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Debate No. 2 of 09. 03.2010

RODRIGUES

SECOND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 2 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 09th March 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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

RODRIGUAN LABEL

(No. B/28) Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué (First Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in line with the general promotion and projection of Rodrigues, any initiative has been undertaken by his Office for the creation of a Rodriguan label since he took office and if so, where matters stand regarding same?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first of all, I would like to point out that it is not the sole responsibility of government, but here in Rodrigues, it is the sole responsibility of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to undertake the promotion of Rodrigues.

The promotion of Rodrigues is generally and mainly carried out by the private sector and, as we already know, the private sector in Rodrigues is not actually dominant. The regional government is leading the role of promoting the island. Over the last few years, the promotion of the island has been boosted up by the setting-up in the tourism field of the Tourism Office, and the creation of a tourism logo and a regular marketing and promotion campaigns world wide and in Mauritius of the island of Rodrigues as a tourist attraction and destination.

For the proper targeted promotion of the island, different targeted slogans and labels have been used for different countries and market segments. For example: *Ile Rodrigues, coup de coeur garanti*, presently being used in Mauritius, Reunion and France.

In the field of local produce and local Rodriguan products such as honey, agro-processing products and so on, my office is working on a strategy which will include: adding value to our products, its conformity, uniformity and standardization as well as their promotion via a recognized Rodriguan label. In that respect there is need for a strategy not only to develop a recognizable label, but also to raise the quality of our products, and to ensure that the quality is consistently maintained over time and quantity.

As announced in my last budget speech, I have set up a Coordination Committee which is working on the strategy in consultation with enterprise support

organizations like SMEDA and DBM, and we will also enlist the support of the Mauritius Standards Bureau.

The Rodrigues Regional Assembly has already set up the Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Ltd. which is working in that direction too. And there are plans for the setting-up of a mini laboratory for the agricultural sector under the Food Security Fund.

Thank you.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the first steps that were taken by the previous government for the setting-up of a recognized label for Rodrigues, any further steps have been taken by his government to complete the project.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the present Executive has not as mandate to continue any work undertaken by the previous government though it might seem to be good or positive. We have started things anew and we are working. It is not a simple issue; it is not a matter of just saying: "Ok, let us have a Rodrigues label". And then, we should decide for which products we are going to use the Rodrigues label. Are you going to put it on salted fish? Are we going to put it on baskets of poultry? We have to carry out a background work with regard to the improvement of the quality of our products. We have to ensure that our products are in line with international and national norms, and that we can guarantee the supply of such products. It is only after that work has been done that the label can be allocated to the different products that satisfy the required norms. We cannot allocate the Rodrigues label to products such as, for example, pots of honey for which supply can be sustained for one month only. We have, firstly, to ensure quality by giving training to the suppliers and the producers, and secondly, to ensure quantity so that there is a continuous supply of the product. If the Member wants us to just put a label and organize a logo competition, we can do it in a week. But the Rodrigues label is not just about organizing a logo competition; it is not just a picture that we will put on products. There is a whole administration that needs to be set up first. And what if we don't have producers who are able to meet the criteria? Do we go ahead with the Rodrigues label?

Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we know that since the nineties, we have a law regulating food products including a list of 51 Rodriguan food products which have to be certified in Mauritius. And we know the qualms and the difficulties that the Rodriguans have to face in order to go there and have their products certified. And we know also how much it costs to do that. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there exist set criteria with regard to the quality of the products.

This is the reason why I am asking the Chief Commissioner whether there has been any discussion concerning this issue of criteria for certification with the Mauritius Standards Bureau, and whether any proposal has been made to the effect that Rodriguans be provided with certain facilities while the Rodrigues Label is being designed.

The Chief Commissioner: I will not answer this question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. According to Standing Order 22(2), a supplementary question should relate to information requested in the original question.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my question regards the label of Rodrigues, and I am asking the Chief Commissioner what steps have been taken in this regard and with regard to what is being undertaken at national level. Actually, some Rodriguans do go to Mauritius for the certification of their products. But others do not. My question is: what is the RRA doing in the meantime in order to see to it that products that are put on the market are up to the required standard.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I have explained, we are presently in Rodrigues in the process of building what I would call consciousness with regard to quality in the mind of people. We have to start on a semi-industrial basis, with a semi-industrial production from agricultural produce to ensure, I repeat: quality and continuity of supply. The question of quality is essential if we want to have a Rodrigues Label. We don't want to create a Rodrigues Label and find out afterwards that only a few selected persons will satisfy the criteria for the use of this label. For example, if we have a Rodrigues Label for honey, how many producers of honey will be able today to meet the set criteria? I don't think there will be many of them. This is why we have to be careful not to create discrimination and apartheid between people who are producing to earn a living and people who can produce quality products. If we decide to have a Rodrigues label we want one and all to be able to benefit from it. And this has to done within a consultative process. Everybody has to be assisted in order to meet the criteria for the use of the Rodrigues label. For example, the producers of honey have to know how to treat, store and purify honey once they have harvested it. The same applies for agricultural products. If we take the example of beans, we can see that this is a move towards marketing, a move towards a Rodrigues Label because the Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Board has made it possible for beans produced in Rodrigues to be packed and sold in Rodrigues. We can afford to put the Rodrigues Label only on products for which the packaging, the weight and the quality are satisfactory. We will have to be very careful with a Rodrigues Label until the quality of our products reaches a certain level. The same thing criteria apply for the Tourism Industry. We have given the tourist operators two years to satisfy the

tourism regulations. What have they done? They are still lagging behind. What will happen today if we decide to give a tourism label, that is, a sort of label that each tourism operator will place at the doorsteps, at the reception desk of his business? Not many of them will get it. This is why we have to put in the mind of people that the quality of our products should satisfy European and international norms. Will you put the Rodriguan label on jars of chilly or transformed lemons, which do not satisfy the set criteria for packing and conservation? We have a very big job to do in that regard. I agree with you. We have done a lot and there is still a lot to be done. We have to understand the current workload of the present regional government. As I have told the Commissioners, our diagnostic when we took power was wrong. We thought that we had reached a certain level in the development of Rodrigues, in its progress, but we have realized that we have to go back to the reform of the water sector, and so on. This is why we have first to set the fundamentals right and then move forward.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner seems to be beating about the bush, and is not answering the question. Since he has been talking about apartheid and segregation, I would like to ask him who set the standards for quality. Can he inform the House whether a time frame has been set with regard to the different initiatives that he is taking, what are those initiatives and whether consultations have been carried out concerning the Rodrigues label?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I repeat: the label is one thing. Does the Member want me to organize a logo competition and have a picture or a drawing and say "this is the Rodrigues label", and give it to all Rodriguan products irrespective of whether they meet the requirements as regards quality? Shall we give the label to, for example, a jar of chilly that will make a boom and explode when a consumer opens it? If she wants us to put the Rodrigues label on such products, we can do it, but we don't want to do it. We want to accompany the producers. We want them to target quality and the label will come only when these persons are ready. We have to train people in each and every sector, in tourism, in the honey sector, in the packed fish sector. Do you think you would put the Rodrigues label on imported frozen products that have been **(problem on cassette)** transported from Plaine Corail to Port Mathurin in a carton or on a lorry in the open air under the sun? Will you put a Rodrigues label on this kind of product knowing that there has been a *rupture dans la chaîne du froid*? Who will bear the responsibility afterwards if this fish is **(problem on cassette)**…. We can only rely on the police and on the good faith of the sellers. And we know that this is going on. We know, for example, that certain persons have made "*piment giraumon*". You know who that person is. I don't know where he is. So what can we do? Do you think that those who will have the authority to give the Rodriguan

label are not going to cheat? There is a risk that they are going to cheat. Therefore, how do we prevent them from cheating? By exercising control. This is the whole issue. I admit, and I repeat that my office doesn't have the appropriate cadres, the appropriate personnel to date to carry out this control. We are working on it and if we get the required personnel and the necessary mode of operation, we are moving forward.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we see that Mauritius has voted the law for certification which was enacted in 1993, and they are coming forward with another type of label which we call the Mauritian label for touristic products like souvenirs and so on. The Chief Commissioner is saying that his office doesn't presently have the necessary facilities and competencies to do the job. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether, in line with this national move for the identification of touristic products in Mauritius, his office has tried to work in collaboration with the SENDA, which also has an office in Rodrigues, in order that this identification label includes Rodrigues or even work out a separate one for Rodrigues.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have voted in this House the Tourism Regulations 2007. And these Tourism Regulations include specific criteria for a business to be classified as a tourism enterprise, as a *gîte*, as a tourism residence, as a restaurant, as a hotel, and so on. We are working with the tourism office and we are giving the tourism operators time for adjustment. The Member should not think that when a law is voted people will run to adapt to it. People come and tell us: we don't have money to invest in air conditioners, in the improvement of the system of lighting and the electrical setup, in fire extinguishers, in ensuring health and safety norms. They tell us that they don't have money, what do we do? We close their business? Then the Member will come and accuse us of causing unemployment? We have to adapt, we should let the people adapt. We should set the norms and let them adapt. And I am proud to say that they are adapting, they are changing their mindset, they are investing and they are moving towards satisfying the norms. With regard to the tourism sector, we already have the system of licence which means that if a person satisfies the norms, he is awarded a licence. It is a sort of label which, unfortunately, we cannot give to all products. We cannot have a Rodrigues label for all products in general. We should have different labels for the different products. We cannot, for example, have the same label for honey and for tourism. In South Africa, for example, they have the label "Proudly South African". But we should work out the requirements a product should meet in order to qualify for such a label for the first time and what are the procedures to follow in order to qualify for it a second time and so on.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am a little bit surprised. It's quite a shame that..!

Mr. Chairperson: The Member can't say that!

Mrs. A. Perrine Bégué: Ok. I withdraw. I mean I am astonished. We are not independent; we are autonomous. Therefore, how come the Chief Commissioner is not aware that the SENDA is working on this project? The project is not about tourism. It is about how to curtail the problem of selling products from China and Madagascar; it is about the protection of crafts and souvenirs sold to tourists. It is about an identification label. This is why I was asking whether the Chief Commissioner has worked with the SENDA Office here in Rodrigues, and whether he has seized this opportunity being given that he does not have the necessary resources. I asked him to inform the House whether he has seized this opportunity so that the Rodriguan craft products, artistic products and any other type of Rodriguan products can be identified as Rodriguan products, and so that the tourists are aware that the products that are being sold in Rodrigues are Rodriguan products. Such a measure, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, will help to safeguard our assets and protect the rights of the Rodriguans. This is what my question was about.

The Chief Commissioner: Two things, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The Respected Member is talking of shame, and of all sorts of strategies. What have they done when they were in office? What projects have they completed when they were in office? That was my first answer. My second answer is: what are the artisans doing? What are the producers doing? Is it up to me, Chief Commissioner, with all the problems that I have - management problems at my office, dealing with all and everything- and to the Commissioners to go and poke our nose in the private sector's business? Is it for the government to do everything all the time? Why don't they group themselves in a federation *des Artisans Rodriguais* and design a label and regulate the label themselves, and place it on the products of their members? Is it up to us to do this? The role of the government has a limit. This is a problem here in Rodrigues - government is not here to do everything. The private sector has its role to play; the individuals have their roles to play. What has happened to the *Chambre de Commerce et de l`Industrie*? Do we hear them today? Where are they? Is it up to me to go and design a label for every hat which is made in Rodrigues? Why doesn't the member help them? Why doesn't she go and help them, group them and say: ok, we work on a label for you people in the handicraft industry. What is the SMEDA doing, and the SMIDO and so on? Is it up to us? Everything will be put on us? The Member has to be careful. The Executive Council will not meet the inaction, the omission of others. We are here to do our

job, we will do ours. We will not do the job of others. People have to make moves, work hard to succeed.

