

**RODRIGUES
THIRD REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Debate No. 9 of 2013

Sitting of Tuesday 26 November 2013

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

(Mr. Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

Debate No. 9 of 2013

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2013

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ADJOURNMENT

MATTERS RAISED

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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, C.S.K.	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,
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, G.O.S.K.
Clerk - Gopall, Mr. Navin
Deputy Clerk - Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick
Serjeant-at-Arms - Constant Perrine, Mr. Stenio

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Chairperson: Respected Members, we are pleased to welcome, amongst others two Members of the UNDP, Seychelles Delegation namely, Mrs. Betty Seraphene and Mrs. Elisa Socrate who are attending this Assembly today. Thank you.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PURCHASE – CT SCAN/DIALYSIS MACHINES

(No. B/151) Ms. M. D. S. Perrine (The Ninth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports whether, in regard to the purchase of new equipment to offer better medical services to people in Rodrigues (CT Scan and Dialysis machines) as announced in the Budget Speech 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand?

The Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports (Mr. I. Valimamode): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as announced in the Budget Speech 2013, this government aims at providing better medical services to our population by improving the infrastructure and equipment. One of the paramount measures of this government with regard to Health Services is the procurement of a CT Scan.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has been working in close collaboration with my parent Ministry since the beginning of 2013 for the procurement procedures of same. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, tender for 32 Slice CT Scan for Queen Elizabeth Hospital was launched on the 04 June 2013 with closing date 10 July 2013. Four bids were received and after evaluation at the level of the Ministry of Health, the contract was awarded on the 20 September 2013 to the supplier FTM Mauritius Ltd. to the tune of Rs 25,735,000. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have the honour and the privilege to affirm that the Health Services in Rodrigues will be equipped with a 32 Slice City Scan as from 04 December this year.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the same vein, I wish to announce to the Members of this House that six Haemodialysis machines as well as six electronic chairs to the tune of Rs 2.8 m. have been delivered and commissioned to the Haemodialysis Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital since July 2013. With the increased capacity of the Haemodialysis Unit from three machines to now nine fully operational machines only two sessions are being carried out

daily and consequently, no session are required after 06.00 p.m., unless urgent cases are being referred from the hospital wards. It has to be noted that before July 2013, three sessions had to be carried out daily and patients were reaching their homes after 09.00 p.m. *Ainsi, M. le Président, mes collègues de la chambre concéderont qu'il y a eu une amélioration colossale au niveau du service de dialyse à Rodrigues et que ma Commission compte poursuivre dans cette même direction pour l'année prochaine. Merci.*

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, usually we hear that these dialysis machines in Rodrigues are out of service or broken down. Can the Commissioner inform the House what has been forecasted in term of maintenance for these equipments as well as if any vacancy concerning, for example, Bio-Medical Technician for dialysis in Rodrigues?

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as far as break downs are concerned we have a maintenance contract with the bidders and this is being attended to at times on the very same day even if one of the machines.. As far as Bio-Medical Technician are concerned, we are working on it and we are recruiting one soon.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, thank you. I understand that a sum of Rs 25,735,000 will be paid for this contract. I would like to know from the Commissioner what was the original sum budgeted for this project "CT Scan" and whether the cost of Rs 25 m. will be met from this provision. And if, the Rs 25 m. exceeds, from where will he get the money to make the payment.

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

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Rs 25 m. are being... When you get a question, we must know your subject, the cost, budgeted cost, in regards to the value of the contract, which you are awarding. May be the Commissioner is trying to get the answer. This is a sign that he does not know what was the original budget. Another question I have is where, in which section.

Mr. Chairperson: Sorry to interrupt you, you cannot say this because he said: "I need notice".

Mr. J. Roussety: What I am saying is that there is no need for notice for this because it is a related question. If the Commissioner had done his homework, he would know that the budgeted cost was this and the allocated price is that. My question as a Member of opposition here is whether he has money to pay for it and if he does not have the money the budgeted money where will he get the money. If he says he needs notice, it means that he does

not know his subject. Another question I have is, where will he at the hospital. Has there been a space, special space, building or facility that has been prepared for this installation of this CT Scan and furthermore, whether by the end of 31 December, being given the equipments is arriving in Rodrigues on 04 December this year, whether the equipments will be fully commissioned to enable payment before 31 December this year?

Mr. I. Valimamode: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let me answer to the first question whereby Rs 23 m. were allocated for the CT Scan and the fact that the cost exceeds Rs 23 m., reallocation will be made from my Commission. As far as the space, we have already identified the space, where it is being carried out right now, to enable the apparatus to be installed at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the last question, the commissioning; yes, I would like to answer to both.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: In the same line as far as the space, which is being upgraded to house the apparatus? I know that it is an old building. I would like to ask the Commissioner whether he is contemplating to construct a new one because even the price of this apparatus Rs 24 m., whether he thinks that it is not wise to look for another space or build another structure to house this apparatus.

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, before ordering the CT Scan, a survey was carried out by technicians from Mauritius. These are technical matters and they found that there is no need for another building.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the computerised topographic scan helping diagnosis and requirement in terms of specialised medical officers like Radiologist, Neuro Chirurgien and others is needful. Can the Commissioner inform the House how he intends to make the CT Scan operational effectively and efficiently in terms of human resources? Will these specialised officers be posted in Rodrigues? Will they come to Rodrigues on turns? Will the outcome of CT Scan be sent to Mauritius for diagnosis? How will this be done?

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, first-of-all, I think the idea of having the CT Scan in Rodrigues is in itself a big step forward. Nevertheless, no specialised technicians are needed to operate the CT Scan. All the results of the CT Scan will be online and to that effect, 2 MB have been reserved on the bande passante for it.

Mr. J. Roussety: What we understand from the answer, which has been made here, is that there will be no specialised medical personnel attached to the

CT Scan on site in Rodrigues. Can the Commissioner confirm the information that he is installing a City Scan, I understand in an old separate X-ray, small building and that whereas in Mauritius, I went for a CT Scan in Mauritius, at Candos and there was a whole team, specialised doctors, general medicines who then specialised to operate radiologist etc. So, we will be having a CT Scan without the specialised medical personnel and he expects to complete it by the end of 31 December.

Mr. I. Valimamode: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to reiterate what I said before and to also stress that the CT Scan is a diagnostic equipment and that the Radiographers, they are called now the imaging technologist, they will carry out the test and we plan to send them to Mauritius for training. We were told that there was no need because each and every type of CT Scan needs specialised training. So, the training will be done here by the supplier and as I said for interpretation of the CT Scan, this will be done online.

