

**RODRIGUES
THIRD REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Debate No. 02 of 2013

Sitting of Tuesday 23 April 2013

The Assembly met in the Assembly House,
Port Mathurin, at 10.30 hours

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 23 APRIL 2013

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STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

The Chief Commissioner

- Port Louis Flush Flood

ADJOURNMENT

MATTERS RAISED

- - Minority Leader: “Calamité Naturelle”
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QUESTIONS (*Written*)

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The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr. Louis Serge Clair, G.C.S.K.)

Mr. Louis Serge Clair, G.C.S.K.	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Central Administration, Civil Aviation (Administration), Civil Status, Customs and Excise (Administration), Judicial (Administration), Legal Services, Marine Services (Administration), Meteorology (Administration), Education (Administration), Arts and Culture, Historical sites and Buildings, State Lands, Town and Country Planning, Fire Services, Prisons and Reform Institutions (Administration), Cooperatives, Agriculture, Food Production, Plant and Animal Quarantine, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues, Registration, Postal Services (Administration)
Mrs. Rose Marie Franchette Gaspard Pierre Louis	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible Child Development, Family Welfare, Women's Affairs, Handicraft, Vocational Training, Information Technology and Telecommunications, Industrial Development
Mr. Simon Pierre Roussety	Commissioner responsible for Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Housing, Transport, Water Resources
Mr. Louis Daniel Baptiste	Commissioner responsible for Social Security (Administration), Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations, Consumer Protection, Trade, Commerce and Licensing
Mr. Ismael Valimamode	Commissioner responsible for Health (Administration), Sports
Mr. Jean Richard Payendee	Commissioner responsible for Environment, Forestry, Tourism, Marine Parks, Fisheries
Ms. Marie Rose de Lima Edouard	Commissioner responsible for Youth, Community Development, Library Services, Archives, Museum

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr. Chairperson - Sooprayen, Mr. Soopramanien
Clerk - Parsooramen, Miss Marie Cristelle Joanna
Deputy Clerk - Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick
Serjeant-at-Arms - Constant Perrine, Mr. Stenio

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) CONDOLENCES – FLASH FLOOD IN MAURITIUS

(ii) MR. A. L. EMILIEN - RECOVERY

Mr. Chairperson: Respected Members, I have two announcements to make.

First of all, may I on behalf of all Members of this Assembly, the Office of the Clerk and, in my own name, extend our deep condolences to the bereaved families of the victims of the unprecedented flash flood which struck Port Louis on Saturday 30 March 2013 and more particularly to the family of our fellow countryman, Mr. Stevenson Henriette. I wish to extend our sympathy to the families who have suffered great losses as a result of that unexpected calamity.

I avail myself of the opportunity to express my warm thanks to everyone who in some way or another has in a great surge of solidarity contributed generously to help those in distress.

May I now invite everyone in this Assembly to stand in silence for one minute as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

Secondly, I welcome back Mr. Joseph Allan Ladd Emilien, the Fifth Island Region Member who was absent for some time on account of health problem. I wish him full recovery.

I have been informed by the Chief Commissioner that the Deputy Chief Commissioner is currently on a mission. Acting on advice of the Chief Commissioner I have assigned responsibilities vested in the Deputy Chief Commissioner during her absence to the Commissioner for Youth and Others.

I am informing respected Members that upon request of Mr. Franceau Aubret Grandcourt, Third Island Region Member, questions B/46 and B/47 are withdrawn.

I am pleased to welcome some young students from different secondary schools who are in the gallery to follow the debate. You are most welcomed.

As usual, I expect all Members to set good examples to the smooth running of public business, especially in the presence of our young generation in the gallery. Thus, I quest for your entire comprehension and good sense.

Thank you for your attention.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PRE-VOCATIONAL SECTOR

(No. B/41) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the pre-vocational sector in Rodrigues, he will inform the House:-

- (a) of the number of students attending same, giving details on the number of boys and girls for each school year;
- (b) of how the “new strategy for pre-vocational education” is being implemented in Rodrigues; and
- (c) if any complaints/representations have been received from parents/students and/or any organisation regarding same and, if yes, to inform the House of the nature thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, I am tabling the number of students attending the prevocational sector at the six colleges in Rodrigues including details on the number of boys and girls for Year 1 to 4 at each school. **(Appendix I)**

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (b) of the question, the new strategy for prevocational education has been introduced gradually in Rodrigues for students of Year 1 and Year 2 as from academic year 2012. Thereafter, the reform in the Prevocational Education which makes provision among others of four years of prevocational education is being implemented in Rodrigues as per the following new organizational arrangements as from academic year 2013:-

- Year 1 and 2 :** Prevocational Education in secondary schools;
- Year 3 :** Three days in Prevocational Education in secondary schools and two days, that is, Monday and Tuesdays at the MITD; and
- Year 4 :** Two days in Prevocational Education in secondary schools and three days namely Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the MITD.

In addition, my Commission was informed through a mail dated 15 January 2013 that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has decided to offer the opportunity to children who have failed the Certificate of

Primary Education (CPE) at their first attempt to join Prevocational Education Year 1 instead of repeating the CPE class at their primary school as from academic year 2013.

As such, a special programme will be made available to the Prevocational stream of secondary Schools to prepare the children to sit again for CPE at the end of the year. If successful, pupils will have the choice of either being admitted to Form one the next year in the mainstream or continue Prevocational Education Cycle and move to Year 2. Subsequently, the said Ministry requested my Commission to look into the possibility of offering the opportunity to first time CPE failures in Rodrigues to be admitted to Prevocational Education Year 1 in a college.

However, following consultations with the management of REDCO Ltd and Rodrigues College, the Executive Council at its meeting held on Friday 25 January 2013 has decided that the new measure adopted by the Ministry of Education regarding the admission of first time CPE failures to the prevocational stream will not be implemented in Rodrigues this year for the following reasons:-

- (i) There is a lack of classrooms in all colleges to accommodate about 239 first time CPE failures in case their parents opt to admit them to prevocational stream;
- (ii) There is the need to have additional human resources that should be provided with specific training to implement the special programme to be run for these students; and
- (iii) The decision of the Ministry was communicated late to the Commission.

With respect to part (c), no complaints have been received from parents/students/or any organization regarding the implementation of the new strategy last year. However, I am informed by the Manager of REDCO Ltd. that teachers are facing much difficulty to work with the study materials received from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources for Year 3 and Year 4 students. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources have been informed of the difficulties being encountered by Prevocational educators to implement the new curriculum.

In addition, as per the recommendations of the Committee under the Chairmanship of the Manager of REDCO Ltd. comprising Rectors and Educators as well as Representatives of Parent Teachers Associations of both

REDCO Colleges and Rodrigues College which was set up to look into the smooth implementation of the new Strategy for Prevocational Education in Rodrigues, the Ministry of Education has been requested to: -

- (i) Review the curriculum proposed as the level does not suit the Prevocational students;
- (ii) Review the workload between the schools and the MITD so that all technical aspects rest with the MITD and academic ones remain with schools so as to avoid overlapping; and
- (iii) Mount another Training Programme for Prevocational Educators.

With respect to the new measure for first time CPE failures, I am informed that following the communiqué issued by the Ministry of Education, two parents called at the Commission to have more information on the matter.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I understand that following the decision taken by the Ministry to come with a new CPE programme for the whole of the republic, the Executive Council has taken certain decision specifically to Rodrigues. However, I did not hear from Chief Commissioner what specific proposal/article the training of teachers. He has mentioned that our teachers need training with a view to better adapt the curriculum to the Rodriguan context but he did not tell us how he is going to proceed. What specific training do our teachers need in order to come up with better programme, which is more suitable to our Rodriguan context?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, during a mission to Mauritius, I met representatives of the Ministry of Education, representatives of the Mauritius Institute of Education and it has been discussed that they will have a mission to Rodrigues to discuss about curriculum and the training needs for the prevocational teachers in Rodrigues. This is a question of I think between Mauritius and Rodrigues sometimes the Ministry of Education takes certain decisions very rapidly without consulting Rodrigues. What happened when they came forward with this new strategy for the prevocational education we noticed that there were no places for those CPE failures in the colleges? There is a sort of overlapping of the college and the MITD and the curriculum itself, the materials themselves, the books are not quite well with this kind of strategy for Rodrigues. That is why the Mauritius Institute of Education has been invited to come to Rodrigues to see exactly what the problem is and to discuss with the Commission for Education of the kind of training for educators, even for the MITD in the future.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there has been a new CPE guidelines, which has been prepared for the prevocational schools and in the conclusion the curriculum panel invites all educators to come up with a feed back on the curriculum and any suggestions will be most welcomed. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether our teachers or rectors or any other officials from the Commission of Education form part in the curriculum panel of the Ministry of Education or the Mauritius Institute of Education?

The Chief Commissioner: Well as I said, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I myself had a meeting with the Mauritius Institute of Education in Mauritius. Mr. Varma, the new Director of the Mauritius Institute of Education and I discussed on it and he agreed with what is going on in Rodrigues. He is supposed to come to Rodrigues next week to see with his own eyes how things are going on to talk to these educators either from the Mauritius Institute of Education or from the colleges, to talk and discuss with them of the curriculum, the programme itself and the materials needs for the prevocational in Rodrigues. They will come next week or a few days after next week to discuss and to meet people on the spot there of what we must do in the future. We are going to suggest to him what we would like to have in Rodrigues. There is also a problem of the number of educators. They have decided and not consulted Rodrigues, in Mauritius for this new strategy for the CPE failures. This is first of all, the great problem. We are waiting for a mission of the Mauritius Institute of Education in Rodrigues to decide how things must be done in Rodrigues.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, today we are the second day of the second term for this year and the Chief Commissioner has mentioned many problems encountered by the students of prevocational schools. Can we know from today/right now what are the students at the prevocational doing since they have been attending there, since Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4? Can we know what the 1057 students are doing right now at the prevocational?

The Chief Commissioner: They have been doing the new curriculum based on four key domains of learning namely: Communication Skills, Numeracy and Problem Solving Skills, Life Skills and Livelihood and Trade Skills.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the problem with the vocational students is that they cannot read and write properly. In the prevocational stream, subjects as the Chief Commissioner has said are normally grouping domains, for example, Communication Skills, skills containing various subjects like Drama, Art and Creole. Hence, there is no real emphasis, which will help the child to read and write properly. Can the Chief

Commissioner inform the House how will these students work in their domains or perhaps re-sits for the CPE examinations if they do not have the capacity to read and answer to what is being asked in school?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, we know that even when we started a prevocational school in Rodrigues there was what we called literacy and numeracy and I see that in the programme there is numeracy, there must be also literacy. We have noted that what I said in my reply there is the question of the number of educators and we have to see in the future how to recruit educators. This will come with the Mauritius Institute of Education who is going to have a mission in Rodrigues next week.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if we look at the statistics for Rodrigues as regards the enrolment in schools offering pre-vocational education by year of study, in 2007, there were 502 pupils enrolled, 2008 – 484, 2009 – 459, 2010 – 415 and 2011 – 316.

Mr. Chairperson: Come with your question, please. Do not make a statement.

The Minority Leader: I need this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in order to elaborate my question and this year 557. The problem of our students attending prevocational is based on this figures. As from this year if nothing is done, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it will be much more alarming in the near future. That is why I am going to refer to what the Chief Commissioner said in his Budget Speech: *Une mobilisation en faveur d'une reforme en profondeur de l'éducation adapter au réalité locale aussi bien que d'une formation en profondeur de la société Rodriguaise. Et il en dit d'autres dans son discours programme.* Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is already one year since the Chief Commissioner mentioned these. Right now, can I ask him whether there have been concrete measures, which he has undertaken in order to make these a reality. Otherwise, we will just sit and see the problems like this and we will not be able to do anything.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to our vision of education in Rodrigues - yesterday we had a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Education, which was very interesting. Coming for the mapping of Rodrigues, we did talk about the technical institutions in Rodrigues. There was formally, before the students were sent to colleges there was prevocational. The first one was Citronelle and then it was decided by the Minister at that time to put those children in a college where it is not in our vision for Rodrigues. For Rodrigues what we discussed yesterday with Mrs. Sonarain and her delegation and she agree with that we should set up, build in Rodrigues a specific skills

institution for those who did not succeed the CPE. I think it is in good way and we have to discuss all that with the Ministry of Finance so that we could have prevocational education outside colleges not inside colleges with specific training and specific learning. I think this is for the future of Rodrigues. This is in the pipeline.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first I must thank you for your warm welcome, of course this does not encourage to fall sick again. I would like to know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, from the Chief Commissioner who has rightly stated, I fully agree, with him that at time decisions are taken in Mauritius without taking the specific situation of Rodrigues. He has also mentioned that a delegation from the Mauritius Institute of Education will be coming. We do not know when. In the meantime, Respected Member Agathe just mentioned it; the second term has already started. Can I know from the Chief Commissioner whether there has been specific proposal made to the Ministry of Education, to the Mauritius Institute of Education or to the Ministry for Rodrigues?

The Chief Commissioner: As I said, I met Mr. Varma from the Mauritius Institute of Education and teachers from the Mauritius Institute of Education to come very quickly so that they can see what they can do and especially for training needs, not only for prevocational but also for teachers, for everyone in this country. We are waiting for him next week and the problem will continue until we cannot find a solution with the Mauritius Institute of Education or the Ministry of Education. All those problems have been raised with the Ministry and Minister of Education and Mauritius Institute of Education during a recent visit to Mauritius and I think that perhaps it will take certain time but we have to find quick solutions to remedy problems of prevocational in Rodrigues.

NEW HOTEL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

(No. B/42) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the “New Hotel Development Scheme”, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:-

- (a) the number of applicant(s) for such scheme in Rodrigues, and to table the name(s) and address(es) of the promoter(s) and the amount to be invested;
- (b) how many projects have been approved, specifying the promoters and where; and
- (c) which projects have been rejected and to give the reasons thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, I am informed that there has never been such a scheme known as the “New Hotel Development Scheme” being implemented by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Therefore, part (a), (b) and (c) of the question does not arise. However, if the Respected Member were referring to new hotel, I would invite him to consult my reply to question B/4 made during the sitting of 26 February 2013, which deals with the same subject matter.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in my question I did not say that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly devised such a scheme. Such a scheme exists in the national policy. In the national policy, yes the Member is referring to ... that is why those promoters who have asked to come up with a hotel project in Rodrigues, one of them, I know, has asked the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for permission to come up with that new scheme. That is why I am asking whether the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has accepted such proposal/request or whether it has been turned down and to give the reasons thereof.

