan of the Company.

The field staff was recruited in December 2009 and January 2010. They are actually following an on the job training with a view to take over the distribution of water in the southern part by April this year.

The budget used or expenditure incurred to date is summarized as follows:

	October 2007 – December 2008	**January 2009 – December 2009**
Recurrent	165,785.00	2,289,896.67
Capital	-	4,638,785.40

As regards part (d), the organizational chart and the Company's mission statement are contained in the Business Plan of the Company which I have just tabled.

As regards part (e), Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the continuous programme for the improvement of the water distribution on the network is being implemented irrespective of the Rodrigues Water Company taking over.

As I have stated several times in this House, the Rodrigues Water Company will be managing the water distribution only whereas the Commission for Water Resources will be responsible for the implementation of Capital projects. A memorandum of understanding in the form of a contract of delegation will be signed shortly between the company and the Commission for Water Resources.

May I refer the respected Members to pages 21 to 26 of my last budget speech, whereby I have enumerated the measures taken by the Commission to upgrade the water supply as well as our vision for the future.

Thank you, Sir.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether any staff of the Commission for Water Resources has joined the Water Company yet.

The Chief Commissioner: Advertisements were made by the Rodrigues Water Company on several occasions. It does not seem, according to the information I have, that any staff of the Water Unit has joined the Water Company.

<u>????? WHO HAS THE FLOOR</u>

Thank you. In fact my question regarded any secondment for duty or whatever. As regards the Chief Commissioner's reply to PQ No. B/120, it was pointed out in that reply that the Company was incorporated on the 29th of October, 2007, but that it was only on the 11th of December 2009 - as per the press release of the Executive Council - that the Executive Council gave its approval for the Company to proceed with the recruitment of the required staff. And I note that it concerns only seven out of the eleven categories of staff to be employed. Can the Chief Commissioner enlighten the House on this point, Sir?

The Chief Commissioner: *Rome ne s'est pas construit en un jour, M. le president*. Following the setting- up of the Company, we had to go through a number of preparatory stages. Consultations had to be carried out and studies undertaken. It was only after all these exercises were completed that the Company started recruiting its staff. Thank you.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Can the Chief Commissioner enlighten the House as to the reason why it took the company one year, even more to start with the recruitment of its staff? Because, as far as I understand, the Chief Commissioner has insisted on the fact that the company's main objective will be only water distribution. Therefore, I cannot understand what was it that next step that had to be taken before starting with the distribution of water.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I have just stated, the issue of a private company, a semi autonomous body, under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, taking over the distribution of the water in Rodrigues, is in the program of the present Government, represented by a majority in this House. Procedures have to be followed before undertaking any reform of this nature, and these procedures have to be followed step by step. We have, for example, to set up the company, to define the legal provisions, and so on. We have had to bring to this House the RRA Investment Management Regulations which will regulate the operation, the accountability, and the management of the Company. And, of course, it took time for the Board of the Company to be fully constituted, for all the necessary information to be gathered, and for all the financial aspects to be finalized. All these steps have been taken one after the other, at different stages. I agree that there may have been some delay, but you know how things are in government. You know that the procedures have to be followed step by step.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I note that the Commission intends to recruit more than one hundred persons to constitute the staff of the Company. Can the Commissioner state whether the staff of that Company will be more or less than that of the present Water Unit of this Government?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, only God knows that. I cannot predict over the long term how the Company or its staff structure will evolve. The Member is very well aware that the staff structure, the organizational structure of a company is not like a rock in the sea. It is subject to change according to the needs of the day, it is subject to change according to the demand and supply of services that the company has to face. It is up to the Board of the Company to decide on whether to reduce or increase its staff. The question of staff, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is a question related to the organizational structure of the company and it depends on the different objectives of the company. I believe that it will make an optimal use of its staff. And this is one of the main reasons why we have created this company; we want an optimum and efficient use of human resources involved in water distribution in Rodrigues. We also want these people involved to become accountable. For example, the person who will be responsible for the water distribution network in a village will have to open the valve at a certain hour and he will have to close it at a certain hour. That person will have to make sure that the consumer is being supplied with water. Therefore, that person will be accountable, and this is not really the case presently with the existing system. And I must add that it is to the credit of this Executive Council and this Regional Government that we have been able to create one hundred jobs - as has been rightly pointed out by my colleague - without increasing the budget.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner mentioned that the company will take over the responsibility for water distribution in the southern part of the island as from 1st April 2010. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether this will start simultaneously with the introduction of a water fee for that region.

The Chief Commissioner: No, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the water fee is another measure which will come after the signature of the contract of delegation, which has been approved by the Executive Council during its last meeting. Water regulations will be presented to the House, and these regulations will include provisions for the introduction of water tariffs. As you are aware, Sir, according to the Investment Management Regulations, no water tariff can be introduced without the concurrence of the Executive Council. Therefore, the next step that we are going to take concerns regulations on water consumption which will include the installation of a water meter on the premises of all water consumers, the conditions under which the meter should be used, the water tariff that will have to be paid, and so on. Even this exercise is going to be carried out in different phases so that when the water rates will be

introduced, it will not be a burden on the consumers; it will be only a symbolical contribution that will make the consumer become aware of his water consumption and this contribution will, of course, generate part of the revenue of the Water Company.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have to make Rodrigues move forward. In no country in the world today, in no modern society, is there a system where water is distributed free of charge, without any contribution from the consumer. We have to adopt the principle whereby you have to contribute for any service that you are being provided with. If Rodriguans are not prepared to pay for the treated water distributed to their homes, who will pay for it? Is it the Americans? Is it the international community that will pay for it? Somebody somewhere has to bear the cost. We are guided by one principle, and this principle is not about recovering the full cost of the service. It is out of question that the whole cost of water distribution be passed on to the consumers. They will be requested to make a symbolical contribution according to the volume of water they consume. I don't know how much it will be. There will be discrimination between those who can pay and those who cannot, for example, pensioners, beneficiaries of social aid, and so on. Those who consume on a commercial basis will be the first to pay. Can you imagine that the water consumed by a tourist in Rodrigues for his shower or the water used to fill the swimming pools in hotels is being delivered free! We are in fact subsidizing the visit of tourists in Rodrigues. We should, therefore, put our heads together and see to it that everybody contributes in order to enable us to provide a better service. Therefore, I repeat, water tariffs will be introduced only after the introduction of regulations and only when the Executive Council will feel that we are ready for it.

Thank you.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards staffing, when I look at the chart, I note that there are a lot of people involved at the technical and management levels or even at a lower level as opposed to the number of persons involved at field level, that is the field officers. There is quite a large number of team leaders for only a few field officers who, I presume will replace the valve operators, that is each team leader will have only one field officer under his responsibility. Can the Commissioner enlighten the House on this point? Can he also explain to the House who, among these one hundred employees, will actually give water to the people?

The Chief Commissioner: The whole staff will be expected to work as a team at the Water Company. The service will be delivered in such a manner that it will not be necessary to involve the same number of persons. I disagree with the point raised by the Member. There are about ten or twelve team leaders who will be heads of sections, sort of foremen, gangmen and supervisors. There are no Field Officers;

there are Field Technicians, about 60 of them. These Field Technicians have been recruited, and these persons will be responsible for the channelling of water from the source of production to the site of storage up to its distribution. They will be the ones to open the valves, check and record the meters at the level of the consumers, and they will also be responsible for the day to day supervision of the water distribution system that will cater for all the different parts of Rodrigues. All this is contained in the business plan that we have just laid on the Table. There are 60 field technicians and 12 team leaders. We are proposing to recruit handymen, sort of labourers, who will be responsible for what I would call the manual works, for example, cleaning of reservoirs, pruning of trees at reservoir sites, painting of reservoirs, maintenance of fencing, and so on. We have, therefore, 60 field technicians and 12 team leaders, and we do not come up to one to one, but one to five.

???????? WHO HAS THE FLOOR?

I heard 12. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, how would the Chief Commissioner qualify the management of water distribution in Rodrigues since he has tool office, that is since 2009? How would he qualify the water distribution especially during the peak dry season, that is, the past few months?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like, with your permission, to correct what the Member has just said. I took office in 2006, not in 2009. I agree, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the biggest challenge for these persons that we will be recruiting will be to show the difference. There is no doubt that there will still be droughts in Rodrigues. And there is one point, Sir, to which I have always been drawing the attention of consultants who come to work in Rodrigues. I have always been telling them whenever they come to meet me that, according to me, there are two problems. We have firstly the problem regarding the management of human resources which can be resolved, and secondly we do not have enough water, which is a natural problem caused by the topography of Rodrigues. The coming into operation of the Water Company will improve things, will improve the service but this does not mean that there will no longer be cuts in water supply during the drought season and other difficult times. But the whole situation will be better managed.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: My question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, was about the distribution of water now. And the Chief Commissioner has replied in the future. That particular Commission forecast institutional reforms which have not brought any results up to now – no water, no improvement in the frequency of water distribution. This is what my question was referring to, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Will the Commissioner agree and accept that he focused on institutional reforms while he neglected the poor state of water distribution in Rodrigues? And, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, *je suis en train de peser mes mots !*

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is the opinion of the respected Member. We agree that at times certain people do not do their jobs properly. Let me remind the Member that it took about twenty years of preparation before the first mission went to the moon. I am not telling you that I am taking you to the moon. It is not my intention, but I am telling you that an institutional reform is like Moses in the desert promising his people the Promised Land, and it took him 40 years. We are not promising people anything, we are telling them that we have to change the institutional set-up, and this takes time. Some people, including the Respected Member, are resisting to that change. Some people are resisting at the level of my office, and I have to fight against my own people. But we believe in what we are doing. We have been mandated to do this and we have to do it. Unfortunately, we will have to face some difficulties until the system is in place.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether he met with the staff of the Water Resources Unit during the last dry season which is still not over, and during which the *rationnement* of water has been more acute?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, I meet the people of the Water Unit as often as is necessary. I meet them during my field visits. And, of course, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have to be careful when we make statements. Water cuts in Rodrigues do not date back to 2006 or 2009. This situation has been existing since long before. Yesterday I was at Quatre Vents and I was wondering about how the land planning had been carried out in Rodrigues. If we have no water today it is because we have had deforestation. There has been no proper planning, and at Quatre Vents houses have been built on the very sites where the water sources are found. The same thing has happened in Malabar where a gymnasium has been built on the sites of water sources. From where are we going to get water in these regions today? We are in a difficult situation because – and this is not the fault of anybody - there has been haphazard development on the island which has led to scattered settlements of the population. And the result today is that our main sources of natural water are being threatened. If we had enough forest land, people would not have built their houses on the rivers themselves, and we would not find ourselves in this situation today. What do we have to do? We have to tackle our own problems. We have to re-invent.

Mr. Chairperson: Last supplementary!

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my question regards the Water Management Committee. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether the Water Management Committee, which was set up at the beginning of 2009, met during that particular period of drought that I have referred to.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The committee met last week at my office.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is really important for me to put this one last supplementary question.

Mr. Chairperson: Does the respected Member realize that we have already exhausted twenty five minutes on this parliamentary question?

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has said that the Water Management Committee met last week. I was referring to the month of December, the end of the year. We know that during the second semester of last year, from around August to December, people have had to face a lot of water problems, and the calmness of the Chief Commissioner contrasts a lot with the stark reality in the country. I think that he doesn't realize how many businesses have had to close down. That's why, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask him how come that the Management Committee did not meet during that period. This committee is in fact the Chief Commissioner's committee, and the Chief Commissioner is also the head of the government and the leader of the ruling party, and one of the four objectives of the Water Management Committee was to study the problem of water shortage during the drought season and take appropriate measures. Is it not true, therefore, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that this Management Committee, is an eyewash being given that we do not see any water in our wells?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je respecte l'opinion de la Membre et je dois dire que le travail ne se fait pas uniquement dans des comités. Quand un comité se rencontre ce n'est pas pour dire Madame X n'a pas d'eau chez elle, Madame Y n'a pas d'eau chez elle. C'est pour discuter des questions de *policy*, pour prendre de grandes décisions concernant l'orientation à donner au secteur de l'eau. Toutes les décisions concernant ces orientations ont été prises lors de la dernière réunion. Nous sommes descendus sur le terrain, moi-même ainsi que le Commissaire de la région ouest, et celui de la région est, afin de coordonner la distribution. Nous avons des *Departmental Heads*, des sous officiers, et des inspecteurs qui ont fait leur part de travail dans les différents départements. Nous avons, par exemple, et comme nous l'avons fait avant, organisé la distribution de l'eau par des camions citernes privés. Nous avons fait notre travail, mais il ne faut pas demander l'impossible.

FUEL – SALE – TRAFFIC JAM

(No. B/2) Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué (First Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the sale of fuel for vehicles in Rodrigues, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) whether he is aware of any problems caused, on the central road *Max Luchesi* in the vicinity of the filling station, by long queues of vehicles;

(b) whether any project for the operation of new filling station in or outside Port Mathurin is envisaged and if so, to give details of the names of promoters of projects submitted to the Regional Government for consideration so far;

(c) when any new development is expected eventually;

(d) what has been done since 2006 to decrease the congestion of the actual filling station and to state the impact for vehicle owners, road users and the quality of life in the island?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by the Police and the National Transport Authority (NTA) that there are no real problems noted on Max Luchesi Street in the vicinity of the filling station regarding long queues of vehicles. Police presence is being maintained for fluidity of traffic especially at peak times.

It should be noted that with a view to reduce traffic jam in the vicinity of the Max Luchesi filling station and to alleviate problems of traffic flow caused by buses, AEL/DDS is operating a mobile filling station for public buses at *Baie Lascars.*

As regards to parts (b) and (c) of the question, presently there are two filling stations in operation in Rodrigues. The one located at Max Luchesi Street and another mobile one operating at Baie Lascars near the Port Mathurin Traffic Centre. Both are managed by AEL/DDS Ltd. Facilities provided at Max Luchesi Street include petrol, diesel, kerosene, lubricating oil and grease while the one at Baie Lascars provides diesel only to public buses.