CONSTRUCTION - BOXING CENTRE, MALABAR

(No. B/152) Ms. M. D. S. Perrine (The Ninth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports whether, in regard to the construction of a boxing centre at Malabar as announced in the Budget Speech 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand?

The Commissioner responsible for Health and Sports (Mr. I. Valimamode): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as announced in budget speech 2013, one of the milestones of my Commission is the construction of a boxing centre at Malabar. I am pleased to inform the House that after various sites visits and consultations with stakeholders a first draft for same was submitted by the team of consultants in July 2013. The document was approved after minor modifications. The consultants then handed over the draft tender document in mid July 2013. After consultations with the technical officers from my Commission, jointly with the technicians of the Commission of Public Infrastructure, the tender documents was vetted and floated on 23 July 2013 for a period of four weeks with closing dates to 26 August 2013. Fourteen (14) bids were received and after evaluation exercise, the contract was awarded on 20 September to Pro-Construction and Renovation Ltd. for the sum of Rs 6,293,000. Construction works started in October 2013 and scheduled to be completed in April 2014.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, allow me to inform the House that all the major minor projects planned for 2013 by my Commission have been successfully implemented. As such, our policies to redynamise and to bring *un nouveau souffle* to the sports community has started to give positive results judging by

the impressive performance of our young athletes in the recent 'Jeux de l'Avenir' in Mauritius whereby we obtained 51 medals as compared to the 42 in 2010, 45 in 2011 and 48 in 2012. I wish to jump on this opportunity to congratulate all the athletes, their coaches and their families for this success.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner under which Vote Item will the project be paid, one and secondly, whether he has in the part line other sports complexes project which will be implemented in the course of this year?

Mr. I. Valimamode: This will be done under the item of Sports Complex. To the second part of the question, actually there is a basketball and volley pitch being constructed at Dans Coco.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, therefore, may I ask the Commissioner, what is the total cost value of these new projects that he is undertaking right now?

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

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether equipment to perform boxing is available at his Commission to fit the centre or whether tenders for the purchase of same will be made and if yes, when?

Mr. I. Valimamode: I think actually we have around 400 boxers and what equipment they need the ring, we have a brand new ring and all they need are, gloves and all these, all these equipment are available.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether practice of boxing will be made during office hours and if yes, can he inform the House what provision has been made in term of sound proofing being given that at the ground floor there are officers.

Mr. I. Valimamode: We need to plan all the activities with the boxing. Right now boxing are not carried out during working hours because all the athletes, most of them they are students. Nevertheless, at times when need be we will look into the matter if there is a need.

ICT IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/153) Mr. A. Edouard (The Eighth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to Information

Communication and Technologies Development in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state the actions taken by this Regional Government in relation thereto since January 2013 to date?

(No. B/170) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (The Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the increase of internet connectivity in Rodrigues from 37 Mbps to 155 Mbps as mentioned in the Budget Speech 2014, she will inform the House where matters stand?

(No. B/175) Mr. J. Allan Ladd Emilien (The Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the increase in internet connectivity in the island, she will state if there has been any improvement in the connectivity thereof, since January 2013 to date, and if so, when and if not, what her Commission has envisaged or is planning to do in relation thereto?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission I would like to answer question B/153, B/170 and B/175 together as they all deal with the same subject matter.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as you are already aware ICT development is a priority of our regional government. This is why we are letting no stone unturned so that same be materialised. As regards to question B/153, I wish to inform the House that my Commission has undertaken actions in the following fields as follows:

- Training courses at the ICT centre for Excellence as follows:-
 - 195 for digital literacy course
 - 25 for Microsoft Office course
 - 157 are presently following courses in both digital literacy and Microsoft Office

Launching of three WIFI Zones at the following locations: the Youth Counselling Centre at Malabar; the Human Resource Development Centre at Malabar and the Maréchal Youth Advisory Audit Bureau. We also had the launching of ten learning corners at the following Community Centres:-

- La Ferme Community Centre;
- Mont Plaisir Community Centre;
- Lataniers Community Centre;
- Oyster Bay Youth Centre;
- English Bay Community Centre;

/UNREVISED/

- Grande Montagne Community Centre;
- Citron Community Centre;
- Centre Polyvalent de Citronelle Community Centre;
- Dans Bébé Community Centre; and
- Bigarade Community Centre.

We are awaiting for an eleventh learning centre/corner at Fond la Bonté for soon. We have also been working for the increase of bandwidth from 37 Mbps to 255 MBPs and this will be a reality very soon. The launching is planned for Saturday the 07 December and we are also signing this Saturday itself the contract for the award of feasibility study for the fibre optic cable project in Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to question B/170, I am informed that on the 09 November 2012 during the course of the previous budget 2013, the government of Mauritius showed its firm commitment to bring the island of Rodrigues on the same level of development as Mauritius in the ICT field. In that respect, this is why we decided to negotiate for an increase in bandwidth and as I have been saying this here, we negotiated at first for 100 Mbps and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) accepted to have an increase up to 155 Mbps and this will be funded under the Universal Service Fund. In this context, the Information and Communication Technology Authority (ICTA), the launch and bidding exercise on the 26 November 2012, inviting networking services provided at national level and public fix telephone network, licencees to submit their proposal for the project.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on the 30 May 2013, Mauritius Telecoms, Sky Vision was awarded the contract as the designated universal service provider for the provision of the additional 118 Mbps satellite capacity between mainland Mauritius and Rodrigues and the delivery of additional satellite capacity has been effective by the end of September 2013.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that in the light of additional capacity 118 Mbps Emtel Ltd. has been awarded 25 Mbps, Cell plus Mobile Communication Ltd. has been awarded an increase of 20 Mbps and Telecoms Plus Ltd. has been awarded a 33 Mbps additional bandwidth. In that respect, 78 Mbps out of 118 Mbps has already been allotted to the operators. It is also pointed out that further to correspondences between the ICTA and my Commission, it was agreed that internet provision is still a major floor and would require an immediate attention.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, hence the allocated bandwidth of 78 Mbps would be solely dedicated for internet provision improving existing connectivity and