TRUTH & JUSTICE COMMISSION

(No. B/29) Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué (The First Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner as regards the Truth and Justice Commission regarding the history of Slavery and Indentured Labourer in the Republic, would he, for the benefit of the House, State:-

(a) whether any representation in the name of Rodrigues has been made before the Commission yet and if so, by whom and to give details about same;

(b) whether this national decision has been the object of any discussion conference, analysis or meeting between his office and the stakeholders in Rodrigues.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), no representation as such has been made; but in the context of the 175th Anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery 2010, my Commission addressed a letter to the Truth and Justice Commission requesting them to conduct a sensitization campaign on its objectives and functions.

As regards part (b), the answer is no.

Mrs. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner himself rightly said on that particular occasion that he mentioned that as regards slavery, Rodrigues has suffered, for example, in terms of the time frame with regard to the announcement of the abolition of slavery, which means that the island itself, including its whole population at that time, suffered from this particular prejudice. Being given that the Deputy Chief Commissioner is responsible for history, I would like to ask him whether any initiative relevant to this particular issue is being considered.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I remind the Respected Member that the Truth and Justice Commission has been set up by the central government, that is, it is a national policy that Rodrigues also follows. But since the setting-up of such a commission in Mauritius, I personally felt that they have taken time to come to Rodrigues. This is why my Commission and I,

personally, thought it right to address a request to the Commission to come sooner to Rodrigues. But in fact, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this does not prevent anyone in Rodrigues or any association, NGO and so on, to go to Mauritius to make representations. I had a phone conversation with one member of that Commission, Mr. Benjamin Moutou, and I have been informed that they expect to be here in some 3 weeks time. When they will be here, it will be a golden opportunity for all Rodriguans to go and meet them. The members of the Commission will seize this opportunity to explain the general objectives of the Commission, and to have meetings with all those concerned. Therefore, at this point in time, I do not have much information to give to the House with regard to the Commission.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned the coming of the Truth and Justice Commission for a sensitization campaign. Did he propose to the members of the Truth and Justice Commission to come to Rodrigues and hear the views of those persons who want to depone in front of the Commission at least once before the closing up of the project? Because it is quite difficult for an individual to buy an air ticket at the price of Rs 8,000. to go Mauritius to depone in front of the Truth and Justice Commission.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I repeat, may be I have said earlier that they will come only for a sensitization campaign. But I think that when they will come here, they will also hear representations from all those concerned as it has been done in Mauritius.

Mrs. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when we look at that law which is being proclaimed on the 28th of August, we note that the mission statement of the Commission comprise only four sentences. There is no need, according to me, for broad sensitization; it is easy to understand. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, sensitization is one thing, action is another thing. And that's why I am asking the Commissioner whether he does not consider that over and above the sensitization campaign consultations on this aspect should be held in order to hear the sentiments and ideas of people with regard to this issue. Because we won't be having another Truth and Justice Commission meeting for this particular issue, and we live in an island where slavery has prevailed. Why should not we think, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that there is a reason for Rodrigues as an entity to depone in front of this Commission? That's why I am pointing out to the Commissioner that a mission statement of four sentences about sensitization is one thing and that the action that Rodrigues Island considers to take is another thing.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Respected Member made a statement instead of asking a question. But she can rest assured that I share the same feelings with regard to the fact that Rodrigues also must be

given the same opportunity as mainland Mauritius. I should also point out that the Truth and Justice Commission will not come here just to sensitize people, but people must be made aware of the terms of reference of the Truth and Justice Commission prior to any representation being made. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I don't think that all the Rodriguans are aware of that.

(Interruptions)

Ok, if they are aware, then why don't they take the opportunity right now if they don't want to wait?

(Interruptions)

Ok, if some have done so, then so much the better. I am going to end on that question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, by saying that this is the stand of my Commission. I have done my job, I am waiting for them to come and if the respected Member wants to meet them, she should seize the opportunity when they come here.

RODCLEAN CO. LTD

(No. B/30) Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué (First Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment, & Others as regards waste collection by the Rodclean Co. Ltd. in Rodrigues, would he, for the benefit of the House, provide the following information:-

(a) whether any recruitment of additional employees is envisaged and if so, how many and when;

(b) how will the exercise be carried out;

(c) will the former employees of the ex-La Voirie Ltd. situation be considered both on humanitarian and experience grounds;

(d) in which way will this major staff development of the Company improve the services in Rodrigues; and

(e) table a copy of the new operation plan of the company which has been designed to substantiate same, if any?

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure & Ors (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regard to part (a), the answer is yes. The

Executive Council at its meeting held on 19th February 2010 has approved the recruitment of 60 additional employees by Rod Clean Ltd. The recruitment procedures shall start soon.

As regards part (b), it is envisaged to consult the Commission for employment to submit a list of registered unemployed. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, RodClean Ltd. is under the overall management of its Board of Directors and will undertake the recruitment as per established procedures and in line with their policy to attain their mission and objectives.

As regards part (c), the selection of candidates will be conducted and the former employees of the ex-La Voirie Ltd. shall have equal opportunity in this exercise provided they are registered at the Employment Office.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (d), since Rodclean Ltd. has started its activities in November 2007, there has been a substantial improvement in the collection and disposal of refuse throughout the island. The coverage area has been extended and regions previously not covered are being catered for. With the recruitment of the additional staff, Rod Clean Ltd. will be entrusted additional duties as follows:

(i) Cleaning of drains;

(ii) Cleaning of coastal zone and public beaches;

(iii) Grass mowing on all public beaches, football grounds and public places;

(iv) Cleaning and maintenance of all public toilets;

(v) Actively involved in embellishment programme along roadsides and public places; and

(vi) Participate in waste segregation project through separate collection programme for plastic.

In view to enhancing the delivery of the services, it is further envisaged to adopt a targeted approach by creating dedicated teams to serve each local region headed by team leaders.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this initiative is in line with the Sustainable Integrated Development of Rodrigues (SIDPR) report which lay emphasis on the environmental concerns.

As regards part (e), an amended memorandum of understanding based on the added services and delivery output including the operational plan is in the process of being finalized.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether any of these new recruits have already started work, since when, and whether the project for recruitment is under way.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are planning to get started at the beginning of the coming month, that is, at the beginning of April.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner whether from January this year there has been new recruitment at Rod Clean Services.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a bit far from the main question. I don't have the answer. I invite the Member to come later with a substantive question.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have one more question. If the approval of the Executive Council is needed for all recruitments, then how come that in the meantime this company is recruiting people?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is a difference between replacing someone who has left an existing post and recruiting people to fill new posts. Here we are talking about the recruitment for 60 additional new posts. This is completely different.

?????Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner what is the procedure for replacement.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all the recruitment exercises for the filling of posts in our companies are done according to established procedures.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Let me reframe the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Or I'll rather put another question concerning the question of equal opportunity with regard to employment. We are aware of the desperate situation which the ex-employees of La Voirie are facing and for which no solution has been found up to now. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my question is - I know it does not concern the Commissioner directly, but even if he cannot answer, maybe he can take it as a suggestion to be considered. Certain people face the problem of discontinuity of

employment and as they are poor people they go to Mauritius to look for a job. It happens that when they come back they get a job *"pou ale débrouillé"* for one or two days. And this prevents them from going to the Employment Office to renew their employment cards. And in so doing a person who has remained registered for several years finds him or herself at the bottom of the list of registration for employment and is considered as a new registrant at the Employment Office. Can we say that there is equal opportunity if the expiry date …

(Interruptions)

Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is what I am saying about equal opportunity. When people are in dire straits can we consider the expiry date of their cards as a condition to stick to and as criteria for employment?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will try to answer this question. As you know, we have established rules at the Commission for Employment.

Mr. Chairperson: Last supplementary.

Mr. N. Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner for Environment whether the established procedures regarding recruitment for Rod Clean include an open advertisement for vacancies and, if yes, when were the vacancies advertised.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is up to the Board to decide. Usually the unemployed just apply directly to the office at Anse aux Anglais. But the Member can rest assured that recruitment will be carried out according to the procedures established by the Board of Directors.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner for Environment enlighten us on these established procedures?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, how come that a respected Member who has been Commissioner comes here and ask me questions about established procedures? He has been in office for three years and he comes here and asks me about established procedures? He should know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir! I can't come here and give lessons to people.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the question was straightforward: whether the established procedures include an open advertisement for vacancy. I did not get an answer from the Commissioner for Environment. This is why I think it is fair that he enlightens the House, not only me, but the House about the established procedures at Rod Clean regarding recruitment as well as filling of new posts.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have answered this question. The unemployed apply directly to the office. And then we ask for a list of names from the Commission for Employment, and then the Board decides on the recruitment of people according to the established procedures.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner for Environment mentioned that the new plan is being prepared. Can we know when it will be tabled in the House or laid in the Library so that we can have a look at it?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we will lay it in the Library soon.

Mr. Chairperson: I just want to add that the document has to be tabled first before being laid in the Library. Can we move to the next question, please?

DRAINAGE SYSTEM

(No. B/31) Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué (First Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others as regards the drainage system in Rodrigues, would he, for the benefit of the House:-

(a) state whether any improvement works have been done since 2006, and if so, when and where;

(b) elaborate on the state of the system of drains within Port Mathurin and its outskirts;

(c) state whether any study has been done regarding the drainage system in Rodrigues especially in regions prone to flooding during those last three years and if any subsequent project is being considered, and if so, to state its scope?

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure & Ors (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is fully aware of the importance of surface water drainage system in the local context, especially in relation to the topography of the island. Besides the regular maintenance of the existing drains, we have constructed:

- 6,600 m of semi line drains
- 800 m of covered line drain

- 6,400 m of earth drains during the period 2006 – 2009

in the following locations:

(i) Grand La Fouche Corail

(ii) Terre Rouge

(iii) Citron Donis

(iv) Baie Topaze

(v) Corail Petite Butte

(vi) Pointe La Gueule – Baie du Nord ; and

(vii) Riviere Coco

In addition, drainage works have also been conducted in the region of Baie Malgache by the Commission of Agriculture in the context of Food Security Fund.

As regards part (b), Port Mathurin is served by a network of nearly 3000 m of drains whereby preventive maintenance is carried out by a dedicated team of the Commission.

The drains are in an operational condition. This is supported by the fact that during the two torrential rain episodes which occurred on 21st – 29th January 2010 and 12th – 20th February 2010, no major shortcomings were noted in respect to the evacuation of surface water runoff.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, part of the drainage system at Port Mathurin will further be enhanced with the implementation of the New Market. The scope therein includes the review and upgrading of the drains in the vicinity of the new infrastructure.

As regardspart (c), I am informed that no major study has been conducted. However, a study is envisaged to be conducted on the existing '*radier*' around Rodrigues in the context of sea level rise phenomenon.

In addition, I have further taken up the matter with the Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Dr. Rashid Beebeejaun for technical assistance for a holistic design approach regarding a combined system in Port Mathurin which shall cater for the overall drainage as well as the disposal of waste water.

Mrs. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he is aware that many of the drains which are found in the

outskirts of and even in Port Mathurin are nearly full of accumulated mud and weeds that have grown to up to 10 cm? Is he aware of that? Can he inform the House whether any action has been taken?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I have just explained we have maintained some 6 km of drains around the island, but we are still facing the problem of lack of labour. This is why we are contemplating to recruit some 60 additional staff at Rod Clean Ltd. in order to cater for the …**(Gap in cassette).** Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I have just said, I have already talked to the Deputy Prime Minister to obtain technical assistance to help us solve this problem. But what we normally do, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whenever there is accumulation of water, the Fire Services just pump out the water that accumulates on the roads.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we cannot have a "*solution pompière*" for everything. Because at the same time when water needs to be pumped, there may be houses on fire, and a choice will have to be made. Can the Commissioner inform the House whether the cleaning and maintenance of drains are not included in the duties of the employees of Rod Clean Company?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would say not specifically. I repeat: we are recruiting additional staff to strengthen the team at the Rod Clean. As I have just said, there will be dedicated teams of workers to serve the different local regions. Ok? These teams will be responsible for the cleaning of drains, cleaning of coastal zones, grass mowing, cleaning and maintenance of public buildings, embellishment, and so on. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, they are talking about Max Lucchesi street. I know. But all this is a question of money. We have disbursed some Rs 10 million to build a bridge in Port Mathurin, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a bridge that the former government has demolished. And this is one of the reasons why we have not been able to cater for a proper drainage system in Port Mathurin.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we all know that the Commissioner is responsible for the Environment, which includes the drainage and sewage systems in Rodrigues. Is the Commissioner aware that during the storm that occurred a few weeks ago major drains - which were constructed by the previous government - were obstructed for days by piles of wood? Those drains didn't serve any purpose, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because they were obstructed. Is the Commissioner aware that in at least two places "*bien frequenté*" some of the wood is still there, has not yet been removed? Is the Commissioner saying that these drains will not be cleaned and maintained until and unless they have the necessary manpower and money? What will happen if a stronger storm occurs?

