SECOND

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 3 of 2010

Sitting of Tuesday 06 April 2010

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Executive Council
(Formed by Mr. Johnson Roussety)

Mr Johnson Roussety	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 Gaëtan 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 Clair	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

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Chairperson	-	Lamvohee, Mr. Joseph Chenlye
Clerk	-	Gopall, Mr. Navin
Sergeant -at-Arms	-	Louis, Mr. Jorgenson

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr. Chairperson: I wish to inform Members of the House that Respected Members Lisette and Spéville have, through the Secretariat, requested that the oral questions standing in their names be converted into written questions. If the House has no objection to these requests, I will order accordingly, that is PQs Nos. B/63, B/64, B/65, B/66, B/67 and B/68 will be questions requiring written answers.

LOW COST HOUSING UNITS CONSTRUCTION PROJECT – BENEFICIARIES ETC.

(No. B/54) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others whether, with regard to the project for the construction of 163 low cost housing units built on a self help basis which started in September 2006, he would inform the House of the following:-

(a) the number of beneficiaries who have already completed their housing units, as at to date;

(b) the number of beneficiaries as at today who have not yet completed their house and the reasons, thereof;

(c) the number of housing units abandoned in an incomplete state and the reasons thereof; and

(d) whether his Commission has set a specific time frame for the completion of this project, if any?

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others (Mr. F.A. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that this government has been sensible towards the housing problem in Rodrigues and has spared no effort to improve the housing conditions of our citizens in particular the low income group. Since we have taken office, more than 1178 people have benefitted from various housing schemes, including the 163 beneficiaries for the low cost housing units for the total sum of Rs 70.3 million.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), 134 out of the 163 beneficiaries have practically completed their houses and 108 units have already been fitted with aluminium openings.

As regards part (b), 26 beneficiaries have not yet completed their houses and I am informed that works are in progress and the stage of construction stands as follows:

Slab level	-	4
Beam level	-	17
Lintel level	-	5

The main reason that explains the slow progress of works is the financial constraints that the beneficiaries are actually facing, and which is hindering the implementation of the project.

As regards part (c), no housing unit has been abandoned. However, as stated in part (b), the construction at certain locations have been temporarily halted due to lack of funds and the works will be resumed upon mobilization of the required financial means.

As regards part (d), the government is providing all its support for the completion of the project in terms of construction materials. However the beneficiaries are expected to provide the labour as a participatory approach. As such, the completion is dependant on the ability of the beneficiaries to provide the financial input.

Thank you.

Mr. P. Francois: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner whether he is aware that some beneficiaries have moved to Mauritius and that this is the reason why the houses have not been completed. What is the stand of the Commission as regards these cases?

Mr. F.A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are in a republic and people are free to move. I have been made aware of only one such case and I understand that that person is working in Mauritius in order to earn some money, and that he will later complete the construction of his house in Rodrigues.

HOUSING AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME - CONSTRUCTION PROJECT AT BALADIROU

(No. B/55) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others whether, with regard to the construction of two duplex buildings at Baladirou under the Housing and Rehabilitation Programme during financial year 1st July 2009 to 31st December 2009, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) whether the project has already been implemented and if not, the reasons thereof; and

(b) whether the sum earmarked for the project has been used for any other project, if any?

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others (Mr. F.A. Grandcourt): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the housing policies have to be reviewed and adapted to suit the societal demands. **On this premise,** the construction of two duplex buildings at Baladirou was envisaged to cater for the middle income group.

Since its inception, the concept and detailed drawings were produced and approved. However, the project did not go ahead due to other priorities that cropped up whereby enhancement of self help low cost housing was considered through providing aluminium openings and secondly due to unavailability of a suitable site to achieve an optimum cost.

As regards part (b), the amount of Rs 1.8 m, earmarked under estimates 01 July to 31 December 2009 under the Housing Rehabilitation Programme, was re-allocated for the provision of aluminium openings to low cost housing units.

Mrs. R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner said that the sum earmarked has been re-allocated for the provision of aluminium openings. Can he inform the House how many persons have benefited from this measure?

Mr. F.A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when I say that beneficiaries will be provided with aluminiun openings, I am referring to the Low Cost Housing Scheme through which 108 out of 163 beneficiaries have been provided with aluminium openings.

HAUTEUR ACCACIA - WATER DSITRIBUTION

(No. B/56) Mr. P. Francois (The Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with respect to the distribution of water to the village of Hauteur Accacia, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) from which service reservoir, network, more precisely the one serving the families living nearby the community centre is getting its water;

(b) the number of families being served with tap water on this network; and

(c) the frequency tap water is being supplied to those families, by indicating the last three dates?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the distribution of water to the villagers of Hauteur Accacia, I am informed that the families living nearby the community centre are getting water from the Malartic service reservoir.

The number of families being provided with tap water on this network is 26. The frequency of distribution is two to three weeks. The last three dates of water distribution were on the 24th and 25th February 2010, 16th and 17th March 2010 and 31st March and 01st April 2010.

Thank you.

Mr. P. Francois: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at Hauteur Accacia there is a storage reservoir nearby the houses that I have mentioned. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner why this part of Hauteur Accacia is getting water from Malartic instead of the storage reservoir I just mentioned.

The Chief Commissioner: The name speaks for itself, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The Hauteur Accacia reservoir is, as the Member is well aware, a transfer reservoir that transfers water from upwards, that is, from Malartic and Fond La Bonté, to the town of Port Mathurin, the hospital and so on. It is not a distribution reservoir for the supply of water to the nearby village. The villagers the Hauteur Accacia have always been supplied with water coming from Malartic which is, from a gravity point of view, a better solution.

REDCO LTD. - POST OF MANAGER

(No. B/57) Mr. P. Francois (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the management of the Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO), he would, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the relevant authority information as to whether any advertisement has been published to fill the post of Manager of REDCO and, if in the affirmative, since when and the new conditions attached thereto, if any?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner (Mr. G. Jabeemissar): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that advertisement has been launched since 9 March 2010 to fill the post of Manager of REDCO Ltd. being given that the contract of the present Manager was due to expire on 31 March 2010.

As regards the new conditions, the Manager of REDCO Ltd. will be recruited on a permanent basis. This decision was taken by the Board at its sitting of 13 November 2009, then confirmed by a resolution on 14th December 2009 and ratified by the shareholders on 15 February 2010.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I know from the Commissioner why there has been a change in the policy relating to the conditions of service of the Manager?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the rationale behind such a decision is to recruit the Manager of Redco Ltd. on a permanent basis is the negative past experience that the Company has had with Managers residing in

Mauritius and who were employed on a one-year contract. In many cases, the managers have opted not to renew their contract at its expiry thus causing a vacuum at the management level of the company. The actual manager has been in post for two years and has brought continuity and stability in the management.