provide new connectivity as well. However, I am informed that despite additional bandwidth has been allocated to operators necessary equipment need to be installed by each individual operator to provide the much-awaited improved connectivity.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that launching ceremony for the additional satellite bandwidth has been scheduled for the Saturday 07 December 2013 by the Vice Prime Minister, Honourable Xavier Luc Duval.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to fibre optic cable, I am pleased to inform that the contract has been awarded to A Vision and the signing of the contract between the Ministry of ICT will be carried out this Saturday 30 November 2013 at 10.00 a.m. in the presence of the Minister of Information Technology and the Chief Commissioner for Rodrigues.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Every day we hear training in this, training in that, training in the morning, in the evening. So, can I ask the Commissioner, she has been mentioning about more than 350 young Rodriguans being trained in ICT. What will be the output, if I have heard well; she said the 150 bandwidth will only improve internet connectivity in Rodrigues. Can I know how is she going to help these 350 young Rodriguans, which have been trained?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that everyone should be trained in ICT. So, the forty thousand people in Rodrigues should be trained in ICT though all of them will not be getting a job in the field because being ICT literate today is being straight forwardly literate. If someone cannot use ICT equipment today, I think it is normal... However, we have been planning for those young people who have been trained at the ICT Centre for Excellence, *je dois dire que nous nous avons fait les choses selon ce qu'il faut faire, eux ils avaient convoqués les réunions pour faire travailler les gens, nous on a fait tout les procédures qu'il faut. La formation pour préparer la population, préparer les jeunes. On est déjà en pourparler avec des prospective investors in the field.* No further than yesterday, we met someone who is showing his interest to invest in the sector in Rodrigues and if the member listens well, I said that 78 Mbps out of the 118 Mbps will be devoted for internet connectivity for household but the rest of the bandwidth will be allocated to develop ICT as a pillar of the economy as the Chief Commissioner mentioned in his budget speech. They are free to believe it or not, we will do it and we are sure we will make it.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, every time I hear the Deputy Chief Commissioner talking about the ICT sector in Rodrigues. I have got the impression that she is taking us for a ride. I refer to my question B/134, which I

put to the Deputy Chief Commissioner on 20 November 2012. In her reply, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I quote *“this is why our proposition to central government and to the Ministry of Finance was that internet connectivity in Rodrigues be upgraded from 37 Mbs to at least 100 Mbs.* With this rate, we would be in a position to attract investors etc. in November 2012, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and now the Deputy Chief Commissioner comes here to say that this will be a reality on the 07 December next where I quote another person, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech at paragraph 554, he mentioned I quote: “Mr. Speaker, Sir, the increase in internet capacity from 37 Mbps to 155 Mbps for Rodrigues announced in the budget last year has become a reality since this week. Can I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner, which is which from all this complex situation?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je l’ai dis, je le répète, effectivement les 118 Mégabits par seconde additionnel est déjà là. C’est déjà là parce que le contrat qui avait été signé entre le ICTA et Mauritius Telecom. ICTA a déjà fait tous ce qu’il faut et déjà mais maintenant il reste que les opérateurs utilisent le bandwidth qui a déjà été alloué à ces opérateurs pour qu’on puisse justement voir ce changement dans le bandwidth donc c’est déjà fait c’est une réalité. Les 118 Mégabits sont *available, commissioned* maintenant on attend le lancement officiel la semaine prochaine par les opérateurs et les gens vont sentir ce changement.

Mr. J. Roussety: M. le président, ce qu’elle raconte ici sur cette affaire est la preuve qu’ils ont mit le bandwidth, la bande passante et elle dit elle-même il y a le manque d’équipement. C’est la preuve que l’approche globale qui viserait à améliorer la connectivité d’internet à Rodrigues est absente. Ma question est par rapport, je ne sais pas si les membres ici sont au courant de la vitesse de l’internet ? Il y a un paradoxe à Rodrigues, je m’explique avant de poser la question.

Mr. Chairperson: Please come directly with your question. You cannot make a supplementary question that preface with a statement. Question please.

Mr. J. Roussety: There is no a statement, this is question time. I know as well as you that this is question time. My question is can the Commissioner explain why for example when you go on the internet with your mobile phone it is rapid because you pay on your mobile phone, you pay more money. This is a paradox. Mobile phones, which use mobile technology, are much more rapid than ADSL which use the telephone line. Is this not a commercial strategy by Mauritius Telecom and Emtel and I do not know who, to see to it that people move more towards mobile, encourage mobile and penalised ADSL because

you know that ADSL, going on the internet with an ADSL line is making you, if you want to get sick go on the internet with an ADSL line.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, les opérateurs ont leurs agendas, they are doing business mais si le membre pense que c'est une stratégie, ça c'est libre à lui de penser mais nous ce qu'on veut c'est justement que l'internet soit accessible à tous et c'est la raison pour laquelle on a travaillé pour ça et la question de dire qu'on a mit la charrue devant les bœufs ce n'est pas exactement ça. *They have been commissioners; they know that there are procedures to be followed* et que justement ces équipements sont pas *available off the shelf. These equipments they have been purchased and they are not yet in Rodrigues for these operators.* C'est ce qu'on nous a informé ce matin. *Donc*, this will be a reality soon but I maintained that the steps have been undergoing as they should be done, so no problem regarding "*met charrue devant les bœufs*" et peut être juste pour ajouter aussi que par rapport à ces jeunes qui sont déjà formés au *Centre for Excellence*, il y a eu une partie qui ont passés la sélection cette semaine pour travailler pour l'implémentation des ID card à Rodrigues. Je confirme que la formation leur serve à quelque chose.

Mr. J. Roussety: My question is, people, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, here on their telephone bill, every month they pay for ADSL. ADSL which is supposed to have such and such performance but this performance, you are the Commissioner for Communication Technology, I am sure she has a Facebook account; I am sure she watches over Facebook. How people are complaining, there is even a page. Do you know what is the name of the page? Hate you Orange ADSL, the page name is Hate you Orange ADSL because people hate Orange ADSL. Why? I myself I see it, we pay but we do not get the service. Is it not the duty of the Commissioner to investigate into why people pay money, which is scarce today in Rodrigues for ADSL and then they do not get the service. Most of the time the service is not good. I give you an example.

Mr. Chairperson: You have set the question, please now you wait for the answers.

Mr. J. Roussety: I have not finished, Sir. You know this is the third times you interrupt me in my questions.

Mr. Chairperson: Sorry, please sit down. Sit down, I am on my feet. If you want to set the question, you had time but now you can reply.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am not finished with my question. I have not put any question.