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of the question.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that at the level of the Board of Investment there is either Hotel Development Scheme or something alike. The Chief Commissioner is the Commissioner for Lands, I think upon taken assumption of office he must have gone through the main files. Can we know whether any hotel promoter or existing hotel, operating, having a lease, has applied to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for schemes whereby they will be allowed to sell in one way/formula or another to sell hotel rooms comprised in that hotel and if yes, what are the names of the applicant.

The Chief Commissioner: As I said, I need notice of the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is actually being sued by a promoter who applied to that scheme that we have just mentioned and which has been turned down by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, if yes, to give the reason thereof.

Mr. Chairperson: I think the Chief Commissioner has already given an answer to it.

The Chief Commissioner: I said the question concerned New Hotel Development Scheme. We do not have this New Hotel Development Scheme in Rodrigues. I need notice of the question he is putting.

PRIVATE/PUBLIC BUSINESSES - RODRIGUES

(No. B/43) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Others whether, in regard to private and public businesses in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House:-

- (a) state the number of registered enterprises under operation since 2010 to date;
- (b) state the number of applications for new enterprises during the same period; and
- (c) table the number of enterprises, which applied for cessation of business for the same period?

The Commissioner responsible for Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Others (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to records from the Licensing Office the number of registered enterprises under operation since 2010 to date is as follows:-

December 2010	1,030
December 2011	1,161
December 2012	1,417
Up to 16 April 2013	1,466

As regards to part (b), the number of applications for new enterprises during the same period has been increasing from 126 in 2010 to 175 in 2011 and it has reached 271 in 2012. For the period January to date, January 2013, we have received 52 new applications.

As for part (c) of the question, I am tabling the number of enterprises, which applied for cessation of business since 2010 to date, as per records available from the Licensing Unit. **(Appendix II)**

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner whether he can inform the House the reason of as to why every week we see in local papers many enterprises are requesting for cessation of businesses. Can he inform the House the reason for such a situation because according to the trend we can see that Rodrigues is becoming an unfriendly business island contrary to Mauritius?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: The figures, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, state otherwise, as we have noticed since 2010 there has been a continuous rise in the number of businesses into operation. As for the reasons of cessation of businesses, I agree that there has been quite a number but the reasons are not necessarily, because business is closing down, it might be that there has been a change in the nature of business activity. For example, if somebody was operating a library and now he wants to convert, to change its activity, let say, run a general retailer shop, and then he will have to cease the existing library. It might also be owing to the fact that the business has changed its structure from a one-man business to a company business or it could also be to the fact that the licensee has passed away so the business has to cease. This is quite some main reasons why we are seeing such notice.

Mr. J. Roussety: With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the question relates to application for new enterprises. Can the Commissioner, there are 62 applications for new enterprises - can we know whether it is application for new enterprises, because I am not aware you need an application to start an enterprise or is it application for licences.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: The fact that for the time being we have only considered such registered enterprises, which are in operation that was the main part of it; we can only have it through the record available in the Licencing Office with regard to applicant. In this case, we are talking of those who are dealing with, who wants to have a licence to operate their business.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if my mathematics is good I see that there is a problem with the figure that the Commissioner replied. For example, in 2010 it said that there is 1030, let take for 2011 there are 1417 we add it to 271 it makes a figure 1788 when you minus the cessation 52 we get the figure 1466 instead of 1636, why is it so.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I said the figures are based on registered enterprises, which are in operation so we consider those who are paying their fees, those who are normally under operation. If we take, for example, 2010, there were 1030 and obviously if we add up to the figure to 2011 it comes to 131. It means that there have been 126 new applications but there were existing businesses that were not operating and they have decided to restart their operation. It is not a new application but it is based on their previous businesses and they have paid to continue their operation.

Mr. J. Roussety: It is clear, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the Commissioner is mixing issue of licence and creation of new enterprise because as a former

Business Studies teacher he must know that an enterprise may have several licences. It does not mean that if you ask for a licence it is a new business because a business can have many licences. I would like to know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir...

Mr. Chairperson: Put your question, please.

Mr. J. Roussety: This is what I am doing. I would like to know from the Commissioner being given that we are speaking of issue of licences etcetera what are the procedures if someone wants to have a licence for X activity, what are the procedures to obtain a licence first, how must he proceed. Second, how is the administrative decision taken to grant the licence and third what appeal if a licence has been refused what possibility of appeal against that decision exist, I mean at the level of the Commission.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that this question is not related to the main question which has been asked but still I can say that the first requirement is the registration with the Registrar Companies with the registration licences and depending on the type of licences there are different procedures. I do not have proper information; I need notice of the question.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will ask a first supplementary on that. I will request the Commissioner to refer again to the Central Statistics Office for Rodrigues (CSO), in businesses like manufacturing, mining and quarrying, agriculture, construction, wholesale, hotel development, restaurant, and transport and so on. In 2010, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, for both sectors there were 16,622 people employed and in 2011, both sectors there were 17,247. Now everybody will agree, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, cessation of business and enterprises in receivership means unemployment. Can the Commissioner, will he admit that since this year 2012-2013 there has been an increase in the rate of unemployment in Rodrigues due to the two main factors I have just mentioned and what concretely is the Executive Council trying to do in order to reverse that trend because *exode, exode tous les jours, pé aller, Mr. Chairperson, Sir*. What precisely is he doing, this regional government is trying to do to reverse this trend, cessation of business, enterprises in receivership, *exode* in Mauritius.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Once again, the question is not related to the main one but as I said, we are talking of cases of legal businesses. If they are registered this means that they are legal businesses. I do not know whether there are illegal businesses operating but we are talking of which are available. I do not know from where you are trying to come but it is obvious that if there is

an increased in the number of applications in the number of registered permits or licences, it means that more businesses are coming.

**MEDICAL BOARDS – BASIC INVALIDITY PENSION
/CARER’S ALLOWANCE**

(No. B/44) Mrs. M.D.L.C. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to medical boards for beneficiaries of Basic Invalidity Pension and Carer’s Allowance, he will inform the House:-

- (a) about the composition of the Medical Board and to table the names of the members;
- (b) who decides who will be the members of same;
- (c) how many medical boards have been held since January 2013 to date and table the list together with their dates and the Medical Board members who undertook these respective boards; and
- (d) how many requests in connection with the above have been entertained, rejected and accepted from January 2013 to date?

The Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a Medical Board is set up under the National Pensions Act to assess applications from claimants for Basic Invalidity Pension and Carer’s Allowance.

As regards to part (a), the board is normally composed of a Specialist and a General Practitioner except for Domiciliary Medical Board which is composed of a Specialist only. Members of the Board should operate in total independence and should not be under any influence or pressure in assessing cases. Therefore, to respect the principle of good governance it would not be appropriate to dispose the names of members who serve on different boards.

As regards to part (b), Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that the Medical Unit recently set up at my Commission is responsible for the organization and coordination of the holdings of the Medical Boards. The Medical Unit in Rodrigues is under the responsibility of an Executive Officer, who arrange for the composition of the boards in collaboration with the Health Director. The Medical Unit itself works under the guidance of the Medical Director of the Ministry of Social Security. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Medical Practitioners employed by the Commission on a sessional basis normally sits on the Board on a roster basis.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, again concerning part (c) in order to respect the confidentiality of cases, it is not ethical for me to provide the names of members who serve on different boards.

Since January 2013 to date, there have been a total of 19 sessions of the Medical Boards. 298 claimants were convened for medical examinations out of which 52 did not turn up. 236 cases were examined for BIP and Carer's allowance. 78 cases were allowed, 70 were recommended for social aid and 98 cases were not allowed. These details are being tabled, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. **(Appendix III)**

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the figures that the Commissioner gave about number entertained, accepted and rejected, can the Commissioner, first tell us the reason why 98 cases have been rejected? What are the criteria that are being used to assess the eligibility for BIP and Carer? For part (c), whether there is a guideline from the Ministry of Social Security, which can be used by the Medical Officer in assessing the criteria, the eligibility of a beneficiary for BIP or Carer.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in fact the reasons for disallowance for BIP is mainly due to the fact that the claimants do not satisfy the criteria of 60% of invalidity and obviously the terms of serving on the board are using this guidelines which was prepared and issued by the Ministry of Social Security dated 02 February 2010. This is the guidelines, which is set for assessment.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (a), the Commissioner mentioned that he will not disclosed the names of the members on the board. Can we know from the Commissioner whether members of the board are paid public fund or they are doing the work voluntarily?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have said that they are employed on a sessional basis by the Commission for Social Security, so obviously they are being paid but we have to take into account that there are laws and according to Section 47 to 43 of the National Pensions Act there are protection for doctors serving on the board so we cannot disclose the names.

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Can the Commissioner explain to the House why there are beneficiaries who have had limb amputated and who have had their BIP disallowed recently. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that this is the work of a doctor and I am not a doctor to assess. As I have said the guidelines are there, I could lay copy later on in the library so that we can see but, for example,

if we see the percentage, lost of arm below the elbow it is 45%, so there are already guidelines. I will lay a copy of this in the library.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am not a doctor but I can see people walking, whether he is physically handicapped or not. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have in Rodrigues people; when you see these people walking they are handicapped. These are handicapped persons, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I know there are criteria at the level of the Commission. Can the Commissioner see to it that these cases where people, when physically you see that these persons are handicapped that they obtain their BIP.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: May be you know the job better than the doctors do so probably we will employ you on a sessional basis to work for our Commission. Let me tell you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are procedures. I cannot look at someone like this and say that he is 50% or 60% handicapped. I have said that there is a guidelines but if the cases have been disallowed the claimant can still have recourse to the Medical Tribunal Appeal and few weeks ago 84 cases have been heard. This is the reason that personally neither the Commissioner nor the Minister and no one else can change the decision of the board except the Medical Tribunal, which is held with two specialist doctors coming from Mauritius and the Magistrate of the Rodrigues Court.

TOURISM PROMOTION CAMPAIGN ABROAD

(No. B/45) Mrs. M.D.L.C. Meunier (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to tourism promotion campaign abroad, he will, for the benefit of the House:-

- (a) state the composition of the delegation which proceeded to the International Tourismus-Börse Berlin fair this year;
- (b) table a breakdown of expenses incurred for each participant together with the vote item concerned;
- (c) state who decided on the composition of the delegation and reasons why these persons were chosen; and
- (d) state if the decision was adhered to by all stakeholders concerned?

The Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others (Mr. R. Payendee): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the delegation which proceeded to the International Tourism Fair at Berlin in Germany this year comprised of Miss Kisna Gaspard and Mrs. Carine Prosper-Ferst.

With regard to part (b) of the question, I am tabling the information asked by the Respected Member. **(Appendix IV)**

With regard to part (c), the decision with regard to the choice of the participants in the above tourism fair was that of the Commission for Environment and Others, which was approved by the Executive Council in its sitting of the 22 February 2013.

Miss Kisna Gaspard participated as a member of the Tourism Office and Mrs. Carine Prosper Ferst was chosen because of her experience in the fair of Berlin owing to the fact that she has attended same several times.

Mr Chairperson Sir, Mrs. Kisna Gaspard, Officer of the Rodrigues Tourism Office accompanied Mrs. Prosper to gain an insight on the holding of such an important International Tourism Fair for a better participation of the Rodrigues Tourism Office in the fair next year.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, upon her arrival here, Mrs Kisna Gaspard stated that the presence of Mrs Carine Prosper at her side was of extreme help and that she is now ready to proceed there alone or to head a delegation next year.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (d) of the question, the Commission for Tourism collaborates with all Stakeholders in the Tourism Sector for the Tourism Development in Rodrigues. Some biased stakeholders were not happy with the choice but those who could think outside the box fully supported the decision. It is very difficult to have 100% agreement on everything you do. At the level of the Commission, we are proud to say that the objective has been attained and we will continue to use people with experience to train others.

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am a bit surprised to hear the Commissioner say that the participation of one Mrs. C. Prosper were based on her experience to this trade. I believe that there are other people who could speak German, who are in the tourism sector, who could have participated, and if Mrs. Prosper has been chosen, on the basis, of her experience I wonder what is going to happen to the trade in South Africa. Mr. Emilien, the Respected Member has been there. So next time I hope he will be chosen to represent Rodrigues there. My question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is if Mrs. Carine Prosper has proceeded there, whom did she represent when she went there and was she given a business card?

Mr. J. Roussety: She is a private hotel employee.

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Who recommends her?

Mr. Chairperson: Please wait, no comment, listen to Mrs. Meunier.

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Whom was she representing; whether she was given a business card and with regard to part (c), whether there has been a change in policy with regard to who represents Rodrigues on tourism fair abroad for the time being?

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I said Mrs. Prosper went to this fair to accompany that person who has never been this fair before! They are saying that some people has been there before which is really true because all the people who worked in the Tourism Office, no one now has been to this fair. We are going to a new fair, which is a very important one; Mrs. Prosper has been to this fair four times. What do we do with all this experience acquired? What do we do with all contacts that this person has made? She is an employee of a hotel and she is also... Do you want to reply in my place?

Mr. J. Roussety: She is an employee of a hotel. Fail!

[Interruption]

Mr. J. Roussety: Fail. Shame on you!

Mr. R. Payendee: If you want to reply, I will let you reply then. Can I continue?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, please continue.

Mr. R. Payendee: Based on her experience, on her ability to speak German and also that person, even if she forms part... What happened in the past let me go back a little in the past. Advisors have gone to tourism fairs; lot of advisors, Minister, Commissioner for Health has gone to mission. What was the policy at that time? We are a new government. We are doing things for the benefit of this island and as I said, I am very happy. If people want to take my place, they come.

Mr. Chairperson: Nest question. Last question.

Mr. J. Roussety: No it cannot be. Will the Commissioner confirm, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that in fact, the Executive Council initially and he himself did not approve for the participation of Mrs. Kisna Gaspard. First and it was because of the strong opposition of the Association du Tourisme Réunies (ATR)

and other stakeholders that he then asked Mrs. Kisna Gaspard to accompany that woman who is an employee of a private hotel in Rodrigues to go and represent Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Will he confirm that this is true, that Kisna Gaspard who is an employee of the Tourism Office and it is those people, employees of the Tourism Office who should officially represent Rodrigues and not private person? Will he confirm that Kisna Gaspard was a last resort when there was protest, strong protest against his policy?