Mrs. R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are all aware that Redco colleges are presently facing serious management and leadership problems, and that nothing can be done because the persons are employed on a permanent basis Are we not taking a big risk when extending this practice to all the colleges? What will happen if those persons *ne donnent pas leur maximum, M. Le President?*

The Deputy Chief Commisssioner: This is hypothetical Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The Member is referring to the present situation and nobody can affirm that the appointment of a manager on a permanent basis will result in poor management. How can she affirm that?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that the main concern of Redco is the welfare of the students. We have also past experiences, Sir, in the public sector as well as in schools involving inefficient officers and rectors. In the light of these past experiences which this Government itself has had to face, will the Commissioner reconsider this decision that will be affecting thousands of students?

Mr. G. Jabeemissar: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Respected Member seems to be saying that since years there has not been any good management at Redco. This is what I understand from what she has just stated. If the Board has decided that the posts at management level should be filled on a permanent basis, it means that the Board knows quite well that the present situation is not good at all Redco colleges. Therefore, reconsidering such a decision might not be good because, as I just mentioned on three different occasions, the Board has taken into consideration all the consequences of such a decision, and it has come up with a final decision to recruit a Manager on a permanent basis. I agree with the decision of the Board and if in the years to come we see that the decision has been wrongly taken, of course we'll consider reviewing it. But at this point in time how can we know what will be in the contract of the full-time Manager? There must be something in the contract that will prevent the Manager from doing whatever he wants, and that will enable the colleges to have a proper management system. And I, therefore, don't think it is a good decision to go back to the previous practice of employing managers on a one-year contract basis. I agree with the decision of the Board, and I will not review such a decision.

MIDWIVES & COMMUNITY MIDWIVES – LENGTH OF SERVICE, PROMOTION ETC

(No. B/58) Mr. S.P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health & others whether, with regard to the posts of Midwives in the Commission for Health, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) the number of Senior Community Midwives, Community Midwives and Midwives appointed at the Commission for Health and their average length of service;

(b) whether these midwives are posted in Community Health Centres, Area Health Centres and Hospital to perform antenatal clinics?

(c) whether the post of a Rodriguan midwife working in Mauritius has been restyled to Senior Midwife and if in the affirmative, on what basis, since when and on what establishment;

(d) whether the recommendation of the PRB Report 2008 regarding the post of Midwife to be restyled to that of Community Midwife in first instance and to Senior Midwife in the second instance, Senior Community Midwife to that of Principal Midwife has been effected and, if in the affirmative, since when and, if not, when such changes will be effected?

The Commissioner for Health & others (Mr. A.L. Emilien): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, the answer is as follows:-

Senior Community Midwife: 1, reckoning 22 yrs of service; 3 Community Midwives with 22 years of service; Midwife Cadre - 2 with 22 years of service, 5 with 21 years of service, 4 with 20 years, 9 with 15 years of service, 1 with 10 years and 3 with 4 years of service.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the answer is yes. This is being done whenever their services are required.

As regards part (c), I would like to draw the attention of the Respected Member to the fact that, at present, there is no Rodriguan midwife working in Mauritius.

With respect to part (d), I would like, first of all, Mr. Chairperson Sir, to draw the attention of the House to the fact that no provision has been made for the post of Midwife to be restyled into that of Community Midwife in neither the PRB recommendations 2008 pertaining to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life nor to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

However, it is to be noted that the PRB report 2008 pertaining to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly recommends, as per Recommendation (1) Paragraph 7.1.5, that, I quote: **"**a midwife assuming responsibility of the Labour Ward while on night shift be paid a monthly allowance of Rs 1,000, provided the officer performs all the night shifts she is scheduled for the month**"** end of quote.

I am pleased to announce that in line with the mentioned PRB recommendation, midwives who are in charge of the Labour Ward at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are being paid the monthly allowance of Rs 1,000.

With regard to the PRB 2008 recommendation 68 paragraph 30.213 pertaining to the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to the effect that the grade of Community Midwife be restyled into that of Senior Midwife and that of Senior Community Midwife to Principal Midwife, same is still under consideration.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. S.P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner state whether the midwives performing the duties of community midwife are being rewarded for the additional duties by the payment of a responsibility allowance or an actingship allowance?

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir as I said earlier in my reply, the services of these persons are required on and off. They are not performing these duties on a permanent basis and therefore no allowance has been paid to them so far.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner state whether the PRB report has recommended that the post of midwife be restyled into that of senior midwife, and after how many years of service?

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, si ma mémoire ne me fait pas défaut, je pense avoir répondu à cette question en disant que tel n'a pas été le cas dans le rapport du PRB. There is no provision for the post of midwife to be restyled into that of senior midwife. Yes, I maintain, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that I said it earlier.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Est-ce-que le Commissaire peut confirmer qu'aucune *midwife* rodriguaise n`a été transférée à Maurice ?

Mr. A. L. Emilien: No midwife has been transferred to Mauritius, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. May be persons occupying other posts, but no midwife.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner state whether a community midwife has been transferred to Mauritius?

Mr. A. L. Emilien: This does not form part of the original question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. If the Member comes with a substantive question, I will reply.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Je voudrais savoir du Commissaire quand est-ce que ces personnes qui ont travaillé pendant 20 ou 22 ans seront promues alors que leurs collègues à Maurice ont droit à un poste supérieur après cinq ans de service ? Est-ce que ce sera pour bientôt, M. le Président?

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Tout sera fait, M. le Président, d'après les recommandations du rapport du PRB et according to their scheme of service. Whatever has been recommended for them will be implemented.

Mr. Chairperson: I invite the Deputy Chairperson take the Chair.

At 10.50 hrs, the Deputy Chairperson took the chair.

BOAT "ZAMBEZIA" - FISHING PERMIT – NO. OF TRIPS ETC.

(No. B/59) Mr. S. P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to the private boat "Zambezia" which is hired for trips by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and financed by the Decentralised Cooperation Programme (DCP) for the training of fishers by the Fisheries Research and Training Unit (FRTU), he would, for the benefit of the House, obtain information on the following:-

(a) who delivered its fishing permit or license together with its expiry date;

(b) to table the number of trips effected on a daily basis up to now;

(c) who paid for the fuel used and its total cost;

(d) to table the amount of money paid by the FRTU for the use of the boat?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the private boat "Zambezia" possesses a fishing licence delivered by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Fishing in Mauritius with permission to fish around Rodrigues and the Haw Kin bank. The fishing licence is normally valid for six months and is renewable after expiry.