Does the Commissioner have an idea on how long the Rodriguans will have to wait for drains to be cleaned and maintained?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is a good sign if there are only two places where water and branches and so on have accumulated.

Je me rappelle très bien, M. le Président, dans le passé, après une grosse pluie, Rivière Coco, Rivière Banana, Mourouk ainsi que Port Sud Est étaient bloqués par des branches. Au niveau de la Commission, M. le Président, on a mis en place un plan selon lequel par temps de grosses pluies, l'équipe de la Commission avec les autres, c'est-à-dire, les officiers de l'environnement, du Public Infrastructure Department, Road Section etc., ainsi que les pompiers, travaillent tous ensemble pour trouver au plus vite une solution au problème. En ce qui concerne le problème d'accumulation de branches - je sais que cela s'est passé à Baie Malgache –ce problème est dû à l'abattage des arbres dans le cadre des travaux qui étaient en cours plus haut. Et tout a été enlevé tout de suite après. Ce sont des choses qu'on voudrait plus tard améliorer. Et, bien sûr, M. le Président, en ce qui concerne le manque de main d'œuvre, on compte sur les employés nouvellement recrus de Rod Clean et aussi sur les 243 travailleurs qui vont arriver bientôt.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have noted that jointed blocks that have been placed to cover the drains that are found next to the church. But for what purpose are the drains covered if they have not been cleaned? Why, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, have these major concrete and easy to clean drains at François Leguat street, been covered with jointed blocks, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? Has the Commissioner looked at the work that has been done there? Jointed blocks being put on the drains without the drains being cleared of accumulated soil!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, how can the Member state that the drains have been covered with jointed blocks without being cleaned? How does she know that the drains have not been cleaned? As I have just said, the drains are operational. All the drains are operational; there is no problem with the drains.

Mrs. A. Perrine Bégué: One last question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. It concerns the risk of contamination of underground water. We know that it is very important to have a good drainage system next to boreholes. I would ask the Commissioner to inform the House whether there is any special team assigned to the proper cleaning and maintenance of the drains situated next to the boreholes.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is a team from the Commission for Water Resources and I think there are many contracts that have been awarded to local contractors to cater for these problems. However, Mr.

Chairperson, Sir, it is sad that the gymnasium has been constructed on a water catchment area leading to Cascade Pigeon. This is a very sad decision that has been done in the past, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

SOUPIRS - WATER SUPPLY

(No. B/32) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Chief Commissioner as regards to domestic water supply to the village of Soupirs (the part behind the Sports Playground) will he, for the benefit of the House:-

(a) State whether he has received any complaints from the villagers on the water distribution frequency during the month of January 2010, and if so, what measures he undertook to remedy same;

(b) Give the dates for the months of December 2009, January and February 2010, respectively, when these villagers were supplied with tap water; and

(c) State when tap water will be supplied to this part of the village of Soupirs for the month of March 2010?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), I am informed that no complaints have been received from the villagers of Soupirs during the month of January 2010. During the past two months the frequency of water supply for the villagers of Soupirs was prolonged due to following factors:-

(i) The dam at Bassin Gallard was being desilted during the period 03 February 2010 and 11 February 2010.

(ii) The reservoir at Malartic, which was heavily leaking, was being repaired during the same period.

(iii) Two cases of vandalism on the main network were registered on 14 February 2010.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the distribution of water in that region was made on 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 31st December 2009; 1st, 2nd and 3rd January 2010 and 2nd, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th February 2010.

As regards part (c), water has been supplied to the villagers on 5th, 6th and 8th March 2010 and will be supplied again before end of March 2010.

Thank you.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner inform the House about the measures that are taken in cases where for one reason or another the distribution of water is less frequent as mentioned, for example, in the case of Soupirs, as mentioned by the Chief Commissioner. Is any particular action being taken by the Commission to ensure that those who, for one reason or another, suffer from scarcity of water during a long period, are supplied with water by water lorries more frequently?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have to look at the problem of water in Rodrigues in a holistic manner and we have to adopt a holistic approach when dealing with this problem. The Member knows the problem of water as well as I do. There is scarcity of water; there is a network, the limits of which we do not know, the operation of which we do not master. We know that there are some undisciplined persons involved in water distribution. Whenever it is necessary, we do send lorries to distribute water and these lorries are basically working on a 24-hour basis.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I was referring in my question to not only government lorries that could cater for a temporary shortage of water, but also to private lorries. There are people who can buy, but when they go to the relevant authorities, they sometimes have to wait for one or two months in order to have their request acceded to by that particular water unit. That's why I am saying, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whether any action has been taken, on humanitarian grounds, to make sure that in special cases where the consumer is not the one who is at fault action is taken to allow at least those who can pay to be provided with water.

The Chief Commissioner: The reason, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is that we don't want the power of money to take control of the water resources of Rodrigues. The policy of the Commission for Water Resources is to as much as possible restrict the trade of water by private lorries. Because water which is given to private lorries is water deducted, removed from the network. We have to make a decision on whether we can allow people who can pay to have a water lorry delivering water at their places and leave their neighbours who cannot pay without water. Everybody has to be dealt with in a fair and equal manner. This is why we have restricted the sale of water. Water in Mourouk, and in all boreholes have to be put into the water network. It is out of question that because some people have money they can afford to have water whereas others who don't have money have to just sit and watch. This is an injustice which was taking a very big proportion and we have decided to stop it. Water is supplied on a case to case basis. If water

has not been supplied to a certain region during one or one a half month, then we take the decision to allow the sale of water by a water lorry, but it is out of question to just allow water lorries to sell water and make huge profits out of this business. The Water Regulations are coming and we will have to regulate on those lorries going to pump water everywhere. For example, they are always pumping water from the source or small river found at Fond La Bonté because there are no regulations specific to Rodrigues to control this sort of practice. All these regulations are going to be included in the water regulations, and the Rodrigues Water Company will have a crucial role to play. I am confident that with the setting-up of the Rodrigues Water Company and with the resources with which it will be equipped, and the regulations that we will introduce in this House soon, the whole water network system in Rodrigues will improve. But the population, the consumers must be prepared to play their role in the whole process. They must be prepared to accept that we place water meters. They must help the water company to play its role, and they must pay their water bills when water tariffs will be introduced.

Thank you.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, subsequent to what the Chief Commissioner just said, can he inform the House since when the decision was taken to stop the sale of water by private lorries?

The Chief Commissioner: Since the beginning of the drought period last year, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And I think this is a good decision.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: If that is so, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, then how can the Chief Commissioner explain that some business persons have bought water for an amount of up to Rs 17,000 during the month of December last year?

The Chief Commissioner: There might be two ways to explain this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. There is corruption in the sector. Someone, somewhere in the government, in the Water Commission is giving the water despite the fact that a decision has been taken not to give, or it may be that the water is coming from a private source. It may be water collected from the roof or water coming into the network that is being sold. These are the different explanations that I can give. You know what has been going on here in Rodrigues? Some people have been selling the water that they have in their tanks at home to water lorries, and this water is being sold to other people. This is the sort of practice that is going on.

(Interruptions)

The Member wants to laugh? She can laugh, but this is the situation that is prevailing. I believe, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that, being given the size of the average Rodriguan household and that of the roofs of houses, if people want to take the responsibility of investing in a water catchment system and in a water tank that is of an appropriate size, this will be a sustainable and long-term solution to the problem of water. Many Rodriguan households can become autonomous as far as water is concerned. Some people have done it and it is working.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner in reply to a question last month, said that the business persons were ready to pay for their water. Therefore, I cannot understand how come this decision has been taken. Have I understood rightly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the sale of water to private lorries is now completely forbidden by the government since September or October?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is a common saying that it is difficult to explain things to women at times when …

(Interruptions)

We have just celebrated the Women's Day yesterday. I will explain once more. There is no ban on the supply of water to water lorries. It is being done on a case to case basis and the decision to do it rests with the Departmental Head. I have instructed him to act on a case-to-case basis, he is the Officer-in-Charge of the department, and he knows where there are problems and where he can give water. The decision is not to give water a water lorry, but to a person, to a family or to a business. And then this business gives the lorry the permit to bring the water to its premises. We don't give the permit to the water lorry business itself, but to the consumer. In order to ensure that there is no water trade, no profit making business on water, we give the permit to the consumer and the consumer then chooses his or her lorry. This is a business that is going on. Unfortunately we have to curtail it. I think the explanation is clear. If you have two water bottles, and you remove one of them, it means that you are reducing one bottle of water from the two bottles that you had. The Member should be aware that the water that we are giving to lorries is being removed from the network. We don't want to reduce water that we have in the network. Does the Member know how many water lorries were going to Mourouk for those who, as she said, can afford to pay? Up to 10, up to 20 lorries. Does the Member know how many cubic meters of water this represents?

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner to kindly withdraw the words that he uttered with regard to women. He didn't explain. He said: that's why we have stopped giving water to

private lorries. Then, I asked him, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whether I got him right and asked whether since the drought season he has stopped completely this type of water supply. And he explained, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with more details, that it has to go through his Departmental Head - and this a new information that he was giving. And he said that I didn't understand because I am a woman. Now I will ask the Chief Commissioner to withdraw his words.

The Chief Commissioner: Which words does the Member want me to withdraw?

(Interruptions)

There is nothing to remove.

Mr. Chairperson: Mrs. Bégué, you rose on a point of order. Now you have to wait because I have to give my ruling. What I heard the Chief Commissioner say is that the problem about women…

(Interruptions)

No, he said that there is a common saying that you have to explain twice to women. I didn't hear him mentioning any of the respected women here. He didn't mention anybody.

(Interruptions)

Of course I understand … , but he didn't mention anybody.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, women have fought for many years for their dignity. I spoke to you once about that…

Mr. Chairperson: I agree with you. Listen to me. You made a point of order. I have to give my ruling and my ruling is that he didn't mention you specifically.

(Interruptions)

I cannot insist. Have you understood my ruling? My ruling is that this was general comment addressed to persons generally and the point of order even if in substance is well taken cannot give rise to a withdrawal.

(Interruptions)

How can I? If the Chief Commissioner volunteers to do so, he can.

/UNREVISED/

MULTIPURPOSE YOUTH CENTRE – CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/33) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Sports & Others whether, with regards to the construction of a multi-purpose youth centre at Pointe L'Herbe North as mentioned in the Capital Budget 1st July 2009 to 31st December 2009, under item vote 31-105-101, he would inform the House where does matter stand?

The Commissioner for Youth and Sports (Mr. J. C. Agathe): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when we came into power in 2006, we have noticed that there was no youth centre in the northern region of Rodrigues. I personally had preliminary discussions with members of the Central Electricity Board during one of their missions in Rodrigues last year on the construction of a multi-purpose centre at Pointe L'Herbe.

According to the discussions that we had, the Central Electricity Board, through its Chairman, agreed in principle for the construction of a cloakroom at the Handball pitch at Pointe L'Herbe. On the basis of this agreement the decision was taken to increase the scope of the project in view of integrating the cloakroom into a polyvalent youth centre which is to be constructed on the identified site adjacent to the handball pitch with the understanding that my Commission will top up the difference in cost.