Mr. Chairperson: You are repeating the same thing.

Mr. J. Roussety: I am not repeating. This is the third time you interrupt me in my question time. I know the Standing Orders as well as you. If you have a problem, you just tell me I will not ask any question, I will leave.

Mr. Chairperson: I did not say this.

Mr. J. Roussety: We are here to do our job. There is a problem on the ADSL, I am trying to explain. I am here; I am paid to do my job. May be some people come here to sleep.

Mr. Chairperson: Please, carry on. Say your question.

Mr. J. Roussety: My question is, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, will the Commissioner in the light of what I have just explained with regard to the theft, I will speak of a theft. This is a theft by Mauritius Telecom. They make people pay for ADSL but the service is not good. The service is mediocre, the service is not good whether she will see to it that money that has been invested, the bande passante, which has been put at the disposal of those operator goes, this is what we want to those people who get the internet service good and not go through *portable*.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, ce n'est pas aujourd'hui que la connectivité à l'internet à des problèmes. Ça existe depuis longtemps. C'est la raison pour laquelle on a prit les taureaux par les cornes, on n'a pas voulu attendre la câble optique qu'eux ils croyaient venir depuis mars 2012, on n'a pas voulu attendre. C'est la raison pour laquelle, parce qu'on connaît le problème, on écoute les gens, on connaît la situation. Donc, c'est la raison pour laquelle maintenant on a lutté pour avoir *increasing bandwidth*. Ce sera lancer la semaine prochaine mais je pense qu'il faut attendre la semaine prochaine pour pouvoir commenter mais c'est mon rôle et je le sais et je le fais comme il se doit. Je vais veiller à ce que la connectivité à l'internet, les gens à Rodrigues ait une l'expérience. C'est ça qui est important et on travail pour ça et on attend la semaine prochaine, le lancement officiellement et à ce moment là s'il y a des soucis là on vient commenter.

Mr. Chairperson: Next, question please.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: I have one supplementary.

Mr. Chairperson: No, I said next question please.

At 11.06 hours the First Island Region Member, Mr. J. Roussety walked out of the Assembly.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT – ACTION TAKEN

(No. B/154) Mr. A. Edouard (The Eighth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to Entrepreneurship Development in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state the actions taken, since January 2013 to date, by this Regional Government to promote same and the outcome thereof?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this regional government is laying much emphasis on entrepreneurship development as a locomotive for job creation and economic development. From this perspective, since January 2013, my Commission has initiated a series of reforms and measures with a view to giving a boost to this sector. I wish to point out that we have to be realistic being given that the island is confronted with several constraints as geographical isolation, market limitation and the low entrepreneurial culture of this population. It is also noted that there were several administrative disfunctions and duplications, which were hampering the sector from

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, during this first quarter of fiscal year 2013, emphasis has been laid on giving support to all categories of entrepreneur including those at the very grassroots, the nascent and the potential ones by equipping them with the appropriate tools, know-how and all necessary support with a view to increasing the sustainability of their ventures.

I will now enumerate some actions which my Commission has undertaken since the beginning of 2013 to promote entrepreneurial development in Rodrigues eliminating the red tapes. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when it comes to setting up a new business or obtaining appropriate leases and licences in Rodrigues most entrepreneurs speak of lengthy cumbersome administrative procedures. To address this issue the role of Invest Rodrigues has been reviewed to better optimise its efficiencies and effectiveness as well as to focus on productive sectors more likely to create jobs and worth. Subsequently, all commercial applications, General Retailer, Snack and Tabagie are now being processed by the Commission for Trade and Licensing. Moreover, technical teams have been set up and are actively evaluating projects for recommendation for the granting of leases. Today the Executive Council has given approval to 57 commercial/industrial projects. Same have been forwarded to Cadastral Office for further actions.

Industrial placement in Mauritius, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with a view to upgrading the skills of our entrepreneurs in different areas, my Commission in collaboration with the Human Resource Development Council has implemented a job placement programme for our entrepreneurs in Mauritius. Some 22 entrepreneurs have completed a one-month placement in several enterprises in Mauritius. The job placement is beneficial to our local enterprises as far as transfer of expertise and savoir-faire are concerned. The programme will be and on-going programme and will be replicated by next year with a view to give a maximum chances to a larger number of entrepreneurs to explore new avenues and to help them to think outside the box, revamping the agro-processing sector through women empowerment.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, further to the visit of the UMCT team last year, my Commission has obtained a grant of \$40,000 to consolidate the agro-processing sector in Rodrigues. In that context, my Commission has fast track the registration of four women cooperatives within the SEMPA regions for a total of 53 members. The project entails several components including capacity building in entrepreneurship and food hygiene and security. The project has also made provision for a pre-processed unit at Graviers for lemon pre-processing and also consists in the reactivation of *Limon D'Or* which is operational since February 2013. Ultimately, this project is expected to provide a sustainable income and employment to the unemployed women community of the SEMPA regions. Similarly, I am pleased to inform the House that the contract for the upgrading of the IFAD building in view of its conversion in a typically Rodriguan restaurant for some 30 women, grouped in a cooperative have been awarded for the sum of Rs 2.5 m. and is near completion. Following the UN retreat in Rodrigues, also I am glad to inform the House that the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) representative of Madagascar, Maurice, Seychelles and Comores and the Chief Agri Business Development Unit, UNI de Vienne was on mission from 18 to 19 of November 2013. Mrs. Niel, a UNIDO Expert will be on mission to Rodrigues this week to work on the project document with regard to the lemon value change product and the end processed meat project.

Minority Leader: I think the Deputy Chief Commissioner is taking too much of the question time in replying such a long answer. This could have been done at statement time.

[Interruptions]

Mr. Chairperson: The Deputy Chief Commissioner may continue.

Mr. Chairperson: Les assizes de l'entrepreneuriat, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with our philosophy of participatory approach to development, an assize de l'entrepreneuriat was organised with all concerned stakeholders on the island to make a situational analysis of the actual SME sector in Rodrigues and to make appropriate recommendations to give this sector a new breath. More than 100 persons attended the workshop and the main objectives of the debate was also to have the necessary input for a medium term strategic plan for SME development in Rodrigues. I am please to inform the House that the strategic plan has now been finalised and the Rodrigues Regional Government is considering the different recommendations made in this document for an immediate implementation of the salient proposals.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, one of the main reasons why small businesses failed especially in their early stage is because of poor follow-up and coaching. Subsequently, a pool of 15 persons from various backgrounds have been recruited and trained to act as mentor. Ultimately, the objective of the coaching programme, the mentorship programme is to reduce the early death rate of nascent enterprises. Many entrepreneurs also have had the opportunity to participate in different fairs with the support of Enterprise Mauritius at SITEX in South Africa from the 28 June to 02 July, the ANUGA Trade Fair in Cologne, in Germany and also in the month of November in Reunion Island and also, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have developed new scheme made available to entrepreneurs..