I am further tabling the number of trips effected on a daily basis as well as the amount of money paid by the FRTU for the use of the boat. The fuel cost for the

boat as per the terms of the contract which was awarded has been met by the Company.

Thank you.

Mr. S.P. Roussety: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the Chief Commissioner has not stated to the House the expiry date of the licence.

The Chief Commissioner: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I don't have this information asked for. According to information that I have, the licence is valid for a period of six months.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mme la Présidente, peut-on savoir la date à laquelle la licence a été émise? A quelle date est-ce-que les six mois ont commencé?

The Chief Commissioner: I don't have the date on which the licence was issued. In any case, the question of fishing licence is not relevant to the contract which was awarded because for the training the contractor was required to produce the navigation and compliance certificates of the boat, which he did.

Mrs. R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether the contract awarded with regard to the Zambezia was interrupted. *Est-ce-qu'il y a eu interruption du contrat?*

The Chief Commissioner: No, Madam, the training period has lapsed, the boat Diego Rodriguaise has been repaired and there is therefore no need to continue training fishermen on the boat Zambezia. And sincethe government boat has been repaired, the backlog of fishermen to be trained has been reduced.

Mrs. R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I think that part (c) of the question with regard to who paid for the fuel has not been answered by the Chief Commissioner.

The Chief Commissioner: I think that the Member is affected may be by the absence of some of her colleagues. The last sentence in my reply is that the fuel cost was met by the company.

FISHERMAN CARDS - OFF-LAGOON FISHING

(No. B/60) Mr. S. P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to off-lagoon fishing cards, he would, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) the new criteria set out for the issuing of new cards, if any;

(b) the number of off- lagoon fishing cards delivered since July 2006 and correspondingly, the numbers relinquished;

(c) whether new cards have already been issued to those fishers who have completed their training for at least a year and if not, when?

The Chief Commissioner: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I am tabling a copy of the criteria and application procedures for the issue of new off-lagoon fishing cards.

I am further informed that 9 new cards have been issued since July 2006 and 2 off-lagoon cards have been re-issued. Twenty-six (26) off-lagoon fishers have been deregistered.

As regards part (c) of the question, no new cards have been issued yet. The application process is on-going and off-lagoon fishing cards will be issued to all those satisfying the criteria above in the coming days.

CAMP DU ROI TO POINTE MONIER – ROAD PATCHING

(No. B/61) Mr. S. P. Roussety (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others whether, as regards the bad state of the road from Camp du Roi to Pointe Monier, he would, for the benefit of the House, state when patching works were last done thereat and whether his Commission intends to repair/improve the condition of the road and if so, when?

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others (Mr. F. A. Grandourt): Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, as the House is aware, most of the roads were previously built based on the DBST (Double Bituminous Surface Treatment) that has a high wearing rate. The patching over the stretch of the road from Camp du Roi to Pointe Monier was effected in mid 2007.

My Commission is further aware of the deteriorating state which has been accentuated due to recent adverse weather conditions and it is envisaged to undertake remedial works thereat as from mid April 2010.

BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION

(No. B/69) Mr. L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) ask the Commissioner responsible for Social Security & Others *w*ith regard to Basic Invalidity Pension, will she, for the benefit of the House, state:-

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

(b) whether appeals were made against such cases and, if so, what has been the outcome;

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

The Commissioner responsible for Social Security & Others (Mrs. M. T. Brault): Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I am informed that 211 applications for basic invalidity pension have been disallowed since July 2005 to date.

As regards part (b), Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I am informed that 73 appeals have been received for basic invalidity pension out of which 36 have been set aside by the appeal tribunal; two have been allowed and 35 are still pending and have been heard at the last Appeals Board at the Court of Rodrigues on 27th and 28th March, 2010.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, we have at least five sessions of the medical board per month to consider applications for basic invalidity pension, 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 Medical Board has met.

As regards part (e), Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the information is being compiled and will be circulated soon.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, according to the Commissioner, it takes around two to four weeks. But I have come across so many persons who have told me that in fact it takes much more time than that. I have here two examples of such cases. We have the case of one lady who had gone for the

medical examination on 28 July 2009, and who has been informed on 26 of January 2010 only that her pension has been discontinued. I would like to ask the Commissioner what measures she intends to take in order to shorten this delay because I know that in most cases it takes at least six to eight months.

Mrs. M. T. Brault: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson. Madam, I am aware that there has been delay with regard to some cases and these cases are being dealt with so that the persons concerned are informed accordingly. The reason for this delay is the transition from the award unit in Mauritius to the award unit in Rodrigues and officers are still adapting themselves to the system. But I can assure the Member that we are doing our best so that such delays do not recur.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: May we know, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, when the award unit was set up in Rodrigues?

Mrs. M. T. Brault: Last year, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I know of several cases where people are mentally or physically unfit for work and who, according to the medical board, are not suffering from 60% invalidity to be entitled for pension. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether any study has been carried out on such cases in order to find out what are the remedial measures that can be taken to alleviate those people found in this category.

Mrs. M. T. Brault: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, it is difficult for us to carry out a study because we are not medical officers. I invite the Member to come to my Commission and I will show him the guidelines that the medical officer has to follow in order to determine whether a person is medically fit or not. We cannot, therefore on our part carry out any study, unless we set up another medical board for those cases, which we are not entitled to do. What we usually do in cases where people have not been found eligible to a BIP is that we refer them for consideration for social aid, and they do sometimes benefit from social aid instead of a BIP. If a person is not 60% handicapped, as stipulated in the guidelines, we cannot do anything about that. We have to rely on the recommendations of the Medical Board to say whether the person is medically fit or not.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, according to my information, there are many cases where recommendations are made to the Medical Board regarding certain persons. I would, therefore, like to ask the Commissioner whether it is based only medical assessment…..

The Chief Commissioner: On a point of order. I have been listening to the Member and he has been, for the second time, making allegations. Now he is saying that some people give recommendations the Medical Board. This is false. If the Member has information in this regard, he should produce same here. Who sent the memo? Can he table the memo or a copy of it? He should not come and say things that he cannot substantiate.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson: Just rephrase your question.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Ok. According to my information, there are certain cases regarding people who are less than 60% invalid and who receive invalidity pension. I am ready to give the names provided the Commissioner is ready set up a committee to inquire into the matter. Is the Commissioner, therefore, prepared to set up a committee to review the cases where, according to my information, people with have less than 60% invalidity are benefitting from the basic invalidity pension.