My office has approved the setting up of another filling station by AEL/DDS Ltd at Mont Lubin. I am informed by AEL/DDS that the construction works will start in about three months.

My office has also received an application for the setting up of a filling station by Indian Oil (Mauritius) Ltd. The Cadastral Office is in the process of identifying a suitable site in the central part of the island to be allocated to the promoter, following which letter of reservation and a letter of intent will be issued to the promoter accordingly.

We have also received interest from a promoter to set up a filling station in Grand La Fouche Corail. The promoter has been requested to submit a detailed business plan and a project write-up for further consideration by the Chief Commissioner's Office.

The House will note that my office aims at reducing the dependency on the filling stations in Port Mathurin and to decentralize this service throughout the island. As such, projects of filling stations are being encouraged from promoters. With the forthcoming setting up of filling stations in Mont Lubin and Grand La Fouche Corail, this service would be accessible island wide.

As regards to part (d), as I stated, with a view to decrease the congestion around the filling station, especially for vehicle owners and road users, one mobile filling station is being operated by AEL/DDS for public buses at *Baie Lascars*. Police presence is being maintained on Max Lucchesi in the vicinity of the filling station for fluidity of traffic. AEL/DDS has informed that more dispenser pumps have been installed at the filling station to provide fuel more quickly. For the long term, the projects of setting up of a filling station by AEL/DDS at Mont Lubin and by Indian Oil in the centre of the island have been approved.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner mentioned that two filling stations managed by AEL/DDS are operational in the outskirts of Port Mathurin, one on Max Luchesi Street and the other up there at the traffic centre. But, as we are aware, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, given that the price of fuel keeps going up, people can buy only a little amount at a time and have therefore to frequently fuel up their vehicles. And we also know that it is a problem for people to come down to Port Mathurin to fill their vehicles, with the result that a number of retailers are selling fuel all around Rodrigues. Is the Chief Commissioner aware of that? Has any authorization been given to these retailers? Is he aware of the security problems that this situation may cause?

The Chief Commissioner: I am not aware this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. But I know that in the past, it was a practice for people to stock fuel in villages outside the authorized places and to retail it to consumers. This practice is not authorized but we have unfortunately no control over this situation presently. We are aware of the risks that such a practice represents. I will ask the Consumer Protection Unit as well as the Fire Services to take appropriate measures to remedy the situation.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in my question I referred also to the people selling fuel privately. This is understandable being given the amount of fuel that a vehicle consumes to come down to Port Mathurin and back. This is the reason why certain people are encouraged to retail this commodity. As regards the project submitted by AEL/DDS, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, why has not the Government insisted with the promoter that he completes the project in a reasonable period of time, at least within the term of office of the present government?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is not my duty to act on behalf of the promoter. We are all aware that the promoter has to go through procedures. He has to submit the plans of his project, and these plans have to be approved. He has also to submit his EIA certificate. If he does not submit the required documents, what can I do? Can I award him the lease even if the conditions for allocating the lease are not met? We have asked for an EIA certificate and for all the permits. Is the Member aware, Sir, that the actual filling station is operating without a fire certificate? What will happen if tomorrow there is an accident? Is it my fault or that of Commissioner Agathe if they do not have a fire certificate. Is it my fault if they don't comply with the requirements? They don't want to invest. They just put up a filling station and install a machine to pour fuel in the vehicles, a machine that has been repaired with wires, a machine that is holding together with *la corde raffia*. Is this seriousness? Outdated equipments are being sent to Rodrigues. People have to be serious when providing a service. We are aware, Sir, that people have to come to Port Mathurin to buy fuel. We have allocated a portion of land in Mont Lubin for a new filling station to be built there. What have the promoters done? Have they submitted the EIA certificate and all the other documents that are required? There are documents missing. Indian Oil has asked for another site in the region of Mont Lubin to put up a filling station. We have no place available for this sort of project. Can we put it in Malabar? Does the Member have any idea where we can put it? What about the risk of contamination of water sources? Where can we put it? Can we pull down a mountain and disfigure the countryside to put up a filling station? We can't do this. We have to be careful about all these issues.

Thank you.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards the construction of the filling station at Mont Lubin, I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether any specific timeframe within which the project should be started was mentioned in the land lease or the letter of intent given to the promoter.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I know that they have been given the letter of intent, but I am not aware whether the lease has been awarded. Anyway, there are conditions attached. They have to submit the plans, the EIA

certificate and all the other documents. Once they have submitted all the required documents, they are will become eligible to obtain the lease and once they are awarded the lease they have to submit the building permit, etc. There are a series of procedures to follow. And it is important to have all these procedures followed if you want to give the best to the population. It is easy for the population to say that the government is blocking the project, the government is not going ahead, is not giving the necessary permits, but what do we do when a promoter does not submit an EIA certificate. The law says that the promoter has to submit an EIA certificate before building a filling station. Therefore, is it our responsibility?

Mr. N. Lisette: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the question is whether there has been monitoring at the level of the Commission because land has been provided by the Commission for a specific project. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether his office is monitoring the project, when it is going to start, and so on. Because when leases are awarded to promoters, they are specific conditions attached to specific projects. How is all this being monitored by his Commission?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the promoters have, depending on the lease, a certain number of months to start their projects. They have to complete their projects within a certain number of months. If they do not comply, we cancel the lease.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when I was listening to the Chief Commissioner, he seemed to be…

Mr. Chairperson: The Respected Member does not have to reflect on the Chief Commissioner's answer.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: May I rephrase, Sir?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner did not seem to be convinced when he was replying to the supplementary question asked before the last one. He said: "where is the place, show us a place. Are we going to break mountains or things…". Is this a way to tell the Rodriguan people that there is a project in the hands of a responsible government and that that government is saying: I don't know, we still don't know? We can see that there is competition among three promoters for this project. We see that Indian Oil is ready to go ahead provided there is a change in site. Is the Commissioner investing enough energy and thought in this project in order to find a solution as regards the site where this particular promoter wants this filling station to be put up? Because when he was

replying he did not seem convinced. It looks like he will not find a solution to this problem. Can the Chief Commissioner answer this question?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, sometimes when promoters who want to invest in Rodrigues are questioned about their projects they say that they want this and that. For example, somebody came to see me one day with other people and said he wanted to build a hotel on Ile aux Cocos. Can we just give whatever they ask to every person who disembarks here? A proposal has been made to Indian Oil to go to Oyster Bay, where there is space on which they can build their tanks and put up a full fledged filling station, and after that they can put up filling stations in Grand La Fouche Corail, in Grande Montagne or in Mont Lubin if ever there is space. They have refused and said that they want Mont Lubin. We have told them that we have no space in Mont Lubin for the time being. We have asked our technical services, in this case, the cadastral office, to see whether there is any possibility for a filling station to be built in Mont Lubin. Until today they have not been able to identify a proper site in Mont Lubin. And you know how big is Mont Lubin! Is Mont Lubin like Paris or Port Louis? Mont Lubin is very small in size. It is a hill. Where will you put up a filling station in Mont Lubin? Shall we cut down the forest? Shall we destroy the landscape? We don't want to do this. We want to respect the environment; we want to respect this island. So we don't have any site available for the time being in Mont Lubin. We are trying to see whether it is possible to do it at Malabar or at Palissade, but they say they want Mont Lubin. Does the Member has in mind any site in Mont Lubin? Can she propose any site?

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has mentioned the question of investment in Rodrigues. I would like to point out that Invest Rodrigues was created with a view to speed up the implementation of projects in Rodrigues. And, according to the reply of the Chief Commissioner, it appears that the promoter is having difficulties in meeting the requirements for the obtention of an EIA certificate and other documents that are required before starting the project. What has Invest Rodrigues been doing in order to find a solution to these problems which, according to me, are administrative problems?

The Chief Commissioner: It is not for an office of the government to step into the shoes of the promoter. An EIA costs a lot of money. Who will carry out the EIA? Is it Invest Rodrigues who will go and do the EIA? No, Invest Rodrigues will tell the promoter that the EIA must be carried out by such and such persons, but it is up to the promoter to undertake this exercise. I am sorry, but the Member should not be confusing.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether, apart from the EIA, there are any other administrative problems that are preventing the promoters from going ahead with the projects.

The Chief Commissioner: I don't think there are any other problems, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I will try to make a statement on this issue before the end of this sitting in order to inform the House about the real status of the project submitted by AEL/DDS.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: *Je vois qu'on tergiverse beaucoup, M. le président!* According to the reply of the Chief Commissioner, it seems that no solution has been found. Vehicles are being stuck in a traffic jam for fifteen minutes near Port Mathurin, and I have not seen any Police officer patrolling the area. Whatever be the answer that has been given in this House, I can assure you that I have never seen any policeman there, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And we are all fully aware that during peak hours there are a lot of vehicles and people waiting there. Therefore, I would ask the Chief Commissioner whether he and his government have the political will to decentralize the sale of fuel in Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner: We have the will, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, but we have to find a solution to this problem together with the promoters. If we have a promoter who agrees to put up a filling station in Grand La Fouche Corail, if he goes through all the procedures and meets all the requirements, he will be allowed to go ahead. But if we have people saying they want this and that, and they don't even know what they want, they won't be able to go ahead with their project.

KAMLA

AIR MAURITIUS – FLIGHTS – CANCELLATION & DELAYS

(No. B/3) Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué (First Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards Air Mauritius flights to and from Rodrigues, he would obtain the following information:-

(a) the number of flights cancelled or delayed since November 2009 and the causes for same;

(b) whether any compensation is being paid to travellers who suffered major inconveniences;

(c) whether any analysis has been made of the impact of such a recurrent problem on the tourist industry in Rodrigues, and

(d) whether the matter been discussed with competent authorities in Mauritius.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by Air Mauritius that out of 592 flights operated during the period mentioned, 316 were delayed, out of which 233 were delayed by more than 15 minutes - 119 out of Mauritius and 114 out of Rodrigues. The reasons for delay were due to technical problems, late arrival of aircrafts and bad weather. 8 return flights were rescheduled and reported for the next day in January 2010. Eleven return flights were cancelled, 1 due to bad weather, 1 due to technical reasons and 9 due to commercial reasons.

As regards part (b), I am informed that wherever applicable, compensation in the form of hotel accommodation, telephone calls, meals, transfers and even sometimes refund for transfer paid is provided by Air Mauritius.

As regards to part (c), no detailed study has been carried out on the impact of the problem on the tourism industry in Rodrigues. However, the Rodrigues Tourism Office collects feedback from tourists affected by the situation as well as tourist operators and travel agencies from the source countries. These feedbacks have been communicated on a regular basis to Air Mauritius via emails and letters.

As regards part (d), the answer is yes, the matter has been discussed with the main office of Air Mauritius as well as the Department of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of External Communications. Several remedial options were discussed, namely the operation of leased planes by Air Mauritius from Air Austral as a contingency plan in such situations, the operation of the airport on a 24-hour basis and, for a longer term solution, the extension of the airport runway to accommodate larger aircrafts like the Airbus A319 which would provide flexibility in such situations.

Thank you.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we know that the impact of these incidents in terms of figures will not be reflected today or at the end of December, but in statistics in the future. As we know, it is the tourists that come back that constitute a very important part of the tourists visiting Rodrigues. And if the tourists feel angry and tired, they will refrain from coming back and will not speak well of Rodrigues, and this is bad publicity for the island. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether any initiative has been taken by his Commission in order to limit the damage caused to those tourists before they left Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commission for Tourism has two main arms. One arm takes care of promotion of tourism and relations with tourism operators and the other arm takes care of the strategic development of the tourism sector. Whenever there is a problem involving passengers, it is for the airline concerned and the airport to assume their responsibilities. Of course, the Tourism

Office is also concerned and when the incidents took place we have remained in touch with the airline company and the airport authorities, and we have inquired with the latter on whether all the passengers involved have been well treated, and so on. Up to now, the authorities concerned have been dealing with this situation satisfactorily and, as I said, compensations and meals were offered and telephones were put at their disposal. It is not the duty of the Tourism Office to rush to the airport and to take care of passengers and manage the crisis on behalf of the airlines.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is it true to say that Air Mauritius gives priority to flights going to Reunion Island as opposed to flights coming to Rodrigues? Will the Chief Commissioner use his good offices to inquire into this matter and even discuss about it with the VPM or even the PM?

The Chief Commissioner: I am not aware of the issue mentioned by the Member, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. In any case, it is up to Air Mauritius to reply to such a question. There are indications that flights to Reunion Island encounter relatively no problems compared to those coming to Rodrigues. This issue has been raised with the CEO of Air Mauritius and he has told us that this is not the case.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, apart from delay, we know that the flight schedule of Air Mauritius is very erratic. Is he aware of any representation made by his office or by partners in Rodrigues with regard to the changes in schedules occurring overnight. Does this mean that Air Mauritius is concentrating solely on its commercial interests and is not taking into consideration its partnership in Rodrigues?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I'm not here to defend Air Mauritius. I must say that the Executive Council and the Regional Government are not satisfied with the passenger flights between Mauritius and Rodrigues. We share the feeling that nothing is being done to improve the service. We also share the feeling also that government must do something. I have read the report submitted to my office by the experts of the African Peering Mechanism (APRM) who were in Rodrigues. I don't know whether it has been made public, but I would request Members of the House to read it if they have the opportunity. And I make the appeal to Government to take into consideration all the problems referred to.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has also mentioned other long-term projects, but in the meantime a lot of pressure is being exerted on the tourist operators in Rodrigues. We have heard about the coming of the Solitaire to Rodrigues, but this project has vanished without any explanation. May I ask the Chief Commissioner whether the opening of our air space to other airline companies may be contemplated in case Air Mauritius does not do its best to satisfy our needs? Has he considered this possibility?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, from the information I have, the air space of Rodrigues is open to any airline interested to deal in passenger service in Rodrigues. They are free to do it. They have to apply to the Civil Aviation Department and get all the clearances for landing and organization of air traffic in Rodrigues. It seems that there is no problem in this regard. The only problem is that such a project is not beneficial to the airlines from a commercial point of view being given the actual set-up of the Airport of Rodrigues. And I have to tell the House that we also have the ambition to have a Rodrigues colour airline – Air Rodrigues. W e have incorporated the company, we have presented this proposal to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Tourism and External Communications and we are waiting for their point of view.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when certain personalities get stuck in such circumstances, decisions are taken very quickly to find a solution. But when other people are stuck during hours, when three flights for Rodrigues are cancelled or delayed and passengers are stuck at the airport, there is no rapid solution. Has this matter been brought to the knowledge of the managing staff of Air Mauritius? Has the Regional Government insisted that rapid solutions should be found in such cases? They have the possibility to rent other planes to transport the Rodriguan passengers waiting at the airport.