My Commission, in collaboration with the Commission of Public Infrastructure, proceeded with a survey, the preparation and drawing of plans as well as tender documents. The detailed drawings and tender documents had already been prepared in September 2009. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 12 millions and will overlap on the budget of the present financial year.

Unfortunately, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Central Electricity Board has not confirmed its funding agreement as was discussed initially and in such circumstances my Commission could not proceed further with the tender exercise. Discussions are still under way with the Central Electricity Board and the latter has dispatched its Corporate Planning and Research Manager to Rodrigues during the month of February this year to obtain more details on the project. My Commission is still awaiting the decision of the Board.

Pending a final decision from the CEB and bearing in mind the commitment taken to further promote the development of the youth in the northern region, my Commission has taken the decision to construct a youth centre at Oyster Bay. Preliminary discussions have already been initiated with the Oyster Bay Village Committee. Its design and drawings are presently under preparation. Construction is expected to start soon.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner for Youth and Sports whether any sum of money has been spent with regard to this project.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Of course, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We have done the plans and the drawings, and tender documents have been prepared by Servansingh Jadav. Therefore money has been spent.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner why he did not ask for a confirmation letter during the negotiations with the CEB, because I understand that a certain sum of money was earmarked in the budget July to December 2009. I would like to know why, right from the start, he did not request a confirmation letter from the CEB.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, discussions are still in progress since the CEB has sent a Corporate Planning and Research Manager in February this year.

Mr. N. Lisette: Another question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. If I understood the Commissioner correctly, the project is now being shifted to Oyster Bay. I would like to ask him the reasons why this project has been shifted from Pointe L'Herbe to Oyster Bay.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, maybe the Member has not listened carefully. The project has not been shifted, but we are constructing a new youth centre at Oyster Bay pending the confirmation of the CEB for the construction of a multi-purpose youth centre at Pointe l'Herbe.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine-Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the project was to be completed or was at least due to start before the end of 2009. And we see that some money has been spent on preliminary works or design works, I don't know. But what will happen to that project? Will the Commissioner confirm that the sum of money voted has now lapsed? And if this project is not catered for in the 2010 budget, then how will he move forward with the project if the negotiations with the CEB end up in a positive manner?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the money has not lapsed. A certain sum has already been spent, and we have reallocated the rest of the sum earmarked for this project to other projects for the youth.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a sum of Rs 5 million was earmarked in the budget of July 2009 to 31st December 2009 under item Youth Center. I would like to know out of this Rs 5 millions how much was for the Pointe L'Herbe

Youth Centre project and much how much has been spent for consultations or for preliminary design with regard to this same project.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a sum of Rs 5 millions has been voted for the construction of a Polyvalent Youth Centre at Pointe L'Herbe. Out of the Rs 5 millions, a certain sum has been disbursed, I don't have the exact figure. But I know that there had been tender procedures with regard to the contractor`s fees. I will seek the requested information and table it later in the Assembly.

Mr. N. Lisette: Will the Commissioner agree, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to the fact that the whole sum of Rs 5 millions has not been spent? If yes, then why is he saying that this sum of money will not lapse?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: The whole sum has been used, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

ANTI-INFLUENZA PROGRAMME – WINTER SEASON 2010

(No. B/34) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Women's Affairs, Child Development and Family Welfare whether, with regard to the anti-influenza vaccination programme for winter season 2010, she could inform the House when the vaccination programme is due to start in Rodrigues and by indicating the targeted groups?

The Commissioner for Women's Affairs, Child Development & Ors (Mrs. M. T. Brault): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that anti-influenza vaccination programme for the winter season 2010 will start in Rodrigues after the receipt of vaccines - which is expected in April 2010 - from the Ministry for Social Security, National Solidarity, Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions.

The Ministry has already initiated the tender procedures for the procurement of the anti-influenza vaccines for the campaign 2010 and the vaccines are due to be received by the end of March.

??????(THERE IN NOTHING ON TAPE FROM HERE TO XXXX)

Normally we receive about 1500 vaccines and about 1000 of these vaccines are used yearly and the rest are offered to other people who wish to be vaccinated.

ROADS – CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

(No. B/35) Mr. P. François (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others whether, with regard to the construction of road projects at Citron Donis and Baie Topaze during financial year 1st July 2009 to 31st December 2009, he could inform the House about the progress of work at these two places?

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure & Ors (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as the respected Member may be aware, due to budgetary constraints, road projects are being undertaken in phases.

The project for the construction of the road from Citron Donis to Rivière Coco over a length of 720 m has been completed and commissioned.

The first phase of road construction from Baie Topaze towards Camp Pintade which constituted the enlargement of the width, laying of crusher run up to sub grade level over a stretch of 1 km, which was intended to be implemented during the period July to December 2009, has also been completed.

It is now intended to proceed with the 2nd phase that is, lying of the wearing course during the current financial year.

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware that the crusher run has been laid on the kilometer of road that people have been complaining as being dangerous due to its impracticability by certain types of vehicles namely motorcycles? Is he aware of that?

Mr. Chairperson: Has the Commissioner understood the question? Can the Member ask the question again, please?

Mrs. M. A. Perrine Bégué: Is the Commissioner aware that there have been complaints or is he aware of the problems that some of the road users are facing with regard to the crusher run has been installed?

…(Gap in cassette).

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure & Others (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt): XXXXX

…… I have just explained that due to financial constraints, the road at Baie Topaze will be constructed in two phases. The first phase has been completed, and the second phase, which constitutes of the lying of the wearing course, will be done during the current financial year.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we know that when we install a crusher run, it has to be coated with a stabilizing layer within a certain period of time. And now the Commissioner is talking about the financial year 2010. Therefore, this could be December, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? This is why I am asking the Commissioner when this is going to be done.

Gap on Cassette

Mr. N. Lisette: The works at Baie Topaze and Camp Pintade are not over yet and we are already in the financial year 2010. Why is it that the works have stopped because money has been voted and is available as from January 2010?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have already answered this question. The respected Member should listen.

Mr. Chairperson: The Commissioner does not want to answer again. I understood from his reply that the project of 1 km of road at Camp Pintade has already been completed. I did not really get the question of the respected Member.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Public Infrastructure whether there has been any delay with respect to the invitation for tenders regarding the second phase of construction or maintenance of roads in Baie Topaze.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: I don't see any link between this supplementary question and the main question. But, anyway, my reply is: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there has been a delay. The CPB has taken some time to approve the tender documents. The closing date is tomorrow, the 10th, then there will be the evaluation of the tenders, and I hope that this phase of the project as well as the construction of other roads will start soon.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner the reason of the delay, and why the invitation for bids has not been launched before the expiry of the former one?

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, such has been the case. But, unfortunately, as I have just explained, and I repeat that the delay occurred at the CPB. We are facing many problems, Sir. Even my colleague, the Commissioner for Social Security has had problems concerning evaluation of bids and award of contracts. We prepared the tender documents long before the expiry of the

contract, but unfortunately, it has take n some time for the PPO to go ahead with this file. This problem exists even in Mauritius, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. We are doing our best to get things started soon.

FOOTBALL GROUNDS & SPORTS COMPLEXES – MOWING OF GRASS

(No. B/36) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth and Sports & Others whether, with regard to the improvement of sports infrastructure, his Commission has awarded any contract for the mowing of grass on football grounds in Rodrigues and, if so, to state:-

(a) the nature of the tendering exercise and the date on which it was launched:

(b) the names of all the bidders and the amount quoted by each, if any;

(c) the name of the successful bidder; and

(d) the conditions specified in the contract?

The Commissioner for Youth and Sports (Mr. J. C. Agathe): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, one of the objectives of my Commission is to construct and to maintain our sports infrastructure in an appropriate state to enable the sports community in Rodrigues to organize and undertake their sports activities in good conditions, particularly football playgrounds and other organizations football matches.

Previously, at my Commission there was a labour force of one handyman, one machine operator, four labourers and four trainees that constituted two teams. Each under the supervision of a gangman and posted at Camp du Roi and La Ferme respectively to mow grass and maintain the football ground and other sports and youth complexes throughout the island.

However, this labour force has been significantly reduced following the departure of the trainees in December 2009 after the completion of their training programme. We are thankful to them and by the same instance the Rodrigues Regional Assembly granted them a certificate of acknowledgement for the good work performed. My Commission made a request to have additional labour force from other government services which has unfortunately not been entertained so far due to lack of labourers in the government service. With the onset of the rainy

season which is coupled with the organization of the football tournament in view of the Republic Day and the high number of athletes performing sports, our reduced labour force could not cope with the fast growth rate of grass on these football grounds. My Commission has, as an immediate measure, no other option than to hire private services as a one off contract for the mowing of grass on the sport complexes. As a matter of urgency, all the persons who were trained at my Commission in mowing of grass were invited on 16 February, 2010 to, by way of an informal quotation, submit their offer to provide labour services for the trimming of grass on the sports complexes throughout Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b), the names of the bidders and the amounts quoted are as follows:-

(i) A. A - Rs 37,250

(ii) J.P.R – Rs 36, 300

(iii) B.S – Rs 35, 300

(iv) M. A – Rs 41,600

The contract was awarded to the cheapest offer, that is, B.S on 19th February 2010 for the fixed sum of Rs 35,300 to provide labour force for grass trimming on 46 sports infrastructures and complexes throughout Rodrigues. Payment will be effected after satisfactory completion of the work.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Youth and Sports the reason why, with regard to this contract, the contractor has used manual labour rather than machines. And I would like to know whether transport facilities are being provided to the contractor.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a policy decision.

Mr. Chairperson: Yes.

Mr. N. Lisette: The question is whether it is a fact that transport facilities are being provided to the contractor by the Commission.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: According to the quotation, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, only the labour force is hired.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, would it not be more effective in terms of costs if open tenders were launched inviting potential contractors for mowing of grass by lawn mowing machines and using their own transport facilities rather than all these facilities being provided by the Commission?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is a question of opinion. These trainees that have been placed at my Commission are people whom we know very well and who had already been granted a certificate of acknowledgment for good work performed in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, even in this House we have heard the Commissioner for Youth and Sports say that he was coming with a programme "*lévé débrouillé"*. Did he at least make use of this programme in order to encourage unemployed young people to bid for that contract?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are procedures regarding quotations. I understand that there are certain procedures to be followed with regard to contracts exceeding Rs 100,000. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am sure that the Tender Committee has proceeded according to procedures and that we have got value for money.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in his reply the Commissioner for Youth and Sports referred to informal quotation. But such methods are not mentioned in the Procurement Act of 2006. May I know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what were the procedures followed for the award of this contract - whether there was an open bidding or whether individual letters were simply sent to these bidders asking them to come to the Commission to be awarded the contract?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I know the procedures regarding tenders below the Rs 100,000, and I know that the way the Tender Committee has proceeded is good.

Mr. N. Lisette: I would like to ask the Commissioner for Youth and Sports, whether, as regards the successful bidder, any of his relatives is involved?

Mr. Chairperson: This question is not allowed.

Mrs. A. Pérrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have one question. The Commissioner said that he has got value for money. He said that the contract was allocated on 16th February, 2010. If this is the case, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, how does he explain that last week sports activities being held in the stadium with the mowing of grass still going on? So, how can he say that he has got value for money?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am aware of this situation. We are in the rainy season and the grass is growing very quickly. What can we do Mr. Chairperson, Sir? We have a reduced labour force and the team at Camp du Roi is doing its best.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I understand that machines are being provided by the Commission to the contractor for the mowing of grass. May I ask the Commissioner for Youth and Sports who will cater for the expenses to be incurred in case the machines break down?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I repeat: the contract includes only labour force.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: I would like to know from the Commissioner whether this tender exercise concerns all the football grounds in Rodrigues.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: As far as I know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, 46 sites are concerned.

Mrs. R. M. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like ask the Commissioner whether he is aware that on Friday last, at Graviers, people were organizing themselves to mow the grass. What about the responsibilities of the contractor who has been awarded the contract?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am aware that many sports people are asking that grass be mowed on the different playgrounds, but unfortunately, we have to go according to a time table. The work is being carried out according to the plan decided by the gangman. I think that the team of workers will proceed to Graviers later.