Mrs. M. T. Brault: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, with regard to recommendations, I should say that this morning itself I have been made aware of a case where the person is, according to me, - just like the Member is saying "according to him" - more than 60% handicapped and entitled to a BIP. I myself come across people whom, I think, should be entitled to BIP, and in these cases I usually call upon the Health Director who is responsible for the Medical Board and ask him whether he can review these cases, and he follows the appropriate procedures and pension is granted for genuine cases. There is no need to set yo a committee. We cannot interfere into the work of the Medical Board. The Medical Board is supreme. And we have also the appeals tribunal that looks into complaints coming from people who believe that in their cases the regulations have not been followed. This tribunal studies the cases and decides on whether the person is entitled to pension or not. So, I don't think it is a question of making recommendations. The Member himself as well as his colleagues comes to the Social Security Office to make recommendations to officers for their people. He cannot point fingers at us. I know perfectly well what I am talking about. I am aware of many cases which, according to me, are genuine, and deserve consideration. Unfortunately, the decision lies with the Medical Board and even our officers themselves are not entitled to say whether this or that person is medically fit or not. It is for the medical officers only to decide. We have been made aware of this problem for a while now and I have discussed it with the Minister in Mauritius. And even in Mauritius the situation is the same. They have to rely on the decision of the Medical Board. We cannot say that the decision of the Medical Board is wrong or right.

CARER'S ALLOWANCE

(No. B/70) Mr. L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security & Others whether, with regard to Carer's Allowance, she will, for the benefit of the House, state:-

(a) the number of applications received by her Commission on a yearly basis for the period January 2007 to date, in each case, by indicating the number:-

(i) which have been assessed by a Medical Board by indicating those rejected;
(ii) of cases referred to the Medial Tribunal by indicating how many have been successful;

(b) whether carer's allowance has been disallowed in respect of
(c) persons who are permanently invalid/bedridden and, if so, the reasons thereof?

The Commissioner responsible for Social Security & Others (Mrs. M. T. Brault): Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the Medical Board has assessed all the cases and the number of cases are as follows: in 2007 - 47; in 2008 – 7; in 2009 - 63.

I am also informed, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, that the following cases have been referred to the medical tribunal as follows: in 2007- 8, and two of them have been rejected; in 2008 - 43, 40 of them have been rejected; in 2009 – 36, and 33 of them have been rejected.

I am further informed that there has been no cases where carer's allowance has been disallowed in respect of persons who are permanently bedridden. If the Member thinks that there are some people who find themselves in such cases, I would request him to inform the Commission, and we will try and find out why pension of those bedridden persons have been disallowed.

FREE BOOK LOAN SCHEME

(No. B/71) Mr. L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the "Free Book Loan Scheme" for Secondary Schools in Rodrigues, he would:-

(a) state the amount of money disbursed for this purpose for the year 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010;

(b) table:-

(i) a list of all books which are still lacking in each secondary school respectively for each level as at to date by stating the reasons for the delay;
(ii) a list of the titles and number of books which are presently laying idle for each college by stating what he intends to do with those books which are out of use due to wear and tear and/or which are no longer prescribed;
(iii) the number of books damaged/lost per college, year wise, since the introduction of this scheme and the amount of money collected as penalty for each year?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner (Mr. G. Jabeemissar): Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, as regards part (a), the expenditure in connection with the Free Book Loan Scheme is as follows:-

Financial Year	Amount disbursed
2007-2008	Rs 2m
2008-2009	Rs 2.6m
July – December 2009	Rs 0.512 m
2010	Rs 1.5 m to date (payment is still ongoing)

With regard to part (b), I am tabling the requested information. The reasons for the delays are:-

(i) Non-availability of certain textbooks on the local market

(ii) Request for procurement were received late from some secondary schools.

Quotations have already been launched and contracts awarded to the suppliers. The books are expected to be received during the course of this month.

As regards part (b), sections (ii) & (iii), the information is still being compiled.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether there is any monitoring committee at the level of the Commission to coordinate all the issues relating to the book loan scheme.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, there is no committee as such, but I regularly meet rectors together with the officers of my Commission to see where matters stand as regards the supply of books and whether there are problems of non availability of books and so on.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, my concern is the poor monitoring of this book loan scheme. For example, in one college last year there were about forty students studying a particular subject, and this year there are only 30 of them. Last year, all the students had their books and more books are being supplied this year. Therefore, how can the Commissioner explain that some students still don't have books? I am ready to provide information in this regard. I therefore believe that there is a serious management problem. This is why I am asking the Commissioner whether he considers setting up a committee at the level of his Commission to look into this problem.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I welcome such a suggestion, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam. I will set up a committee and see to it that things are done in a better way.

UNTEVISED

WRESTLING– INFRASTRUCTURE & EQUIPMENT

(No. B/72) Mr. L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & sports & Others whether, as regards the sports discipline wrestling in Rodrigues, he will state to the House whether the athletes are provided with adequate infrastructures and appropriate equipments at the training centres and for competition and, if not, what remedial measures he intends to take.

The Commissioner responsible for Youth & sports & Others (Mr. C. Agathe): Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, wrestling is one of the various sports disciplines in which Rodrigues has a good reputation due to the good performance of our wrestlers in national and international competitions.

I am pleased to inform the House that national coach for wrestling for the whole Republic is in Rodrigues. I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Mr. Alex Albert, the Rodrigues Regional Wrestling Committee, as well as the wrestlers for their excellent work. The House will recall that during the last Indian Ocean Island Games held in Madagascar in 2007, the Republic of Mauritius harvested its first gold medals won by our wrestlers. This outstanding performance was the result of the participation of the wrestlers in the international wrestling competition organized yearly in Tourcoing, France. Their participation in this competition is sponsored by my Commission.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, if we have reached such an outstanding performance in wrestling, and if we are still progressing, this is a clear testimony that adequate facilities are being provided to the athletes to enable their training in good conditions.

I am pleased to inform the house that the number of athletes practising this discipline is constantly increasing.

For instance, we have a population of around 300 wrestlers who receive training at the Malabar Gymnasium, Marechal and Le Chou Colleges, the Mini-stadium at Baie aux Huîtres and at Citron Donis Youth Center. All these training centres are equipped with tatamis.

There are also other *Ecoles de Lutte* which provide training in several villages such as Rivière Banane and Camp Pintade. In view of promoting the practice of this discipline and other *disciplines de combat* throughout Rodrigues, my Commission is presently making the necessary arrangements for the purchase of additional tatamis for placement in colleges, youth centres and some community centres for this purpose.

In addition, my Commission has also initiated procedures for the purchase of other equipments such as track suits, training shoes, socks, wrestling tracks and wrestling shoes to enable the wrestlers to train properly. A budget of Rs 340,000. has also been earmarked for this purpose over and above the increased budget allocated to the Rodrigues Regional Wrestling Committee for the promotion of this discipline.