The Chief Commissioner: I repeat, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that we are not satisfied with the way Air Mauritius has been operating its flights to Rodrigues. But at the same time we understand the constraints and difficulties that they have to face. We understand when they say that they are making losses when operating these flights. But we also agree that the service has to be improved. As regards personalities who have been treated in one manner or the other, I can only say and repeat that I am not a member of the Board of Air Mauritius, that I don't form part of Mauritius. I am just a small politician of Rodrigues.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, one last question. We note that technical problems regularly occur on both aircrafts coming to Rodrigues. Has this matter been discussed with Air Mauritius? Has the issue of security of the Rodriguan passengers as well as that of tourists travelling to Rodrigues been discussed with Air Mauritius, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we live in a country where there is the rule of law. We have a Department of Civil Aviation, and I don't think that the reputation of the Department of Civil Aviation of Mauritius is to be questioned here. We have never had accidents or any other incident involving airplanes flying to and from Rodrigues. I hope this will never occur. The planes which are being operated by Air Mauritius are, I have been told, safe, and it is for

safety reasons that flights have sometimes to be delayed or cancelled. The CEO of Air Mauritius has assured me that they will never put at risk the safety of passengers, the safety of their crew members and their equipment.

FOODCROP - PRODUCTION

(No. B/4) Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué (First Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture & Others with regard to foodcrop production in Rodrigues, he will state:-

(a) whether there has been any decrease in the total area of cultivation and production of food crop in Rodrigues in 2008 as compared to 2007;

(b) whether there has been any specific decrease in the production of garlic in Rodrigues since 2007, and if so, to state the extent and why;

(c) the volume of importation of garlic annually by Rodrigues;

(d) any measures introduced to boost up garlic production and to improve its quality in the island?

The Commissioner for Agriculture & Ors (Mr. L. A. Perrine): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that according to the data published in the Central Statistics Office Report 2008, there has been no decrease in the total area under cultivation in Rodrigues as compared with 2007. In fact, the total area under cultivation has increased by 23%.

As regards food crop, the yearly production has been almost normal. In fact, the production of certain food commodities namely beans, onion, chillies etc., which have benefited special attention from my Commission has significantly increased. Regarding other commodities such as summer crops, there has been a decline in production in 2008 as a result of the deficit in rainfall during summer. Variation observed over 2007 is therefore mainly due to climatic variation. The early months of 2008 suffered from rainfall shortages.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I have to say that garlic has been grown in Rodrigues since many years. Its cultivation is carried out mainly on the high lands and under rain fed conditions. The average annual production for the past five years is about 15 tons whereas the annual import has reached about 30 tons. Local requirement is estimated at 45/50 tons annually, out of which a substantial amount is used in the agro-processing sector.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the decline in the production of garlic in Rodrigues is mainly due to bad soil management and lack of irrigation facilities. Moreover, under the regional programme (*Pôle Régional de Protection des Végétaux* – PRPV), indexation of the local clones has been made in Reunion Island with the collaboration of AREU. Out of the ten clones sent to Reunion Island for analysis, only one was found to be virus free.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is clear therefore that virus infected garlic seedlings has been a major cause of decline in the production of local garlic resulting in low yield and a reduction in clove size.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am nevertheless pleased to say that there is considerable scope to increase production of garlic in Rodrigues and to achieve self sufficiency. My Commission has already elaborated an implementation plan whose target is to produce 50 tons of garlic by 2015. The accompanying measures include the provision of virus free seeds and the Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Company Ltd (RTMC) has already ordered 600 kg of improved garlic seeds to be sold to planters this year. The Company will also start marketing this commodity in 2010. Training of planters in Pest Control and other cultural practices will start soon.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has referred to statistics and has stated that in 2007 the area under cultivation was 348 hectares and that it increased by one hundred in 2008. This information is correct. But what I would like to know is how the Commissioner explains that there has been a decrease in production by 360 tons while the area under cultivation has increased. We would have expected that, with a modern system of agriculture, there would be more intensive agricultural practices, and production would be higher on a smaller surface of cultivation.

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to advise the Respected Member that it is imprudent to jump to conclusions when referring to agricultural data collected over a period of one year. To be able to interpret agricultural data you should analyze data collected over a period of five years, that is, a longer period. You should look at the trend, and if the Member looks at the trend, she will note that since 2006 there has been an increase in both the production and the total area under cultivation. What has happened in 2008 is what we call a normal variation which, as I have said earlier, is mainly due to climatic conditions. If you look at the statistics for the first three months of 2008, you will see that there has been a shortage in rainfall affecting summer crops such as *bringels*, creepers and mixed vegetables which are normally grown in summer, in the month of January. This is why there has been a decrease in production. I would also draw the attention of the Member to the fact that when the variation is between 15% and 18% it is considered as normal. Therefore, the variation of 12% in 2008 is, according to us, a normal variation.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we note a decrease in the production of garlic which was once one of the main cash crops in Rodrigues. The production decreased by 70% from 2007 to 2008, at a time when the Commissioner had money and was saying that he was putting much energy in encouraging the planters to go into agriculture. The Commissioner has said that the decrease in production is due to land management, but he has omitted to mention one crucial fact. Is he aware that people have been forced to stop growing garlic because the Marketing Board has stopped buying this commodity and there is, therefore, no *prix garanti*?

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the information that I have given concerning the production of garlic is correct. The seeds had been infected by a virus. The cloves (*tetes)* were getting smaller year after year. The Marketing Board stopped the marketing of garlic because it could not sell the product in Mauritius due to its size and quality. We produce red garlic in Rodrigues whereas the Marketing Board imports white garlic from China. There is a problem regarding the quality of garlic that we produce. This is why I have said that we are now going to start the production anew. We are importing 60 kg of improved garlic seeds from Mauritius and we have to get rid of the red garlic that we have in Rodrigues because it has been infected by a virus. This year we will start the production anew using the improved seeds that we have imported from Mauritius. And the RTMC will start marketing the product as from this year.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Agriculture has been speaking about trend and analysis. If we analyse the figures of 2008, we will see that out of 15 food crops grown in Rodrigues, nine have experienced a decrease in the average yield. It seems that what is happening now is that we are producing less on a larger area of cultivation. Has not the Commissioner, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, emphasized too much on higher production and smaller areas of cultivated land to the detriment of the application of new techniques?

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we should look at the crops for which there has been a decrease in production. If we look at the statistics for 2008, we note that there has been a decrease in the production of *bringels*, tomatoes and garlic. And, as I have said earlier, the decrease is about 12% which, according to me, is normal. But if we look at the figures representing the production of tomatoes, we see that there has been an important decrease. This is a result of the people's choice, that is, when the price of tomatoes is high, people start growing tomatoes and when the price goes down they stop. There is also the question of competition. People here in Rodrigues consume canned tomatoes that are imported from abroad and this practice discourages the planters to invest in the production of tomatoes in Rodrigues. This is an important issue that has to be looked into seriously. Therefore,

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I believe that the trend has been on the increase since 2006 for both area under cultivation, which is about 340 hectares, and production of food crops, which is above 2000 tons. Before 2006 it was 1.8, 1.6, and 1.7. It should therefore be clear to the Respected Member, Mr. Lisette, that the trend is on the increase. Mr Chairperson, Sir, we should not make conclusions based on a small variation of about 12% because one year we can have special climatic conditions, the following year may be different. For example, 2007 was a special year for certain food crops.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it was a time when garlic planters used to sell an average yearly harvest for the sum of Rs 40,000 to Rs70,000. But they no longer earn this money as garlic is being imported to the tune of 30 tons yearly. When did the Commissioner realize that there was a virus affecting garlic? Has there been any discussion with the planters concerning this issue?

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the collection of garlic cloves (*tetes)* started before I took office. I think that this took place at the time when Mr. Spéville was in office, and the bulbs were sent to Reunion Island for analysis. And I should draw the attention of the Member to the fact that out of every ten bulbs sent to Reunion only one was found to be virus free, and that we had to make use of this one out of ten bulbs that came back to Rodrigues to propagate the cultivation of garlic. And after that we tried to get a special seed that is resistant to the virus to be cultivated in Rodrigues.

Mr. N. Lisette: I come back to my point, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I will now refer to a specific food crop, that is, maize. We note a big increase in last year's harvest, but when we look at the average yield from 2007 to 2008, that is the number of tons per hectare, we note a decrease from 3.5 to 2.8 tons per hectare. My question is, Mr. Chairperson, Sir: is not the Commissioner putting too much emphasis on the question of area of cultivated land to the detriment of techniques or to the detriment of facilities being provided to the farmers?

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the biggest problem presently being faced by the agricultural sector is irrigation. Our agriculture depends on rainfall. Maize is planted in December or early January. If you look at the statistics with regard to rainfall you will see that there has been a deficit of rainfall in December, January, February, March and April that is the months during which planters are supposed to grow maize, because we don't grow maize in winter. We have therefore imported a special seed from MSIRI and we expect to start growing it in Rodrigues. Therefore, one should understand, when looking at the statistics, what is a normal variance when referring to food crops that are affected by the climate - summer or winter, and what is systematic variation which is either increase or decrease over a long period of time.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: *M. le président, l'ail est quelque chose qu'on mange,* and every year we are consuming 30 tons locally. The Marketing Board had an agreement since a long time ago with Rodrigues to buy our garlic at a guaranteed price. What is the strategy of the Commissioner in view of this situation? Will the Commission remain on a pluvial agriculture? Mr. Chairperson, Sir, plantations are concentrated *sur la crête de l'île*. Is the Commissioner aware that, for example, at Montagne Malgache the number of planters has decreased by more than 50% because they were concentrating on the cultivation of garlic? And today, some of them have abandoned garlic and have turned to the cultivation of maize and they are earning less than what they used to earn. Will the Commissioner continue with an agriculture that depends on nature or is he considering other alternatives being given that the planters are not scattered and are concentrated in one region. This is also a way to help these Rodriguan planters to start again earning the money that they used to earn before with the cultivation of garlic.

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have enumerated some of the incentives that my Commission will be offering in order to encourage the cultivation of garlic in Rodrigues. As I have already said, the RTMC has imported 60 kg of good seeds from Mauritius, that will be sold at a subsidized price to garlic growers. Secondly, we are going to start an irrigation project for onion/garlic growers and, thirdly and most importantly we are going to start a campaign in order to train the planters with regard to pest control. The reason why we have had to face the problem of virus is because the planters do not have the required technology to deal with the control of pests. We are, therefore, starting a big campaign to train the planters in pest control so that when they start growing garlic anew they will not have to face the problem of virus.

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"*LEVÉ DÉBROUILLÉ*" PROJECT

(No. B/5) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth and Sports & Others Whether his Commission is mounting a project known as "*Lévé Debrouillé*" and, if so, could be briefly outline the following:-

(a) the objectives of the project, together with its modus operandi;

(b) the sum of money allotted in the budget for same;

(c) the targeted start date and the number of persons to be concerned?

The Commissioner for Youth & Sports (Mr. J. C. Agathe): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to confirm to this House that effectively my Commission is making the necessary arrangements with the MBC for the broadcasting of a weekly radio programme to be entitled "*Lévé Debrouillé*". Comme le nom du Projet l'indique, « *Lévé Débrouillé* » veut dire se mettre debout pour créer des opportunités et des moyens pour gagner sa vie dignement au lieu de s'asseoir et d'attendre. This programme is aimed at educating, sensitizing and communicating a culture of "*debrouillardise*" rather than sit down, wait and see.

M. le Président, à travers ce programme, nous voulons:

(1) communiquer les informations concernant les opportunités d'emploi et de service dans le but de résoudre le problème de chômage, à l'exemple du programme « *Choisir ou travail* » comme c'est le cas à Maurice. Malheureusement à Rodrigues, la radio est notre seul moyen de communication accessible;

(2) aider les entrepreneurs et les personnes de métier à mettre en valeur leurs services et leurs produits. Un fermier, par exemple, qui aura besoin de quelqu'un pour travailler chez lui, peut faire appel à travers le système qui sera mis en place et ceux intéressés peuvent contacter le fermier pour être embauché même sur une base journalière.

M. le Président, à travers ce Programme, nous voulons aussi sensibiliser les employés concernant leurs droits ainsi que leurs responsabilités pour qu'il y ait plus de respect et de productivité tout en favorisant une culture de sécurité et de santé sur leur lieu de travail.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has already had a preliminary meeting with the MBC and the Mauritius Telecom to discuss the modalities for the implementation of the project.