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have not seen any strong protest as it has been said but one thing is sure, at the end of the day the Tourism Office was represented by Mrs. Kisna Gaspard and accompanied by someone who has got a lot of experience and who trained that lady in this trade. This is all I can say on that.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: It is true what the Member, Mr. Roussety is saying. Can we know from the Commissioner since the two participants have gone to Berlin and the travelling one they pay the same? Subsistence allowances the same but for air tickets, it is different. Why is it different? Is it because of what the Member Roussety is saying?

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the difference in the tickets depends on the date the reservation is made and everybody knows that it depends on what happened in the world, the change, exchange rates and so on. So, again... I will let them answer the question.

[Interruption]

Mr. J. Roussety: Tell the reason. You are lying my dear!

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: With regard to this specific fair, the objective of Rodrigues participating in tourism fair is mainly to attract tourists from this source to Rodrigues. I would like to know with so much money spent on airfares and all the different problems it has aroused whether the Commissioner is going to send again the same person for her experience next year though he said that it might not be so. Since we see that, the statistics for arrival from Germany has considerably dropped over the years. In 2012, we reached 181 from 253 in 2006. Are we going to keep on maintaining this fair, which require experience people, first, to attend and secondly, where we are not receiving much people from.

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Member did not get my answer clear. I said that “lady” who accompanied the person from Tourism Office, if need be, she will go. We are the one who take decision; we are the

Executive Council so we decide. It is we, who decide. When you were in power, you were the one to decide and you did a lot of... I will not say the word. If need be the person will go again but I said that next year we have trained someone, we are using someone who has a lot of experience and next year we have got someone and again it is us who decide whether we are going or not, it will be based on statistics. Next year is another year. You even know the song. What happened if tomorrow never comes? Next year is next year and this year I fully support it.

[Interruption]

Mr. Chairperson: Next question, I said.

LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT – GOVERNMENT/PRIVATE SECTOR

(No. B/46) Mr. F. A. Grandcourt (Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to loss of employment in government/private sector activities (mainly construction industries and hotels) in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House:-

- (a) table a breakdown of the number of persons who have lost their jobs per category as specified above for the last five months;
- (b) give details of the measures his Commission is taking to tackle this social problem; and
- (c) confirm the receipt of a letter addressed to him or his Commission from a group of victims inviting him for a meeting with them during the last five months?

[Withdrawn]

REFUSE COLLECTION – ROD CLEAN CO. LTD

(No. B/47) Mr. F. A. Grandcourt (Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to refuse collection carried out by Rod Clean Co Ltd (Rod Clean) in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:-

- (a) the amount of money earmarked for this item under the present financial year;
- (b) the reasons as to why the contract of employees of Rod Clean has not been renewed on a yearly basis; and

- (c) the number of meetings he had with the employees of Rod Clean to discuss matters related to cleaning services or others?

[Withdrawn]

NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS 2013

(No. B/48) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the National Day Celebrations 2013, he can inform the House:-

- (a) if there has been any official complaint(s) emanating from parents/student councils/Parent Teachers Association's as per the quality of juices and cakes offered to the students, and if yes, to table a copy of same;
- (b) how was the bidding exercises done to allocate contract regarding same; and
- (c) if there has been any pre-selected list of potential service providers, which was sent to schools regarding same and, in the affirmative, to table the list per school and successful bidders?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, I have received a letter from the Student Council of Le Chou College informing me of the poor quality of juice and cakes offered on the occasion of the National Day at their college.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the letter that was addressed to me by the student Council of the said College is a personal one. Thus, with due respect to them, I consider that it is unethical to table the letter for fear that these students withdrawn into themselves the next time they would want to draw my attention on matters that are of particular interest to them. This would be in contradiction with my Regional Government's approach to empower the Student Council at the level of each school in Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b), I would like to point out that no bidding exercise was carried out at the level of my Commission for the award of contract for the supply and delivery of juice and cakes to educational institutions. Actually, as in past practice, the Executive Council has approved that a grant of Rs 22 per head (pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff) be provided through their respective Parent Teachers Associations to each educational institution for the procurement of local juices and cakes on the National Day Celebrations. The aim was to boost local entrepreneurship and support local entrepreneurs while at the same time promote local products.

Subsequently, it was the responsibility of each educational institution to make its own arrangements for the procurement of juice and cakes for distribution on the National Day.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (c), there has not been any pre-selected list of potential service providers that was sent to schools. In fact, upon request from some schools, a non-exhaustive list of potential suppliers of juice and cakes comprising mainly Food Processing and Marketing Cooperatives Societies Limited, Women Associations and women entrepreneurs was attached to the letter sent by my Commission to convey the decision of the Executive Council to each educational institution.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the list of potential suppliers of juice and cakes that was sent to all educational institutions and the list of suppliers that was contacted by each primary and secondary schools as well as other educational institutions for the supply of juice and cakes on the occasion of National Day. **(Appendix V)**

It is to be noted, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that out of the 59 educational institutions, 33 Pre-Primary schools and 1 specialized institution did not contact any of the listed supplier to supply juices and cakes but instead made their own arrangements at school level to distribute juice and cakes to their pupils and staff on that day.

In addition, out of the remaining 25 Educational institutions, 14 schools contacted further suppliers other than those included on the list sent by my Commission to supply either juice or cakes to them.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Chief Commissioner, who took a decision in the Executive Council to encourage Parents Teachers Associations to supply juice to primary schools and secondary schools on such, relatively to Rodrigues, a large scale. Let us forget about the list that some schools have themselves contacted. On the list which has been tabled here, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, do these people/suppliers qualify the basic, I do not say the elementary, I said the basic sanitary, health. I will not mention HACCP standards, the elementary standards given it is his Commission who communicated this to the schools. Whether the list satisfies the elementary health and sanitary standards? Whether these persons have a licence to operate as juice manufacturer and whether he will agree, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that such a policy has been a total failure leading to the exposure of the whole schools population of Rodrigues to serious health risk.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my colleague, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has initiated training courses to those people. A committee comprising senior officers of my Commission, the Principal Health Inspector, the Nutritionist, Health and Physical Education Inspector and other stakeholders concerned with a view to set up a monitoring and control mechanism for the provision of local produce to educational institutions. The committee is also responsible to work out a protocol so as to ensure that sanitary norms and standard are respected by food handlers involved in the supply of foods in educational institutions among others. As I said, training courses have been given to those on the list submitted by the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office so that these people can accept the protocol of the committee of sanitary norms and hygiene.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, normally for juice it should be consumed just after preparation if no additives are added. They are put by a chemical processes going on. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether additives were added to same and secondly, being given that juice was to be prepared for an important community (*en mass*), the distribution of juice was a whole mess on the 11 March at schools. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether the Nutritionist, whether the Sanitary Inspector were contacted to investigate the preparation of the juice on site and to see whether the important parameters were taken into account especially temperature, *la chaine du froid*, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

The Chief Commissioner: We have complaint only from one school and the other schools themselves chose their suppliers for juice and cakes. We know what had happened according to complaint from one school. I must say that school must take all responsibilities for what is going on during that day. It seems that school today at different colleges and Parents Teachers Associations, at the school colleges committee. In some colleges, they did have meetings to have consultations among themselves. In other different primary schools, there were no complaints.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I heard that following the incidents the Commission decided to hold training courses. *C'est bien, M. le président, mais cela il faut admettre.* They have been wise after the event. Before embarking on such a project, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when there is a health risk on our students could the Commissioner not hold these training courses before in order to empower our people to embark in such a project before going ahead with it. Therefore, I ask the Chief Commissioner whether he will not admit, we should be humble enough to admit, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the decision was wrong.

The Chief Commissioner: Courses with these people were carried out before the event of the March and courses continue after that and we will continue to give training to the people so that there can also be examinations so that they can have a certificate to operate.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, some juice have been put to the dustbin even at Rodrigues College. Here, I see from the name of a supplier, we have Body Fit Gym, *faire exercise ça*, they are among the list of suppliers.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there were advertisement for those who were interested to produce juices and cakes to the schools and so on. I know that there were no complaints from Rodrigues College.

Mr. Chairperson: I would like the Deputy Chairperson to take the next questions, please.

At this stage at 11.47 hours, the Deputy Chairperson took the chair.

**LAND MECHANIZATION – PARC TORTUE, CAMP PINTADE,
MT. GOYAVES/BALADIROU**

(No. B/49) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to land mechanization in the regions of Parc Tortue, Camp Pintade and Mt Goyaves/Baladirou, he will, for the benefit of the House:-

- (a) table the list of equipment in running condition at his Commission;
- (b) state if there has been any request from planters of these regions which was turned down and to give reason(s) thereof; and
- (c) state his policy with regards to increase in crop production?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the list of equipment for land mechanization which are in running order. **(Appendix VI)**

Concerning part (b) of the question, eight applications from planters of Camp Pintade, one from Parc Tortue and one from Mt. Goyaves have respectively not been attended in cases where the land is rocky, sloppy, covered with high grasses, in case of land dispute, or the plot is too small in size.

Mr. Chairperson, the policy of this Regional Government is to encourage more production of food crop with a view to attain a higher level of food security.

In this context, actions are being taken to:-

- (i) increase access to land through the grant of agricultural permits and leases to eligible applicants. A Survey is being undertaken to ascertain effective land occupation and development by existing holders of agricultural permit. Leases will be granted to those who are regularly cultivating their land whereas land not being cultivated would be repossessed and allocated to interested producers.
- (ii) address the issue of straying of livestock, which is causing serious damage to planters' crop. We intend to sensitize farmers on the provision of existing legislations and to review such legislation where warranted.

Community pastures are being created at regional level so that farmers could adopt the cut and carry system and/or rotational grazing to reduce the drawbacks of the present extensive farming system;

- (iii) to introduce rainwater harvesting to solve the problem of unavailability of water for irrigation which is worsening with climate change. In the first instance, a sum of Rs 4,000,000 has been provided in the budget for the construction of rainwater harvesting structures.
- (iv) pursue the land de-rocking programme in view of the encouraging results obtained in terms of increased maize cultivation at Montagne Goyaves on land where de-rocking has been carried out;
- (v) review the agricultural extension system and enhance research. At my request the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) of the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security in Mauritius is fielding a mission to Rodrigues next month to review our extension system and to look into the possibility practical arrangement of setting up a branch of the AREU in Rodrigues;
- (vi) encourage producers to regroup themselves in cooperative societies to increase their capacity of doing agro-business.

The demonstration plots at Mourouk, Maréchal, Grand La Fouche Corail and Caverne will be put at the disposal of cooperatives for the production of local seeds;

- (vii) set up a “Lycée d’enseignement Agricole” for the training of a new generation of agricultural producers as well as existing producers so that the latter can adopt modern technique of production; and
- (viii) maintain subsidy on retail price of onion, garlic and potato seeds.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has enumerated a long list of policy regarding the increase in crop production. Is the Chief Commissioner aware, he is talking of increasing of crop production; at extension service, site people have waited for hours/days to have fruits to then after know that the officer that performed store form has been transferred to another site and that no officers are present on site to do the store form. If we want to increase crop production like this, *administrativement on est mort*. I think that all the Rodriguans who wants to go in the agricultural field will not be interested no more. At extension service, no officers are present to perform store form so that they can have to plant.

The Chief Commissioner: I take notice of the question.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b), the Chief Commissioner mentioned that there is one case where the mechanical plough has not been able to plough the land since there are high grass, rocky land, I understand that and I also agree with him. Why is it that at Mt. Croupier at the *pâturage* the same tractor has been performing the same work since the land is high land, rocky land, how is it at Mt. Croupier for government it has been able to do it.

The Chief Commissioner: I take notice of the question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, is the Chief Commissioner aware that there are some applicants, which have been turned down due to political views in his Commission.

The Chief Commissioner: I do not think so, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. If you have any applicant who has been turned down, please go and see the Departmental Head at the Agriculture. We know what happened in the past, many people have suffered from politics that is why we say they are producers, they are agriculturists and we do not look on the political side, their opinion. It

is for the agricultural development of Rodrigues. If any information can be given to the Departmental Head, it is welcomed.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I have got a list of equipments available at the level of his Commission. Can we know whether he has the required driver or anyone to manage the equipment? Does he have the sufficient number of workers to perform these ploughs?

The Chief Commissioner: There were different briefings at the Commission of Agriculture. There is a question of lack of drivers for the mechanization and sometimes that is why we are looking more and more drivers for mechanical work by the Agricultural Services.

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: With regard to agricultural leases, which the Chief Commissioner mentioned earlier, can we know from him whether his Commission has started granting agricultural leases, if yes, how many leases have been granted from 2012 to now. If not, when will agricultural planters start getting their leases? Not permit leases.

The Chief Commissioner: We do not give lease for the time being. We are having a survey to see what are those who have received an agricultural permit is working on the land. We note last year that the problem was water in Rodrigues that is why many people have abandoned their lands. That is why now we are doing a survey to know those, there is a long list at the Agricultural Services, of people who have received, let say 10,000 m², even politicians have received before the elections. They have received about 8,000/10,000 m² of lands. So we are looking forward to know what to do and as I said in my reply, if these lease are not being produced we are going to repossessed the land and gave that to people who like to produce food in Rodrigues. I need notice of the question concerning the number of persons who have applied for an agricultural permit or leases.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, from the list of equipment, we know that we have obtained one big excavator from AREU; I do not know it is from AREU or someone from institution in Mauritius. Can we know whether there has been any planning for these heavy vehicles for de-rocking of land and where is the machine to date?

The Chief Commissioner: At the Agricultural Services, we have a special team for mechanization, someone responsible and as I said, there are some vehicles, which are out of order. We are going look for finance so that they can be repaired. I must say that there is a special mechanization team and we had briefing every fortnight to see how things are going on. A Member

mentioned about high grass, you know in order to plough a land; the planter must first remove all the high grass with insecticide and so on. If, this is not done the land cannot be plough. The land must be ploughed on a flat land, not on a rocky land and not a slope land.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Next, question.

**CREATION OF NEW/REACTIVATION STRUCTURE
– FORESTRY SECTOR**

(No. B/50) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Forestry and Others whether, in regard to the creation of new or reactivation of structure/unit in the Forestry sector, he will, for the benefit of the House:-

- (a) give details of same, including whether the Forest Squad is still functioning;
- (b) state the policy of same and what has been the output since its setting up; and
- (c) table the list of officers affected in the respective units and their responsibility thereof?