Unfortunately, this is taking some time because we have to follow the procedures and we expect to acquire these equipments by mid May this year.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the Commissioner said that they are using tatamis and, according to my knownledge, tatamis are used for judo. I would like to know from the Commissioner whether he intends to provide the wrestlers with appropriate equipments, that is, canvas for the training sessions as well as for competitions.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, we are all aware of the good results obtained by the Wrestling Committee in Rodrigues, and if we have tatamis in Rodrigues, we have to use the tatamis. We have to use whatever we have in Rodrigues. We have also acquired some wrestling tracks for tournaments and we have placed them in Malabar. If we have tatamis, we have to use tatamis. I don't know why the Member wants other facilities. We have tatamis and we use them for all the *sports de combat* in Rodrigues.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, we are aiming higher. And when I talk about appropriate equipment, I do not mean tatamis, but canvas which is used for wrestling. I am aware that tatamis are being used presently, and they are being damaged because they are not adapted for wrestling. I am asking the Commissioner whether he intends to provide wrestlers with the appropriate equipment, that is, canvas.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the Member may be right in what he is saying. What we want to achieve here in Rodrigues is high level wrestling. Therefore, we are using all the facilities that we have in Rodrigues.

PUBLIC OFFICERS - LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

(No. B/73) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to public officers who were on leave without pay from 2006 to date, could he obtain the relevant information and state whether any of them have resigned to their posts and if in the affirmative, could he give details as regards their names, their post/grade together with their respective date of resignation?

The Chief Commissioner: Mrs Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I am informed that the number of Public Officers within the Rodrigues Regional Assembly who have been granted leave without pay since 2006 to date is 34.

The information is being tabled. Two (2) of these officers have resigned from their post, namely Miss Marie Antoinette LEOPOLD, who was employed as Teacher/Senior Teacher and who resigned on 2 February 2007; and Miss Marie Paule SAMOISY, who was employed as Clerical Officer/Higher Clerical Officer who resigned on 8 February 2009.

Thank you.

FOR ATHLETES

(No. B/74) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports whether, with regard to transport facilities provided to athletes after their training, he could inform the House:-

(a) whether his Commission is envisaging to contract out/or has already contracted out the service to private company or individuals; and if in the affirmative the reasons which motivated this decision; and

(b) give details as to the amount budgeted for this project for the current financial year.

The Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports & Others (Mr. C. Agathe): Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I would like to inform the House that presently we have a population of about 2000 athletes that constitute the various *écoles de sports* and *centres de formation* and to whom we have to ensure an adequate transport service for their conveyance to their places of residence after the training sessions.

We expect that this number will increase significantly and will reach up to 2500 in the coming months, taking into consideration that we are presently setting up additional *écoles de sports*, *centres de pré-formation, centres de formation* and *centres d'entraînement* in Football, Volley-ball, Athletics, Boxing, Wrestling, Judo and others.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, we want to develop sports in Rodrigues. We want to produce elite sportsmen and sportswomen in the various sports disciplines. In order to achieve this objective, the adequate and reliable transport service to the athletes is very essential to motivate and encourage the athletes. Presently, my Commission is equipped with the following fleet of vehicles:

1 Minibus of 12 years old;
3 Toyota minibuses of 5 years old;
1 ISUZU 4 x 4 of 10 years old; and
1 TOYOTA 2 x 4 of 7 years old.

These vehicles, despite their advanced age, are being overused so much that they are having their servicing most of the time twice a month, which is normally effected after 5000 km. In addition to that, the Mitsubishi minibus has been admitted to the mechanical workshop since September 2009 and is still not repaired due to lack of spare parts. The ISUZU 4x4 vehicles is in a state of breakdown since 22 March and is still awaiting repair. The other vehicles, despite of being presently operational, frequently break down and have to go to the Mechanical Workshop for repair.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the existing fleet of vehicles posted at my Commission is therefore not sufficient to cope with the increasing number of athletes. With the increasing frequency of breakdown and servicing of these vehicles, at times, we have to have recourse to hire private transport at short notice to convey athletes to their places of residence. Very often, such arrangement is not possible when the breakdown occurs after working hours. We therefore run the risk of children reaching their homes late in the night.

Unfortunately, these are having serious impacts on the training programmes and activities of the various *écoles de sports and centres de formation*. My Commission has in fact received several complaints in this regard. I am informed that in such conditions, parents are not motivated to send their children for training.

It is to be noted also that the cost of fuel consumption reaches a monthly average of about Rs 150,000., which largely exceeds our budgetary monthly forecast of Rs 67,000.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, we are already under PBB. While we have to keep our expenditures within budgetary limits, we also have to fulfill our objectives as defined in our Programme Based Budget in terms of promotion of sports.

In view of the above problems and to meet our objectives, we need at least four (4) additional buses. We have considered that purchasing these vehicles is not appropriate due to lack of funds, high cost of maintenance and fuel consumption and the inevitable interruption in the provision of transport service due to servicing and breakdown as I have indicated earlier. This is why we have considered that the best alternative is to hire private vehicles to complement our existing fleet in order to ensure a reliable transport service to our athletes.

In this context, tenders have already been floated to hire private transport services as and when required. The closing date has been fixed for 15 April 2010.

UNREVISED

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, as regards part (b), the expenses involved will be met from sub-programme 60102: Item No. 22900 - “Regionalisation of Sports” for which a sum of Rs 1 m. has been provided.

ROAD SAFETY AND SECURITY – SPEED CALMING DEVICES

(No. B/75) Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others whether, with regard to road safety and security, he would inform the House whether his Commission, together with the other relevant authorities, are envisaging to put in place "*ralentisseurs*" or take any other preventive measures on the roadway Petit-Brûlé-Palissade-Ternel-Carrefour to limit road accidents; and to re-install appropriate road signs on the roadway from Palissade Ternel to Cooperative and vice-versa, mostly in connection to the presence of Antoinette Prudence Ste. Famille RCA School?

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt) Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, my Commission has already explored the option of introducing speed calming devices at specific locations in Rodrigues as a policy towards reduction of road accidents. This is further supported by the inclusion under the programme 504 of the Programme Based Budget Estimates 2010 as an output – Output 4 – introduction of speed calming devices to promote road safety.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, this demonstrates our commitment towards making our roads safe and this is coupled with frequent sensitization campaigns.

As regards the stretch Petit Brûlée – Palissade Ternel – Carrefour, the best option shall be carefully assessed jointly by the Commission for Public Infrastructure and the Police Department, and the recommendations shall be implemented accordingly.