The functioning of the Programme will comprise a professional telephone answering machine which will be installed at my Commission. The phone numbers will be published to enable job and service providers to call and to register their details which will be compiled and broadcasted on the radio on a weekly basis.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the implementation of the "*Lévé Débrouillé*" Programme will have minor initial cost implication for the installation of the telephone answering system and telephone lines. A quotation is being awaited from the Mauritius Telecoms. Expenses will be met from provision made under Programme 603 (Employment) – Item No. 2290099 "Miscellaneous" for which a sum of Rs 50,000 has been provided.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is expected that the radio programme will start at the beginning of March 2010. As explained earlier, the programme will target the public at large, particularly the unemployed.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I note from the reply of the Commissioner that a strategy will be put in place to invite people to come, get information and choose the job that suits them, and so on. This is the strategy, *mais ou est la matière, M. le président* ? C'est la stratégie, mais où sont les jobs ? Comment va-t-on produire des jobs for these persons ? Where are the jobs?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, maybe the Member has not listened carefully to the answer. As I have said, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have an Employment Office at my Commission. The main role of the Employment Office is to register the unemployed persons. We have been reviewing the strategy of the Employment Office so that it will not only register the unemployed, but will also deal with job placement. For example, we are presently in the rainy season et des personnes qui veulent etre embauchees comme laboureurs ou jardiniers peuvent téléphoner et laisser un message sur le répondeur que nous allons installer à la Commission. Et la personne choisie peut dire si elle est disposée à aller travailler chez quelqu'un comme jardinier ou laboureur même pour une journée. C'est ce genre de job placement qu'on fait à la Commission.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué : M. le président, il y a un problème *d'advertisement*. Nous savons qu'il y a un problème de manque d`emploi et aussi longtemps qu`on aura ce problème de manque d`emploi, cela ne sert a rien de jouer à l`entremetteur. The jobs available have to be advertised for a minimum of four to five days, so that the best qualified persons can have the chance to get the job.

(Interruptions)

Even a *ti-job*! Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is no *ti-job* or big job or whatever! People need money, people need to buy food! Il y a aussi, M. le président, la question de transparence sur laquelle je voudrais attirer l'attention. Il ne faut pas qu`on y mette son nez, even if it is a small job, everybody should have his chance. I think that we should deal with this question in a different way. There should be another way, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The idea is not bad, but I would ask the Commissioner to review it in such a way that people have the feeling that there is transparency as regards allocation of jobs.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that the Member is a bit confused. Il n`y a pas de problème de recrutement ou de transparence. C'est du

dépannage. Notre rôle ici est de faciliter l'embauche aussi bien pour l`employeur que pour les personnes sans emploi.

DROWNING AT SEA – ST FRANCOIS

(No. B/6) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner with regard to security at sea would he obtain information as to whether any case of drowning has been registered on Sunday the 17th January 2010 and if so, the persons concerned, the time at which the accident took place and the consequent measures taken by the different departments concerned?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by the Rodrigues Police Division that one case of drowning at sea has been registered at Saint François on 17th January 2010. The person concerned is a French citizen residing in Réunion Island. The incident took place between 11.30 hrs and 12.58 hrs and, further to the autopsy carried out, the cause of death was attributed to asphyxia drowning.

I am further informed that at 13.13 hrs the Rodrigues National Coast Guard was informed of the incident and reached there at 13.35 hours. Meanwhile, the regular Police had already attended to the case and conveyed the corpse of the person to the hospital.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Chief Commissioner at what time the ambulance reached St. Francois to pick up that person?

Mr. Chairperson: You mean the ambulance?

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Yes.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this question relates to security at sea, and has been asked in order to obtain information on whether any case of drowning has been registered, the time the accident took place, and the consequent measures taken by the different departments. If the Member wanted to know the time the ambulance reached St Francois, it should have been included in the original question because I don't have this information at hand and I don't know at what time the ambulance reached St. François. The only information I have is that the regular police conveyed the corpse to the hospital.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: M. le président, je voudrais demander au Chef Commissaire s'il ne pense pas qu'il est nécessaire surtout en ce début d'année…

Mr. Chairperson: Your question, please. You have wrongly started.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Je voudrais demander au Chef Commissaire…

Mr. Chairperson: Whether he thinks? You have to refer to facts, please.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Est-ce qu`il est nécessaire, surtout les dimanches et en cette période de début d'année où il y a une affluence de personnes sur les plages, que les Coast Guards soient présents sur les côtes?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am not responsible for the National Coast Guard. I am responsible for the Regional Assembly, but I agree that they must be present. I see that they are present on major events - during regatta festivals and whenever there are public gatherings – and they do their job. I will take up the matter with the Divisional Commander and ask him to consider the possibility of ensuring a more visible presence of the National Coast Guard. But there is also the question of sensitizing people that should not be neglected. People should be sensitized on the risks of drowning, especially when bathing in the sea just after having taken a meal, as well as the risks for small children and old persons at sea. I have been informed that in the case we are referring to the person had heart problems and went out at sea, I don't know whether he was alone or whether he went into deep waters where he could not be attended to. And there is also the question of training people in first aid. An accident may occur at any moment and we all know that we do not do not have the means to post ambulances on every site where there are tourists and swimmers. Therefore, we have to train people. We have to encourage people to get training in first aid, especially tourist operators, as this can help to save lives. Somebody who is properly trained can reanimate a person who has swallowed water and stopped breathing.

MT. CROUPIER – LAND REHABILITATION

(No. B/7) Mrs. R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture & Others with regard to the pastoral reserve on State Land in the catchment area of Mt. Croupier, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) the nature of any project in progress, thereat;

(b) the name of the contractor working on the project;

(c) its procurement value;

(d) whether all stakeholders have been made aware of the project; and

(e) table a detailed plan of the project area?

The Commissioner for Agriculture (Mr. L. A. Perrine): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that my Commission, confronted with the aggravating problem of land degradation in Rodrigues, is taking urgent measures to reverse the trend. As we all know, unsustainable agricultural practices and uncontrolled grazing coupled with deficient rainfall and long periods of drought have contributed to extensive land degradation in several regions of the island.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has already identified most of the degraded sites and has embarked on a programme of rehabilitation through reafforestation and planting of grass as soil binders against erosion. Once rehabilitated, these sites would have the potential to produce fodder throughout the year. The second step will be to legislate against the present practice of uncontrolled grazing.

In fact, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the new vision for the livestock sector aims at replacing the present free grazing system with one where animals will be kept in stables with a stall feeding system (cut and carry). The implementation of this new system will succeed only if the availability of fodder is guaranteed throughout the year.

The programme of rehabilitation of degraded lands therefore aims at the creation of fodder reserves in different localities of the island. After the creation of the fodder reserves, herders will be encouraged to set up their stables in the periphery of the sites, outside the fence. They will be allowed to cut and remove fodder against the payment of a minimal fee.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the project in the region of Mt. Croupier is co-financed by the European Union and consists of fencing 5 km for the planting of trees and fodder for the rehabilitation of some 80 hectares of very degraded land for environmental and the following economic functions:-

(i) The grass plantations will provide fodder to herders of cattle, sheep and goats.

(ii) The melliferous trees will increase the availability of nectar for beekeepers.

(iii) Vegetal fibre produced from plants like *Pandanus*, *Vetiveria* etc. will be exploited by artisans of the handicraft sector operating near the site.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regards to part (b) of the question, I have to inform the House that the contract for the fencing works, which are ongoing, has been awarded to Mr. Jean Stephano Philippe for the sum of Rs 297,880. The contract for trees and grass planting is under process and has not yet been awarded.

As regards sensitization, I must say that all breeders of the region have been made aware of the project. Several formal and informal meetings and site visits have been held since 2008 and most breeders of the region fully support the project.

I am tabling a detailed plan of the project area for the attention of the House. **(APPENDIX…).**

Thank you.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: I would like to ask the Commissioner when it is expected to have the first fodder cut in this reserve.

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, normally it takes three months but it depends on climatic conditions and the rain.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my question is about the timing. We are not yet out of the dry period.

(Interruptions)

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Let me finish my question, please! We are not yet out of the dry season, Sir. I would like to ask the Commissioner why the fodder reserve is being fenced now and why he did wait for some weeks before doing this.

Mr. L. A. Perrine: I understand the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I would request the Member to have a look at the map. We have about 260 hectares of degraded land on that site and we are going to fence only 80 hectares during the first phase of the project. The remaining will be available to farmers.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner says that there have been meetings. Is it not true that he met with those persons for the first time? Has there been a consensus? When were those meetings held?

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the Member that the first meeting was organized on 6th October 2008. I have had several meetings, site visits as well as informal meetings with the farmers. The meeting held on Saturday took place after our sensitization campaign had been carried out because in that region they did not have a farmers' association. It is only after we have motivated them that they have formed an association and the second meeting was held on Saturday. It was a success and we are going to organize a one-day session for all these people.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, will the 80 hectares that are going to be fenced include also Délo Vert?

Mr. L. A. Perrine: No, Sir, the site comprises Mt. Croupier, Baie Manioc, Calinie and Pointe Manioc for the time being. So this makes up 80 hectares, and a second phase will be considered at a later stage.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: There is a common access on that site which is used by the fishermen going to La Cote Pistache and it seems that the closure of that access road is causing problems to those fishermen. Will this little… ***(change of cassette)***

Mr. L. A. Perrine: …farming in Rodrigues, so they will have to adopt the cut and carry system. We are going to set up fodder reserves and herders will be allowed to come and build their stables in the periphery of these fodder reserves. To reply to the question of the Member, I would like to point out that we will leave corridors for the herders, for example, to lead their cattle to the *abbreuvoir*. We are, therefore, not going to close the *sentier* that is on the site. We will keep it so that people will have access to water sources also. We are going to fence only degraded land on which we are going to plant fodder and trees. And I assure the Member that this has been done with the consent of all the people of the region. Nothing has been imposed on them, and I will advise people not to come and mix politics with this issue. Thank you, Sir.

FESTIVAL KREOL – INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT

(No. B/8) Mrs. R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner *w*ith regard to infrastructural development associated with the holding of the festival Kreol in Rodrigues, whether he could give, year wise and village wise, the following details: -

(a) the different development consequent to the celebrations that have been realized as from the year 2003 thereon;

(b) the total amount disbursed for the holding of each of the edition; and

(c) table the costs associated to each project, as well as the source of funding for same?

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

As regards part (a), the different developments in terms of infrastructural works that have been achieved in the context of the celebration of *festival kreol* since 2003 are as follows:-

Year 2003 - levelling of football ground, construction of track Road, upgrading of Community Centre at Patate Theophile

Year 2004 - upgrading of road, fencing of football ground at Grand Baie

Year 2005 - upgrading works, fencing works, asphalt, masonry levelling, etc. at Citron Donis

Year 2006 - upgrading works, levelling of football ground, resurfacing of roads & drain works at Rivière Coco

Year 2007 - public toilet, upgrading works, box culvert, access road, parking, bus terminal, children playground at Baie du Nord

Year 2008 - upgrading, enlargement & resurfacing of roads, refurbishment of toilet at Port Sud Est, construction of kiosk and placement of benches on public beach, upgrading of Port Sud Est Community Centre, construction of podium at Mourouk. The villages concerned are Mourouk and Port Sud Est.

Year 2009 - construction of bus shelter, construction of kiosk, installation of wooden barriers, upgrading of community centre at Graviers

As regards part (b), the recurrent expenditure for the holding of the *festival kreol* in Rodrigues for period 2003 to 2009 is as follows:-

2003 - Rs1,200,000.
2004 - Rs.2,250,000.
2005 - Rs.1,271,000.
2006 - Rs.800,000.
2007 - Rs.1,700,000.
2008 - Rs.2,550,000.

2009 - Rs.2,605,000.

Concerning part (c), I am tabling the costs of each project and its respective source of funding **(Appendix)**

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis : Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner whether, for the holding of *festival Creole* at Graviers, there was a demand for the construction of a public toilet *étant donné le nombre croissant de personnes visitant Graviers.*

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a request was made in this regard, but we haven't been able to construct the toilet during the course of the *festival creole*. The request will be considered in due course.

EARTHQUAKE – PREPAREDNESS SCHEME

(No. B/9) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards the earthquake which occurred a few kilometers off the coast of Rodrigues in early December, 2009, he would state:-

(a) the date, time, distance and magnitude of the earthquake registered by the Meteorological Services;

(b) whether the effects of this natural event were felt in the island;

(c) whether there were any damages/casualties caused as a result of same; and

(d) what preventive measures are being taken by the Regional Government in the event of a major earthquake nearby Rodrigues, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed by the Meteorological Services that an earthquake of magnitude 5.3 on the Richter Scale occurred on 2nd December 2009 at 8.20 hrs local time, within latitude 20.68 degrees south and longitude 64.39 degrees east, at about 146 km to the east south east of Rodrigues island.

As regards part (b), I am informed that the effects of the earthquake were felt at Port Mathurin and Petit Gabriel. Members of staff of the Commission for Youth & Sports, including the Commissioner, and the staff of the Commission for Health working at the Alfred North Coombes building in Port Mathurin have reported that

they have felt the building vibrate for some 10 seconds. The Meteorological Services of Rodrigues has also received a report of tremors from a woman of Malartic/Petit Gabriel. No abnormal rise of water level has been noted from the tide gauge in the port.

As regards part (c), there were no casualties reported to the Police following the earthquake. As regards the damages, Mr. Ahmad Ismael Mackoojee, Manager of Mackoojee Co. Ltd, Port Mathurin, reported to the Police that following the earthquake he noticed that there were cracks on the wall of his shop situated at Port Mathurin. With regard to the Alfred North Coombes building, no cracks were noticed. The Engineer from the Commission for Public Infrastructure has inspected the Alfred North Coombes building and the building of Mr. Mackoojee. His report is being awaited.

As regards part (d), the earthquake of December 2009 has been taken with much seriousness but also there is concern on the regular occurrences of mild earthquakes within the Indian Ocean tectonic plate adjacent to our island. It has been decided that there is urgent need for an Earthquake Risk Assessment exercise to be carried out in Rodrigues. In that respect, I have requested the support of the Central Government and specialised organisations to assist the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in undertaking or in appointing an expert to carry out this risk assessment exercise. The findings of the risk assessment exercise would be helpful to properly assess the risk of earthquakes in Rodrigues as well as ensure a preparedness plan for post-earthquake actions. I am informed that the Central Government has reached an agreement with UNESCO to undertake this exercise in Rodrigues very soon.

For the short term, however, the Rodrigues Cyclone and Other Natural Disasters Committee is working out an "Earthquake Preparedness Scheme" to ensure preparedness in the event of earthquakes and the possibility of tsunamis that can be generated and to ensure coordinated actions by all stakeholders concerned.

Thank you.