Mr. Chairperson: Sorry to disturb you the Deputy Chief Commissioner. I know it is a main question there is a long answer but could you please shorten it, please.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have to elaborate on the different actions that my commission has been undergoing that is why the answer is a bit lengthy but I am nearly finished. We also organised *La Semaine Rodriguaise à Maurice*, where entrepreneurs have been participating and this have been a *tremplin* for them to market their products and this why in the light of all these we have seen that our products in Rodrigues, they got success on the Mauritian market and also on regional markets, this is why we are working on the development of the label for Rodrigues and actually I am pleased to announce that the Consultant recruited are actually in Rodrigues to develop the label and this will be important for the entrepreneurial sector in Rodrigues.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in light of entrepreneurship development, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether she had had consultations with the MIE, concerning the

implementation of entrepreneurship as a new subject as from 2014. Whether there will be a special syllabus for Rodrigues, whether there will be a special session concerning entrepreneurship in Rodrigues. Whether consultation has been made with the MIE concerning the manual.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, j'ai eu des consultations personnelle avec le ministre de l'éducation et de la formation par rapport à ce sujet le entrepreneurship au niveau des écoles donc l'année prochaine. On a discuté, il m'a informé que le programme c'est un programme générale, générique pour tout le monde et que c'est un début, un projet pilote. C'est comme tout le monde apprend les maths, c'est un niveau au niveau des collèges. Il y aura l'introduction de ce sujet là et avec le temps il y aura la possibilité d'avoir des sujets bien plus spécifique pour quand les étudiants vont choisir en forme quatre, forme cinq mais pour le moment tous les élèves vont avoir une notion dans *l'entrepreneurship*. *There is no need to have special attention to Rodrigues because business is business.*

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: M. le président, la commissaire a parlé de *Limon D'Or*. Je voudrais la poser la question est-ce qu'elle est au courant des problèmes que rencontre ces gens pour écouler leurs produits ? Est-ce qu'elle est au courant que quatre dromes de limon confit sont en état de décomposition à Maréchal. Est-ce qu'elle est au courant de ça ? Si oui qu'elle nous en parle.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, peut être que le membre parle de leur l'époque. Ça ce n'est pas vrai. Ce que je suis sûre c'est qu'il y a eu beaucoup de formation. Il y a eu des formations sur la conservation des produits et il y a des tests qui sont fait aussi parce que c'est la première fois qu'on le fait. Ce qui se fait les techniciens qui travaillent là bas et d'ailleurs ce n'est pas les dromes qui sont utilisés. Il ne faut pas dramatiser les choses. Quand on parle de drome à Rodrigues *c'est ban gros drome* alors que ce sont des pelles. Non non non, M. le président, je n'aime pas que les gens racontent des histoires *food graded containers* ce n'est pas drome, c'est très petit et il y a des tests. Il y a des tests qui se fait par le technicien qui est là bas pour rassurer, pour pouvoir être sûre qu'elle durer les produits restent, ces produits qui sont conservés et ce sont des tests normal. Si vous êtes des gens qui ont une notion de la science vous saurez qu'elles sont les tests qui se font et c'est avec le temps qu'on va savoir qu'elle est la durer de ces limons qui sont confit, combien de temps cela peut rester. Donc c'est un processus normal. Il n'y a pas de drome jeté. Je suis désolé, il ne faudrait pas induire la population en erreur.

Mr. Chairperson: Next, question, please.

FINANCE RRA

(No. B/155) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the finances of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for this financial year, he will:

- (a) give a detailed breakdown of expenditure as at to date and all commitments of Programme Based Budget (PBB) 2013 up to 31 December 2013 on “Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets” by each Commission and by programme and to table same; and
- (b) state if under any programme of the “Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets” there has been or there will be any excess of expenditure/under-expenditure on the budget provision and if so, to give the reasons thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am inform that as to date the cumulative expenditure has reached Rs 214.6 m. and further payments of some Rs 106.69 m. are being effected by the end of November. The expenditure forecasts for December 2013 stand at Rs 116.91 m. resulting in a revised total estimate of Rs 438.85 m. for this fiscal year against an approved budget of Rs 319 m. Additional provision of Rs 48.85 m. will be sought from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development accordingly. A summary of the expenditure per commission is being tabled while the detailed expenditure by programme showing excess of under expenditure is being compiled and will be tabled at the library of the Assembly shortly.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to the reply of the Chief Commissioner, whether I have well understood, by end of December this year, he has said that, a sum of Rs 116.91 m. will be entertained and that he will have a total expenditure of up to Rs 438 m. If this is so, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because I have not been able to have look at the paper which have been tabled, can I ask him whether all the projects that have been identified to be executed during this financial year falls within the total expenditure that he has been talked to be undertaken this year?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, all projects mentioned in the budget 2013 will be achieved and that is why we have the estimates for such and such contracts, sometimes it is over the sum mentioned. That is why we have to ask for more money from the Ministry of Finance but we must say also that construction of schools delayed because some contracts have to be launched and this will help us to spend certain sum of money BY the end of this year. Thank you.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I understand that because certain projects would be relaunched, that is, these projects he has not mentioned exactly which projects. First-of-all, I would like the Chief Commissioner to mention which projects exactly, will have to be relaunched, the reason why these tender exercise has been done, and it has to be relaunched and the reason and secondly, when will the project be executed, whether during this financial year or the next financial year?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, sometimes the sum of money mentioned in the budget is very low but we have to reduce certain projects mainly schools at Terre Rouge and Montagne Goyaves. We have some problems with those projects and these projects have to be relaunched but as I said all the money will be spent. I even say here that they will need more money that is why we are going to say with the Ministry of Finance will give us the additional sum of money to complete those projects. Thank you.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has mentioned the education infrastructure at Terre Rouge which will not be implemented. Is it the extension of the second phase of the secondary school or is it primary school. Which project is he really mentioning?