With respect to the road leading from Palissade Ternel towards Cooperative, appropriate road signs and markings do exist. However, this shall be further reinforced, should the need be warranted.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson Madam, I would like to know whether the Commissioner is considering this issue as an urgent one and when he is planning to take a decision in this regard.

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: Yes, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson Madam, I do agree that the matter is of utmost importance, and this is why we have included in our budget 2010, as I have just said, the introduction of speed calming devices on various roads in Rodrigues.

Mrs. F. Gaspard Pierre Louis: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson Madam, I do live at Palissade Ternel and there are no road signs on the stretch of road from Palissade Ternel to Lataniers on which is situated the Antoinette Prudence RCA School. The signs are very important, especially in the morning. A year ago, there were panneaux

indiquant que les gros véhicles sont interdits de rouler. Ces panneaux n'existent plus. Est-ce que le Commissaire considère que c'est urgent de replacer ces panneaux-là?

Mr. A. F. Grandcourt: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I will look into the matter. But it is not right to say that there are no signs. We do have signs on that road.

STATEMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

MINI LABORATORIES - SETTING-UP

The Commissioner Responsible for Agriculture (Mr. L. A. Perrine): With your permission, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I would like to make a statement regarding the setting-up of three mini laboratories at Citronelle, Rodrigues.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the project to set up a mini lab in Rodrigues for basic food analysis dates back to March 2005. A revised project proposal was subsequently submitted by the University of Mauritius in June 2006, but could not be implemented for various reasons, including unavailability of funds.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the lack of laboratory facilities in Rodrigues for soil analysis; crop, pest and disease diagnosis, and testing of food products is one of the causes of the degradation of the agricultural sector in the island.

It is extremely important to have basic testing facilities locally, for example, for soil, pest and disease diagnosis to enable timely remedial measures to avoid major crop failures. For more detailed analysis, samples can be sent to Mauritius.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, one of the priorities of my Commission is to empower the farmers community so that they become entrepreneurs. This can only be achieved if the right support is provided and essential equipment, tools and facilities are available. That is why since my taking of office as Commissioner for Agriculture, I have given top priority to equip the agricultural services with essential research and laboratory facilities.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson Madam, following a mission fielded under the guidance of Dr. A. K. Srivastava, Officer-in-Charge, National Animal Health Laboratory, Ministry of Agro-Industry, Food Production & Security, a consensus was reached with regard to the tests and objectives of these laboratories with a view to enhance the capacity to investigate plant and animal diseases; plant and animal pests, and quality of feed, fodder and agro-processed foods.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I am today pleased to announce that with the support of the European Union and the Ministry of Agro-Industry, three mini labs will be operational at Citronelle by the end of this month and the following basic tests will be carried out:

(i) Soil test

(ii) Pests and diseases identification for crops and livestock

(iii) Microbiological test for honey, agro-processed food for both crop and animal based

(iv) Veterinary pathological laboratory tests

I have also to announce that four officers of my Commission are presently under training in Mauritius and they will return to Rodrigues by the end of this week and hopefully by the end of this month the three mini labs will be operational. I have also to announce that my Commission has made an application to be affiliated to the agro-industry organization of the Indian Ocean, Quality**…** **,** for better quality of products and for assistance in laboratory technology.

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL - SPECIALIZED MEDICAL CARE UNIT

The Commissioner Responsible for Health (Mr. Jabeemissar): Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I would like, with your permission, to make a statement with regard to the setting-up of a specialized medical care unit at Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I am pleased to inform the House that the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Honourable Rama Sithanen, has announced that his Ministry will grant Rs 50 m. under the sub-programme "Other Projects and Schemes Centrally Managed" for financing specific projects/schemes related to community development, promotion of education, health, sports and culture from the proceeds of the National Lottery to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the construction of a new specialized Medical Care Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, as you are aware, medical services are provided to the population of Rodrigues, that is, 37,000 persons, at the main hospital of the island, namely the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) and the two Area Health Centres situated at La Ferme and Mont Lubin as well as the fourteen (14) Community Health Centres located around the island.

However, all major health facilities in Rodrigues are found and provided at the one and only hospital at Crève Coeur. In addition, patients requiring more specialized health care are sent to Mauritius for treatment.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, since this Regional Government took office in 2006, major investments have been made to improve the health facilities and services in Rodrigues through the provision of modern medical equipment such as ECG machine, fixed and portable X-Ray machines, echography machine, multi-parameter monitor, sciallytic lam**,** short wave diathermy, faradic muscle stimulator, defibrillator and colorimeter among others. Moreover, additional delivery couch, examination couch, oxygen trolley, beds, mattresses, pillows, bed sheets, bedside tables, cots, blankets and bathroom scales among others were procured so as to ensure that patients are offered better health services.

Furthermore, the orthopedic services were improved with the acquisition of several equipment, namely an image intensifier also known as C-Arm Apparatus, surgical motor, suction apparatus, T-shape connection, angle shape connection, cystoscope set and probe pulse oxymeter.

In addition, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, with a view to facilitate the transfer of patients to and from the hospital and area health centres, two new ambulances have been procured last year.

Since 2009, a new Maternity Ward named after late Mrs. Ancilla Jean is now operational at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Additionally, with a view to ensure the security of people attending the hospital, a parking space has been constructed at the QEH hospital.

However, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson , Madam, we are conscious that there is still room for improvement and a lot of development works need to be undertaken in the Health Services so as to ensure that the population is provided with high quality and efficient medical services. For instance, the existing operation theatre at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital does not satisfy international norms and is located in an old building. In addition, the SAMU Unit at the QEH is not properly equipped and subsequently operates mainly as an ambulance service. Similarly, as the House is aware, the intensive care unit which can accommodate only three beds is not properly equipped. Moreover, it is not well situated as it is found alongside the main road and in an old building.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, there is the necessity to construct a modern and full-fledged new operation theatre so as to provide appropriate services for infected/septic cases, for emergency cases and for scheduled surgeries. Moreover, the extension of the new intensive care unit is of paramount importance in view of the increasing number of patients necessitating intensive care in Rodrigues.

Consequently, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson Madam, with the funds provided by the proceeds of the National Lottery, it has been decided, after consultation with my colleagues of the Executive Council and the Ministry of Health and Quality of life as well as medical staff and various stakeholders concerned, to construct a new Specialized Medical Care Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, the Unit will house the following services:

- a modern and full-fledged operation theatre complex;
- a Recovery Room;
- a Surgical Ward including surgical and orthopedics;
- a High Dependency Ward that can cater for 6 patients;

- a fully equipped SAMU Unit; and

- a modern intensive care unit that can accommodate 10 patients including infants from neo-natal and pediatric cases.