RAIN WATER HARVESTING PROJECT

(No. B/10) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others whether, with regard to the Rain Water Harvesting Project for the vulnerable groups where a sum of Rs.25,000 as financial support has been proposed to those who are eligible for that project, he would:-

(a) give a brief detail of the project;

(b) state the number of applications received, processed and approved to date; and

(c) state the amount of money disbursed in connection to the project as at to date?

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment (Mr. A. F. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is generally acknowledged that water has been a rare commodity in Rodrigues and that it warrants an optimum utilization. In this respect and with a view to attenuating the water problem, this government has initiated a series of actions in the interest of the population including reform in the water sector.

In addition, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the population is being encouraged to adopt a water harvesting culture. A recent report "*Appui au développement durable du secteur de l'eau de l'île Rodrigues*", submitted by the Consultant Michel Chené clearly stipulates that the total water production drops from nearly 7,500 litres per day during the wet season to approximately 3,700 litres per day in the dry season.

It is therefore clear, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that to complement water storage, rain water harvesting shall be encouraged. As such, my Commission, upon the approval of the Executive Council, has come up with the rain water harvesting scheme to be implemented as a pilot project. It consists of granting a financial support of Rs 25,000. to the beneficiaries for the construction of a concrete water tank of 18 m^3 and procurement of rainwater harvesting structures, including UPVC gutter and downpipes.

A detailed plan has been conceived by my Commission and the beneficiaries would be required to construct the water tank in compliance with the said plan. The disbursement shall be effected in two instalments. The first disbursement of Rs 15,000.00. will be effected upon the construction attaining the beam level and the remaining balance of Rs 10,000. will be granted on substantial completion of the water tank inclusive of all connections.

The criteria, as approved by the Executive Council, shall be as follows: firstly, the applicant shall possess a lease or a title deed in cases where the tank is built on private land, and secondly, he should have a valid building permit for the house found on the premises where the tank is proposed to be constructed.

A technical committee will be set up to approve the proposed location and monitor the stages of construction. An agreement will also be signed between the Commission and the beneficiaries to that effect.

As regards part (b), more than 2,000 applications have been received at the closing date set for the scheme and they are actually being processed.

As regards part (c), no disbursement has been made up to now.

PUBLIC OFFICERS WELFARE FUND

(No. B/11) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to "Contribution to Public Officers Welfare Fund" under item vote 02-101.337 for financial year 1st July to 31st December, 2009, he would inform the House about the activities organized by the Council for the welfare of Public Officers and table a breakdown of the amount of money spent in connection with the item vote, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, during the financial period from 1 July to 31 December 2009, no expenditure was incurred from the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Estimates to organize activities for public officers. Two officers were invited by the Council to participate in the *kermesse* organised in November 2009 at the Gymkana, Vacoas and all costs related to their participation were met by the Public Officers Welfare Council.

I am informed that, in 2008, the Public Officers Welfare Council, which operates under the aegis of the Ministry for Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms, has, due to budgetary constraints, requested the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to make arrangements for its own funds to be utilized for the welfare of public officers in Rodrigues.

As advised, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has made provision for funds under item Contribution to Public Officers Welfare Council.

On the other hand, following his visit to Rodrigues in September 2009, Dr. the Hon. Balkissoon Hookoom, Minister for Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms, has agreed that the Council will resume its activities in favour of public officers in Rodrigues.

I am further informed that the organization of welfare activities is expected to resume during this financial year with the support of the Council.

Thank you, Sir.

/UNREVISED/

SECONDARY EDUCATION SECTOR - REFORM

(No. B/12) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards to the reform proposed by the Ministry of Education in the secondary sector, he would state:-

(a) whether there are any specific proposal/s recommended to respond to the emerging need of the Rodriguan society and if so, to state same;

(b) whether his Commission was consulted to submit any proposal and if so, to inform the House of same?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the new curriculum was officially launched on 21 January 2010 by the Hon. Minister, Vasant Bunwaree. The new national curriculum framework has not made any specific provisions for Rodrigues. However, we note that the strategies set in the curriculum are to some extent in line with what has been recommended by the SIDPR, for example, consideration has been taken of the MDG's (Millennium Development Goals) which is also part of the objectives of the SIDPR.

As regards part (b), I would like to inform the House that the current reform of curriculum of the education sector emanates from the national government programme 2005-201, which states at paragraph 148, I quote: "Government will undertake a comprehensive review of the curriculum at primary and secondary levels in the light of developments worldwide and our national needs. Government will also review the training and career paths of teachers to enable them to play a key and enhanced role in educational reforms."

A national debate on curriculum reforms was subsequently organised in November/December 2005 whereby all stakeholders were invited to participate and submit their views and proposals.

Given that Rodrigues is a major stakeholder, I am sure that we must have been invited to participate in the debate, to submit our views and proposals.

In the aftermath of the debate, a paper entitled "Towards a quality Curriculum: Strategy for Reform*"*, was prepared and it came out in November 2006. This Paper stressed on the need for reforms of the school curriculum. The Ministry of Education and the Mauritius Institute of Education have subsequently worked out the reform programme based on the proposals and same was launched on 21 January 2010.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the reform proposed by the Ministry of Education targets a change in the type of examinations that students will be sitting for after form V. They are proposing HSC and also, I think, baccalaureate. Does not the Commissioner deem it fit, even though we have administration in the affairs of education, as regards Rodrigues, we should move towards vocational education at the level of HSC?

Mr. Chairperson: Well, I don't really understand your question. If it aims at commenting on or at criticizing the national policy on education, it is not allowed. Is the Deputy Chief Commissioner willing to respond?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am ready to reply in the same direction. Why should I come with a specific policy for Rodrigues when everything has been included in the national curriculum policy?

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am not insisting but I think that, as regards Rodrigues, the Commissioner or rather the Commission for Education remains the prime partner with respect to the Ministry of Education. I therefore believe that the Commission is in a position to somehow influence whatever decision is being taken in respect of reforms. We know that the Ministry of Education has got a policy. But yet the Commission for Education is in a position to influence the decisions. Should we agree even if the reforms that are being proposed are not appropriate for the context of Rodrigues?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I mentioned earlier that all the needs of Rodrigues in terms of education reform will be addressed in the SIDPR. My Commission will be guided by whatever the SIDPR has prescribed for Rodrigues. This is the only direction in which we are going to move for the time being.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the proposed reform will bring changes in the setting of national examinations at form III level, and new subjects will be proposed at form IV and V levels. Here, in Rodrigues, Sir, we are still in the developmental phase of our agricultural sector whereas Mauritius has already entered the industrial and the technological phases of its development. Does not the commissioner deem it necessary to introduce agriculture as a subject at form VI level rather than to introduce the baccalaureate which will not fit in the local context?

Mr. Chairperson: Well, I can't, as I said earlier, understand your question. Is it a proposal or a recommendation? Is what you just said a proposal by the national government or is it a recommendation?

Mr. N. Lisette: All I know Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is that there is a strategic plan for 2008/2009.

Mr. Chairperson: Has it been finalised?

Mr. N. Lisette: If I refer to information that I have, I would say that there is still scope for change in the plan.

Mr. Chairperson: In this case the question is allowed.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: If there is scope for change, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this will be done according to the needs of Rodrigues. As I just said, there is already a plan which is the SIDPR which has been prepared after consultation with all the stakeholders in Rodrigues. Recommendations have been made with regard to the future education needs of Rodrigues, with regard to our future economic needs as well as the other aspects of the life of Rodriguans. I will therefore be guided by the recommendations of the SIDPR and by what is prescribed by the national curriculum framework, and so on. Everything will, of course, be done according the specific needs of Rodrigues. And asking me to make proposals to the Ministry or to change whatever is prescribed just to make things fit in the context of Rodrigues is out of question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. N. Lisette: We are talking about the future of our children, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Such an important issue cannot be out of question. If modifications can still be brought and if there is need for such modifications to be brought, why should not we do it? Why should we commit an error whose consequences will be borne by the future generations. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to information that has been given to me, it is clear that we have been invited to make suggestions to be included in the curriculum. I would therefore ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner to inform the |House whether his Commission has made any recommendation before the Minister came forward with what has been proposed. If so, what were the recommendations made.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, sir, as I said earlier, the Member should go and see who were in office in 2005. I was not there. Therefore, if there have been consultations, if there have been recommendations, and why these do not appear in the report, I cannot answer for that.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner is right when he says that the proposal was made in 2005. We are aware that there has been a change in government in Mauritius and in Rodrigues also. Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether he has made a follow up as regards

the proposals made in 2005 in order to make sure that the present Minister takes on board whatever had been proposed at that time?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all the different aspects of the development of Rodrigues - education, economy, social and so on – have been taken into consideration in the SIDPR. It also stipulates that we have to set up an Education Standing Committee to implement all the recommendations of the SIDPR. If there is one aspect that has not been taken into consideration by the SIDPR, then, as the Respected Member has pointed out, there is a need to review the recommendations of the SIDPR. But, for the time being, since we have just started implementing the first phase of the SIDPR, let us wait and see whether there is any need for review at the next stage of implementation.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the SIDPR deals only with the administrative aspects and we are speaking here of pedagogy and reform. This means that the Commission for Education will not been be able to emphasize on policies though the SIDPR.

Mr. Chairperson: This is hypothetical.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: It is not hypothetical, Mr. Chairperson. It is clear …

Mr. Chairperson: It is, unless you mention the differences between the SIDPR projections and the proposed recommendations in terms of the policy approved by the National Assembly.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: What I am saying Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is that it is clear that we do not have a policy for education, and that pedagogy is not one of our issues. We have to go according to the policy at national level. We have a policy here concerning SIDPR, framework for Rodrigues etc., but as far as education is concerned, if we want to influence decisions taken with regard to pedagogical reforms, the recommendations of the SIDPR have to zoom up to the national level so that they can be implemented. This is why…

Mr. Chairperson: Therefore, it is included in the SIDPR?

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: It is in the SIDPR. The implementation is on the way and the Commissioner is saying that he goes along the lines of the SIDPR. But, at the same time, we see that no recommendation has been made in the SIDPR regarding the national policy for us to be able to implement its recommendations.

Mr. Chairperson: Can the Member reformulate her question? Too many points have been raised at the same time.

Mrs. Perrine-Bégué: In the light of what I have just said, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what is the reaction of the Commissioner?

Mr. Chairperson: Is this what you want to know?

Mrs. Perrine-Bégué: Yes, Sir.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: The Member wants me to react? I will therefore ask her why she is asking me questions about things which they themselves have not been able to do in the past when the same situation was prevailing. There has been curriculum reform in Mauritius in the past, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Since the existence of the Executive Council of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, how far has the previous Government influenced decisions at the national level with regard to the specificity of Rodrigues? How far have they been able to do that?

Mr. N. Lisette: Let me put the question in another manner, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. In the light of what has been said by my Colleague, will the Commissioner exert pressure so that the recommendations of the SIDPR are incorporated in the policy in Mauritius? Or will he wait for the policy to be adopted and then adjust the SIDPR here?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the SIDPR is a document which has been approved by Cabinet. Rodrigues has four Members sitting at the National Assembly and all the issues concerning education in Rodrigues must be debated at the National Assembly. Therefore, all that I can do is just implement the recommendations of the National Assembly.

At 12.35 hrs, the Assembly was suspended for 45 minutes for lunch.

On resuming at ……. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

ADSL – CONNECTION SPEED, BROADBAND DEVICE ETC.

(No. B/13) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the development of Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) in Rodrigues, he would, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the relevant institution the following information:-

(a) the actual speed at which connection are being obtained for the service;

(b) the number of persons who are benefiting from the service;

(c) the number of outstanding applications, if any and when these persons are likely be served;

(d) whether they intend to proceed with the development of broadband device island wise and if so, in what time frame?

The Chief Commissioner: I am informed by the two operators providing ADSL service in Rodrigues that the connection speed is as follows:-

- **Mauritius Telecom:** There are two ADSL offers which allow speeds up to 128 kbps and 256 kbps respectively;

- **Emtel Ltd:** Through 3G technology speed ranging from 56 kbps to 384 kbps depending on network coverage over the island.

As regards part (b), the number of persons who are benefiting from the service are as follows:

- **Mauritius Telecom:** 442 as at end of January 2010.

- **Emtel:** 300 using USB internet on laptops/PCs (not including those using internet via 3G mobile phone which is not known)

Regarding part (c), the number of outstanding applications is as follows:

- **Mauritius Telecom:** 168 outstanding applications as at January 2010. The time frame for providing the service will be based on the feasibility studies being conducted.

- **Emtel:** No pending applications. All applications are immediately processed and services provided.

As regards part (d), I am informed that the Mauritius Telecom is currently studying the possibility to extend the ADSL services to the whole island. The technical and feasibility studies are currently being undertaken and once these are completed, the Mauritius Telecom will be in a better position to give time frames and deployment plans with further details. The estimated cost implication of the project would involve a capital expenditure of some Rs 17 million together with annual operating expenses of Rs 13.3 million. Mauritius Telecom has informed that as the above investment is not commercially viable, they will approach the Information and

Communication Technologies Authority (ICTA) for funding the project from the Universal Service Fund (USF).

Emtel Ltd. has informed that it is upgrading its network at La Ferme and Jeantac and is continuously identifying spots around the island for covering all regions.

The House would note that in addition to the private efforts by these two operators, my Office is negotiating with the Ministry of Information & Communication Technology for:

- The SEGANET Indian ocean inter-island fibre optic cable project under the Indian Ocean Commission to pass to Rodrigues; and

- A fibre optic cable linking Rodrigues and Mauritius to be installed. In this connection, cost estimates have been prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of ICT whereby it is estimated that the cost of laying a fibre optic cable between Mauritius and Rodrigues would turn around US$ 14 million. It is planned to hold meetings with the operators and the Ministry and ICTA for the implementation of the project through a private-public partnership project.

Thank you.