The Commissioner responsible for Forestry and Others (Mr. R. Payendee): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, many places in Rodrigues is bare, that is, has hardly got any forest and lots of places has got the wrong forest such as areas totally invaded by *piquant loulou* which is also called *Acacia Nilotica*. The topography of the island makes it very vulnerable to soil erosion and as forest has a very important impact on the weather, this government believes that it is very important to create new forest and to eradicate the invasive species that are destroying our forest ecosystem. This is why we have dismantled the Forest Squad to create a Conservation Unit, which will be much more productive in the Conservation and Protection of the flora and fauna of Rodrigues. The Conservation Unit took effect as from Monday 07 July 2012.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this Government do not believe that Forest Officers should be like police officers in the forest. We believe that they should become scientists, botanists, ecologists and even extension officers.

Education is the key to success; this is why we want to get an educated population with regard to the protection of the forest. This is our vision and slowly but surely the objective will be achieved.

The policy behind the Conservation Unit is to enable Forest Officers to work on the science side of forest ecosystem and to better understand the forest dynamics through hands-on conservation practices and building awareness in the public at large.

Since the setting up of a Conservation Unit sensitization campaigns for creating awareness among Students and the public on conservation of endangered flora and fauna of the island have increased. Forest Officers posted in this unit works in close collaboration with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. It is with great pleasure that I am tabling the information asked at part (c) of the question. **(Appendix VII)**

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware that the Office of the Conservation Unit is remaining unattended as from lunchtime almost every day. Is he aware of that?

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am not aware of this.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner see to it that something like this does not happen again for the benefit of the population.

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I said that I am not aware of it. I will verify and if need be, action will be taken.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House how contravention are being dealt with as from February 2012?

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this is a question I do not really understand. How contravention is established. We have the Forest and Reserves Act and anyone who contravened the Act; of course, he is arrested and then prosecuted. This is how the contravention is established.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether there has been any contraventions that has been turned down by his office during his present mandate.

Mr. R. Payendee: I am not aware of this.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we are all aware that the Commissioner has stated that land in Rodrigues is bare. We are all aware that year in, year out, the forest cover in Rodrigues is reducing at an alarming rate.

He has decided to dismantle. He has dismantled the Tourism Office. Mr. Dismantle, he is dismantling the Forest Squad. Is he aware, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I do not know whether he walks or he goes around in the island. I will have another question on this. Is he aware, for example, of the damages, the indiscipline as regards straying animals, irresponsible farmers, on political grounds putting their animals in the enclosures at night and telling people no one - "*nou partie au pouvoir pas pou kapav faire nou narnier*". Are you aware of all this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir and does these practices, warrant the dissolution of the Forest Squad.

Mr. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pretty aware that the squad a lot of straying animals around but if you look at the it is not just the Forest Officers who are supposed to arrest people, established contravention against people contravening. It is all enforcement officers mainly Police Officers because I have been a Forest Guard myself, so I know the law well. According to the Legislation Forest Officers mainly when things happened within an area protected by the Forest Division, like nature reserves, sylvo pastorale but with regard to animals grazing on people's garden, it is not the job of a Forest Officer. The Forest Officer normally looks after the forest. He is talking about 18 Forest Officers. If we put one squad, which was the case before with four people, four Forest Officers working on that, does not mean these four people are supposed to work for 18. So, what is the job of the others, other 14? So, and again, another thing was said - it is also said that people maliciously put their animals in people's garden. This is all about education. That is why we created a Conservation Unit. We want people to be educated. I said that the people of this island, even politicians let their animals around, goats around to eat on people's garden. We have this information. There is a big education that needs to be done on this island. People need to be educated with regard to respecting others and this is what we want to do. This is what this government is trying to do. So, putting policemen, making the Forest Officers become policemen is not the solution. Thank you.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Commissioner, as regards to part (b) of the question concerning the output of these officers that will produce, is the Commissioner aware of the bad conditions where these officers are working at Solitude?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: This is not new. If you are talking about the state of the house/building of Solitude, these people, you have been in power for six years and what have you done? We have started to repair it. We have already started to solve the problem but this problem was long overdue. What have you done all these years? You should have repaired it. It is a shame! It is a shame

on you that you went to this office taking pictures as if this was yesterday! This is a problem long overdue and we will show you that we will repair it.

[Interruptions]

Mr. J. Roussety: *Ou ki bisin travay! Forest fail! Tourism fail! Partout fail! La pêche fail! Tou fail partout! Démissionner matelot !*

Mr. J. R. Payendee: *Vine prend mo place!*

Mr. J. Roussety: *Moi? Prend to place? Prend place ban couyon.*

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: On a point of order! Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the words used by the Member from the other side of the House is unparliamentary. It is unparliamentary.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I heard the word. Can the Member remove this word?

Mr. J. Roussety: I remove the word.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, at the level of the forest, everybody is unsatisfied. Even for the Independence Day, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, they are not being allowed to attend/participate because they *zot enan trop gros ventre*. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Commissioner, how many vehicles does the Forest Unit have to cater for the conservation of forests in Rodrigues?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Member said that all the Forest Officers are not satisfied.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Most of them!

Mr. J. R. Payendee: This is not true. There are no figures. This is based on *les on dit* and we, in this government, we do not believe in *les on dit*. We do not believe in this. With regard to vehicles for the Conservation Unit, I have to remind the House that all Forest Officers are getting mileage allowance.

All Forest Officers have got their own vehicle to do whatever work they have to do apart from we have got one jeep, tractor and so on but this is true that everybody has got his own transport and government is paying lots of money

with regard to mileage allowance for these people to do their jobs. So, where is the problem with regard to transport?

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, a last one. How will the Forest Ranger and Forest Officers, when they have someone who has contravened the rules of forests, how will the Forest Ranger take the seized animals, on motorcycle? How? Can we know?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: The Forest Office has got a jeep, a 4 x 4. We have got a jeep so if you want to take and this is a government entity! Let us put it like this. Suppose Forest Officers arrest 1000 goats, do we need to provide/give the Forest Office 1000 lorries? This is a government and we work together with the different Commissions. There is lorries in this government. If need be, whenever we need to use whatever vehicle with this government also if we need to contract out to get whatever lorry, we will do it but this government, again do not believe in policing. These people are talking about police! We need an educated population! Education is more important than policing. This is the same thing that happened when we were doing the octopus thing. They know only policing! We do not believe in policing. We believe in education! That is why we have created a Conservation Unit and we will continue to work in this direction because at the end of the day, we want this population to be educated. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Next, question please.

**CONSTRUCTION - NEW INFRASTRUCTURE
- SPORTS COMPLEX – BAIE LASCARS**

(No. B/51) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports whether, whether, in regard to the construction of new infrastructure for sports complex at Baie-Lascars, he will for the benefit of the House:

- (a) give details about the project and table the list of successful bidders for the project together with the initial cost involved;
- (b) state why the initial terraces (gradins) have been demolished and give details thereon including the cost of same; and
- (c) state when the project will be completed and if there have been delays in the initial time of completion, if any, and the reasons thereof?

The Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports (Mr. I. Valimamode): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the project of construction of a Basketball pitch at Baie Lascar was decided after consultation with athletes and general public in line with the Regional Government policy of *démocratie participative* with a view to promote and improve the practice of sports and also to promote the aim of sports for all. The Baie Lascar Basketball pitch will cater for the increased number of basketball and volleyball players' adherents especially in the Northern Region.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the project consists of the construction of basketball pitch at Baie Lascars including of parking, re-orientation of ex-Pétanque Court. The project was carried out under the annual rate contract for maintenance, upgrading and construction of roads for year 2012 and the appointed contractor was *Colas (Maurice) Limitée*. The initial estimated cost of the project is Rs. 2,488,033.41 excluding VAT. I am therefore tabling copy of the Works Order No. 8 of 2012. **(Appendix VIII)**

Mr. Deputy Chairperson Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, the initial *gradin* has been removed as it would have represented a potential danger to the basketball players in view of the limited space between the pitch extremities and the boundary block wall. Having been made aware of the problem by the basketball players and after verification with technicians of my Commission, I called a site meeting on the 14 January 2013 with the Acting Island Chief Executive and Technicians of the Commission for Public Infrastructure and members of the Rodrigues Basketball Regional Committee.

The constructed *gradin* consists of two rows of seats in masonry structure over a length of 18 metres on the left hand side of the pitch. It was unanimously agreed that the stone *gradin* be removed and replaced by one row of wooden bench of galvanized frame. To date, there has been no cost implication with respect to the demolition work.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c) of the question, as per Works Order No. 8 of 2012 which has been tabled dated 22 October 2012, the works was to be started by the 25 October 2012 and the date of completion was 31 January 2013. I am informed that the project was actually completed on 11 March 2013. However, the Contractor has not handed over the site to the client. As to date, the Contractor has not made any formal application for extension of time and unjustified delays shall be subject to penalties as per contract clause.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, whether the layout of this project, which lies in Port Mathurin, abides to planning regulations and planning rules in force in Rodrigues?

Mr. I. Valimamode: I need notice of this question, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I will put the question more directly because it seems that this is again an ill-conceived project. How come that *gradin* was erected, a Basketball pitch was erected and then they decided that they have to demolish? This is the particularity of this government. *Faire après casser!* It is, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the sign that there was no consultation, ill preparation of the project and most of all, no respect of the guideline of not constructing within the 30 metres from the high watermark, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, from the sea. I was astonished! Go and see at the football ground!

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Please, ask the question.

Mr. J. Roussety: Go and see the football ground that we built and you will see the alignment with... *reste tranquille nou pou écoute toi après nou!* The alignment with the wall, the stonewall. Now, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, if you look at the alignment, the basketball pitch merely goes into the sea. Why is it? I would like to know. You cannot just go and construct sports infrastructure, which are not in line with physical planning guidelines.

I want to know whether, this basketball pitch observes. Why? For example, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, you go at the place there it is ugly. It is a physical ugliness. For example, why is it that this development was not aligned with the level/line of the football playground fencing? Why is it that it had to go forward and then it had to be a triangle? How come all this, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, disfiguring the environment there? Thank you.

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I think I can table the plan. Talking about the demolished *gradin*, in the initial face, there was a *gradin* and as I said, the players, talked to me and said that it represents a hazard for them. The pitch is within norms but the fact that it is concrete, the *gradin* is in concrete, it represents a hazard and after a site visit and with all stakeholders, we decided to demolish it because we do not want to be wise after the event. In case of accident, we have to respect at least these players. I do not understand what the respected Member said concerning the alignment with the football pitch. It is the Pétanque court that has been re-orientated. There is a ...

Mr. J. Roussety: There is a road there. There is no more access. You have blocked it with concrete on the beach!

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: *Zot, zot ine donne l'hôtel la route!*

Mr. J. Roussety : *Hé ou la !*

Mr. L. D. Baptiste : *Zot ine donne l'hotel la route !*

[Interruptions]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, Mr. Commissioner, please!

Mr. I. Valimamode: That is my answer, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

[Interruptions]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Order, please! Order, the House, I said!

The Minority Leader: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner. Now it is clear that we know where the problem is. They should admit that they have failed. Why did they not think it fit to appoint a consultant to devise such a project, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir?

Mr. I. Valimamode: I think, the project, itself, it is a straightforward one. As I said, we could have left the *gradin* as it was but we have decided, for the sake of these athletes, to remove it. As you mentioned early on, "*Do not be wise after the event.*" This is why because we could have left it as it was.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Commissioner when did the meeting consultation with the athletes for basketball etc. done? Prior to the construction or planning of this basketball pitch.

Mr. I. Valimamode: I do not have the exact date but I can assure you, this House and you can verify with these athletes with the Basketball Regional Committees that we have had meetings with them.

Mr. J. Roussety: *Après la mort, la tisane!*

Mr. I. Valimamode: No, before! We even had meetings with the villagers of English Bay, Port Mathurin and others to decide where it is more suitable because English Bay was asking for a basketball pitch at their place, Crève Coeur was asking one and Port Mathurin was asking one. So, we talked with all these stakeholders and it was decided to put it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: One last question, please.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, all know that when Colas is doing a work, it should be according to *Fédération Internationale des Ingénieurs - Conseils (FIDIC)*. We must all know that and we have engineers here, they know the norms. Can we know from the Commissioner, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, since there has been construction, demolition, so, there must be delay in starting/commencement of the work and the final/completion of the work. Can we know from the Commissioner whether, there has been any liquidated damages and if so, first of all, what is the estimated price and whether, there has been any liquidated damages?

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I think I have answered to the question. It is most unfortunate that the respected Member was not listening. You would have... I have said ...

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Point of order, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner is making as if I am deaf. So, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I want the Commissioner to remove his words.

Mr. I. Valimamode: No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I have not said even if I have worked at the hospital level for so many years, I have not said that he is deaf. I said he was not listening!

Mr. J. Roussety: We have a point of order. Please, Commissioner, may be you do not know the Standing Orders. You have to learn it!

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Please, sit down!

Mr. J. Roussety: You have to learn it! This is a point of order. You have to give your ruling! What is your point in explaining?

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Yes, I think that you are imputing motives to the Member. Can you please, remove these words?

Mr. I. Valimamode: Okay, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I remove these words.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: But I have heard that he has already replied to the question that you just put. He has replied.

[Interruptions]

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Deputy Chairperson Sir, as regards to part (c) of the question, as per Works Order No. 8/2012 dated 22 October 2012, the works was to be started by the 25 October 2012 and the date of completion was 31 January 2013. I am informed that the project was actually completed on 11 March 2013. However, the Contractor has not yet handed over the site to the client. As at date, the Contractor has not made any formal application for extension of time and unjustified delays shall be subject to penalties as per contract clause.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Next question.

BOREHOLE – LE CHOU

(No. B/52) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others whether, in regard to the borehole situated at Le Chou, he will, for the benefit of the House:-

- (a) state the number of times same has broken down, giving the different dates and the nature thereof, since February 2012;
- (b) give the number of trips made by the government water lorry tankers since February 2012 together with its purpose;
- (c) inform on the consequences arisen with respect to the borehole breakdown on the day to day functioning of the institutions which use that water; and
- (d) Give his policy on the future use of the borehole with respect to its location?

The Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the borehole of Le Chou has been broken down five times since February 2012 and the different dates and natures of the break down are as follows:-

The first break down occurred on the 13 March 2012 and the nature of the breakdown was due to a fault in its electrical panel. The fault was repaired on the 14 March 2012.