The Specialized Medical Care Unit will also include a Telemedicine Department.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, it is believed that the setting-up of this Specialized Medical Care Unit will enable the Regional Government to attain its vision and mission of providing and promoting high quality and timely health services in Rodrigues that meet the expectations of the population. Indeed, the new operation theatre will enable medical operations which at present have to be done in Mauritius to be carried out in Rodrigues. At the same time, there will be no need to send patients requiring highly specialized treatment to Mauritius and more cases will be dealt with in Rodrigues. And this, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, will considerably decrease the financial, family and social problems related thereto.

The project, Madam, is also in line with the strategies proposed in the Sustainable Integrated Development Plan (SIDPR) prepared for the island with regard to the health sector. In fact, the overarching objective of the health sector is to adopt an integrated approach in the provision of quality health services with a view to achieving a sustainable development of the island and meeting the Millennium Development Goals related to health, such as reduce child mortality; improve maternal health, and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, an Implementation Committee comprising representatives of the RRA , the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and other stakeholders concerned, will be set up shortly to look into the setting-up of the Specialized Medical Care Unit.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Central Government for its continued support in allocating financial resources to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to meet the needs for the development of Rodrigues, though at times, more could have been done.

I avail myself of this opportunity to extend also our thanks to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Hon. Rama Sithanen, for providing additional funds to the RRA.

I am also thankful to my Colleagues of the Executive Council for their unflinching collaboration and assistance in the implementation of strategies and initiatives for the boosting up of the health sector in Rodrigues, particularly to the Chief Commissioner who was personally involved in the negotiations with the Ministry of Finance together with my Colleague, Commissioner Agathe.

My anticipated thanks go to all those who will in a way or another give a helping hand in the realization of this long awaited project.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, thank you for your attention.

WORLD HEALTH DAY

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, as the House is aware, every year the World Health Day is celebrated throughout the world on the 7th of April.

To mark this event, Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, my Commission will organize the following activities. Firstly, a screening for non-communicable diseases will be carried out at a work site, namely at Welcome Industries at Grand La Fouche Corail for some 40 members of the personnel. Secondly, following the training programme on AH1N1 vaccine carried out for all community health nursing officers and nursing officers by Mrs. Jhuboo, Principal Community Health Nursing Officer of the Ministry of Health, on Saturday 3rd April 2010, vaccination will be carried out in the first instance among the personnel of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as from this Wednesday, that is, tomorrow. The aim is to create awareness among the population regarding vaccination against AH1N1 virus, and facilitate the acceptance of same. Vaccination will thereafter be extended to the whole population. Thirdly, radio talks on health issues will be carried out throughout the month of April so as to promote good eating habits as well as healthy habits among the population at large. Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, moreover during the month of April various sessions with regard to stress management will be organized in collaboration with the Brahma Kumari Center for the benefit of the population as was the case last year.

Thank you, Madam.

MOMUS, MRS BRINDA - DEATH

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, it is with great sorrow and concern that we have learnt about the death of Mrs. Brinda Momus yesterday. It is always sad when someone passes away, but it is deeply regretted when a young mother of 21 years old happens to pass away. The latter was admitted on 20 March 2010 at Queen Elisabeth Hospital, and on 4 April this year, with the consent of the patient, an emergency cesarean was carried out on her. The intervention went on smoothly. Unfortunately, Mrs. Momus passed away yesterday, 05 April 2010, at 6.05 hrs. The case has been referred to the Police Medical Officer in order to elucidate the real cause of death. A post-mortem examination will be carried out shortly.

Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, on behalf of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Commission for Health, and in my own name, I would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the family of late Mrs. Brinda Momus.

I thank you for your attention.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mrs. Deputy Chairperson, Madam, I move that the House do now adjourn to Tuesday 18th of May 2010, at 10.30 am.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 11.50 a.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday, 18th May 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MARECHAL - AGRICULTURAL SERVICES UNIT

(No. B/62) (**Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres**) asked the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture & Others as regards to the Agriculture (Extension) Services Unit of Maréchal, would he state:-

(a) whether the unit is still operational and if not, the reason why;

(b) the services which were/are being provided there;

(c) the number of planters who live in the region and who were/are benefitting from facilities from the unit?

REPLY: I wish to inform the House that the Strategic Option for Agricultural Sector 2007/2015 clearly defined the operational orientation of the different services to be provided by the Commission for Agriculture. It was recommended that farmers will have to work in groups to benefit from assistance put at their disposal.

Consequently, necessary reforms have already been initiated so that farmers organizations become commodity base rather than region base so as to encourage clustering and create the critical mass for export.

In line with the reforms, the research and extension system in Rodrigues as well as the operational methods employed have been reviewed so as to be more result-effective and responsive to the needs of the farming community and programme based. In addition to traditional technical advice, operators are trained all along the commodity supply chain.

With regard to part (a) of the question, the Unit responsible for Extension Services which was based at Maréchal Sub Office is still operational. However, the

operational mode has changed in that the officers now perform field work instead of office work most of the time.

The services which are provided to planters of this section include provision of technical advice and support services such as pest control and land mechanization. Some 550 planters in this region have access to the services provided by the Unit.

FOOTBALL - RODRIGUES SELECTION TEAM

(No. B/63) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports & Others as regards the setting-up of the Selection Football Team in Rodrigues, would he state:-

(a) the frequency at which the team is being trained;

(b) whether there is any fund allocated for the team and if yes, to state the amount;

(c) the competition/s in which the team will be participating;

(d) the facilities being provided to the players and coaches apart from usual facilities transport and sportswear?

REPLY: The Rodrigues Regional Football Committee, with the blessing of my Commission, has set up a selection team of football players for Rodrigues. The team is named "Club R". Its aims and objectives are:-

(i) to provide the apex for an appropriate pyramidal structure that will enable the development of football in Rodrigues;

(ii) to represent Rodrigues and to participate in football competitions organized at national and international level.

The "Club R", now comprising about 35 players, was officially launched on 7 November 2009. I am informed that the selected players have already started their training programme which is being held twice weekly, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, at the Camp du Roi Stadium. I am informed that the training sessions were stopped on 9 February 2010 to enable the Independence Cup tournament to start.

To enable the "Club R" achieving its objectives, particularly with regard to the training of the selected players, my Commission, with the approval of the Executive Council, has allocated a grant of Rs 300,000 for the present financial year to the Regional Committee. The grant is being paid in four installments of Rs 75,000. The first installment has already been released. It is to be noted that this grant will be used mainly for the purchase of equipments, refund of travelling and provision of meals to the players. I am informed that as at date, a sum of Rs 16,000 has been paid to trainers and as refund to players for travelling expenses, and Rs 13,500 for meals.