The Chief Commissioner: Well I said secondary school at Terre Rouge and the *école communautaire* at Montagne Goyaves but we should say also that some of this money has been reallocated on the project whenever we are going to spend all the money. So, the money is being reallocated throughout the project.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, now I want to ask the Chief Commissioner, these two projects together makes more than Rs 43 m. Which has been budgeted for this year and which the Chief Commissioner will not be able to undertake. With your permission, I will have to quote what he said on debate 21 August 2012. He said I quote: “it is the policy of this regional government to come out with a proper financial management framework as well as a proper financial regulation to further judicious use of our public funds”, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: Come with your question, please.

Minority Leader: The question is: Is what the Chief Commissioner is doing, is this what he called judicious use of public fund, sound financial management? Then why did he, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when the previous

government use such practices he said that it is against the normal financial practices.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are not stealing. It is reallocation. We had some problems this year 2013 concerning the consultancy. There has been a problem for the allocation of contract for consultancy. That is why we are a bit late in our projects but the money is being managed judiciously by the Rodrigues Regional government. We are not wasting money whether the money is there we are going to allocate it to other projects. This is how we worked, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question, please.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner was told to table a summary of the acquisition of non financial assets but here we see that we have the estimates from January-December 2013 for all the commissions, for six commissions but the estimates for the Chief Commissioner's Office does not form part of the table but the total is Rs 390 m. Can the Chief Commissioner inform us on that?

The Chief Commissioner: As I said, the information is being compiled.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question, please.

PURCHASE OF NEW EQUIPMENT – BETTER MEDICAL SERVICES

(No. B/156): The Minority Leader (Mr. G. Jabeemissar) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards to Airport Development at Sir Gaetan Duval Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the option (as per ECORYS report) this Regional Government has opted for; and
- (b) when the Expression of Interest for Consultancy Services regarding same has been launched indicating the closing date thereof and to table a copy of the list of bidders received, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, in August, I would like to refer the respected Member to my reply to question B/129. Allow me to quote a part of the answer, which reads as follows: *“The Executive Council has decided to proceed with option 3 with a possibility of proceeding with option 2 at construction stage in the first instance*

as this offers stronger opportunities as seriously recommended by the ECORYS Consultant, itself.”

As regards to part (b) of the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, an exercise of invitation for the expression of interest for Consultancy Services, for Design of runway extension and... works at the airport was advertised publicly through Procurement Policy Office (PPO) website on the 23 September 2013 with closing date 13 November 2013 at 13.30 hours. I am tabling a copy of the bidders.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, maybe my memory is not correct but during budget speech presented by the Chief Commissioner last year, he said that this Regional Government is going ahead with option 2 *comme recommandé par les consultants*.

Dans une question récente, M. le président, quand on lui a demandé encore une fois quelle option ce *Regional Government* ont-ils envisagé d’aller de l’avant avec la construction de l’aéroport, il a maintenu encore une fois que c’est l’option 2. Maintenant, je vois que le conseil exécutif a lancé son *expression of interest for option 3*.

That is why I asked the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to know which is which! He announced in his budget speech that he is going ahead with option 2 and now, he launched the expression of interest for option 3. That is why I wanted the Chief Commissioner to once and for most say which option the Executive Council wants to go ahead at the airport development of Sir Gaetan Duval.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in order to take maximum advantage of tourism potential and future socio-economic development of the island, the Executive Council of the new government of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly would opt for option 2 as initially recommended by Deloitte & Touche.

This option of the extension of the runway under option 2 enables Rodrigues Airport to accommodate airplane A319 aircraft serving all short routes. This may lead to a direct connection with Reunion, which positively affects the passenger demand on the Rodrigues-Reunion route.

The choice of option 2 goes in line with the vision of the government to go for the gradual development of the airport and by adopting this stage by Stage Development Strategy. Then, the next stage would be reduced by a proportion of the road preceding stage, as the work would have already been

undertaken. Consequently, this would lead to a reduction in the cost. The option 2 which consists of an extension of the runway by means of.... resulting in a 30 m wide 1800 m long runway capable of receiving the large aircrafts.... serving short whole route Mauritius-Reunion.

In fact, this option has been recommended by the consultancy firm. As such, choosing option 2 would always offer the opportunity from an airport planning perspective to go to a next step in airport development as to extend the runway further to 2000 m for 45 m wide runway as a later stage option 3.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I ask a question again. If the firm's intention is to go ahead with option 2 and then, further extend to option 3, my question is why does the Executive Council invites for expression of interest for option 3 and not for option 2? That is the question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because he has been talking about *rapport Delouche*, something like that, Deloitte but here, I was referring to ECORYS Report which is the latest report and which the Chief Commissioner, himself, he mentioned in his budget speech. He never referred to any other report rather than ECORYS and the ECORYS is clear. The four options are clear. If he decided to go ahead with one option, I think it is clear that the expression of interest should be for that option rather. Okay, that is why we need more clarification on that.

The Chief Commissioner: The clarification is clear. The Executive Council has decided to proceed with option 3 with a possibility of proceeding with option 2 at construction stage in the first instance as they offer stronger opportunities as seriously recommended by the ECORYS Consultant. Well, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we cannot understand. We say one option and in one option, there they have the second option. That means this is one option, which will allow us to go ahead with the second option. This is what I am saying.

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we all know that option 3 is an extension of option 2. Yes! Therefore, in your policy, your intention is to in the longer term, going ahead with option 3, is it not? Yes! So, why then, did the Chief Commissioner say that he never mentioned his intention to go ahead with option 3 and he stuck to option 2? That is, technically speaking, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, these are two different things. These options are totally different.

The Chief Commissioner: *Ene rentre dan lot do!*

The Minority Leader: *Ene rentre dan lot, alé nou pou guette toi kan ene pou rentre dan lot, to mem pou rentre ladan!*

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Yes, please, your question?

Mr. A. L. Emilien: The Chief Commissioner has mentioned that this will be done in phases and he also mentioned that it will bring, it will lead to a reduction in cost but the global trend, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, is that all prices go up. Can I know from the Chief Commissioner, how is it that there will be a reduction in cost when the work will be done in phases?

The Chief Commissioner: Well, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is a technical question. I need notice of the question.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the...

Mr. A. L. Emilien: I am sorry, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have not heard what the Chief Commissioner said according to...