CONSTRUCTION SECTOR – LOSS OF JOB

(No. B/37) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports & Others whether, as regards to employment with the main contractors/subcontractors involved in the construction sector in Rodrigues, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) the number of persons employed in the sector as at July 2009; and

(b) table the number of workers who have lost their jobs since July 2009 per month to date;

(c) the number of these workers who lost their jobs and who have applied for the Workfare Programme and how many of these applications have been successful;

(d) the number of these workers who have applied for other unemployment benefits as a result of their losing their jobs and which have been successfully considered?

The Commissioner for Youth and Sports (Mr. J. C. Agathe): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that, according to figures available at the Labour Office of my Commission, the number of workers in employment with the contractors and sub contractors in the construction sector as at October 2009 amounted to 225, as follows:

(i) Colas Ltd - 96; sub - contractors average 69

(ii) Laxmanbhai Company Mauritius Ltd - 42, sub – contractors – 18

As regards part (b), Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that not all dismissed workers report their case to the Labour Office. However, a total of 7 complaints regarding loss of jobs have been registered from workers in the construction sector since July 2009 as follows:-

(i) July – 2

(ii) August - Nil

(iii) September – Nil

(iv) October – Nil

(v) November – 2

(vi) December – Nil

(vii) January 2010 – 3

(viii) February – Nil

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (c), the seven persons who lost their jobs arrived at an amicable settlement and did not apply for the workfare programme. However, 72 workers who were on contract of employment of determinate duration have applied for the programme. Following an enquiry and consideration by the Ministry of Labour, advice was sought from the State Law Office by the same Ministry. The Solicitor General advised that these workers were not eligible, unfortunately, Mr. Chairperson Sir, to join the Workfare Programme as they were on a contract of employment of determinate duration. I am tabling the information regarding part (d) of the question.

SC & HSC REPEATERS – APPLICATION FOR SEATS

(No. B/38) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner, whether, as regards to students who sat for School Certificate and Higher School Certificate Examinations in 2009 in Rodrigues and who opted to repeat in 2010 with a view to improve their results, he would:-

(a) table the number of application received by each college;

(b) state whether all students wishing to repeat same were offered a seat and if no:

(i) to state the reason/s why;

(ii) to table the number of application/s rejected by each college;

(iii) the criteria used by the different colleges for the selection exercise/s.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner (Mr. G. Jabeemissar): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), I am tabling the number of applications received by each college in respect of students wishing to repeat form V and Upper VI in 2010.

As regards part (b), I am informed that all requests for repeating SC classes have been settled , but as regards HSC, not all students have been able to obtain a seat. For example, the number of applicants for School Certificate was: Marechal College was 52; Grande Montagne – 29; Le Chou College – 71; Mont Lubin College – 61, and Rodrigues College – 4. The number of applicants for Higher School Ceertificate: Marechal College – 28; Grande Montagne College – nil; Le Chou College – 29; Mont Lubin College – nil, and Rodrigues College – 55.

The reasons for same are as follows:-

(a) at Le Chou and Marechal Colleges, I am informed that a few of the applicants wishing to repeat HSC had already reached 20 years as at 31 December 2009. Their applications were consequently rejected in line with established criteria.

(b) as far as the Rodrigues College is concerned, I am informed that not all applications have been accepted because of a lack of space/ capacity to accommodate them. There are already 105 first timers

students in Upper VI and 35 repeaters. Unfortunately, the college does not have the facilities to accommodate the remaining applicants.

Concerning part (ii), I am tabling the number of applicants rejected per college. The criteria used by each college for the selection exercise are as follows:-

A. <u>Rodrigues College</u>

1. The motivation and assiduity of the students mainly during his/her last year in Form VI.
2. The discipline of the students.

B. <u>REDCO Colleges</u>

1. The age of the applicant
2. The academic results of the applicants
3. The behaviour/conduct of the students

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if I refer to the figures provided by the Deputy Chief Commissioner regarding the number of applications received and the number of applications that were rejected, I see that the major problem lies with the Rodrigues College. May I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether the criteria for selection were based on performance, that is, whether students who had obtained the best results were given priority over others for admission to repeat?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I mentioned earlier, the criteria used by the Rodrigues College for admitting or rejecting applicants were motivation, assiduity, level of achievement and discipline of the students, especially during his or her last year in form VI. I have had several meetings with the rector and the manager of that college, but I cannot interfere in the internal management of the college. I am aware that the parents have not stopped to make representations. In fact, this morning I met a few of them again. And I hope to call all the parties concerned again during the course of the week in order to work out a final solution.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the question does not concern Rodrigues College only. It concerns a number of young people in Rodrigues who are not being allowed to repeat the HSC class. How do we measure the motivation, assiduity and discipline of a student? Is it right to state that if a student has obtained bad results this means that he was not motivated during the

previous year? Does it mean that a student fails because he is not motivated? Is this the criteria used at Rodrigues College, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is the question that I asked the Manager and the Rector of that college. After the HSC examination results were published the same problem occurred in REDCO Colleges. As I stated earlier, I have been able to manage the situation, that is, REDCO Colleges have been able to accede to all the requests. But I cannot poke my nose into the management of a private school. This is why, as I just said, I consider that this college must find ways and means in order to see to it that all the students concerned are admitted to the school again. But I am not in a position to say, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the Rodrigues College must accede to all the requests. I am still considering the reasons that have been given to me, and I am trying to see whether there are any possibilities for that college to admit those students. They have given two distinct reasons - lack of space, and the assiduity and motivation of the students, of which I am not aware.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is a question of human rights where young Rodriguan students willing to study are not being given the opportunity to do so. I would like to ask the Commissioner for Education whether he has looked into all options and possibilities for these students to be admitted in REDCO colleges.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: REDCO, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is not a dumping site. REDCO has played its role and I expect REDCO to continue doing same. I am considering any possible solution, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. My Commission is putting free tuitions at the disposal of students who cannot get admission to schools so as to enable them to sit for exams. This is one of the possible solutions that exist. But I am still looking into the matter and trying to assess whether Rodrigues College could have done otherwise. That's why my answer to this question is not final.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am personally proud. The Deputy Chief Commissioner is saying that REDCO is acting as a dumping site, but I'm not referring to this aspect of the problem. I am referring to the fact that some of our students who have not been allocated a seat in Rodrigues College have managed to get admission in Marechal College or Le Chou College, and I am proud of that. But there are cases where students have been discriminated against. Is the Deputy Chief Commissioner aware of such cases where students from RODCO have applied and secured admission in REDCO while admission has been refused to other students leading to a double discrimination towards them?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, maybe a final answer on that issue….

Mr. Chairperson: There is a question.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: If Rodrigues College cannot do anything, then by next week I will start to consider the cases of students who have not been able to secure a seat.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my question regards the SC students. The Commissioner said that all the requests to repeat classes have been settled. Should we understand that all the students concerned have been admitted as repeaters or that all those students have accepted the alternatives or different options that have been offered to them? Did you get my point?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: No, no, please.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: I said that I understood from what the Deputy Chief Commissioner said that all the cases concerning SC students have been settled. Should we understand that all of them have been accepted as repeaters outright or that options have been given to them to do other things and that the Deputy Chief Commissioner considers these cases too as settled?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Of course, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the main concern was to help them secure a seat. And we have been able to provide them with a seat in a college.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: This is not true, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: You cannot say that.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: I know people... Maybe I have to rephrase and I'm rephrasing. I would ask the Commissioner ……

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on a point of order. I beg to disagree…

Mr. Chairperson: No, the Member cannot proceed on these lines.

The Chief Commissioner: I agree with you. If she has names, she should give the names. If you don't have the names, please sit down!

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: I will not sit down, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I will rephrase my question.

Mr. Chairperson: If she wants to rephrase, Chief Commissioner, at least we should allow her to rephrase.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what I'm saying is that I know of at least one case at Le Chou where options have been given to a girl student.

Mr. Chairperson: Take your seat, please. According to the rules, once a Commissioner has answered a question, the matter stops there. If there is something which is not correct, then there are specific procedures to follow. But the Member cannot pursue on the same question. I am not the Court to say whether it is correct or not. This is what the Standing Orders say.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: Can I suggest…..

Mr. Chairperson: Suggest what? We can be flexible, but you should not pursue on these lines.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: What I would like to suggest, Mr. Chairperson, Sir…

The Chief Commissioner: It is not speech or debate or suggestion time, it is question time. If the Member has a question, Mr. Chairperson, she puts the question and she sits down.

Mr. Chairperson: This is a point of order. If the Member wants to reformulate, she can do so.

MARKET (NEW) – PORT MATHURIN - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/39) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment, & Others as regards to the construction of the new market at Port Mathurin, will he for the benefit of the House:

(a) table the names of the bidders together with their amounts quoted;

(b) state the name of the successful bidder;

(c) state whether the site has already been handed over to the successful bidder and if no, why?

The Commissioner for Public Infrastructure (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the information requested under part (a) of the question is being tabled. **(APPENDIX…).**

As regards part (b), the best evaluated bidder stands to be Ireko Construction, following the evaluation of the bids by the Central Procurement Board.

As regards part (c), the handing over of the site is scheduled for tomorrow, 10 March 2010.

(Nos. B/40 - B/42) – ***Written Answers***

RODRIGUES TRADE AND MARKETING CO. LTD. – LOCAL ONIONS

(No. B/43) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture & Others whether, with regard to the buying of local onions by the Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Company Ltd for the harvesting period of the year 2009, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) the quantity bought and the purpose for which the products are destined;

(b) the conditions in which the products are being stored; and

(c) whether the Company encountered any loss due to spoilage of the onions?

The Commissioner for Agriculture & Others (Mr. L. A. Pérrine): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed that the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Co. Ltd. purchased 102,890 kg of onion from local onion producers for the first time in Rodrigues in October 2009 for a total sum of Rs 1,773,415.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, onion producers were very frustrated with the price being offered to them by the different buying agents including the Agricultural Marketing Board prior to 2009. The prices they were being offered are as follows:-

- Onion Grade I - Rs 11.90/kg

- Onion Grade II - Rs 9.90/kg

As a result, many planters were discouraged and some even stopped the cultivation of onion. As a matter of urgency, the marketing system had to be reviewed to boost up the local production of onions and reduce importation.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with a view to reorganizing the marketing of onion with proper pricing mechanism, the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Co. Ltd. (RTMC) offered local onion producers in 2009 the possibility to sell their onion at the following prices:-

- Rs 17.00/kg for Grade I; and
- Rs 14.00/kg for Grade II

This represents an increase of more than 70% for onion Grade I and 70.7% for onion Grade II.

Also, the RTMC provided onion producers with free transport facilities from their doorstep so that they can take maximum advantage of facilities offered.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, out of the total amount of onion bought, some 55 tonnes were exported to Mauritius and sold to the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB).

The RTMC also kept 48 tonnes of onion for sale on the local market. The annual local consumption is around 240 to 300 tonnes (i.e. about 6-7 kg per head per year).

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am very pleased to announce to the House that it is for the first time in Rodrigues that local onion is still available for sale five months after onion harvest. This is a great stride towards food security with respect to onion and it has also greatly contributed to the reduction in the selling price of this commodity on the local market from Rs 21.00 to Rs 16.00 per pound.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b), the onions are being kept at the RTMC in both aerated store and cold room. Loss of weight in onion is a natural process and is accounted as shrinkage which varies according to different parameters which include:-

(i) Stage of harvest

(ii) Variety of onion

(iii) Agro-climatic conditions at harvest

(iv) Temperature and humidity during period of storage.

Up to now, there is still a stock of local onion on sale at the RTMC and the profit and loss account will be drawn after complete exhaust of stock.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson Sir, the Commissioner has not mentioned whether there has been any loss due to spoilage of the stock.