As regards part (c), I am informed that the Rodrigues Regional Football Committee is liaising with the Mauritius Football Association for the participation of the Club 'R' in the forthcoming *Coupe de l'Ocean Indien* football competition and in friendly matches among the Indian Ocean islands. In addition, we are also contemplating the organization of a "*Tournoi des Villes*", to be held hopefully in September 2010 subject to availability of financial resources.

As regards part (d), the following additional facilities are being provided:-

(a) Refund of travelling to the players
(b) Meals
(c) A monthly stipend to the trainers as follows:-
    (i) Rs 3000 to the Head Coach
    (ii) Rs 2300 to the Assistant Coach
    (iii) Rs 1500 to the Team Manager

HSC REPEATERS – APPLICATIONS FOR SEATS

(No. B/64) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, with regard to students who were having difficulties in securing a seat to repeat their Higher School Certificate in 2010, he would state what steps his Commission has taken in the month of March with a view to helping them to improve their results?

REPLY: In reply to PQ B/38 of the sitting of 9 March 2010, I informed the House that, as regards HSC repeaters, the following applications were rejected:-

REDCO	:	3
RODCO	:	21

As far as REDCO is concerned, applications were rejected on the ground of age limit. For RODCO, out of the 21 applicants, two students subsequently withdrew their applications while one was advised to apply for a seat at the University of Mauritius.

My Commission has held discussions with all stakeholders in view of finding a solution for the 21 students who have not been able to obtain a seat at Upper Six Level at the Rodrigues College.

In fact, on 10 March 2010, a meeting was held with the parents of the students, the Manager and Rector of Rodrigues College to discuss the issue. I have again held a meeting with the Rector of the Rodrigues College on 25 March 2010 to discuss possible solutions, particularly the recruitment of part-time teachers. It has been found that the recruitment process will be long since the educators are not available in Rodrigues.

As such, the Rodrigues College has informed my Commission that it has sought assistance from the PSSA by requesting it to examine the possibility of setting up an exceptional 5th Upper Six Section to accommodate the 21 repeaters.

However, the PSSA has replied that all the 161 students (105 first timers and 56 repeaters) can be housed in the existing four sections. It has thus been recommended that the 21 students be admitted with immediate effect, and that per capita grant be paid accordingly. On the other hand, the Rodrigues College argues that increasing the class size is not an appropriate condition mainly for first timers. Nevertheless, RODCO has stated that a solution will be found before the closing date for the payment of examination fees, which is scheduled for 15 April 2010.

My Commission has already requested the Rodrigues College to comply with the recommendations of the PSSA without any delay.

TELEVISION - RECEPTION & PROGRAMMES

(No. B/65) Mr. N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether he would, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation on the following:-

(a) the reason/s as to why there are frequent disruptions in television reception in Rodrigues;

(b) the time allotted for the broadcasting of programmes related to Rodrigues and its local activities on the different channels weekly and table same?

REPLY: I am informed by the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation that frequent disruptions in television reception are due to rain fade experienced either in Mauritius or Rodrigues. Since the MBC is transmitting on the Ku-frequency band, the signal is subjected to rain fade. Rain fade causes the signal level to drop significantly which might give rise to complete loss of signal at reception site at MBC Rodrigues, thus resulting in freezes on TV. In periods of heavy clouds or rain, the signal may fade consequently.

The MBC has informed that they have recently purchased a beacon receiver and automatic gain controller at MBC Pasteur, which will cater for increase of transmitted signal power in situations of rain fade at MBC Pasteur.

I am informed by the MBC that with the present reception antenna of 2.4m in diameter at Mt. Venus, the signal level is not highest. The MBC has planned to install a 3.7m antenna in Rodrigues - and which has already been transferred from Mauritius to Rodrigues - for replacement of the 2.4m antenna. The MBC is actually working on the set-up of the new 3.7m antenna which would give a signal of a higher

level than the 2.4m antenna. The foundation drawing has already been sent to the Officer in Charge, MBC Rodrigues.

BAIE TOPAZE – REHABILITATION OF DAM

(No. B/66) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Agriculture & Others whether, as regards the construction of a "*retenue collinière*" at Baie Topaze, he would give a description of progress of work of the project to date?

REPLY: There has never been the construction of a*" retenue colliniere"* at Baie Topaze as such.

In fact, my Commission took the decision to desilt and rehabilitate for irrigation purposes an old river dam which was constructed in the 1960s and left in an abandoned state. The works were done in house by workers of the Agricultural Services. The siltation works were completed in 2008 and high percolation of water in the dam was detected.

To remedy the situation, my Commission submitted a proposal to the European Union to finance a project to supply and install a geo-textile liner in the dam at Baie Topaze. The project was approved to the tune of Rs 1.2 million.

Prior to the installation of the geo-textile liner, the water course was diverted to prevent a high flow of water into the dam during heavy rainfall.

I am pleased to inform the House that the supply and installation of the geo-textile liner have already been commissioned and the irrigation network is being designed to provide water mostly to bean planters in the region. Works will be done in-house by officers of the Agricultural Services during this financial year.

BAIE TOPAZE TO CAMP PINTADE ROAD - UPGRADING

(No. B/67) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure, Housing, Environment & Others whether, as regards the upgrading of the road segment from Baie Topaze to Camp Pintade, he would state to the House where matters stand?

REPLY: I would refer the Respected Member to the reply to PQ B/35.

The first phase of the works over a length of 1 km has been completed since February 2010. The works constituted of earthworks, construction of masonry structures and box culvert and laying of plums and crusher run for the sub-grade.

The second phase involves the laying of the wearing course under the current financial year. The tender for the maintenance, upgrading and construction of roads has been awarded yesterday following the evaluation exercise conducted by the Central Procurement Board. It is therefore intended that works for phase II shall start shortly.

FISHERS OF PORT SUD-EST – RELINQUISHMENT OF LICENCE

(No. B/68) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) ask the Chief Commissioner *w*hether, as regards the demand of the registered net fishers of Port Sud-Est for the relinquishment of their registration against payment of a financial compensation, he will state to the House where matters stand?

Reply: I am informed that a request has been made in January 2010 by the Port Sud-Est Cooperative Net Fishers Society Ltd. for the relinquishment of the large net fishing licence.

Furthermore, they have made an appeal that the present compensation package of Rs 75,000 per fisher be reviewed upwards. The matter is being considered by my Commission and a reply will be made to the fishers thereafter.