Mr. Chairperson: He said: *‘technical, I need notice’*.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Can the Chief Commissioner inform the House on which option will the tenders be launched, option 2 or option 3? On which tenders, on which option will tenders be launched, 2 or 3?

The Chief Commissioner: Well, it is impression of interest. The tender has been launched for impression of interest for consultancy.

Mr. Chairperson: Before taking next question, I invite the Deputy Chairperson to take the Chair, please.

At this stage, 11.40 hours, the Deputy Chairperson took the Chair.

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question!

ELABORATION D’UN LABEL POUR LES PRODUITS LOCAUX

(No. B/157): The Minority Leader (Mr. G. Jabeemissar) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the *“élaboration d’un label pour les produits locaux”*, she will inform the House:

- (a) if any tender for the elaboration thereof has been launched and if so, when and to table a copy thereof;
- (b) the scope of work thereof together with the products concerned;
and

(c) when will the label become effective?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that in line with the policy of this Regional Government to promote entrepreneurship and make it the engine of economic development, quotations were sought from two Consultants who have performed the similar works with organisations such as SMEDA and Ministry of Business Enterprise and Corporatives. The offers received were evaluated based on the following criteria: expert with best qualification, expert with long working experience and Consultant with the lowest bid.

I am tabling the document requested and the most responsive offer was selected and contract for the supply of Consultancy Services to Forena for the sum of Rs 294,000 have been awarded and, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, the scope of the works is to design and implement a label that can be used by local entrepreneur to act as evidence of genuine quality Rodriguan products. This will be used mainly in sectors such as handicraft, agro-processing, woodwork, fishing and agriculture.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as per the terms of contract, the project will be executed in three phases: phase 1 – meeting with the different stakeholders in two times of three days within three weeks period, phase 2 – identification of elements which will form part of the label and phase 3 – implementation of the label over a period of 12 to 15 months.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Consultant is presently on mission in Rodrigues and is meeting the different stakeholders today, itself.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I do not know whether, because I have asked such a question, then, I suddenly heard on radio this morning that this label is presently going ahead. It is in the first phase. Yes, it is undertaking the first phase.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, let me remind the House what the actual Chief Commissioner said in 2005, “*nous travaillons à développer un label rodriguais puis, populariser ce label et exporter surtout vers Maurice et l’île de la Réunion* ». In 2005, he has been in power again since 2006 and I remember in 2011, in my budget speech, I also presented that same label to be undertaken by the then Regional Government because we know it is a must if we want our entrepreneuriat to go ahead.

Yes, I am coming with the question because I need to introduce. I need to set up the parameter in which we are going right now. I just also read this week in the newspaper, *regardez, M. le vice-président, 'gare aux faux miel'. Faux miel, ça, ce sont des risques.*

Maintenant, M. le vice-président, c'est bien qu'ils aient commencé à award the consultancy mais before implementation, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner what she is planning right now because she has said that the implementation period will take from 12 to 15 months. What does she envisage to do when this implementation stage will come to its final stage to have this in force in Rodrigues? What does she has in mind? What has she planned in order that this can be fully implemented? This is my question.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le vice-président, le *Minority Leader* lui-même a dit qu'en 2005, le Chef commissaire d'alors avait mentionné ce projet. Il était resté au pouvoir jusqu'en 2006 mais il n'a pas dit ce qui s'est passé en 2006 et 2011. Qu'est-ce qu'il a fait, lui, s'il trouvait parce que le faux miel, ce n'est pas un problème qui date encore aujourd'hui. Il y a beaucoup de temps. Depuis longtemps, ça a été là. Si vous croyez dans le projet et qu'en 2005, ça n'a pas été fait, vous avez eu cinq ans et demi de mandat, rien n'a été fait. Aujourd'hui, si on le fait, on le fait selon ce qu'il faut. C'est un besoin. On a compris. La population le demande. Les entrepreneurs le demandent.

Quand on participe dans les foires, on comprend la pertinence d'un label. Il y a des procédures à suivre et par coïncidence, par pure coïncidence, ce matin, le consultant est rentré hier. Il commence son travail ce matin parce que les procédures pour recruter le consultant ont démarré bien longtemps. Donc, ce qui fait que par pur coïncidence, il est là et j'ai discuté personnellement avec lui ce matin pour voir quelle est la planification, quelle est le *programme of work*.

Donc, il y a douze à quinze mois pour développer le label et il y aura aussi un temps après pour appliquer le label. C'est un travail qu'on fait en consultation avec les différents partenaires et surtout aussi, ce qu'on va discuter, on va avoir une réunion de travail cette semaine pour discuter qui c'est qui prend en charge le label après parce qu'il y a plusieurs possibilités. Ça peut être géré par une société privée, par le gouvernement ou par une coopérative quelconque.

Donc, tout ça va être décidé et rassurez-vous, je tiens à rassurer la chambre qu'on va faire les choses qui répond le mieux à notre besoin aujourd'hui. Qui c'est qui va le gérer, c'est une décision qu'on va prendre après mais on va devoir arriver jusque-là. Ce que je rassure c'est que ce n'est pas un

document. Ce n'est pas juste pour dire un label, c'est un label qui sera utilisé/opérationnel aussitôt que c'est prêt et ça va justement changer beaucoup de choses par rapport aux produits que les gens, les contrefaçons qui se fait à Rodrigues parfois par les Rodriguais mais qu'on peut voir aussi ailleurs à Maurice les produits *made in Rodrigues* mais qui ne sont pas exactement fait à Rodrigues.

Donc, je rassure la chambre que le label va se faire. Ça va prendre une année. Le consultant m'a fait comprendre que ça va prendre encore une année pour l'implémentation. C'est normal. Ça va prendre en compte les normes existantes. On ne va pas aller réinventer la roue. Il y a tout ce qui est *Food Act*. Il y a tout ça. On va prendre les normes existantes, on va rentrer dedans et on va développer quelque chose qui est propre à Rodrigues et qui fait la différence entre nos produits et les produits qui viennent d'ailleurs.

The Minority Leader: À en croire, M. le vice-président, au *Deputy Chief Commissioner*, si on a franchi ces trois étapes qu'elle a mentionnées, le label sera enfin prêt pour être implémenté. C'est ça !

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Encore une année.

The Minority Leader: Encore une année mais qu'en est-il du côté légal ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner : This will come !