RRA - PUBLIC OFFICERS – SUSPENSION

(No. B/14) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards public officers/officers on contract working under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he would, for the benefit of the House, obtain the following information and state:-

(a) the number of such officers who are actually suspended from the public service due to criminal proceedings contemplated against them, if any and the nature of these criminal proceedings;

(b) whether there are any such officers where criminal proceedings

(c) are contemplated against them but who are not suspended from the service and if so, the nature of the criminal liabilities and the reason/s for their non-suspension?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, presently in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly ten officers are under interdiction pending the outcome of the inquiries in the cases in which they are involved.

Thirty other officers are also involved in police cases which are still being inquired into or for which advice from the Director of Public Prosecutions is being awaited.

Disciplinary proceedings against public officers include administrative procedures that should be followed in accordance with the Public Service Commission/Disciplined Forces Service Commission Regulations. These procedures have to be followed by the Island Chief Executive who is the Responsible Officer for the staff of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

As indicated in replies to Questions B/108 and B/132 by the then Chief Commissioner, and as I have also been informed, disciplinary action initiated against public officers should not be made public.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have not asked for the names of officers. I asked about the nature of the proceedings that are contemplated against them. The Chief Commissioner has mentioned the number of cases where officers have been interdicted and which are being considered by the DPP. He has not mentioned the nature of the proceedings concerning both the officers under interdiction and those involved in police cases, and yet this is part of the question.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir I am not the DPP, and I cannot give information on the nature of proceedings. I do not and cannot have such information.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, these officers must have been suspended for a particular reason. We cannot suspend an officer by just telling him: as from today you are suspended. There should be a reason why a responsible officer takes the decision to interdict an officer from coming to work. May I ask the Chief Commissioner on what basis these ten officers have been suspended from the service of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly?

The Chief Commissioner: I repeat, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the-then Chief Commissioner and now Minority Leader has already replied to PQs Nos. B/108 and B/132 on the same subject. And as I have also said earlier, I have been informed that disciplinary actions against public officers are not and should not be made public.

FOND LA BONTE – ROAD PATCHING

(No. B/15) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others whether, as regards the bad state of the road leading to Fond La Bonté, he would state to the House when patching works were last done thereat and whether his Commission contemplates to repair/improve the conditions of the road and, if so, in what time frame?

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others (Mr. F. A Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, most of the roads previously constructed were in DBST (Double Bituminous Surface Treatment) which has a higher wearing rate than asphalted concrete. My Commission conducts constant surveys on the state of the roads around the island and thereafter remedial works are conducted as per an established programme and according to a priority list.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the patching lastly conducted at Fond La Bonté dates to November 2008 and I am informed that the next intervention thereat has been planned for mid February 2010. In addition to the patching works, it is also envisaged to construct a turning bay in order to facilitate the manoeuvre of buses, especially during adverse weather conditions.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner for Public Infrastructure whether he is aware that because of the bad state of the road which was last asphalted in as far back as November, 2008, bus owners are refusing to go there to pick up school children in the morning?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am not aware of that problem. It is the first time I hear about that. Maybe after the heavy rainfall the state of the road has deteriorated. But I am aware that the road referred to was in an already bad state. I would like to remind the Member, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that that road had been badly designed. It should not have been constructed along that path. We are looking into the possibility of building drains there if necessary. Our technicians are working on this possibility and we will do the needful soon.

LE CHOU COLLEGE - SCIENCE SUBJECTS

(No.B/16) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the possibility of teaching science subjects at HSC level (lower VI) at Le Chou College in 2010, he would state to the House where matters stand.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that, for the time being, Le Chou College is not fully prepared to hold classes in science subjects at HSC level, particularly chemistry and physics.

Nevertheless, REDCO is aware of the hardship experienced by many students who have to attend classes at Marechal College since science subjects are not offered at HSC level at other REDCO colleges. It is indeed difficult for students, particularly those from the eastern part of Rodrigues to reach Marechal College in time due to transport problems. Therefore, REDCO Ltd. is currently examining the possibility of bringing some classes nearer as from academic year 2011.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this process needs to be carefully planned, particularly in terms of manpower and space requirements. REDCO is currently considering the possibility of conducting Form VI classes at Mont Lubin College where six additional classrooms were constructed in 2009. This will help to alleviate the difficulties faced by students who have to travel to Marechal College.

SONGES - DESALINATION PLANT

(No.B/17) Mr. J. D. Speville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the desalination plant at Songes, he will for the benefit of the House:-

(a) state whether any incident occurred thereat during the year 2009 and if so, to give the date when such incident occurred together with its nature and consequences;

(b) table the report of inquiry, if any;

(d) give a breakdown of the total cost incurred to reinstate the plant, the names of the different technical assistance sorted to repair and the measures taken to prevent the recurrence of such incident;

(e) state the measures and any alternatives taken to ensure the water distribution service during the breakdown period, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed, with regard to the desalination plant at Songes, that on 19 November 2009, a fire broke out and part of the electric cable linking the submersible pump leading to the plant was burnt. The Police inquiry has not revealed any evidence of foul play. The forensic expert who examined the locus has concluded that the fire was accidental, and was due to

overheating. I am tabling a copy of the report of the forensic expert. (**Appendix)** The cost of repairs amounts to Rs 51,700. Technical assistance was sought from the CEB and the CWA and the contractor's representative. It is to be noted that the Commission has met the costs and the amount will be deducted from the contractor's account. Moreover, bid is being floated for the fencing of the two intake boreholes to prevent any unauthorized access to the site.

As regards part (b), during the said period, water from Mourouk borehole was diverted to Rivière Cocos to compensate the loss of production from the desalination plants.

SCHOOL CANTEENS – SALE OF FOODSTUFFS - REGULATIONS

(No.B/18) Mr.J.D. Speville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the new regulations that prevail for the sale of foodstuffs in school canteens, he will use his good offices so that a special derogation be obtained for the selling of local fruit juice prepared under specified established norms in the school canteens of Rodrigues.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, further to the implementation of the new Food Act 2009, my Commission requested the Ministry of Health to organize workshops to sensitize all stakeholders in Rodrigues with regard to the provisions of the Act. Working sessions were held by Mrs. Doomun, Ag. Chief Nutritionist, on 16 and 17 December 2009. The target groups were the heads of schools, presidents of PTA's and canteen holders.

A meeting was subsequently held on 18 January 2010 whereby different stakeholders were requested to submit their views and recommendations on the regulations regarding the sale of foodstuffs in school canteens. Same will be examined and compiled in a report to be submitted to the Ministry of Health, taking into account the specificity of Rodrigues.

It is expected that part of the report will include a recommendation for the sale of local fruit juice, with the right level of sugar to be in line with the provisions and objectives of the Act.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Commissioner to the fact that we have actually nutritionist who is working at the hospital and who is at the disposal of the government. I would also like to point out that among the different products that have been recommended there are, for example, *maïs boulli, maïs grillé,* which are products that can be sold in schools as from now. These are foods that children love and their sale in schools will help our local producers. For example, puddings can be prepared from sweet potato

or manioc or maize. I would therefore ask the Commissioner whether such proposals have been made and will be included in the recommendations.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all that is being proposed by the Respected Member has been discussed during the various meetings that have been held. We made the same proposal with regard to the use of our local products such as maize, fruits and so on. The only thing that has to be sorted out is how to ensure that the food is prepared in hygienic conditions and how it is handled in the school canteens. We have to ensure that this is done in accordance with the provisions of the Health Act.

Mrs. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I make a proposal? We have the *vieille méthode grandmère* such as, for example, *mapinba*. These are old cooking practices and eating habits that can still be used. Maybe we could add some new techniques. This is a proposal that should be taken into consideration to make sure that, for example, *gateau manioc*, is not fried, but in such a way that it is accepted by the nutritionist.

HEAVY RAINS – DAMAGES & EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURE

(No.B/19) Mr.J.D. Speville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture & Others as regards the passage of the last heavy rains in Rodrigues, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) whether his Commission has made an assessment of its adverse effects on agriculture and if so, to table same by giving the number and nature of any complaint received regionwise;

(b) the type of compensation/help, if any, that his commission intends to give to vegetable planters who have suffered substantial losses?

The Commissioner for Agriculture & Others (Mr. L. A. Perrine): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that Extension Officers of my Commission have made a rapid survey of their respective working zones immediately after the heavy rains and no severe damage has been officially reported. On the contrary, it has been reported that the rain has been beneficial for agriculture in general.

However, it has been observed that some crops, mainly greens (*brèdes)* and tomatoes in the cultivated valleys, have suffered some slight damages, but these crops are still in a recovery stage and will be closely monitored.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to parts (b) and (c), by the 3rd of February 2010, only one complaint has been received at the Public Relations Unit of my Commission where 0.06 A of maize plantation has been damaged for a planter of Palissade and the matter is under consideration. In addition, a site visit was effected by officers of my Commission on Thursday 4 February 2010 at Anse Enfer and Mourouk which are prone to flooding, and it has been noted that five fields have suffered from flooding due to unfinished landfill works at Anse Enfer since 2001. Remedial action is being envisaged and a contract will soon be awarded for the urgent completion of the landfill works.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to announce that FAO has, under the IFSP Programme, donated 100 kg of vegetable seeds and 167 packs of bio-fertilizer. These are being distributed free to vegetable growers as a means of assistance.

Moreover, the Small Planters Welfare Fund is finalizing a Crop Insurance Scheme for planters in Rodrigues and same will be implemented during this financial year.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL - NEW MATERNITY BLOCK

(No. B/20) Mr. S. P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health & Others whether, with regard to the New Maternity Block at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he would, for the benefit of the House, state which future development/action he intends to take for the optimal use of that building.

The Commission for Health & Others (Mr. A. L. Emilien): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the construction of the new maternity ward, now known as the Mrs. Ancilla Jean Maternity Ward, was most welcomed as it was high time to provide women of Rodrigues with a decent place to give birth to our future generation. The Chief Commissioner himself recently benefited from these facilities.

However, Mr. Chairperson Sir, the former Regional Government omitted two very important aspects, namely: -

- Provision of personnel to run the extended facilities; and

- Provision of equipment and furniture, as referred to in my reply to PQ B/64 and my statement thereon for the sitting of 19th May, 2009.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that the present rate of admission for delivery at Q.E.H is 1.8 per day (say 2 cases per day). This does not

allow the maximum use of the existing facilities. For example, the ground floor level itself caters for 20 beds at the Antenatal Ward and 8 beds at the converted Gynaecology Ward.

It is a fact, Mr. Chairperson Sir, that a new maternity block was constructed by the previous Regional Government and put in use by this present Regional Government. However, my Commission is facing great difficulties to fully utilize the whole block not because there is a lack of funds to equip the different units but because there are major shortcomings in the design of the building, as I stated in my reply to a supplementary question to PQ B/64.

Presently, the unions are making representations to the effect that there is no mess room for the nursing, midwifery, hospital attendant and hospital servant staff. There is also no kitchen for washing dishes, and no facilities for the disinfection of gowns used in the delivery rooms.

As the construction of this building was completed in July 2007, and given the high investment costs, it will take Rodrigues another 20 years before these new facilities can be fully utilized. It is therefore with this in mind that, as Commissioner responsible for Health, I have set up a high level committee to study the possibility of optimising the use of all the rooms available in the new building.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, as it stands today, a first meeting was held during which it was decided that the service of an architect well versed in the design of health infrastructure from the Ministry of Public Infrastructure would be sought for advice and necessary action. Professional advice is being sought in order to avoid the risks of nosocomial and other infections. This regional Government is not taking any risk by taking decisions that would negatively affect the health of the people in this country.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that Mr. Noorani Khodaboccus, Government Principal Architect, and Mr. Samad Pheerungee, Engineer, are presently on mission in Rodrigues to evaluate the existing facilities and to recommend how to improve same. They arrived in Rodrigues yesterday by flight MK 130 and the Departmental Head, the Health Director and myself had a meeting with them this morning.

Afterwards the report and recommendations of the team will be submitted to the expert of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for evaluation before any action is undertaken. Then the Executive Council will be apprized of these recommendations and appropriate decisions will be taken accordingly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are not looking at the problem piecemeal. We are considering it with a holistic approach. We are not only looking only at the optimum use of the Ancilla Jean Maternity Ward but the whole compound of Q.E.H. The present I.C.U is badly situated, near the transport office and the public road with so much noise disturbing patients. This unit will be moved to the present Paediatric Ward and the latter moved to the old Maternity Ward where integrated facilities such as efficient isolation room, separate wing for staying relatives, appropriate consultation room and nursery already exist. Presently, the risks of infections are very high in this ward and, as we all know, babies and children are vulnerable to infections.

Being given the increase in the number of patients needing haemodialysis, my Commission has already ordered 4 additional dialysis machines and the whole building harbouring the haemodialysis and ICU will be converted into a haemodialysis unit.

We are also planning to have a surgical/orthopaedic ward on the 1st floor of the Ancilla Jean Maternity Ward.

The set-up for a modern male/female surgical/orthopaedic ward already exists, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The availability of an Operating Theatre in the building itself is of utmost importance, especially during cyclones and other major disasters. A ramp and stairs will be built in order to enable direct access to the 1st floor and avoid nosocomial infections from Paediatric/Surgical Ward to Maternity Ward. I have just been informed, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a few minutes earlier, that the Principal Architect has recommended that no ramp needs to be built and that instead of a ramp an access will be built just beneath the exiting stairs with a small adjacent wall and that this will cost one tenth of the estimated cost of a ramp. Of course, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all these are proposals. As I said earlier, no final decisions have been taken so far and we are studying how to optimise the use of all the rooms and space available at in the maternity ward.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson, Sir

SOUPIR - FOOTBALL PITCH – UPGRADING WORKS

(No. B/21) Mr. S. P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports & Others whether, with regard to work carried out for the upgrading of the Soupir football pitch, he will state:-

(a) whether any damages have been caused to any residential properties in its vicinity there after its completion;

(b) what are the damages and its nature;

(c) what measures he intends to take to remedy same and when; and

(d) table a copy of the plan regarding the upgrading works that have been carried out, thereat?