The second breakdown was on the 10 May 2012 and again the fault was due to a fault on the board of the electrical panel. The pump was in operation the same day after the fault was cleared.

The third breakdown occurred on the 24 May 2013 due to another fault in its electrical installation and was repaired the same day.

On the 09 October 2012, the nature of the fault was due to a defective cable and it was replaced on the same day that is, on the 09 October 2012. On the 27 November 2012, the propeller shaft and the bore line got damage and were removed on the next day on the 28 November 2012.

A temporary pump was installed on the 29 November 2012. On the 31 January 2013, a pump of higher capacity replaced the one installed on the 29 November 2012.

Since February 2012, lorry water tankers have carried out some forty hundred trips from Le Chou borehole to supply Queen Elizabeth Hospital for dialysis purposes and 21 trips for consumers of Montagne Fanal.

As regards to part (c), of the question, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, there are two main institutions namely Queen Elizabeth Hospital Dialysis Section and Le Chou College which are being provided with water from Le Chou borehole. When there is a prolonged breakdown, water from Mourouk or another borehole may be supplied to Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

As regards to part (d), Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, actions have already been initiated so that in the near future, Le Chou borehole will feed water to the new L'Union Service Reservoir.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has said that water from Mourouk may be delivered to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for dialysis but as I know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, being given that the water from Le Chou borehole is the main source of water which is important for dialysis in Rodrigues, an important issue. Can I ask the Commissioner whether tests, physical and biochemical tests have been performed/made on other sources of water in Rodrigues to see whether, same tally, these parameters tally with water from Le Chou borehole so that the latter can be used as an alternative source whenever the borehole is not functioning? This is the first question.

Second question, can the Commissioner make an audit on the amount of water loss at every *remplissage camion* at Le Chou, on the pipe itself daily and near the borehole and make necessary measures to deal with same because it is not fair that water is being tapped from borehole at high energy cost and same is being wasted every day.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, up to now, we have not taken any water from Mourouk to Queen Elizabeth Hospital but when the equilarise will do the test first before supplying water to Queen Elizabeth Hospital. For the second part of the question, I will look into the matter and take necessary action if need be.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, because as I know, a letter was made in that sense and that there has been no forum but prevention is better than cure. I think that the Commissioner should deal/take the follow up of this letter in head.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Le Chou College also, as the Commissioner has said, tapped water directly on the borehole and during the period that same is broken down, water is unavailable at the school namely for important amenities, like toilets, which make the day-to-day functioning of their college/school difficult. Can the Commissioner see into the possibility with other stakeholders involved, Commission for Education, to build an independent water tank? Because there was a water tank *en amont du collège* and same has been dismantled to construct new toilet infrastructures. Can the Commissioner see to it with other stakeholders to build an independent water tank *en amont* of these amenities to feed these toilets and other amenities for water on a required basis? Because when the borehole is broken down, life is difficult at the college. There is no water. We cannot enter the toilet for three days or four days. Can he see into it to build a water tank *en amont* of these toilets because the water tank, which was there, has been dismantled?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I take notice of these questions.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, being given the recurrence, we have seen the number of breakdowns, electrical problems on these panels. Can we know when was the last visit of the Commissioner being given the importance of this borehole, whether he has ever visited this borehole and when was it?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, every time that there is a problem there, I make a must to attend the borehole and you know, the electrical faults occur every often on the electrical installation. When there is loose connection in every installation, we have problem with electricity.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given that at every time, there is a problem with the electric panel, can the Commissioner inform the House whether there has been a meeting with the Central Electricity Board (CEB) to explore into that fault to see whether the electric panel is not good? Whether there is a problem on the electrical network? Has there been a meeting?

Mr. J. Roussety: *Pa CEB sa! Panneau la mem pa bon! Ki CEB pou fer ? CEB donne courant li ! ...*

Mr. S. P. Roussety : Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we have not been informed since 10 May 2012.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the reply of the Commissioner to part (a), I have seen that there are many faults as regards to the drilling of water at Le Chou. I is almost the same problem, which is encountered by the boreholes around Rodrigues, and we know that there are different surveys that have been carried out in Rodrigues as regards to the drilling of boreholes. I understand there is Luxembourg, Chennai and all that; there have been lots of surveys as regards to the drilling of boreholes. Can we know from the Commissioner, whether there has been any test to know whether the boreholes at Rodrigues have reached the critical level?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, it is not true to say that every borehole in Rodrigues has the same problem.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Almost!

Mr. S. P. Roussety: No! It is not true! Regarding the boreholes, every year, we are doing a lifting to maintain the borehole.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Next question.

FUEL STATION – MONT LUBIN

(No. B/53) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and

Others whether, in regard to the fuel station at Mont Lubin, he will inform the House on:

- (a) the different dates associated with the state of progress of the project;
- (b) the modus operandi associated with the fuel depot;
- (c) whether any geological and hydro geological surveys were made before construction; and
- (d) The conditions in the lease and the operation permit to ensure an environment friendly operation and the measures taken to ensure road safety?

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the project started after the approval of the building permit on the 22 February 2013. We have no other dates with the state of the progress, as it is a private one.

As regards to Part (b) of the question, the Fuel Depot will operate like all filling stations.

As regards to Part (c), no geological and hydro geological study has been effected on the reclaim land.

As regards to part (d), as per Building and Land Use Permit the developer has to abide strictly to the Environmental Guideline No. 8 for filling stations as issued by the Ministry of Environment and National Development Unit.

Furthermore, appropriate drainage configuration has been inbuilt in the design proposal submitted by the developer inclusive of catch pits and petrol interceptor chamber.

As regards to road safety, the developer has been requested to take all mitigating measures to ensure road safety:

- (1) A deceleration lane of about 30 metres long tapered to the actual carriage way to give direct access to the filling station;
- (2) Prior to the operation of the filling station, the developer has to inform the Commission in writing to coordinate road traffic issues.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether, for the filling station, a planning policy has been adhered to and which?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as I have answered, the promoter has to adhere strictly to the Environmental Guides No. 8 for filling station. All is clear in the guideline.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware that there is a new, not the Environmental Guidelines, there is a new Planning Policy Guidance No. 8 emanated from the Ministry of Housing and Lands, which cater for the location and sitting of filling stations? If such is the case, can the Commissioner inform the House about the objective of this Policy Guidance? Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can he explain to the House the objective of this Planning Policy Guidance?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Environment Officers with the Committee for Land Use and Building Permit have met and explored all the issues on the filling stations and they have taken note from the Ministry of the Environment Unit and the National Development Unit, the latest that they have.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House on the area, the *superficie* of land on which the filling station will be operated?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this is a new question. I have not the answer. Should he come with another question, he will have the answer.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am asking question on filling station. Normally, filling station should be erected on a plot of land not less than 844 m². Normally, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, filling station should be located at a minimum of 50 metres from public grounds and any other environmental sensitive areas. Being given that the filling station is found on a public ground, reclaimed at Mont Lubin, can the Commissioner inform the House whether there will be a demarcation wall between the filling areas and the other part of the reclaimed land? Can he inform the House whether all the reclaimed land will be used for the filling station? Whether there will be a demarcation wall between the filling station and the reclaimed land or whether all the plot of land being given that we should operate it on at least 844 m². Will there be a demarcation line between the filling station and the other part of the reclaimed land?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I thank the Member for the question. I would have asked him to look who modified the lease in 2011.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Commissioner since given the one that we have in Port Mathurin has got problem, is there any meeting held at the level of his Commission or any Commission of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly prior for the installation of the fuel station at Mont Lubin where a Health and Safety Officer is attending?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, in Port Mathurin, the question does not arise but regarding Health and Safety Officer, he has submit his Factory Building Permit which is clear. The question that the respected Member is asking does not arise.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I have two questions. First, I would like to know what would be the incidence of the transportation of fuel, different types of fuel from Port Mathurin to Mont Lubin, whether this question has been addressed as regards road safety etc. Second, I would like to know as regards this project whether (*laisse li kozé*) the fuel tanks, which will be used to store fuel, will be underground or on the ground?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, there is a guideline for carrying fuels from the depot to CEB, from the depot to the airport, from the depot to Kan John Stone Crusher. The same will be applied to carry the fuel to Mont Lubin and regarding the tankers, it will be above the ground.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, zero risk does not exist. Can we know from the Commissioner since where the fuel station will be situated, there is what we call the water table of Rodrigues? There is the risk of percolating of fuel in the water for local consumption in Rodrigues. Can we know from the Commissioner whether this aspect will be taken into account?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, all aspects regarding environment and oil spilling will be taken into account.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, being given that the filling station is found in a shopping area, there are shops here, can the Commissioner inform the House whether, the owners of business in that region were consulted prior to the construction of the filling station? Is he aware that all these businesses will now be classified as risky business and that the owners have to pay for a higher insurance loan?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: As in Port Mathurin, it is the same risk and every aspect of security has been undertaken and will be undertaken by the fire services so that the promoter takes all risks against danger of fire.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, being given that according to Health and Safety, the distance from the localisation of the plant, there should be an assembly meeting, an assembly point at least 50 metres from the initial one. Can we know from the Commissioner whether this aspect will be taken in this project, the assembly point? *Kan enan difé, ki pou faire?* Where will they meet?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Of course, the aspect of assembly point will be taken into consideration but I think that the respected Member is being exaggerated about 50 metres.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner has not answered to my question. I have said that whether meeting was done with owners of business and whether he is aware that these businesses are now classified as risky businesses and that *les pauvres gens doivent payer* a higher insurance rate, whether there was a meeting, *démocratie participative*, whether there was a meeting with these owners or businesses.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am not aware that the promoter had meeting with the shopkeepers there but I will look into the matter with them.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House before obtaining a licence normally, the filling station should obtain a licence from the National Transport Authority (NTA) before operating. Can he inform the House whether other documents...

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Please, do you have a mobile phone with you?

Mr. J. D. Spéville: No. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House before obtaining a licence from the NTA, normally the filling station, the owner of the filling station should produce documents. Can the Commissioner inform the House before the filling station will obtain a licence from the NTA, where other documents need to be produced by the filling station?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am not aware but I will look into the matter.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Okay, I suspend the sitting for 45 minutes for lunch.

At 12.47 hours, the Assembly was suspended.

On resuming at 13.40 hours with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr. Chairperson: Next, question please.

**WATER DISTRIBUTION – EAU VANNÉE
– STATUS OF WATER NETWORK**

(No. B/54) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others whether, in regard to water distribution in the village of Eau Vannée, he will inform the House about the status of the water network as from the house of one late C to the extremity of the track road?

The Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to water distribution in the village of Eau Vannée, as from the house of one late Casaï to the extremity of the track road, the water network is in good condition.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner for Water Resources from what date was the network in good condition? Since what day?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on the 05 April 2013, the Gangman in charge of the maintenance section in that region informed Malabar Office regarding damage on water distribution network as from the house of a late Casaï to the extremity of the track road. The leakage was caused by a *saboteur*, I mention, a saboteur who pierced the polypipe of 63 millimetres on the two sides with an object as if it is like a machete. Necessary action has been taken on Saturday 06 April 2013 to repair the network in order not to disrupt the frequency of water distribution.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this problem has been here for times. Since three months, this problem existed in that village. Can the Commissioner inform the House? After I visited the problem, the day after, there was reparation. I visited and saw the problem on site and the day after,

there was reparation. Can the Commissioner inform the House whether it exists at the level of his Commission, an emergency team *pour au moins pallier et diminuer la perte d'eau dans les réseaux*?

I know that sometimes spare parts are unavailable on the market. See ways and means to decrease *la perte d'eau dans les réseaux* because water at that time was leaking at about 70% and was causing a situation of despair in the village namely in terms of low water pressure and muddy tracks. Whether it exists an emergency team, see to it that an emergency team be set up *pour au moins pallier la diminution de perte dans les réseaux quand il y a des problèmes comme ça*.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the leakage, as I have said, was caused by as if it is a machete and the villagers informed the Gangman on the 05 April and action was taken immediately after. If the Member has said that it is for months, I do not understand why the villagers have not come to the office to make a complaint. Just after we received the message, we attended the repairs but for the maintenance team, there is no emergency team as a squad but we are looking into the matter.

Mr. Chairperson: May I inform the respected Members that question B/67 has been withdrawn. Thank you. B/67 withdrawn. Yes, Commissioner?

ERECTION OF A GREENHOUSE – EAU VANNÉE

(No. B/55) Mr. J. D. Spéville (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the erection of a greenhouse in the village of Eau Vannée, he will inform the House on the purpose of same?

The Commissioner responsible for Youth and others (Ms. M. R. Edouard): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, allow me to answer the question B/55 which falls under the responsibility of the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, with a view to reducing the use of pesticides and other fertilizers, women of the *Association Feminine* of Pavé La Bonté, namely, Esperance have decided to set up a hydroponic project to have full control of pests, diseases and other parameters such as humidity and sunlight.

In addition, Mr. Chairperson Sir, the project is a means to fight against poverty amongst women, the women community of the region of Petit Gabriel and Pavé la Bonté. The income generated through the sale of vegetables will

help to satisfy part of the needs of their families and improve their standard of living. In other words, they will become more economically independent via the project. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House when the greenhouse was erected? Because since last year, 2012, nothing has been done until now and the greenhouse stands as an *éléphant blanc* in the village of Eau Vannée. Give the number of months when this greenhouse was erected. I hope last year and nothing has been done until now.

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the projects started in November 2012. I wish to point out that we have been informed that the Ministry of Gender Equality, Family Welfare and Child Development that a project entitled reducing poverty amongst mothers of Petit Gabriel/Pavé la Bonté by cultivation of vegetables and flowers using hydroponic system and projection of composting in large scale submitted by *Association Féminine* that I just mentioned was approved last year for financing to the tune of Rs 976,000 under the special collaborative programme for support to women and children in distress. The projects approved under the special collaborative programme are being seen.

On the last meeting held on the 04 April, the association informed that they have made an advanced payment, for example, for a water tank but as at that date, the supplier has not delivered this same tank and it has been advised to refer to the matter to the Police. So, it is wrong to say that nothing has been done because since then, action has been taken but there are issues not relating to our direct interference, which are delaying the project.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, six months have lapsed and I do not think that an *éléphant blanc* will reduce poverty. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House who advised the stakeholders involved in that project to erect a greenhouse nearly on the top of a hill which is heated permanently by the South East Trade Wind? The greenhouse is situated on a hill and it is directed just *devant Grande Passe* and it is heated permanently by the South East Trade Wind.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay, please, your question?