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I have said that shrinkage in onion is a natural process. There is shrinkage of about 5% to 10% which is normal and I have said that we still have about two tons of onions in stock and we will do the profit and loss account after the sale of all the onions that we have at Citronelle.

Mr. N. Lisette: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, shrinking is a natural process, that's right. But I would like to ask the Commissioner for Agriculture whether any onion has been thrown away as a result of bad aeration during storage.

Mr. L. A. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to my information, it is the poor condition of onion at harvest that has been a cause of a high rate of shrinkage, that is above 5%. The onion should not have been harvested when it is not dry enough. But my Commission is taking the necessary steps; we are going to build curing units in five regions of Rodrigues in order to facilitate the harvesting process for farmers.

Mr. Chairperson: The Second Member for Grande Montagne, Mr. Baptiste, has requested that Question B/51 be withdrawn. He has informed me that he would not be here and that he would like questions B/50, B/52 and B/53 to be questions requiring written answers. I hope the House does not have any objection to this request. We usually break for lunch at this time, but since we have only four questions left, I propose we go over these questions. Let us therefore proceed with question No. B/44.

STANDARD IV STUDENTS - ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME

(No. B/44) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in connection with the enhancement programme for Standard IV students in Rodrigues, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) the number of students and teachers involved in the programme; and

(b) whether there was any refusal from the part of parents or teachers to participate in same and if so, the corresponding number?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner (Mr. G. Jabeemissar): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), out of 795 pupils, 755 are involved in the Enhancement Programme. The number of teachers/senior teachers involved in this programme is 29.

As far as part (b) is concerned, forty (40) parents refuse that their wards participate in the Enhancement Programme and two teachers/senior teachers are not interested to participate in the same programme.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner whether there has been refusal from parents because of the transport problems faced by students after the programme at 5.00 p.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I am not aware, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whether the refusal is due to transport problems.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask another supplementary with regard to the difficulties that numerous parents are facing regarding the supply of lunch to their wards. Has the Commission received any complaints with regard to students who have to rely on *"du pain l'école"* during normal school hours? Has there been any proposal from the schools with regard to the supply of some food to the students from 15.30 hrs to 17.00 hrs?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: No, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have not received any proposal or complaint with regard to this matter.

Mr. N. Lisette: I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether whenever there is a refusal from any parent or student, the Commission makes any inquiry to know the reason of the refusal to attend the enhancement programme. I know that the attendance is optional, but does he carry out an inquiry to know the reason because sometimes the reason may be very simple like the one that my colleague has just mentioned. It may be because the students feel hungry after 15.30 hrs and therefore cannot stay at school up to 17.00 hrs. So, they go back home. Has he inquired into that?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in fact I recommended the officers of the Inspectorate Section to assess the difficulties that are being encountered and how the project is going on. I will be able to take a decision only after they have submitted their report.

FISHERIES SECTOR - STRATEGIC PLAN – WORKSHOP

(No. B/45) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner, whether, with regard to the workshop held in November 2006 by his Commission, with the view to develop a strategic plan for the Fisheries Sector in Rodrigues, he would outline the major outcomes/recommendations of the workshop and table a copy of the strategic plan?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a facilitated strategic thinking session was carried in November 2006 by the Commission for Fisheries. The workshop has enabled the delegates to raise issues of concern to them related to the Fisheries Sector, whilst at the same time drawing up the basis of an action plan for the attainment of the desired vision for the Rodriguan Fisheries Sector.

The major outcome of the workshop was the preparation of an action plan for the sector. I am tabling a copy of the strategic plan which contains all the details of the action plan and findings of the workshop.

Thank you.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I would like to know whether any committee has been set up and any action already taken in view of the implementation of the strategic plan.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, the strategic plan outlines many aspects of development of the fisheries sector in Rodrigues and this strategic plan, I would say, is a guide together with other policies that we have at the Commission. And the Member is fully aware that we have made much progress in the fisheries sector. We have, for example, reinvigorated "*la maison des pêcheurs*" which in a few weeks will start selling fish. In a few weeks, boats funded by Regional Assembly will be put to use providing employment to fishers and enabling them to go out at sea in complete safety. We are carrying out negotiations with the IFAD for five bank fishing boats. Tenders have been received and are being evaluated. We have also given training to more than 305 fishers on out-lagoon fishing. We have had meetings with people of the fisheries sector. Sports fishing as well as commercial fishing have started, and I believe that we have to go ahead and develop the culture of out-lagoon bank fishing so that there is enough fish in Rodrigues to meet the local demand as well as exportation.

BALADIROU - SHELTER - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/46) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Women's Affairs, Child Development and Family Welfare with regard to the construction of a shelter at Baladirou, could she, for the benefit of the House, state:

(a) whether tender has been floated, and if so, to table the list of bidders together with the amount each quoted;

(b) table the name of successful bidder if any?

(c) whether any preliminary works have been completed/and the nature of same together with the cost?

The Commissioner for Women's Affairs, Child Development and Family Welfare: (Mrs. M. T. Brault): Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regard to the construction of a shelter at Baladirou, a first invitation for bids was advertised in the press on 12 October 2009 and the closing date for the submission of bids was 13 November 2009 up to 13.30 hrs at latest and were opened in Mauritius by the Central Procurement Board at its office on the same date at 14.00 hrs. This office has been informed after evaluation by the Bids Evaluation Committee of the Central Procurement Board that none of the bids is responsive. I am tabling the list of bidders and the amount each quoted.

As regards part (c) Mr. Chairperson Sir, preliminary works concerning enabling work, earthworks, masonry wall and fencing have been completed by A J Maurel Colas Ltd. under the approved annual rate contract. The works cost Rs 4, 468,618.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said that the bids were not responsive. I would to know whether another tender exercise is being launched.

Mrs. M. T. Brault: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, invitation for bids for the construction of a shelter was launched a second time on 22nd February, 2010 as soon as we received a letter from the Central Procurement Board to say that we could go ahead. The closing date for the submission of bids is Friday 26th March, 2010 at 13.30 hrs at latest. The bids will be opened on the same day at 14.00 hrs in the Conference Room of the Central Procurement Board.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given that money has been voted for this project since 2007 – and this has been mentioned in the budget at least three or four times - I would like to ask the Commissioner how

come that it is only in October 2009 that there was invitation for tenders for the first time.

Mrs. M. T. Brault: Mr. Chairperson Sir, we have been discussing this matter at every budgetary consultation. The reason is that at the time the project was initiated, we had to look for consultancy services and we have had to wait for consultants to be appointed for all the projects of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. This took time and it was only after the consultants had worked on each and every project that we could launch the tenders. So this is why there was such a long delay.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: Can I know from the Commissioner what has happened to the sum of money voted each time for this project? Was the money re-allocated to her Commission or to other Commissions?

Mrs. M. T. Brault: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think the Member has had the opportunity to discuss this matter during the debates on the budget, but each time they chose to walk out. She can consult the debates to know what has been decided concerning this matter. Yes, the money was re-allocated to other projects because we cannot let the money lapse, but money is available for this project.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: My question was specific, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Was that money used for her Commission by her Commission for projects within her Commission or has it been re-allocated to other Commissions.

Mrs. M. T. Brault: The money has, of course, been re-allocated. This was a capital project, and therefore the money cannot be re-allocated to the Commission. It is completely logical Mr. Chairperson, Sir that it will go to other Commissions.

Mrs. M. A. Pérrine Bégué: Can we have more details about the preliminary works, Sir, - who carried out the works and whether a contract was awarded?

Mrs. M.T. Brault: I have already answered that question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I think Members should listen carefully to what is said. I repeat: the preliminary works consist of enabling works - because the site we chose is at Baladirou where there are rocks, '*piquant loulou*' and so on - earthwork, masonry walls, fencing, and these works have been carried out by A. J. Maurel/Colas Ltd.

KV PASTORAL LAND – CAMP DU ROI

(No. B/47) Mr. S.P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture & Others with regard to pastoral land at Camp du Roi, will he, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) whether any pastoral land has been allocated and if in the affirmative their extent together with the names of the farmers who are beneficiating for their animals;

(b) how many farmers have applied for a farmer's professional card?

The Commissioner for Agriculture & Ors. (Mr. L. A. Perrine): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed , according to a survey plan of Camp du Roi area submitted by the Cadastral Unit, there is no pastoral land within Camp du Roi village envelope. Consequently, the question of allocation of land to farmers does not arise.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that 19 farmers have submitted their applications for a farmer's identity card.

CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT - ALLEGED CASE OF FORGERY

(No. B/48) Mr. S. P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner, as regards to the Civil Aviation Department, will, he, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) whether a statement has been made to the Police Station with regards to an alleged case of forgery on attendance sheets at the Civil Aviation Departments and if in the affirmative, who made it and for what dates;

(b) the number of employees at the Air Control Tower working on Sundays and Public Holidays; and

(c) table the number of hours of overtime worked and the amount of overtime paid to each employee of the Airport Control Tower per month from February 2009 to date?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the answer to part (a) is yes. On Sunday 24th January, 2010, a statement was made by myself as Commissioner responsible for the administration of Civil Aviation concerning

irregularities in the attendance registers in the Civil Aviation Department at the tower of Sir Gaetan Duval International Airport. On the same day, at around 10.00 hrs, police proceded to Plaine Corail Airport Control Tower where several irregularities in the attendance register of the Civil Aviation Department were noticed, namely for the day of Saturday 23rd January, 2010 where, after the last name, three lines were left blank and, after these three blank lines, another entry has been inserted for Sunday 24th of January, 2010. I am informed by the Police that the inquiry is still ongoing.

As regards part (b), I am informed that the Airport Control Tower is operated by three officers, namely the Officer-in- charge, Civil Aviation; one Assistant Air Traffic Controller, and one Flight Data Officer, who work on a roster basis based on flight schedules. Two officers are present at the tower on each roster, including Sundays and public holidays, in line with the manual of air traffic services and in line with the recommendations of the Department of Civil Aviation which is the regulator in the Civil Aviation Sector. I am informed that only three members of staff are qualified to work at the tower, two of whom are posted from Mauritius. This situation forces the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to have recourse to the payment of overtime to officers to carry out airport operations, especially during peak periods. The RRA is presently in the process of recruiting additional staff in order to provide sufficient rest time to the presently overworked staff as well as to reduce the payment of overtime. I am informed that interviews were held in that respect last week.

As regards part (c) the information is being tabled. **(APPENDIX…).**

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL - SECURITY SERVICES

(No. B/49) Mr. S. P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health & others, with regard to the security services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, will he, for the benefit of the House, state which Company is presently offering its services for security to the Commission for Health for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and whether the Company is complying with all the terms of the contract?

The Commissioner for Health (Mr. A. L. Emilien): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, presently no security services is being offered by any company at Queen Elisabeth Hospital and, as a matter of fact, the question of compliance with the terms of the contract does not arise.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether he is satisfied with the security at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at present?

Mr. A. L. Emilien: The question Mr. Chairperson, Sir, was about which company is offering security services at the hospital. Now the respected Member is asking whether I am satisfied. Of course, I am, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether there was an incident in the night of Thursday 25th of February, 2010 at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital regarding a third party and that incident was caused due to a lack of security.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I can't understand the point of the Respected Member concerning security. We have a police post at the entrance of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and this is one of the main reasons why we do not have recourse to a company for security services. And I can't see why the Member is saying that there is a lack of security. This is not to my knowledge, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Est-ce que je peux demander au Commissaire si ce poste de police est ouvert aussi la nuit ?

Mr. A. L. Emilien: M. le Président, un poste de police est ouvert 24 heures sur 24. Mais pendant la journée il y a une présence continue de policiers. Pendant la nuit, il y a des *frequent police rounds*. A*rrangements have been made with the Divisional Commander for police rounds to be carried out frequently throughout the night.*

/UNREVISED/

STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

PIERRE LOUIS, MR JEAN CLAUDE – ACTING ISLAND CHIEF COMMISSIONER – TERMINATION OF ASSIGNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to make a statement to inform the Assembly of changes at the level of the Civil Service and Secretariat of the Executive Council.