The Commissioner for Youth & Sports & Others (Mr. C. Agathe):- Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the word "Soupir" would indicate a sigh of relief which we have wanted to bring to the inhabitants of the locality who have been neglected for so long despite the growing number of athletes in this region. The Executive Council has decided to provide the necessary funds under the stimulus package to upgrade the existing football ground and to provide the sports community of this region with an appropriate infrastructure for the practice of sports. The scope of the upgrading works comprises the following:-

(i) excavation and levelling works
(ii) construction of masonry structure
(iii) installation of a chain link fencing

The contract was awarded to Colas Maurice Ltée. on a rate contract basis through works order dated 1 September 2009.

The works have been practically completed on the 18 December 2009.

However, it has been observed that during the torrential rain that has occurred during the week 25 to 31 January 2010, one of the nearby residents has been affected by run-off water from uphill including from the football ground.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the rain water run-off has led to the accumulation of soil debris in the yard of the nearby resident. In addition, the concrete base of the new fence has cracked as a result of the washing away of the compacted soil under part of its foundation during the heavy rainfall. About 25 metres of the concrete base of the fencing has been damaged.

The contractor has already been on site and has been requested to take necessary remedial action at his own cost to pull down the damaged fence, to re-compact the soil and reconstruct the fence. Furthermore, as an immediate step, soil debris from the yard of the affected resident will be removed and an appropriate drainage system will be set up to facilitate the easy flow of surface water. *Vetiver* or other suitable grasses will be also planted on the sloping external sides of the football pitch in order

to stabilize the soil and to prevent further soil erosion. The contractor has been given up to 12 February to complete these remedial works.

These measures will form part of the list of snag works to be completed before the site is taken over by my Commission and final payment is made.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (d), I am tabling a copy of the plan regarding the upgrading works undertaken at the Soupir Football ground.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the renovation works which are being carried out at the football pitch make the access from the main road to some houses in the village impracticable. Will the Commissioner consider the urgent construction of a track road that can be used by students who encounter problems during the rainy weather?

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this does not form part of the works I have referred to, but I will discuss with the Commissioner for Infrastructure so that the needful is done.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Commissioner has mentioned the coming up of a drainage system. I would like to ask him whether this formed part of the initial plan of the project.

Mr. C. Agathe: No, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this decision has been taken after the problems that resulted from the heavy rainfall.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: May I, therefore, know who designed the project before the construction?

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is the contractor. He submitted the design and we agreed to it. We had not taken into consideration the drainage system. As I said, we will look into the matter and a drainage system will be put in place so that the residents are not affected.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is astonishing to note that after just one rainfall, so much damage is caused to a newly built sports infrastructure, including even cracks in the walls. May I ask the Commissioner for Youth and Sports whether the construction works have been carried out according to the specifications in the contract or whether they have been carried out without the approval of the supervising officer.

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there has been good supervision, but sometimes snags may occur in any construction work. And as we are still in the conditional period, all the problems are going to be looked into.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are not dealing with snags here. We are dealing with the foundation of a sports infrastructure Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The cracks have not occurred in a wall, but, as has been said by Commissioner in his reply, in the foundation itself. Is it not true that there is some lacuna in the design of the project itself? Has this been done for the just sake of doing something without taking into account the solidity and the durability of the infrastructure?

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, *il est parfois difficile de travailler avec ces gens-là !* The cracks, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, have occurred along only about 25 metres. It seems that the Member is paying attention to these 25 meters only and not to the rest of the works that have been carried out.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: *M. Le President, le Commissaire a lui-même avoué que la base est en train de chanceler.* It is our right to ask questions. And also, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what is a little bit queer is that the Commissioner has said that the technical design of the project was done by the contractor. Does this mean that the Commission has not taken any initiative as regards the technical and security aspects of the construction?

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this project has cost us around three million rupees. The technical aspect of the project has been agreed to and dealt with by the Commission for Public Infrastructure. We are not technicians; we cannot look at all the aspects of the construction.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is it not true that usually it is the promoter, that is the Commission, that does the design and calls for tenders? It seems to me that tenders have not been called for that project. Otherwise, the construction would have been done on the basis of the design.

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the works have been carried on the basis of a works order, and the works order is issued by the Commissioner for Public Infrastructure.

Mrs. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this means that the engineers working at the Commission or those available in Government have not had anything to do with that project at any point in time.

Mr. C. Agathe: I will look into the matter, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

GRENADE – WINDFARM – RENTAL OF EQUIPMENT

(No. B/22) Mr. S. P. Roussety (The Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others with regard to the commissioning of the two wind energy convertors (windfarm) at Grenade, Rodrigues, on the 11 January, 2010 he would seek information from the Central Electricity Board whether any amount was paid or will be paid by the CEB for the rental of the tent, sound equipment, the Events Manager, his Assistant and the hostesses to the Commission for Arts & Culture and to state the amount, thereof?

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others (Mr. A. F. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission provides shelter facilities for the holding of official functions free of charge and, in line with this policy, no claim whatsoever has been charged to the Central Electricity Board for the provision of tents in connection with the inauguration ceremony attended by the Deputy Prime Minister and his delegation.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the rest of the information requested in the question concerns the internal matters of the CEB, and we cannot disclose such information.

JCB EXCAVATOR GMR 585

(No. B/23) Mr. S. P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others with regard to the JCB Excavator Registration No. GMR 585 attached to his Commission, will he, for the benefit of the House, state when was it purchased together with its cost at that time and whether the Excavator took fire and if in the affirmative, what caused the fire?

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others (Mr. A. F. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir there is no JCB excavator bearing registration No. GMR 585 at the Commission for Public Infrastructure. Instead, there is a lorry bearing this number and it is in good working condition. I don't know where the Respected Member got this information. Therefore, GMR 585 is a lorry that is in good working condition and is attached to the Commission for Public Infrastructure.

/UNREVISED/

FOOTBALL PREMIERSHIP – 1st & 2nd DIVISION LEAGUE

(No. B/24) Mr. L.D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports & Others whether, with regard to the Premiership, 1st and 2nd Division Football league 2009 in Rodrigues, he would:-

(a) state when were the last respective league seasons closed;

(b) state the names of the respective champion and runner up teams;

(c) inform the House whether the prizes have already been remitted to the winning and runner up teams and, if yes which prizes and when?

The Commissioner for Youth & Sports & Others (**Mr. C. Agathe):** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I must inform the House that football leagues in Rodrigues are organized by the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee which is autonomous in its functioning. My Commission only plays a facilitating role by providing financial support for the purchase of prizes and the payment of referees, as well as logistic support such as marking of football grounds and transport facilities for referees.

With regard to the premiership, 1st and 2nd Division Football League 2009, a sum of Rs 161,500. has already been credited to the account of the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee on 21 January 2010 for cash prizes to be awarded as follows:

Premiership
Champion (Rs.30,000.)
Runner up (Rs.15.000.),
3rd to 6th prizes (Rs4,000. each)

First division league
Champion (Rs.20,000)
Runner up (Rs.10,000.)
3rd to 6th prizes (Rs.2,000. each)

Second division league
Champion (Rs.15,000.)
Runner up (Rs.5,000.)

Feminine football leagues
Group A (Rs.5,000.)
Group B (Rs.5,000.)

Referee fees for the premiership league 2009
Second round (Rs.15,000.)

Referee fees for first division league 2009
Second part (Rs.16.000)

An amount of RS.161,000.- has been credited to the MCB Bank.

Mr. L.D. Baptiste: According to my information, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the premiership ended in August or September. I would like to know from the Commissioner why the Commission has taken so much time to credit this amount to the account of the football committee.

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission took action after receiving the claim from the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee. This is why the money has been credited on that date.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir may I know from the Commissioner for Youth & Sports whether there have been any struggle or protest between the winning team and his Commission or the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee as regards the amount of money being disbursed to them?

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as far as I know I don't know. I will discuss the matter with the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Youth and Sports whether a decision had been taken prior to the starting of the competition regarding the amounts representing the prizes to be awarded to the different teams.

Mr. Chairperson: Please wait. I was given to understand from the answer of the Commissioner that everything is done under the purview and discretion of the Football Committee. If this is so, then the Commissioner won't be able to reply to this question. This question is therefore not receivable unless the Commissioner volunteers to give the information requested. You understand my point? If the Football Committee has the discretion to decide, whatever the collaboration of the Commissioner, it will be the Committee that will be responsible for the decisions taken, not the commissioner. If the Member wants to rephrase his question, he is allowed to do so.

Mr. N. Lisette: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I would like to ask the Commissioner for Youth & Sports what were the requests made by the Rodrigues

Regional Football Committee to his Commission with respect to the cash prizes to be awarded to the winning teams prior to the start of the competition.

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee requested, for example, that the champion team of the premiership be awarded a cash prize of Rs.30,000. And my Commission just gave the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee a sum of Rs.30,000. to be awarded to the winner of the Premiership.

Mr. L.D. Baptiste: I would like to know whether there had been a decrease in the amount of this cash prize as compared to the previous season.

Mr. C. Agathe: I don't know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

RODRIGUAN ATHLETES - INTERNATIONAL SPORTS COMPETITIONS

(No. B/25) Mr. L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports & Others whether, with regard to the Rodriguan athletes who participated in international competitions from January 2009 to date and who were medallists, he would state:-

(a) the number thereof; and

(b) table a list of their names and respective sports discipline, the international competitions they participated and the type of medals won;

(c) the policy of the Commission as regards to the supports provided to them for their preparation and as rewards to their performance?

The Commissioner for Youth & Sports & Others (**Mr. C. Agathe):** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that, with a view to motivating and encouraging our athletes to achieve good performance in international sports competitions, it is the policy of my Commission to award cash prizes, subject to formal notification submitted by the respective Regional Sports Committees.

For period January 2009 to date, there have been 10 Rodriguan athletes trained in Rodrigues who have been participating in international sports competitions organized in Mauritius and abroad. Despite the cash prize received in Mauritius, seven out of ten athletes are eligible for award by my Commission.

Details concerning names of athletes, sports competitions in which they participated and award granted are being tabled **(Appendix)** .

As regards the support provided to these athletes, my Commission provides the appropriate logistics and technical services in terms of infrastructure for training, qualified coaches, transport facilities and equipments.

As regards the rewards, they are granted on the basis of their performance as follows:-

Gold Medal	: Rs 20,000
Silver Medal	: Rs 15,000
Bronze Medal	: Rs 10,000

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I know from the Commissioner for Sports whether there are set criteria for these people to satisfy in order to be eligible for awards. I note that 7 out of these 10 athletes are eligible. What about the other three?

Mr. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are three out of ten who have not won any medal. These three athletes whose names I will not give are not eligible for any cash prize.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner whether those athletes who have won medals in international competitions have been given the same facilities and provided with Rs.20,000, as well as a monthly allowance?

Mr. C. Agathe: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I wanted to know Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whether, apart from the cash prizes, the athletes benefit from a monthly cash reward for a certain period of time.

Mr. C. Agathe: The Member does not seem to be happy. Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Christiane Legentil will receive a cash allowance of Rs.5,000. up to the next *Jeux des Iles de L'Océan Indien* to be held in the Seychelles.

Mr. N. Lisette: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, why is it that the other athletes are not receiving this allowance, because they are also expected to participate in the coming *Jeux des Iles de L'Océan Indien* which are going to take place in Seychelles?

Mr. C. Agathe: The allowance will be provided, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on a case to case basis.

GRANDE MONTAGNE COLLEGE - CONSTRUCTION/EXTENSION

(No. B/26) Mr. L.D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards to Grande Montagne College, there is any construction/extension projects underway and if so, he would provide information to the House as regards to:-

(a) the nature of works to be carried out and its estimated cost;

(b) the time frame set for the kick off and completion of the project; and

(c) table a copy of the plan/layout of the buildings, if any?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has planned a construction project at Grande Montagne College.

As regards part (a), the project will consist of the construction of an administrative office, a library, an audiovisual room and an ICT room. The existing administrative block will be converted into science laboratories. The main objective of the project is to enable Grande Montagne College to have adequate space to conduct 21st century science classes, which will become compulsory as from the next academic year. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 7 million.

As far as part (b) is concerned, it is expected that the construction will start in April 2010, and will last approximately 7 months. The tentative completion date is early November 2010.

Concerning part (c), consultant Servansing Jadav and Partners is currently working on the drawing of the plan. I shall table a copy a thereof upon receipt of same.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I would like to know whether provisions have been made in the present budget for this extension project and, if not, how this project will be financed.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: When I say that construction will start, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this means that provision has been made for same.

SOURCE TIGOMME - CONSTRUCTION WORKS

(No. B/27) Mr. L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards to the upgrading/construction works carried out at Source Tigomme (including along the river and reservoir), will he state:-

(a) whether tendering/procurement exercise were carried out and if so, when;

(b) the nature/scope of works done, the starting and completion date; and

(c) table the list of bidders together with the amount each tendered and a copy of the contract of the successful bidder?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir with regard to the upgrading works at Source Tigomme, Graviers, I am informed that a request for restricted bidding for the stated works was sent to 9 pre-selected bidders on 22nd May 2009 with the closing date for receipt of bids fixed to the 12th of June 2009. The site was handed over on the 10th September 2009 and all works were practically completed on the 21st December 2009. The major works comprise the following:

RESERVOIR AREA

- Casting of new floor
- Waterproofing of reservoir
- Masonry of wall and fencing of reservoir
- Upgrading of filtration plant building.

DAM AREA

- Siltation of dam
- Placing of gabion units upstream the dam
- Trailing wall to river

SPRING

- Casting of floor in existing reservoir
- Construction of masonry wall and fencing works

I am tabling the list of the six bidders who responded together with the amount tendered and a copy of the contract of the successful bidder. (**Appendix**).

Thank you.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir I would like to know who designed and supervised the project, especially the wall along the river.

Mr. Roussety: This was done by the Commission for Water Resources in collaboration with the Rodrigues Water Company.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I would like to know whether the technician made a site visit along the river after the heavy rainfall and, if so, whether the Commissioner will give some details concerning the actual situation on that site.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if the Member wants this to be done, it will be done.

STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

LATE HON. JAMES BURTY DAVID & MR. JOSEPH ALEX PERRINE – OBITUARIES

Mr. Chairperson, Sir it is with great sadness that we have learnt the death of the then Minister for Rodrigues, Honourable James Burty David, in December last. The Assembly has not had the opportunity to meet until today and, therefore, on behalf of the Regional Assembly, I will invite you to request the Clerk to convey our condolences to the family of late Honourable James Burty David. We have had the occasion to attend his funeral in Mauritius.

It is also with great sadness that we have learnt the death of late Joseph Alex Perrine on 26 November 2009 at the early age of 46. As Members of the House are aware, late Mr. Joseph Alex Perrine was actively involved in social work particularly for the benefit of the under privileged segment of our population.

In 1999, in collaboration with a group of friends concerned about the hardship being faced by the poor in Rodrigues, he founded the local NGO, A*ssociation pour le Bien- Etre des Rodriguais à Port Louis*. Late Alex Perrine has been the President of ABRO since its creation and remained at this post up to his death.

I recall that in February last, upon his personal initiative, and with the support of my colleagues, Commissioners Agathe and Emilien, we organized a meeting with the Rodriguans living in Mauritius. The meeting was held in the context of the implementation of activities under the global fund with regard to AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria.

From 1984 to 2009, he was employed by the Civil Service Family Protection Scheme in Mauritius, and he was also employed as part-time Project Officer at the Mauritius Family Planning Association from 1999 to 2006. As social facilitator for the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups from May 2006 to May 2009, he was involved in helping the vulnerable groups. Late Mr. Perrine was the first Chairperson of the Rodrigues Regional Health and Advisory Board which was set up by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in 2001, and he chaired that Board up to 2004. I will invite the Executive Council to consider how the Rodrigues Regional Assembly can pay tribute to late Mr. Perrine and give due recognition to his substantial contribution in the social sector.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will invite you to request the Clerk to convey the condolences of this Assembly to the widow and the children of late Mr. Joseph Alex Perrine and to the ABRO.

Thank you, Sir.

HAITI – EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS – COLLECTION OF FUNDS

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make a second statement to the House. As Members of this House are aware, on 12 January 2010, a major earthquake struck Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world. The earthquake, of magnitude 7, was the worst catastrophe hitting Haiti in the last century causing heavy damages and loss of lives in Port aux Prince and all the settlements in the region.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, allow me to express, on behalf of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Rodriguan population, as well as in my own name, our deepest sympathy to the stricken Haiti population . We have a special thought for the family of late ASP Gooraj Lutchman who was killed during the earthquake, especially for his wife who is a Rodriguan and for her parents, the Calamel family of Plaine Corail.

In view of assisting the people of Haiti in their efforts to recover their losses and rebuild their country, the Executive Council has decided, at its meeting of 15 January 2010, to set up a solidarity fund in favour of the victims of the earthquake.

Appeals have been made to the public officers, private firms, schools and to the public in general to contribute to the fund. Some 42 collection boxes made available by the electoral office have been placed around the island in schools, public offices, shopping centres and at the airport. Funds have also been collected separately by the Church and Caritas. At the closing date for the collection of donations, that is on Monday, 1st February, 2010, an amount of Rs 152,462.91 (one hundred and fifty two thousand four hundred and sixty two rupees and ninety one cents) has been collected and deposited into the Chief Commissioner`s Relief Fund. In addition, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has decided to contribute an amount of Rs 50,000. (fifty thousand rupees) which has been made available from the Chief Commissioner's Relief Fund. The total amount of Rs 202,462.91 (two hundred and two thousand four hundred and sixty two rupees and ninety one cents) will be transferred to the Prime Minister's Haiti Relief Fund for distribution among the Haiti people.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir following the catastrophe that hit Haiti, we need to feel deeply concerned about the fact that nowadays no country in the world, including Rodrigues, is immune from natural disasters as the nature is becoming more and more unpredictable due to the climatic changes affecting our environment.

Thank you Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: M. Le Président, les membres de la Minorité et moi-même, nous joignons au Chef Commissaire pour présenter à la famille de l'ex-Ministre James Burty David, à celle de M. Alexandre Perrine ainsi qu'à la famille et à la veuve de Bhoraj Lutchman, nos condoléances et notre sincère sympathie.

M. le président, nous avons suivi avec beaucoup d'attention ce qui est arrivé à Haïti, une île où on parle le créole et aussi une île qui a beaucoup souffert dans le passé. Souhaitons qu'avec toutes les assistances et l'aide internationale les Haitiens puissent reconstruire leur pays et surtout qu'ils retrouvent l'espoir.

Merci, M. le président.

Mr. Chairperson: On behalf of both the majority and the minority sides, I will direct the Clerk and ensure that the messages of condolences be sent to the three families.

PRESS ARTICLE IN "*LE RODRIGUAIS AUTONOME"*

The Commissioner for Health & Others (Mr. A. L. Emilien): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, allow me to react to an article in a local newspaper "*Le Rodriguais*

Autonome " whose *Directeur* and *Rédacteur en Chef, un certain Serge Clair qui, je suppose doit être le* Minority Leader.

The newspaper was dated Friday the 22nd of January, 2010, and the article's title was "*Au service de la santé – l'inefficacité de notre service d'ambulance coûte la vie à un touriste étranger".*

Tout est faux dans cet article, M. Le Président. Le touriste a été retiré de l'eau inanimé. L'ambulance était déjà sur place quand on l'a retiré de l'eau. Des exercices de réanimation ont été pratiqués sur lui et on a pu le réanimer. Lorsqu'on l'a mis dans l'ambulance, il était vivant. Il était sous respiration assisté mais vivant. Il est arrivé à l'hôpital de Mt. Lubin vivant.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this Regional Government has and is sparing no effort in order to boost up the tourism sector in Rodrigues, especially after the severe world crisis we recently experienced. This article, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is not an incentive for foreigners to come and visit Rodrigues. Maybe, given the nature of the article, this is the wish of some people here in Rodrigues.

I wish to draw the attention of the House, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to the fact that this article is false, malicious and misleading. I don't know the objectives behind such information.

Allow me, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to recapitulate the series of events that took place before and after this sad event. On Sunday 17 January, 2010 , at 12.35 hrs, the ambulance attached to Mont Lubin Area Health Centre left for Queen Elizabeth Hospital with the Acting Charge Nurse, Mr. Daris Pierre Louis, to transport Mr. Cupidon, victim of a cervical injury for having fallen from a mango tree while picking fruits. The patient thereafter passed away in Mauritius.

At 13:00 hours, a call was received requesting the assistance of an ambulance at St. Francois. Immediately, the Nursing Officer on duty made a request to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for an ambulance as the one attached to Mt. Lubin Area Health Centre was already taken up with the transportation of a severely injured patient.

At 13:45 hrs, Mr. Maitre Jean, 86 years old, residing at Coromandel, was brought by ambulance bearing plate no. 40 RRA 08 (an ambulance attached to QEH) and was examined by Dr. Vamben and staff in the following physical conditions:-

- Complaining from malaise while swimming (as per information gathered from relatives)
- No blood pressure
- No pulse
- Attempt for resuscitation failed

- All other results negative

At 14:00 hours, patient Maitre Jean, was declared dead by Dr. Vamben and the case was referred to the Police Medical Officer.

At 14:30 hours, the corpse was handed over to Police Sergeant Cupidon Jacquelin bearing No. 6715.

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that the House be adjourned to Tuesday, 9 March 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

MATTERS RAISED ON ADJOURMENT

SPORTS ANIMATORS – SALARIES AND ALLOWANCES

Mr. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir I am making myself the spokesperson of the sports animators who help in the training of our youth in the different é*coles de sports and centres de formation* in Rodrigues. Many of them have come to me because they are not being given their due and they are being penalized unjustly Some of them have not been paid their monthly salary as well as the session fee due to them since the month of October 2009. This amounts to a sum of approximately Rs 2,100. (two thousand one hundred rupees) per month. This situation is leading to a lack of motivation which may ultimately lead to the closing of more é*coles de sports* in Rodrigues. Already the é*coles de sports* at Port Mathurin and La Ferme, which were among the best performers for past ten years, are no longer functioning. If immediate action is not taken, other é*cole*s will know the same fate.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the other issue of concern relates to the lack of equipment or proper training at *l'école de Judo* at Allée Tamarin where, for example, the *tatami* has been badly damaged and there are risks of the judokas getting hurt while training. In other é*coles de sports*, there has been no renewal of sports equipment since 2005 when they were last provided with. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, these youngsters in the different é*coles de sports* represent our elite of tomorrow and I am sure that all Members in this House will agree that they deserve our utmost consideration and encouragement.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I hope that the Commissioner for Youth and Sports who, unfortunately, has left, will take the necessary steps in order to prevent this situation from deteriorating.

Thank you, Sir.

LANGUE RODRIGUAISE – PRESERVATION

Mrs. Perrine-Bégué: M. le Président mon intervention cette après-midi constitue une alerte parlementaire sur la préservation de la langue rodriguaise, c'est-à-dire le créole rodriguais. Compte tenu des défis qui nous guettent, je voudrais attirer l`attention de la Chambre sur la nécessité de sauvegarder l'identité linguistique Rodriguaise et de préserver la saveur spéciale de notre langue créole dans le monde créolophone et dans la république de Maurice.

Quels sont ces défis M. le Président? Ils se présentent à deux niveaux. Il y a d'abord le challenge social qui est en train de disparaître dans la société Rodriguaise et ensuite le challenge politico institutionnel grandissant au niveau national. En ce qui concerne le challenge social, on note que depuis un certain temps les mouvements de masse et les échanges entre Maurice et Rodrigues sont tellement nombreux et les séjours des Rodriguais en quête de travail à Maurice tellement prolongés que la pression linguistique sur le créole Rodriguais se fait sentir. E à terme, M. le président, cette assimilation lente et latente du créole rodriguais sera irréversible, notamment au sein de la jeune génération. On note au sein de notre société une telle nonchalance a l'égard de ce patrimoine, à tel point que notre langue s'agonise dans l'indifférence.

M. le Président, un bref coup d'oeil sur quelques unes de nos institutions démontre ce manque de vigilance ou les difficultés à contourner ce problème. On voit, par exemple, des *slams*, des poèmes et autre écrits primés par des institutions dont la Commission des arts et de la culture et imprimés dans les médias locaux qui ne font pas attention aux spécificités linguistiques de notre communauté. L'établissement de critères de sélection dans le cadre de toute production ou compétition littéraire est aujourd'hui, selon moi, une nécessité pour démontrer une volonté politique et institutionnelle de préserver nos acquis et notre tradition linguistique.

La religion est aussi, vous le savez, M. le Président, une des institutions culturelles et d'intégration sociale de chaque pays. Dans ce contexte, j'ai rencontré certaines autorités religieuses locales dont l'église catholique qui parle d` un effort déjà de son comité liturgique de réadapter à la sensibilité linguistique rodriguaise les écrits en créole reçus de Maurice.

Cependant, les défis demeurent les chants, dont ceux très populaires de Grégoire et d'autres compositeurs de Maurice, qui sont difficiles à revisiter et qui pourtant ……(**change of cassette)**
Après certaines hésitations du Ministre Bunwaree, nous voyons arriver une volonté politique prononcée cautionnée par le Premier Ministre mais qui, malheureusement, arrive en fin de mandat.

Cela implique, M. le Président, qu'un travail colossal de standardisation de cette langue doit se faire sur le plan national. Et c'est là où la vigilance rodriguaise doit être exercée, tout comme nous l'avons fait il y quelques années dans le cadre du projet national Graffi Larmoni où nous avions insisté auprès du Professeur Hookoomsing pour qu'il vienne étudier les spécificités de la langue créole Rodriguaise avec toutes ses

variations locales, et ensuite en débattre avec les Rodriguais dont les politiques, les dirigeants dans le secteur de l'éducation et les acteurs et observateurs culturels et sociaux. Il s'agissait de comprendre la portée de ce projet concernant Rodrigues et aussi la sauvegarde ainsi que la reconnaissance de notre spécificité dans le monde créolophone. Dans son rapport final, le Professeur « codifie », si je peux utiliser ce mot-là, le créole Rodriguais comme le RCL- le *Rodrigues Creole Language*. Nous devons, à mon avis, M. le Président, bâtir là-dessus, pour que les spécificités de la langue rodriguaise soient maintenues quand sortiront éventuellement les manuels pédagogiques pour l'enseignement de cette langue au niveau de l'éducation nationale.

Je lance donc un appel, M. le Président, pour un plan d'action pour la préservation de l'authenticité de la langue rodriguaise avec sa forte dose francophone, comme vous le savez, et ses emprunts africains. Rodrigues doit se donner une mission et les outils nécessaires pour sauvegarder notre langue qui est en danger de disparition.

Mon intervention, Monsieur le Président, cette après-midi n'a pas un but conservateur, n'a pas pour but de souligner une certaine différence communautaire qui existe bel et bien au sein de la République de Maurice. Ce n'est pas non plus par souci de repliement dans des retranchements inventés, mais avec le sens du devoir de préserver et de promouvoir un patrimoine par excellence qui doit rester notre repère et notre référence en tant que peuple. Quand notre langue authentique est connue de tous, quand nous connaissons et nous respectons son importance et ses particularités, nous n'aurons aucune crainte à garantir et à accepter la liberté individuelle de chacun à l'intérieur d'un même espace de s'exprimer selon son choix.

Et je termine par une citation de la Déclaration Universelle de l'UNESCO sur la diversité culturelle qui dispose d'un programme de sauvegarder les langues en danger. M. le Président, je cite : « Chaque langue reflète une vision du monde et un complexe culturel unique et constitue une part essentielle du patrimoine humain vivant. Cependant, selon les experts, plus de 50% des 6000 langues du monde sont en danger de disparition ».

Je vous remercie M. le Président.

At ……, the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 9 March 2010 at 10.30 a.m.