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Who advised to erect this greenhouse?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Member is stating that this project will not be helping people out of poverty. It is a matter of appreciation. He is appreciating the issue on a certain level but I am still

maintaining that things are being done and from the initiatives of the *Association Féminine* and it is their demands/requests that have been taken on board before implementing this same project.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I know that greenhouse will help people but we cannot put a greenhouse on the top of a hill or in the sea! There is special place to place greenhouse. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the greenhouse cover was torn on the Easter Day. People in the village *croyait que Madame Wye tirait des pétards chinois* on the Easter Day. Can the Commissioner inform the House, *jour pâques*, whether the repairs, there are big holes in the cover of the greenhouse, whether the repairs will be made against retention money by the contractor and if not, who will be responsible to reinstate the greenhouse?

Secondly, can the Commissioner inform the House whether there is a body or whatsoever responsible to help these stakeholders to maintain and manage the greenhouse whenever there are windy days? There should be, I think a body, to help these stakeholders to manage with direction, *la voile rissé baissé* of the greenhouse. Two questions.

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to date, no formal reports have been received by the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office pertaining to holes in the greenhouse' cover whatever the Member is mentioning but I need to assure this House that the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office will take the matter into consideration and is providing the necessary support to these women of Pavé La Bonté.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question for Mr. Agathe.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: I want to inform the Commissioner that I, myself, I live near the greenhouse and I am reporting it to the House that there are big holes in the greenhouse. I have eye, I see, I live near the greenhouse.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question, Mr. Agathe.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, since the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have received funds from the Ministry for Gender Equality what is the participation of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to implement such project. We all want that these NGOs succeed in their project. What is the role? What participation is the Rodrigues Regional Assembly providing to these NGOs in order that the project comes to an end?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I mentioned in my reply, I said that the project is a project from the Ministry of Gender Equality and I wish to point out that the channel through which the project has been.... will be reviewed because to date, we are not satisfied with the ways things are being done until now and of course, the Regional Government in due course will provide the necessary support to any NGOs/associations/cooperatives wishing to set up or pursue in the entrepreneurship section. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Next, question please.

PRODUCTION OF WATER

(No. B/56) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others whether, in regard to the production of water in Rodrigues, he can inform the House about:

- (a) the average amount of rainfall per month and the average volume of water produced per day and per month from January to March 2013;
- (b) the policy of the government with respect to same in the light of the figures above; and
- (c) state the measures implemented, if any, or those to be implemented in the short and long term and the expected results on water production in Rodrigues?

The Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the change in climatic condition is a cause of concern to all of us. The amount of rainfall has been deficient last year, thus causing hardship to the production of water. The average of rainfall and the volume of water produced per day and per month from January to March 2013 are as follows:-

Average of rainfall per month

Month	Pointe Canon	Plaine Corail
January 2013	70.9 mm	69.5 mm
February 2013	217.7 mm	196.9 mm
March 2013	89.6 mm	29.9 mm

Average of water produced per day

Month	Average daily/m³	Average monthly/m³
January	3,776	117,056
February	3,629	101,612
March	3,941	122,171

As regards to part (b), of the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the daily production of the water is about one third of the demand. The policy of the government in the short term is to encourage water consumers to invest in Rainwater Harvesting Project. Low-income families will be provided with concrete water tanks and gutters and the Regional Assembly is taking measures to install desalination plants in Rodrigues.

As far as, part (c) of the question is concerned, this will result in an additional of 4,000 m³ daily. This will ensure a regular and sustainable water production throughout the Island.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House what are the different sources which constitute the total volume of water produced per month?

Mr. Chairperson: So, it seems that there is *un portable* in the House. Please, it is not permitted. You see to it.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the answer. I may table it next time on the table of the Assembly.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am asking the Commissioner what are the different sources not the value, the different sources which constitute the whole volume of water which he has informed the House, the whole volume of water produced per month, the different sources of water.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: The different sources are the borehole or springs, which produce this water.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether the desalination plant of Songes, the water produced from the desalination plant of Songes also constitutes the volume of water produced which he has informed the House here?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, 450 m³ to 500 m³ per day.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question.

**INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS UNDERTAKEN BY
COMMISSION – 2012 UP TO DATE**

(No. B/57) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others whether, in regard to the infrastructural projects undertaken by this Commission for the year 2012 up to date, he can inform the House of the name of same, their status, their completion date, their costs together with the number of jobs created?

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Mr Chairperson, Sir, the infrastructural projects undertaken by my Commission for the year 2012 is as follows:

- (1) Patching of work around the Island for the sum of Rs 875,851.50 from 07 to 18 May 2012.
- (2) A second patching of work was effected around the Island for the sum of Rs 619,705.25 from 01 to 11 June 2012.
- (3) Repair to damaged road crossing at junction Gervais Mercure/Francois Leguat Road, Port Mathurin for the sum of Rs 315,480.24 from 19 June to 27 July 2012.
- (4) Upgrading of access road, fencing and masonry work at Saint Gabriel Cemetery for the sum of Rs 1,239,270.36 from 24 September to 15 November 2012.
- (5) Resurfacing of volleyball pitch at Vainqueur and basketball pitch at Port Sud Est for the sum of Rs 717,738.00 from 21 September to 18 October 2012.
- (6) Upgrading of Pointe Coton to Roche Bon Dieu - 3.1 km for the sum of Rs 71,385,079.20 from 01 October 2012 to be completed by the end of April 2013.
- (7) Proposed Basketball Pitch at Baie Lascars for the sum of Rs 2,861,236.12 from 25 October 2012 to 11 March 2013.
- (8) Patching of roads around the island for the sum of Rs 2,065,687.50 from 25 October to 07 December 2012.

- (9) Construction of a parking at Lataniers near Antoinette Prudence RCA School for the sum of Rs 1,783,233.70. Works is ongoing.
- (10) Proposed Box Culvert at Champs for the sum of Rs 837,585.37. Works is ongoing.
- (11) Construction of 1340 metres tracks roads around the island for the sum of Rs 3,753,566.65 from 02 July to 11 September 2012.
- (12) Again, construction of 694 metres of track roads around the island for the sum of Rs 1,793,463.31 from 01 September to 05 October 2012.
- (13) Construction of 1695 metres of track roads and 724 metres of footpath around the island for the sum of Rs 6,450,303.89. Works is ongoing.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am a bit astonished. I am astonished that the Commissioner did not mention even the reservoir. We have reservoir at, I give one example only, Camp Pintade. The project was started by this government and we passed the project to this government. Now, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Commissioner what was happening to this reservoir up to now?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: This reservoir will be commissioned shortly.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, he is mentioning that the reservoir will be commissioned shortly, what do the people there want? They do not want that the reservoir be commissioned. They want water from that reservoir since the water is being pumped from Baie Topaze to another two small tankers and the water is not sufficient to be distributed to these people. These people want water from this reservoir and the project has been implemented since long. Up to now, nothing is being done with the reservoir. The people want the end product there.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, they have been here for five and a half years and there is no mainline from the reservoir to Pointe Palmiste. We are doing this line, this pipeline and then, it will be commissioned. *Cinq ans et demi to là!*

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Can the Commissioner inform the House when Camp Pintade completed? When was the construction of this 1000 m³ concrete reservoir completed at Camp Pintade? When was it completed?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the date with me.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we also have around Rodrigues, so many football/volleyball/basketball pitch. The one, which is at Papayes. The project at Papayes has not been well done since there are cracks on the basketball pitch and the Contractor should have repaired it, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Up to now, the time that I am speaking here, nothing has been done to this project. I will ask the Commissioner when these people around Rodrigues will be able to play basketball, volleyball on the different pitches that we have constructed around Rodrigues?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I suppose that this question should be asked to the Commissioner for Sports.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: No, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there are problems with the pitch at Papayes. There are problems now, Mr. Chairperson, Sir and these people need the basketball pitch in order to play. Nothing has been done up to now. What is the Commission contemplating to do in order to repair this basketball pitch?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is a project for Sports. As I have said, the question should be put to the Commissioner for Sports.

Mr. Chairperson: Next, question please.

SALE OF FORMER PUTTERS PARADISE

(No. B/58) Mr. J. S. Swee (Seventh Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the sale of the former Putters Paradise, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if the building has been sold to a third party, and in the affirmative, if the approval of the Commission for State Lands has been obtained prior to the sale and when?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Putter's Paradise Limited held an industrial lease over a plot of state land of 2519 m² at Port Mathurin for period 24 December 1998 to 30 June 2018. On the land stands a concrete building with ground and first floor.

I am further informed that in a letter dated 20 June 2000 and 29 June 2001, permission was granted to pledge its leasehold rights in favour of Development Bank of Mauritius (DBM) in respect of two loans contracted by the company for the implementation of its project.

In a letter dated 03 October 2005, the Cadastral Office was informed that a Sale by Levy would be carried out at the request of the Development Bank of Mauritius against the Putter's Paradise Limited and same was scheduled for 13 October 2005 before the Master's Bar at the Supreme Court.

The DBM proceeded with the sale by levy and the Court allowed the seizure and sale of the building standing on the land together with its leasehold rights for non-payment of debt in favour of the DBM. The building together with its right of lease was adjudged to the DBM on the 22 February 2007 after outbidding. A deed of Sale by Levy was registered and transcribed Rodrigues in Volume TBR 22 Number 96 on 23 April 2007 and the DBM became the lawful owner of the property.

In letters dated 26 April 2011 and 09 September 2011 addressed to the Island Chief Executive, the DBM has applied for permission to sell the building and transfer the leasehold rights over the plot of state land of 2519 m² to the Rodrigues Food and Beverages Limited represented by Mr. Bijaycoomar Greedharry. The letter was referred to the Departmental Head, Commission for Lands for their views.

On 22 September 2011, in a minute in file, the then acting Island Chief Executive informed the then Chief Commissioner that he has discussed the issue with the then Commissioner for Lands and it was agreed that RRA will repossess the site as it was prime land for development. The then Chief Commissioner gave his approval to proceed accordingly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, however on the 26 January 2012, some fifteen days before the last regional elections, the then Acting Island Chief Executive authorised the DBM to proceed with the sale of the building and approved for the transfer of the leasehold rights to the Rodrigues Food and Beverages Limited.

The Rodrigues Food and Beverages Limited has acquired the above mentioned property on 01 November 2012 as per deed of sale registered and transcribed in Rodrigues on 23 November 2012.

Mr. J. S. Swee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I understand from the Chief Commissioner that some days before election, approval to sell building was conveyed to DBM by the then Acting Island Chief Executive. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner if approval was obtained from the Chief Commissioner.

The Chief Commissioner: No approval of the Chief Commissioner was conveyed in the file prior to the letter sent to the DBM.

Mr. J. Roussety: I believe that the Chief Commissioner at that time was not necessarily the Commissioner for Lands. Has there been an approval from any other Commissioner or has there been an approval from the Executive Council?

The Chief Commissioner: I have no information concerning approval from the Executive Council but as I know, no approval of the Commissioner of State Lands is seen in file as per provision of the State Land Act, Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act.

Mr. J. S. Swee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with these answers, I would like to know if given that no approval has been obtained from neither Commission for Land nor Chief Commissioner's Office, if the Chief Commissioner intends to initiate any inquiry into this matter.

The Chief Commissioner: I must agree, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to have an inquiry on this matter.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

(No. B/59) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to disaster preparedness, he can inform the House:-

- (a) about the actual arrangements in force in case of any natural calamity;
- (b) where matters stand as regards preparedness for floods, earthquake and tsunamis; and
- (c) whether there has been any specific risk assessment for natural disasters in some areas of the island, the recommendations thereof and action undertaken?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Natural Disaster Preparedness Scheme that exists within the Rodrigues Regional Assembly consists of four parts, namely:-

- (1) A Cyclone Emergency Scheme;
- (2) A Torrential Rain and Landslide Emergency Scheme;
- (3) A Tsunami Emergency Scheme; and
- (4) An Earthquake Emergency Scheme

As regards part (a) of the question, each scheme lays down in detail the standing procedures and actions of every stakeholders in the event of a natural calamity in order to save life, protect property and help the local community to recover after a disaster.

Being given that each scheme contains lengthy details on action to be taken in case of a natural calamity, it will be inappropriate to take the time of this Assembly to go through them all. With your permission, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the highlights of the details of existing arrangements in force in case of a natural calamity. **(Appendix IX)**

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, allow me to inform the House that while updating the flood prone areas in Rodrigues as a measure of strengthening disaster preparedness, the Regional Government has also carried out an audit of all the drainage system. I have personally made several site visits in the context of this exercise.

A number of agglomerations where drains must be constructed or the existing ones cleaned have been identified. In flood prone areas like Fond La Digue, Camp du Roi and Oyster Bay, cleaning works have already started by Rod Clean under the supervision of the Commission for Environment. The works include removal of mud, debris and wastes in the drains, removal of noisome vegetation, branches and silt in both drains and rivers and cutting down of trees where required. At Rivière Coco a diverted/cross drain, extending on a stretch of about 900 metres from the new cemetery down the hill towards the river will be constructed.

In addition to the drainage problem, there also exist the very dangerous hazards of huge stones rolling down the road and on houses in a number of areas namely at Pointe Canon, Fond La Digue, Bigarade, Grande Montagne and Rivière Coco, Montagne Fanal, Soupirs, etc. in case of torrential rains.

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In view of this precarious situation, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development has been approached for the provision of additional funds to improve the drainage system around Rodrigues.

As regard part (c) of the question, as part the Africa Adaptation Programme, Republic of Mauritius, the Ministry of Environment awarded a contract to the firm studio Galli Ingegneria SPA of Italy in January 2012 for the Development of an Inundation, Flooding and Landslide National Risk Profiles, Maps, Strategy Framework and Action Plans for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Management for the Republic of Mauritius including Rodrigues.

The objectives of the project were:-

- (i) To identify and assess the exposure of risks to people, property loss, critical facilities, infrastructure, and economic activities as well as the potential losses (human, economic and financial) related to flooding, inundation and landslide prone areas;
- (ii) To prepare comprehensive maps, in appropriate scales of all flood, inundation and landslide prone areas, based on historic data and information, and generate event scenario simulations (sea level rise scenarios and flooding and inundation scenarios associated with storm surges and flash floods);
- (iii) To build capacity of stakeholders on disaster risk profiling, assessment and management; and
- (iv) To prepare a DRR Strategy and action plan, including DRR Investment Programme.