Following a report that I made to Dr. the Hon. Prime Minister and to the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service, and following an enquiry by Mr. K. Poonoosamy, the Public Service Commission has terminated the assignment of Mr. Jean Claude Pierre Louis as Acting Island Chief Executive. He has now been reverted to his substantive post of Officer-in-Charge, Agriculture, formerly Senior Agricultural Officer.

I have to tell Members that the Regional Government has gone through difficult times, which has led to a blockage in the administration. The facts of this whole affair are clear. The former Acting Island Chief Executive had adopted positions which were contrary to the policies of the Executive Council and he was repeatedly challenging, questioning or delaying decisions taken by the Executive Council and by myself. There was no longer confidence in the-then Acting Island Chief Executive for several serious reasons that I will not expose here. This situation could not continue and this is why, as a last resort, I had no other option than to report the acts of the incumbent to the Prime Minister's Office and to request his removal from office. I personally think that there has been subversion of many policies of the Executive Council and that there has been gross insubordination to the authority of the Chief Commissioner. If he had not been revoked, as I had publicly announced, I would have resigned on a question of principle.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, civil servants, whatever their ranks, have to be loyal to the government of the day and to observe the basic principles regarding their posts. The distinction between the civil service and the elected executive should be clear though there is an area of common denomination where politicians and civil servants are called upon to manage conflicting views, prerogatives and interests. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly is a very young institution and we have all to learn from each other, to learn from our errors and to keep training ourselves. It is out of question for my Regional Government to control all the actions of civil servants. But where questions of policies falling under the scope of the fourth schedule of the RRA Act 2001 are concerned, civil servants of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly have to stand by, observe and apply the decisions and the

directives. In our system of decentralized government, the civil service is at the service of the Regional Executive and unfortunately for those who choose, without reasonable grounds, to challenge the policies and the decisions or instructions of Commissioners and the Executive Council, I am not afraid to say, and I say it on behalf of the people of Rodrigues who have placed their trust and legacy in us, that they will have to leave or face the disciplinary rules and regulations of the Public Service. All civil servants under the Rodrigues Regional Assembly may rest assured that we have as the top of our priority their well being and their quest for progress in their careers. We have also legitimate expectations of integrity, loyalty, professionalism and commitment. Civil servants and elected political executives should work hand in hand in their respective spheres of operation to further the common goals of progress and development for the benefit of the people of Rodrigues. The aspirations and expectations of the people are very high and diverse, and it is not the sole responsibility of politicians to meet them. As I said in this House on the 22nd of December 2006, we have a mandate to change the life of people, to make things go better in this land and, in that scope, we cannot alienate civil servants against us. In this context, I solemnly call upon one and all to their sense of duty, discipline and commitment towards the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Civil servants should always be trained to be in a position to manage efficiently their relationship with elected political executives and should continuously bear in mind their sensitive role in our system of government. Civil servants have to serve and not to try to rebel against the elected executive. There is the widely accepted convention that civil servants should show difference to legislators. Whenever there are conflicting views and interests between an elected representative and a civil servant, the latter should be aware that he has a number of clear-cut options and that he or she has to make the choice when there is need for decision.

For example, it is perfectly lawful, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, for a Commissioner to give an instruction pertaining to the management of his Commission to any employee of that Commission. Even though that instructions is verbal and that employee must do what has been instructed. If she or he is in doubt, he or she must consult the Departmental Head or the Supervising Officer and should not challenge the Commissioner. If a Commissioner asks an Administrative Officer to book a reception for a visiting delegation, where is the problem? Is that not an administrative task? Does he or she ignore that the Commissioner has command over financial resources appropriated by the Regional Assembly in the annual budget of the Commission for that purpose? Where is the team building and the general assistance that the close aids of a Commissioner are supposed to tender to

him or her? What would have happened, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if myself, Chief Commissioner, had asked that a reception be offered on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister or the President of the Republic and I had given verbal instructions to an officer to organize the matter and that this officer had decided not to do it on the erroneous personal presumption that the Chief Commissioner or a Commissioner *"pa gagne droit donne moi l'ordre"*. What would have that Officer answered to the Prime Minister when the latter attends the function and finds himself in a place where nothing has been organized? Who would have taken the responsibility of such affronts, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? Rebels will be dealt with as rebels. I will never accept those behaviours: willing to make a hell out of petty things with the aim to discredit my Commissioners. I apologise but I want to say it: some people have to learn manners and follow courses on courtesy.

I would like, in the context of this statement on the present issues and the role of the civil service, to share with Members my readings of the book: "Preserving the public trust: the five principles of Public Service Ethics" by Michael S. Josephson. I quote Mr. Chairperson, Sir: "Dealing with policy disagreements standard: Public employees who find that their personal convictions are irreconciliably incompatible with lawful policies should openly state their conflict and in some cases withdraw from the administration of such policies.

In dealing with policy disagreements, there is need to address: professional duty versus professional conscience and second internal conflicts of interest. Professional duty versus professional conscience: Ethical government cannot exist without people of principle and conscience. Sometimes, personal convictions of public administrators sharply conflict with the legitimately established policies set by others, so much so that they raise issues of personal integrity. Conflicts most commonly arise when major changes in direction are dictated by a new law or policy. Often such changes are personally and professionally distasteful to public employees committed to existing programmes and former policies. Strong belief that a new policy is irrational, impractical, unduly political or ideologically offensive presents a serious ethical dilemma - professional duty versus conscience.

Internal conflicts of interest. The existence of strong disagreements with lawful policies by those assigned to interpret or to implement them may create unacceptable conflicts of interests between the dictates of conscience and the requirements of law and public service. The public is entitled to vigorous good faith in the implementation of policies and laws established by or under the direction of its elected representatives. Thus, those who have a strong personal belief about the government's proper role and the value of specific programmes must decide among the following options:

(i) to subordinate their personal views and do to their duty

(ii) to confront the issue directly and refuse to perform

(iii) in extreme cases, to resign or to request a transfer.

If government is to work, however, the professional obligation to do one's job should prevail most of the time. It is therefore ethically proper for conscious - driven public employees to subordinate even the most strongly held personal views and abide by organizational policies, so long as they believe that they can do so effectively. At the same time, where they find the duties of office irreconcilable with the dictates of conscience they find the duties of office irreconcilable with the dictates of conscience, it is also proper that they remove themselves from the dilemma by resigning or seeking a transfer. It is not proper, however, to covertly seek to sabotage or hinder government policies." End of quote.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, those Members sitting on this side of the House have not come to power for the sake of enjoying the exercise of power. Power, for us, is not finality or a pleasure; it represents the means for which we have fought for decades to further the cause of economic development, to fight exclusion and poverty, to fight ignorance and illiteracy in this small island.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all those who stand in our way will have to bear in mind that they run the risk of being knocked down. I believe in democracy and a civil service guided by universally developed and recognized principles is an element of democracy.

I thank you for your attention.

SPORTS ANIMATORS - PAYMENT OF FEES & SPORTS EQUIPMENT

The Commissioner for Youth and Sports (Mr. J. C. Agathe): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have two statements to make.

First of all, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make a statement to enlighten the House on remarks made during the last sitting of this Assembly by a Respected Member of the Minority concerning payment of fees to Sports Animators, and sports equipment in the different *écoles de sports* and c*entres de formation*.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are presently 42 Sports Animators appointed by the Public Service Commission to provide training to athletes in the different

écoles de sports and c*entres de formation* with the aim to enabling us to fulfill our objective of developing sports in Rodrigues. These Sports Animators are paid at the rate of Rs 2,015. per session of one and a half hours each with a maximum of twelve sessions per month. The 42 Sports Animators are responsible for the following sports disciplines:

(i) Athletics – Eight Sports Animators for seven *écoles de sports*, one c*entre de formation* and one *camp d'entaînement*;

(ii) Judo – Seven Sports Animators for ten *écoles de sports*, one *centre de formation* and one *camp d'entraînement*;

(iii) Wrestling – Two Sports Animators for four *écoles de lutte*, one *centre de formation* and one *camp d'entraînement*;

(iv) Boxing – Two Sports Animators for six *écoles de boxe*, one *centre de formation* and one *camp d'entraînement*;

(v) Volley ball – Eight Sports Animators for 8 *écoles de volleyball* and two *centres de formation* (boys and girls);

(vi) Football – Thirteen Sports Animators for nine *écoles de foot* and one *centre de formation*;

(vii) Handball – One Sports Animator for one *école de* handball;

The Sports Animators operate under the technical supervision of the Sports Coaches of my Commission in their respective sports disciplines. Payment of their allowance is normally made on a monthly basis and is subject to their submission of claims which have to be certified by the Sports Coach. Unfortunately, despite formal instructions from my Commission, it has been observed that on several occasions claims are not submitted on time and, in some cases, the claims are submitted two to three months later. This situation has led to delays for payment for which my Commission is not to be held responsible.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I must also inform the House that payment of fees to Sports Animators is also subject to the renewal of authority by the Public Service Commission, which is normally granted at the beginning of each financial year. For the time being, authority for animators who are in the Public Service has been obtained recently during the month of February. Payment of fees for the month of January and February 2010 are being processed for those who have submitted their claims. As regards animators who are not in the public service, authority is being awaited and once received, payment will be effected accordingly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as a responsible government, we are conscious that 42 animators are largely inadequate to ensure the appropriate training of our athletes in the various sports disciplines. This is why a decision has been taken to recruit additional Sports Animators. Procedures are presently under way for the recruitment of 50 Sports Animators for which approval from the Public Service Commission has already been obtained. The selection exercise is presently ongoing. Procedures have also been initiated by my Commission to bring the total number of Sports Animators to 150 to enable us to meet our objective with regard to the regionalization of sports and developing *sports de masse* in Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with a view to provide a better pyramidal organizational structure to further the development of sports in Rodrigues, my Commission is presently setting up various *centres de pré-formation* and *formation* for the main sports disciplines. In this context, for seven disciplines, namely football, volleyball, athletics, judo, boxing, wrestling and swimming, the following *centres* will be set up: *centre de pre-formation* - 12 to 14 years old; *centre de pre-formation* - 14 to 15 years old and *centre d'entraînement* - 16 to 17 years old.

SPORTS EQUIPMENT - RENEWAL

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards sports equipment, I would like to inform the House that my Commission has already started renewal of same in the various *écoles de sports*. For instance, all the *écoles de football* have been provided with appropriate equipment, including jerseys, shorts, stockings and balls. Similarly, the equipments for all *écoles* de volleyball and *écoles* de boxe have been renewed accordingly. In the wake of the present financial year, a sum of Rs 2 million has been earmarked for the purchase of additional equipment for the setting up of the different *centres de pré-formation*, *centres de formation* and *camps d'entraînement*. Procurement procedures have already been initiated in this regard and we expect to receive the new equipment shortly. These include Rs 1 million for the purchase of *tatamis* to be placed in Youth Centres, Colleges, Sports Complexes and in some Community Centres in order to promote judo and wrestling for which we have a good track record.

Following the outstanding performance of Judoka Christiane Legentil in the recent Commonwealth Games held in Singapore, my Commission has offered a scholarship of Rs 5000 monthly to encourage her to better prepare for the next Indian Ocean Island Games. And we are proud, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the Turo tournament, the same Christiane Legentil won the gold medal in Reunion last year.

(Applause)

Other good news, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Rodrigues has the potential to win its first gold medal in a world tournament. I have in mind, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the junior kick-boxer, Faxson Perrine. With a view to encouraging him, my Commission is contemplating to award him a scholarship of Rs 5000 per month as from April this year in order to enable him to participate in the junior world championship to be held in October 2010 in Serbia.