A consultant attended part of the project relating to Rodrigues following which, two officers from the Environment Unit participated in a Capacity Building and Validation Workshop was held from 22 to 24 August in Mauritius. The final report of the Consultant is still being awaited.

A French Expert of the *Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris* visited Rodrigues in April 2012 to carry out a Tsunami and Seismic Risk Assessment. His report was submitted in August 2012 and the two main recommendations made have already been implemented, that is, the installation of seismograph in Rodrigues and the elaboration of an Earthquake Emergency Scheme for Rodrigues. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: I remind you that there are only fifteen minutes left for question time.

Mr. J. Roussety: As regards tsunami, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are aware that there is the seismometer installed at Citronnelle. I remember we were working on the plan for preparedness. Can we know, what is the state of warning if ever there is a tsunami and there is a risk? We have seen the tsunami in 2004. What is the state of warnings and being given that Rodrigues is an island, how these plans, which have been enumerated, do provide for timely warning for those persons concerned?

The Chief Commissioner: Excuse me, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I need notice of the question.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as we are speaking about floods, we have at Rodrigues, many places around the island where we have what we call, *radiers*. We have seen/noticed that these *radiers* are causing a lot of harm to the *automobilistes*. Can we know from the Chief Commissioner, whether, these *radiers* can be look into so that we can put a bridge instead of *radiers* at the place mentioned.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, after the cyclone Imelda, we held an urgent meeting and the question of *radiers* has been raised. The Commission for Infrastructure is going to send us a report on what is going to be done but we must be very careful because we have to build something, which will not cause any harm either to inundation, flood. For the time being, the *radiers* has helped a lot instead of bridges. The Commission for Infrastructure is going to study on what has been raised in that meeting after Imelda Cyclone.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether, there has been any discussion with the Central Government for the *Village Écologique* Project in Rodrigues and whether, the different scope of work on the project will cater for disaster preparedness in terms of canals, drains, riverbanks and so on.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am flying to Mauritius this afternoon/this evening and I will present a report to the Prime Minister. Even the Prime Minister phoned me the other day telling me that the Vice Prime Minister, Mr. Baichoo will come to Rodrigues with a delegation to

look into all that have been raised in this meeting after Cyclone Imelda. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Question B/64 is withdrawn and we have less than ten minutes left. Next question.

TRADE OF SALT

(No. B/60) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Others whether, in regard to the trade in salt in Rodrigues, he will for the benefit of the House, state:-

- (a) how the trade is organised;
- (b) the volume of different categories of salt imported over the last ten years together with their respective average yearly price; and
- (c) if any measures are being contemplated to encourage local production of salt?

The Commissioner responsible for Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Others (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, common salt is presently imported from Mauritius and abroad. The imported salt is classified into two categories namely the processed raw salt, commonly called "*gros di sel*" used for curing purposes and secondly, the refined salt which is used in cooking.

Unfortunately, there has been no proper data system that could enable the capture of appropriate statistics concerning the amount of salt imported. Information concerning the volume of salt imported to Rodrigues is therefore not available for the time being.

Actually, there are about 10 importers who are involved in the importation of salt in Rodrigues. This is normally distributed to retailers for sale to the public in different shops throughout the island. Salt is not a controlled commodity according to the Consumer Protection Act. That is why it is difficult to have information relating to early average prices but the current retail price is actually between Rs 12 and Rs 16 per kilo for processed raw salt and between Rs 12 and Rs 15 per half kilo for refined salt.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in spite of the fact that there are no appropriate statistics concerning salt import in Rodrigues, it is estimated that our salt

consumption for cooking and curing purposes is quite significant. Being given that Rodrigues is surrounded by sea water, which is the principal raw material for salt production; this Regional Government aims to encourage private enterprises to produce this product locally. This is why my Colleague, the Deputy Chief Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Industrial Development is facilitating the implementation of a Pilot Salt Production Project at Baie Topaze with the technical assistance of two sauniers from Noirmoutier, France.

I am informed that these two persons were in Rodrigues from 20 January to 19 February this year to investigate into the feasibility of the project and to provide training to 13 unemployed persons residing in the vicinity of Baie Topaze. Following their training, these 13 persons have already started the erection of a removable wall structure of 1.5 metres high by 100 metres long and 80 centimetres wide, made of clayey soil to protect the salt pans against high tide.

A second mission of the two sauniers in Rodrigues is expected in October/November this year to start the salt production process on a small scale. If the project is conclusive, it will be replicated on a large-scale basis.

I am also informed that the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office is assisting fishermen's group within the South East Marine Protected Area region to mount project relating to salt production, which will be submitted to potential funding agencies such as the Decentralised Cooperation Programme (DCP) and Global Environment Facility (GEF) for funding consideration.

Additionally, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office will also support cooperatives which are interested in salt production by facilitating their access to existing incentives such as Mauritius Business Growth Scheme from the Ministry of Business Enterprise and Cooperatives or the Special Collaborative Programme of the Ministry for Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare.

I am also informed that the Commission responsible for Industrial Development has received applications for the reopening of the existing salt pans at Plaine Corail. A Technical Committee has been set up to evaluate the project proposals and a decision will be taken in due course based on the recommendations of the Committee.

Mr. Chairperson: On request, question B/63, B/69, B/70 are withdrawn.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c), the Commissioner did mention that there is a Pilot Project for Salt Production at Baie Topaze. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not know whether the Commissioner has been there. I have been there. I saw people, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, digging in the mud, in the sea. How come that we are going to have salt in the mud, in the sea, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? We have mud through which some people, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, had below the arm. How come that we will have at least one kilogramme of salt there at Baie Topaze?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the project itself, has not yet started for production of salt. It is only the retaining walls that are being carried out and as I said, the two sauniers will be back. They are experts, I understand, in this project and they will give additional recommendations.

Mr. Chairperson: Please, sit down. Question time over.

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN RODRIGUES
– ACTIONS OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
SINCE JANUARY 2013**

(No. B/63) Mr. A. Edouard (Eighth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Entrepreneurship Development in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state the actions of Regional Government since January 2013 to promote same and the outcome thereof?

(Withdrawn)

**YOUTH COORDINATING COMMITTEE
– AIM AND ‘RAISON D’ÊTRE’ OF COMMITTEE**

(No. B/64) Ms. M. D. S. Perrine (Ninth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth and Others whether, in regard to the launching of the Youth Coordinating Committee, she will, for the benefit of the House, elaborate on the aim and the ‘raison d’être’ of the committee?

(Withdrawn)

FOOTBALL IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/67) Mr. J. C. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports whether, in regard to football in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:-

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- (a) which team will participate in the Mauritius Football Association cup this year; and
- (b) the different problems, which occurred in football since last year and what action is being taken to remedy same?

(Withdrawn)

FOREST IN THE ISLAND

(No. B/69) Mr. D. L. Guillaume (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to forest in the island, he can inform the House:-

- (a) how many hectares have been or are being fenced; and
- (b) how many officers are attached to the department and their grade?

(Withdrawn)

**RUBUS ALCEIFOLIOUS /ACACIA NILOTICA
(PIQUANT LOULOU)**

(No. B/70) Mr. D. L. Guillaume (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to difficulties faced by inhabitants of the island due to the big problem of Rubus Alceifolious/Acacia Nilotica (*piquant loulou*), he can inform the House what action(s) is(are) being taken to tackle this situation?

(Withdrawn)

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

PORT LOUIS FLASH FLOOD

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, further to your announcement, allow me to make a brief statement to this House. As all Members of this House are aware, the whole population of Rodrigues was taken aback by the heartbreaking event of the 30 March Port Louis Flash Flood which has caused the loss of eleven lives, damage to properties of hundreds and to public infrastructures. Rodrigues could not remain indifferent to the pain of the

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numerous victims left with damaged homes, no clothing and almost all hopes washed away. Quick action was taken.

After consultation with the Private Sector, the Civil Society and other partners like Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) Rodrigues FM, to set up a common Rodrigues Solidarity Fund for flood victims in Mauritius and to date, an amount of Rs 633,669.44 was raised.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, allow me to thank all those people and organisations including children who donated to their heart content from the little they had. A contribution of the population of Rodrigues in this national wave of solidarity was exemplary. One of the victims is a young Rodriguan who went to Mauritius to work as a Street Vendor to follow his poor family left behind here to earn a living. A sum of Rs 10,000 will be donated to her sister, domiciled in Mauritius as assistance for having taken care of the funeral of her deceased brother.

In addition, a sum of Rs 20,000 will be donated to the mourning mother in Rodrigues left without the income of the now deceased son. The remaining balance is currently being credited to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund. I thank you for your kind attention, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 18 June 2013 at 10.30 a.m.

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

MATTERS RAISED

« CALAMITE NATURELLE »

The Minority Leader (Mr. G. Jabeemisar): M. le président, comme vient de mentionner le Chef commissaire la calamité naturelle qui a grandement affecté l'île Maurice le 30 mars dernier a été sans précédent dans l'histoire de Maurice. Je m'associe donc avec lui pour exprimer notre profonde sympathie aux familles durement éprouvées. On a une pensée spéciale pour ces onze victimes et surtout pour notre compatriote Stevenson Henriette.

Cependant, M. le président, plus près de nous il y a eu le week-end dernier, le cyclone Imelda qui vient nous affecter et ceci après plusieurs années je dirais que Rodrigues a oublié l'ampleur d'un cyclone mais cependant tous le monde est d'avis pour dire que ce cyclone a fait plus de peur que de mal. Si nous regardons le côté positif de ce cyclone Imelda est arrivé, on peut dire, à point nommé car tous les jours nous entendons le commissaire, malheureusement il n'est pas là, il est parti, il se plaint toujours qu'il n'y a pas suffisamment d'eau pour pouvoir palier au problème de distribution d'eau à toute les régions de l'île. Mais là vue qu'Imelda nous a apporté suffisamment de pluie, M. le président, j'espère bien que le pays sera en mesure de réduire cette longue liste d'attente dans la fourniture d'eau. J'espère bien que la commission responsable de l'eau sera en mesure de nous donner une bonne fourniture d'eau. En parlant de la fourniture, M. le président, il y a avait aussi récemment la qualité de l'eau qui était qu'on distribuait était vraiment laissait à désirer. Je ne sais pas où se trouve le problème, y-a-t-il un manque de technicien qualifié pour assurer que la qualité de l'eau répond aux normes. Y-a-t-il une défectuosité dans les stations de traitement, je ne sais pas. Je fais un pressant appel pour que suite a surtout une inondation ou un cyclone c'est lé ou il y a le risque où l'eau est contaminé. Et la il ne faut pas que la santé de la population soient mis à risque. Alors je demande aux autorités d'être très vigilant, de veiller a ce que la qualité de l'eau qu'on va nous offrir soit d'une qualité de norme internationale et pour qu'il n'y a pas de risque de maladie. Il y a un autre problème aussi, M. le président, souvent après les cyclones, on a appris que ce cyclone a causé du tort surtout aux plantations. Là il y a les planteurs d'oignons dans les régions où on plante beaucoup d'oignons, tels que Port Sud Est, Gravières et autres, on nous dit que les plantations d'oignons étaient grandement affectées. Même si n'est pas d'une ampleur considérable mais les planteurs ont suivies des pertes et pour recommencer à zéro bien sure cela leur prendra beaucoup de temps, M. le président. Je demande à l'autorité est-ce qu'ils vont prendre des mesures pour offrir des compensations en terme de semences pour pouvoir aider ces planteurs à redémarrer, M. le président. Il y a eu aussi une affectation dans la plantation des haricots. Alors la je demanderais aux autorités de veiller à ce que ces planteurs aussi également ils soient indemnisé.

Un autre problème, M. le président, qui est très fréquent après un cyclone c'est les stagnations d'eaux à certains endroits. Est-ce que les mesures sanitaires ont été prises pour les démoustications etc. Si c'est un progrès tant mieux mais il y a aussi après un cyclone quand il y a un manque de fruits ou de légumes produit localement on a tendance à se fier sur l'importation. Est-ce les mesures phytosanitaire sont mise en place pour pallier au problème lié à l'importation parce qu'il y a le risque qu'il y a certain insecte nuisible à nos plantations qui rentre dans notre pays parce qu'actuellement il y a un insecte

nuisible à Maurice qui affecte les fruits dans certaines régions. Ils sont en train de prendre les précautions nécessaires. Est-ce que l'aide du service d'entomologie de Maurice a été demandé pour nous aider ici localement à veiller à ce que notre agriculture ne soit pas affectée. Donc je demande qu'après Imelda il y a un survey générale, non seulement en ce qui concerne les plantations affectés mais aussi les autres risques qui peuvent surgir au prochaine cyclone qui certainement qui va nous affecté dans les prochaines saisons cyclonique.

Merci, M. le président, j'espère que l'appel a été attendu. Je profite pour dire bravo aux autorités pour tout l'élan de solidarité qui a été mise en place pour venir en aide aux familles affectés par les récentes inondations à Maurice.

QUESTION B/45

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, for granting me leave as per Standing Order 24 on a point of personal explanation. Referring to question B/45 addressed to the Commissioner for Tourism. First of all, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to express my surprise for the arrogance with which my friend the Commissioner replied to that question and secondly, I have to sought out that he was stressing on the fact one lady, I am not going to mention any name, one lady attended the fair in Germany on the basis of her experience. Of course, it is a good thing and at a point in time, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, he mentioned that, let us look what has been done in the past and among others he stated that even the Commissioner for Health attended tourism fair in South Africa. Of course, this is why we have initiated to open the way to acquire experience. If we adhere to what he was saying in this House, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it would mean that only a few selected one would attend tourism fair. Tourism fair remains a tourism fair be it in Rodrigues, in Mauritius, in Reunion, in South Africa, in Berlin anywhere in the world. I would like to draw the attention of my friend the Commissioner for Tourism that I headed a delegation for Rodrigues for a tourism fair in South Africa and prior to that, I have not any experience in the African market. I do not speak Africana but I can consider, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that my mission was a success because the then Acting Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Hon. Xavier Luc Duval who was then Minister for Tourism headed the delegation of Mauritius and on different occasions he congratulated me for my different interventions and he even mentioned it while preparing his mission report. Just to say, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that we cannot only have the same people attending international fairs because they have experience. That lady, I have been informed in this House attended that particular fair on four occasions and it was of the major reason/criteria on which it was based to send her there.