In addition to sports animators and equipment, my Commission is also making arrangements to hire vehicles from private services in view of completing our fleet of vehicles and ensuring a constant and reliable transport service to our athletes attending the different *écoles de sports* and *centres de formation*.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as it can be noted, every effort is being made to provide the appropriate support to our athletes for their personal development as the young citizens of this country and also to further promote sports.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN RODRIGUES

The Commissioner for Employment and Others (Mr. J. C. Agathe): M. le Président, permettez moi de faire une déclaration dans le but d'apporter des éclaircissements par rapport à la situation dans le domaine de l'emploi à Rodrigues.

M. le Président, posons-nous la question suivante : qui sont les pourvoyeurs d'emplois à Rodrigues? Nous avons en premier, le secteur public à travers l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues, suivi des grosses firmes privées avec plus de 50 employés et les petites avec moins de 50 employés, les petites et moyennes entreprises, et ainsi de suite.

M. le Président, nous savons tous que le monde fait face actuellement à une crise financière sans précédent dont les conséquences sont néfastes pour la société et l'économie. Une de ces conséquences est la perte d'emplois. Même les géants comme l'Amérique, les pays d'Europe et autres sont affectés par cette crise et les grosses firmes ont du avoir recours à des licenciements massifs.

M. le Président, malgré cette tendance mondiale, qu'est- ce qui s'est passé à Rodrigues? Alors qu'il y a eu de massives pertes d'emplois ailleurs, l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues a créé des emplois décents et durables. Je vous donne les

chiffres concernant le nombre d'emplois qui ont été crées ou qui seront crées très prochainement. Nous avons créé Rod Clean - avec 144 employés (dont 84 personnes déjà recrutées et 60 postes additionnels à venir); la Water Company - avec 68 employés; Discovery Rodrigues (5 employés) ; Rodrigues Fishing Company (2 employées et 243 *trainees*), et on espère qu'ils reviendront très bientôt. Nous aurons bientôt, M. le Président, la Rodrigues Housing Company, le Rodrigues Sports Council, les animateurs sportifs (avec 150 employés); le Parc Marin, les animateurs communautaires et sans compter les postes vacants à l'Assemblée Régionale et ainsi de suite. En sus de cela, nous avons formé plusieurs contracteurs dans le but de renforcer leurs capacités afin de leur permettre d'accéder aux gros contrats dans le secteur public et de créer des emplois additionnels. Pour cette présente année financière, une somme de Rs 275 millions a été prévue pour des projets infrastructurels dans le but de créer de l'emploi à Rodrigues, sans compter la somme de Rs 50 millions qu'on vient de recevoir.

M. le Président, quel gouvernement régionale a eu une telle réalisation en matière de création d'emplois en si peu de temps. Si par malheur ce n'était pas la présente équipe du MR, dirigée par le Chef Commissaire, M. Roussety, qui était au pouvoir, quelle serait la situation, M. le Président? Malgré tous les efforts déployés, la demande d'emplois dépasse largement l'offre et ceci est dû à un manque de savoir faire de la part des précédents dirigeants. Ils n'ont pas pu faire en 25 ans ce que nous, nous avons pu faire en trois ans. Imaginez M. le Président, si nous étions au pouvoir à leur place pendant au moins dix ans, où serions-nous aujourd'hui? Afin de résoudre le problème de déséquilibre entre l'offre et la demande, nous avons un gros travail à abattre ensemble, comme une seule voix, pour l'avancement de Rodrigues. Il nous faut œuvrer pour:

(i) augmenter la connectivité de Rodrigues avec le monde afin de permettre la mise en place des centres d'appels qui offriront des possibilités d'emplois massives.

(ii) ouvrir Rodrigues au monde à travers l'agrandissement de l'aéroport de Plaine Corail afin de permettre le développement de notre secteur touristique.

(iii) troisièmement, moderniser le port pour permettre aux gros porteurs d'accoster.

Pour que cela puisse se réaliser il faut que nous nous unissions pour parler d`une une seule voix dans l'intérêt nationale de Rodrigues. Je dois ici saluer nos quatre députés qui siègent à l'Assemblée Nationale pour leur positionnement par rapport a la mise en place des centres d'appels. Je salue aussi la déclaration du membre

Spéville dans le journal l'express de mercredi dernier par rapport au fait que les Rodriguais doivent être plus unis, doivent travailler ensemble dans l'intérêt de Rodrigues, et oublier les guéguerres partisanes. Je fais un pressant appel aux deux partis présents dans cette Assemblée pour œuvrer dans cette direction. C'est Rodrigues qui en sortira gagnante. C'est notre seule issue.

Je vous remercie, M. le Président.

ONION & GARLIC - LOCAL PRODUCTION

The Commissioner for Agriculture (Mr. L. A. Perrine): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like, with your permission, to make a short statement on the production of onion and garlic in Rodrigues.

As we all know, Sir, onion is a key cash crop which is grown in specific areas around the island among which Port Sud-Est and Mourouk. My Commission has laid emphasis on the production of onion with a view to cutting down on the import of this commodity from Mauritius and also with a view to creating a surplus in production for export to Mauritius where there is big demand for this commodity.

The production target for 2015 is 1,500 tonnes annually for the ten growing areas. The following accompanying measures have been taken by my Commission in order to support onion planters:

(1) To mitigate the problems caused by stray animals, fences are being erected in the following regions:
- Pointe Coton
- Anse Aly
- Rivière Banane
- St. François
- Port Sud-Est
- Graviers

The works are still going on.

(2) Purchase of three onion sowing machines in order to assist planters in their activities. This machine, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, will eliminate the process of transplanting since the onion seeds will be sown only once until harvest, thus reducing the labour costs in the production chain. The cost of production of onion will therefore decrease and farmers will maximize their profit.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission will place curing units in major onion growing areas in order to assist planters in the post-harvest treatment of onion. After curing, the onion will conserve better during storage and hence fetch a better price on the market. My Commission will subsidize again this year the price of onion seeds at the rate of Rs 1,000. per kg. It is to be noted that the trend for local onion production is on the increase both in terms of area planted and volume of production.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in 2009, the freight for exporting onion to be sold in Mauritius was subsidized at the rate of Rs 978.00/tonne. This measure contributed to the efforts made in order to offer a higher purchasing price to onion producers. In fact, the price offered to onion producers has increased by 70%.

Concerning garlic, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that my Commission is confirming its intention to revive the local garlic production by introducing, this year, a subsidy of Rs 1,000./kg of garlic seeds. It is unconceivable that Rodrigues, which was once (in the 1990s) a garlic exporter, is presently a net importer of this commodity (about 50 tonnes/year). Hence, the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Co. Ltd. will import 500 kg of garlic seeds from Mauritius for planting and the Company will buy the whole local garlic production.

Thank you for your attention, Sir.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I move that the House do now adjourn to Tuesday, 6 April, 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

The…….. rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 13.25 hrs, the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 06 April 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

EDUCATORS SERVING IN RODICGUES - REPORT OF PROFESSOR TORUL

(No. B/40) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the Report of Professor V. P. Torul, Mediator appointed to look into the case of the Educators serving in Rodrigues with regard to their terms and conditions of employment, he will state where matters stand.

Reply: I wish to inform the House that the Report of Prof. Torul, who was appointed as Mediator to look into the case of Educators serving in Rodrigues with regard to their terms and conditions of employment has been submitted to the Government of Mauritius and subsequently a copy was issued to my Commission on 29 January 2010. Same was submitted to the Executive Council on 6 February 2010 for consideration.

The Ministry has decided that the recommendations contained in the report with regard to changes in the terms and conditions of service of Educators to bring parity, fairness and justice will be implemented in consultation with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. A monitoring Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, and comprising representatives of the Private Secondary Schools Authority (PSSA), the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and REDCO Ltd. is currently being appointed to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.

A meeting at the level of my Commission was held on 3 March 2010 during which a copy of the recommendations made in the Report was issued to all stakeholders, that is the Managers of REDCO and RODCO, representatives of UPSEE, the Rodrigues Secondary Schools Employees Union and the Secondary School Teachers' Association of Rodrigues. They were all requested to go through the recommendations and submit their views by 18 March 2010 for onward transmission to the Ministry.

The date of the first meeting of the Monitoring Committee will be communicated by the Ministry in due course. In the meantime, my Commission will have a representative of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to sit on the Committee.

SEA PASSES - DREDGING

(No. B/41) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the dredging of sea passes in the lagoon around Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state when tenders were launched, and if so, what has been the outcome of same together with his policy for a better navigation in the said lagoon?

Reply: With regard to the dredging of sea passes in the lagoon around Rodrigues, my Commission launched tenders in November 2008 for the preparation of an EIA report for the widening and deepening of passes around Rodrigues.

The final report was submitted in August 2009. The EIA Report has been submitted to the Ministry of Environment for an EIA clearance. My office is still awaiting the EIA clearance. Once the EIA clearance would have been obtained, tenders would be launched for the desilting works. The stretch from Baie aux Huîtres to Ile aux Coco will be considered as a matter of priority.

Meanwhile, passes linking Pointe Monier to Oyster Bay will be desilted. Works are scheduled to start in April this year and completed by November this year.

OCTOPUS FISHING

(No. B/42) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel asked the Chief Commissioner whether he will state to the House any changes that will be brought to the actual octopus fishing in Rodrigues, and if so, what will be its *modus operandi*?

Reply: I am informed that two experts visited Rodrigues in November 2009 and submitted a draft report on octopus fishing in general and has concluded that there was a need:-

(a) to recognize a state of emergency for the octopus fishing;

(b) to recognize that intervention is required to halt the decline and rebuild stocks;

(c) to develop a comprehensive Octopus Management Plan.

The report also made the following suggestions on the way forward namely:-

(a) Maintaining octopus biomass and recruitment;

(b) Developing a co-management approach with the fishers communities and the development of alternative livelihood strategies;

(c) Maintaining an ecosystem approach to management and environmental interaction;

(d) Manage access to octopus reserves by non commercial users

(e) Ensure adequate enforcement and monitoring.

All the recommendations of the report are being studied and a policy decision will be taken after consultation with all stakeholders involved.

BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION

(No. B/51) Mr. L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security & Ors with regard to the Basic Invalidity Pension, will she, for the benefit of the House, state:

(a) the number of beneficiaries whose pension have been disallowed since July 2006 to date;

(b) whether appeals were made against such cases, and if so what are the outcomes;

(c) the frequency at which the Medical Board meets to consider applications for Basic Invalidity Pension;

(d) the length of time the applicants have to wait before having the results; and

(e) table a list where the Board has met from January 2009 to date by indicating the number of cases examined, those approved rejected and still pending?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that 211 applications for Basic Invalidity Pension have been disallowed since July 2006 to date.

As regards part (b), Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that 73 appeals have been received for basic invalid pension out of which 36 have been set aside, 2

allowed and 35 still pending and will be heard on 27 and 28 March 2010 at the next scheduled meeting of the Appeals Board at the Court of Rodrigues.

As regards part(c), Mr. Chairperson Sir, we have at least five sessions of the Medical Board per month, that is, every Wednesday and last Friday of each month.

As regards part (d), usually the applicants have to wait for two to four weeks before having the results after the meeting of the medical board.

As regards part (e), Mr. Chairperson Sir, the information is being compiled.

TERRE ROUGE COLLEGE - CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/53) Mr. L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the construction of Terre Rouge College, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) the amount earmarked in the 2009 budget if any, together with the amount of expenditure incurred and disbursed so far in relation to the construction of same;

(b) where matters stand thereat?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), the voted provision for the construction/extension of secondary schools in the July-December 2009 budget was Rs 10.6 m. This amount has been earmarked for the construction of additional classrooms at Mt. Lubin College and to start works on the Terre Rouge Project (Phase I).

A sum of Rs 0.69 m has been spent as consultancy fees for Terre Rouge College.

As far as part (b) is concerned, I am pleased to inform the House that tenders for platform/earth works at Terre Rouge Secondary School were launched on 1st March 2010 through restricted bidding, the closing date being 8 March 2010. In the meantime, the Consultant is finalizing the tender documents for the construction of Phase 1. It is expected that same will be made available to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for consideration and approval by the end of March 2010, before being sent to the Central Procurement Office for tender procedures.