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This is not, according to me, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a good practice, because we have to give everybody the opportunity of attending these fairs.

I thank me for allowing me to make this point of explanation.

SYMPATHY & SOLIDARITY - FLASH FLOOD IN MAURITIUS

/VOTE OF THANKS

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, just to say a few words about the word of solidarity towards our friends of Mauritius who have suffered from the recent flash flood and that have caused so many deaths. From this part of the minority, we also associate ourselves to the voices, which have been expressed here to give our word of sympathy and solidarity. At the same time, I join the words of the Minority Leader who has spoken on the occurrence of cyclones Imelda, just to say a few things. I have been listening also to the radio and listening to the Chief Commissioner speaking ... we have to think of Rodrigues *dans 20 ans, dans 30 ans et dans 50 ans* and I heard him speaking about the '*Plan d'Amenagement du Territoire*'. I do not know how long the Chief Commissioner has been engaged in active politics but I say it is high time for him to act, it is high time for the Regional Assembly to put in practice the '*Plan d'Amenagement du Territoire*'. As a former Chief Commissioner, I can tell this House that a serious and a complete *Plan d'Amenagement du Territoire*, which was made by one legal expert and a Land Urban Specialist, is already ready. It was prepared with the help of the DCP project is already ready at the Chief Commissioner Office, what is needed is its implementation. May I also end by saying our appreciation of the work done, for example, during the cyclone, people like the MBC, the Fire Services, although I have been told that out of three water pumps that they used to pump flood water in houses and in boats etcetera, boats were sinking. I do not know what has happened to the ... pump of the boats. Normally, a boat when there is rainwater enters into it, it is pumped automatically. This is a big lack of seriousness in the management of these boats. These boats could have been put in security ashore because there is a trailer for it, you can put on the trailer and put the boat ashore. Thank you for people of the MBC, the Fire Services and the CEB. We should not forget that we have got a chance with Imelda and that this chance may not be here next time. We better be prepared.

Mr. Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

*At 14.43 hours the House was, on its rising adjourned
to Tuesday 18 June 2013 at 10.30 a.m.*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP FORUM/SEMINAR

(No. B/61) **Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member)** asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Entrepreneurship Forum/Seminar recently organized by her Commission, she will, for the benefit of the House, state and/or table:-

- (a) the total itemized cost of the event;
- (b) the list of invitees, including speakers and their background/qualifications;
- (c) the tenure of the discussions;
- (d) the full report of the findings; and
- (e) how this event will help to shape oncoming policies in the field?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, as regards to part (a) of the question all funds for the organisation of the *assises de l'entrepreneuriat* are met under Programme 207 – Item 229900099 Miscellaneous Expenses, Industrial Development to the tune of Rs 135,153.00.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am now tabling information with respect to part (b). **(Appendix X)**

With regard to part (c), the discussions took place over one and a half day as follows:

On Wednesday 06 February 2013 from 12.30 to 15.30 hours:

- i. There was the opening ceremony followed by
- ii. Presentation on the following themes:
 - « Rôle de l'entrepreneuriat dans le développement économique de Maurice » par Mons. Michel de Speville, PDG, Food & Allied.
 - « La promotion d'une culture d'entrepreneuriat dès le plus jeune âge » par Mons. Raymond Guillouzo, Directeur de l'IFE.
 - « Sortir de l'économie informelle à l'économie formelle » par Mme. Danièle Le Normand, Présidente, Initiative Réunion Entreprendre.
 - « L'entrepreneuriat, moyen de développement personnel, social et économique » par Mons. Michel de Speville, PDG, Food & Allied.

After each presentation, there were interactive sessions where participants were given an opportunity to share experience, ask questions etc.

Thursday 07 February 2013 from 08.30 to 16.00 hours

Presentations were oriented on the following themes:-

- « Etat de lieu de l'entrepreneuriat à Rodrigues » par Mons. Johnson Pierre Louis, Industrial Analyst.
- « Les secteurs porteurs à Rodrigues » par Dr. Henri Agathe, Conseiller à l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues.
- « Les sociétés coopératives » par Madame Steddy Henriette, Officier à la Commission des Coopératives & Mons. Raymond Guillouzo, Directeur de l'IFE.
- Témoignage par Mons Hans Collet, représentant d'une société coopérative (RAMCF).
- Atelier de travail sur les thèmes suivants :-
 - Compte-rendu des ateliers
 - Finalement Mons. Le Président une synthèse a été faite et toute information collecté lors de la session sera utilisé afin d'élaborer n plan stratégique pour l'entrepreneuriat à Rodrigues.

Findings

The workshop was sub-divided into three main activities namely: presentations, working sessions and discussions. The working sessions were based on the following themes:

- Comment promouvoir l'innovation, la créativité et la productivité dans le contexte Rodriguais (*animé par Madame Françoise Marechal-Charlotte du NPCC*).
- Quel système de formation, d'éducation et de sensibilisation pour développer une culture entrepreneuriale à Rodrigues (*animé par Dr. C. Jaddoo, Représentant du Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE)*).

- Un ‘SWOT Analysis’ de l’entrepreneuriat à Rodrigues (*animé par Madame Brenda Félicité, Conseillère en Développement Industriel*).

1. Outcomes of the working session on Innovation

It was pointed out during the working sessions that the causes of low competitiveness of our SMEs lie on several factors. For instance, the relative isolation of the island, administrative hindrances, and a lack of innovation culture among the population are conditions obstructing local SMEs from innovating. With a view to remedying this situation, a series of recommendations were made:-

- Concepts such innovation and productivity be integrated in the school curriculum since the young age;
- Foster exchanges, networking and clustering among our local entrepreneurs;
- Set-up a policy framework for innovation where there will be interactions between enterprises, the policy makers and other stakeholders. There is also a need to have better synergies between the educational system, investors among others;
- Setting-up of business/technological & innovation incubators;
- Setting-up a one-stop shop to reduce duplication of procedures;
- Undertake in-depth market surveys and market researches based on the policy of the government;
- Encourage the local people to buy ‘Rodriguais’;
- Spill-over of the concept of innovation and creativity in the media;
- Review air freight;

- Give dedicated support to innovative projects since they are more risky ventures and hence the risks of failures are particularly high;
- Popularise innovative success stories to induce young entrepreneurs to embark on innovative ventures.

2. Outcomes of working sessions on developing entrepreneurial spirit at school level

It was unanimously agreed that the lack of entrepreneurial spirit of our people lies upon the fact that entrepreneurship does not form part of the school curriculum especially at the very young age. The main findings are now under consideration:-

- That entrepreneurship should form part of the school curriculum since primary level where children at the very young age could develop their creativity and entrepreneurial spirit;
- Introduce the concept of ‘jardin communautaire’ at primary level to inculcate in children the intricacies of business through learning by doing;
- That entrepreneurship be extended to all lower secondary schools instead of introducing it on a pilot basis at Le Chou College only;
- To make the ‘activity period’ at secondary level become a slot where guest lecturers, resource persons and successful entrepreneurs could be invited to deliver talks and share their experiences;
- To encourage Form Six students undertake field visits in enterprises and to develop mechanisms for job placement during holidays so that they get used to the world of enterprises;
- To sensitise rectors and other heads of schools so that they become entrepreneurial champions so that they can better transfer this spirit to their children;

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- Sensitise parents so that we break the myth that for instance a degree holder cannot start his own business;
- Introduce business-oriented subjects such as handicraft at prevocational level with a view to providing an understanding of how to run an enterprise;
- Encourage secondary school students to start a non-profit oriented business at school to develop business skills.

3. Outcomes on the SWOT analysis made on Entrepreneurship

Strengths

- Highly motivated entrepreneurs;
- The island is relatively small, which is an advantage for doing business since it is easier to understand the habits of customers;
- Our products have excellent reputations, example, honey;

Weaknesses

- Administrative hindrances;
- Unfair competition between formal and informal businesses;
- Existing laws and regulations are lenient – thus allowing illegal businesses to operate;
- Unclear regulations
- Pirating and counterfeited products have easily penetrate local market;
- Lack of networking among our local institutions ;
- No quality control, especially on agro-products;
- There is no label for Rodrigues;
- Lack of mentoring and coaching of entrepreneurs;
- Poor access to information;
- Entrepreneurs lack long-term vision;
- Lack of dynamism among the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Ltd.

Opportunities

- Incoming of the fibre optical cable will foster e-commerce;
- Land is still available for development projects;
- Access to finance is relatively easy;
- Willingness of financing institutions and angel investors to help in the SME development;
- Facilities such as Mauritius Business Growth Scheme and those offered by Enterprise Mauritius are also available to Rodriguan entrepreneurs.

Threats

- Counterfeited products
- Relative isolation of the island;
- Climatic disturbances;
- Lack of competitiveness vis-à-vis imported products;
- Limited market

Turning Weaknesses into Strengths

- Setting-up one-stop-shop for both aspirants and existing entrepreneurs;
- Review human resource capital;
- Setting clear-cut time frame for processing of applications e.g leases and permits;
- More schemes to boost entrepreneurship;
- Better spill-over of existing schemes;
- A mechanism to evaluate the contribution of the private sector on the economy.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that the main objective of the *assises de l'entreprenariat* was to generate inputs in view of the preparation of a strategic plan for entrepreneurship development in Rodrigues. In fact, Mr. Guillouzo, director of the IFE has started working on the preparation of the strategic plan since last year but needed additional information through a participatory approach to be able to finalise the plan. He will be in Rodrigues for a validation workshop by the end of this month and will submit his report by the end of the first week of May 2013. The plan will constitute the basis for formulating policies to promote entrepreneurship and

make it the engine of job creation and economic progress in line with the mission of this Regional Government.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, SMEs are the backbone of the worldwide economy. Rodrigues should not be an exception to this trend. As I have said on several occasions, a strong, vibrant and efficient SME sector will ensure the inclusive and broad based economic and social integration. It has been noted that for years, our SMEs have remained more or less artisanal and traditional, with little focus on innovation and are less export oriented. It has also been observed that entrepreneurship is a route, which is chosen as a necessity rather than as a credible career option. Thus, SMEs still remain unappealing especially to our highly educated youth who prefer to be employed in the civil service or private companies instead of establishing their own businesses, employ other people, and create domestic jobs. In addition, the gloomy and unstable international economic context, coupled with the relative lack of synchronisation of our SME supporting institutions discourage people from embarking on this venture.

SME development cuts across several sectors and therefore, a multi-sectoral approach must be adopted. There is the SIDPR but there no true strategic and practical document on entrepreneurial development in Rodrigues to which the Government and the non-state actors can stand guided. Such road map was found to be critical with a view to reaching our goals of creating competitive and sustainable businesses in Rodrigues with the ultimate objective of absorbing a large segment of our unemployed youths.

In this context, and as announced also in our last budget, it was decided that an '*Assise de l'entrepreneuriat*' where all stakeholders concerned would meet and act as a 'think tank' on the strategic development of SMEs in Rodrigues. Being a very technical piece of work, the aid of an international consultant in the name of Mr. Raymond Guillouzo, director of IFE was solicited in drafting the strategic document, which will constitute the major document for shaping policies in the domain.

FENCED PROTECTED ZONES/SYLVO-PASTORAL AREAS

(No. B/62) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to fenced protected zones, sylvo-pastoral areas and similar fenced areas on land under government responsibility, he will, for the benefit of the House:

- (a) list and table the full list of these zones specifying their extent, date or year of creation, location and actual state of conservation;

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- (b) state how many trees or other have been planted island wise and where in view of the reforestation programme; and
- (c) state if grazing animals have been authorised in any of the areas/zones and, if yes, when and why?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am tabling the information asked by the Respected Member at Annex I and II. **(Appendix XI)**

As regards to part (b) the number of trees planted island wise in view of the reforestation programme up to date is as follows.

As regards to part (c) following representations from the “*Association des Eleveurs*” of the Eastern Regions of Rodrigues about difficulties they were facing to feed their animals in the prevailing dry season at that period of time. The Executive Council at its meeting held on 13 July 2012 decided that animals be allowed to access the Grenade Perimeter for grazing.

HEAVY RAIN/RODRIGUES

(No. B/65) Mr. J. C. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to heavy rain which occurred in Rodrigues lastly, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:-

- (a) which region was affected mostly and if an evaluation was carried out to situate the causes;
- (b) what action is being taken to overcome the problem identified; and
- (c) if any person was compensated and the reason attached thereto?

Reply: After the heavy rain of 22 and 23 February 2013, a survey has been conducted around the Island. Some regions have been affected, mostly in flood prone areas such as coastal zones.

My Commission has identified the different causes and actions are being initiated accordingly. For example, the cleaning of rivers like Fond La Digue, Baie Lascars and Camp du Roi are ongoing. Drains are being cleaned to avoid flooding in some regions.

Furthermore, my Commission is finalizing matters for the issue of Work Orders for the construction of box culverts and drains in certain villages.

As regards part (c), I am also informed that nobody has been compensated.

MISSIONS OUTSIDE RODRIGUES – COMMISSIONER/OFFICIALS

(No. B/66) Mr. J. C. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to missions effected by Commissioners and officials, including officials from the Tourism Office, outside Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House:-

- (a) table the list of missions effected per Commissioner and per official since February 2012 to date together with the list of countries visited, per diem paid and the outcome thereof; and
- (b) state if any incident has happened to the participant(s) during the different missions and, if yes, to state the problems encountered?

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the list of missions effected by Commissioners and Officials of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly including officials from the Tourism Office outside Rodrigues since February 2012 to date as well as the country visited. I wish to further inform the House that the officials participating on official mission overseas have been paid subsistence allowance at approved rates to cover costs of boarding, accommodation, inland transport, etc. The amount of subsistence allowance paid depends on the country in which the mission is carried out and as per circular issued by the Ministry of Finance. **(Appendix XII)**

As regards part (b) of the question, I am not aware of any incident happening to the participants during the different missions outside Rodrigues.

DISTRIBUTION OF WATER – LOCAL REGION NO. 2

(No. B/68) Mr. J. C. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others whether, in regard to the distribution of water in Local Region Number Two to date, he will, for the benefit of the House:-

- (a) table the frequency of distribution from February 2012 to date per village; and
- (b) state if the quality of water distributed to the inhabitants is according to the norms?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (a), I am hereby tabling the frequency of distribution of water from February 2012 per village, in Local Region No. 2. **(Appendix XIII)**

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As regards part (b), the quality of water distributed to the inhabitants is of acceptable/within norms.