The Minority Leader: Yes but that is why I asked you that question previously. Are you planning to come up with the regulation in this House? And, if yes, when?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le vice-président, when we come to the bridge, we will cross it. We will make exactly what should be made. We will do exactly what should be done and we will go up to the last step, which should be implemented. If there is recommendation for bringing a regulation, we will do it.

C'est ça le plus important, on va aller jusqu'au bout et ce sera opérationnel et ce sera utilisé par les entrepreneurs pour changer justement leur vie parce qu'il s'agit là du business, il s'agit de faire connaître Rodrigues, il s'agit justement de promouvoir les produits rodriguais. On va aller jusqu'au bout. Tout ce qu'il faut faire, on le fera en temps et lieu et la population sera informée.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House about the first phase of the label? I think that this will concern marketing of the Rodriguan products locally Mauritius and Rodrigues. Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether provision in the tender has been made for the way forward concerning Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP), concerning ISO so that these products... You say that there is a difference *dans nos produits mais quand même, il y a une uniformité concernant les procédures* so that these products can be exported internationally.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Effectivement, M. le vice-président, c'est tout ce qu'on a discuté justement avec le consultant ce matin parce qu'il n'y a pas que la région. Nos produits sont appelés à aller au delà de Maurice. Justement, on a fait mention. On a discuté de la possibilité ou bien de l'importance que ce label nous mène vers des certifications Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point (HACCP) et ISO et je dois informer la chambre qu'on a déjà commencé avec le *Pre-Processing Unit* qu'on va faire à Graviers. Déjà, on a commencé les procédures qu'il faut maintenant pour que quand cette unité de *processing* de limon sera opérationnelle, ce sera certifié HACCP. Donc, c'est clair que tout ça est pris en compte.

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question !

NEWLY UPGRADED ROAD JUNCTION AT BRÛLÉ

(No. B/158): The Third Island Region Member (Mr. F. A. Grandcourt) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others whether, in regard to the newly upgraded road junction at Brûlé, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) who designed same; and
- (b) if the recommendations of the Road Safety Committee has been obtained prior to the execution of the works thereat and if so, to table a copy thereof?

The Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the road junction at Brûlé was designed by the Contractor and cleared by officers of my Commission. As regard to part (b) of the question, the Road Safety Committee at its last meeting held on 19 November 2013, has decided that the traffic islands be removed and replaced by road marking to regulate circulation.

Moreover, the Committee has decided that traffic calming device like those at Mont Lubin be installed on the road from the said junction toward Brûlé Primary School for the safety of pupils.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, c'est ça où on parle de mettre les charrues devant les bœufs. Pourquoi après avoir construit la route, après avoir construit les *concrete islets* sur la route, je crois ça s'est passé depuis septembre, on a construit depuis septembre et après le 19 novembre, le Road Safety Committee vient et dit qu'il faut enlever ces *concrete islets*, M. le vice-président. Mais qu'est-ce qui se passe à la commission ? La question, est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire pourquoi est-ce que sa commission n'a pas vu, n'a pas cru bon d'aller consulter le Road Safety Committee avant de construire ce tournant à Brûlé ?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, let me inform the House that the Road Safety Committee never vetted nor given approval and recommendations before the construction of roads even from period August 2006 to January 2012. All adjustment and realignment were done during and after the construction.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure inform the House with accordance to the tender, who is responsible for the design drawing of the road before the Contractor is awarded same?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: As it has been in the past, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, all construction and design are being made by Contractors and vetted by the officers of my commission.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether, the design which was given by the Contractor was vetted, the original design was vetted and agreed by his commission?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: I have already answered to this question, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: I am asking the Commissioner whether, the original drawing/design which was submitted by the Contractor was fully vetted by his commission or whether, there has been amendment afterwards?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, it was fully vetted as I have replied in the first paragraph.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as far as the demolition of the islets is concerned, it has been agreed, it has been vetted by the commission, it has been built by the Contractor. Who will bear the cost of the demolition as well as the construction of lease? Will it be the commission or the Contractor?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this will be discussed with the Contractor. He proposed us that design and we have seen that it is not good. We will discuss with him about the payment.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner just said that his commission vetted the design and they approved it and then, he comes and he says that he is going to discuss with the Contractor. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this is government's money! This is our money, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir! Can he explain to this House which is which, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir? We need seriousness in this House, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir! Can he tell us who will bear the cost of construction and demolition of this islet?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we will discuss with the Contractor because we have seen that it is insecure for the pupils.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : You approved it!

Mr. S. P. Roussety: But regarding the cost, we will look afterwards.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether...

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : This is not correct!

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Whether the demolition...

[Interruptions]

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Whether the demolition of this islet will be considered as a snag work or a new work, where new cost should have to be incurred?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: I have already replied, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. This will be done after discussion with the Contractor and then, we will see what will happen.

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question! Mr. Spéville, please.

FORM III NATIONAL ASSESSMENT

(No. B/159): The Second Local Region Member of Maréchal (Mr. J. D. Spéville) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Form III National Assessment, he will inform the House as to if recommendations have been made for any change in the time and date schedule for the implementation thereof and if so, where matters stand?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, with respect to question B/159, the National Assessment as at form III has been introduced by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources as the implementation of the recommendation of the Education and Human Resource Strategic Plan for year 2008 to 2020. The Assessment Award implemented in a phased manner and on the pilot basis is 2013.

In some schools in Mauritius and as from 2011 in Rodrigues, the aim of the assessment is to evaluate the level of competencies acquired by students after the first three years of secondary schooling so as to enable teachers to identify students' academic strengths and weaknesses for corrective actions where needed. In 2013, the National Assessment for form III has been rolled out in all secondary schools in Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The assessment was conducted from Friday 18 October to Wednesday 23 October 2013. The timing corresponds to the period during which secondary schools are holding their internal examinations. These dates were approved by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources have taken into consideration that CPE, SC and HSC examinations were also being held during this same period. The subjects assessed were: English, French, Mathematics and Computer Studies and Literacy, Biology, Chemistry and Physics.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, my commission has not received any recommendations to date for any change in the time and dates scheduled for the implementation of the National Assessment Form III. However, I am informed by the Manager of REDCO Ltd. that following the conduct of the National Assessment Form III, the subjects department upon request from the school management as per usual practice, have carried out their own analysis and submitted a report on their.... The contents thereof are being compiled at the management level of REDCO schools for the identification of weaknesses of students and planning remedial strategies for improvement.

In addition, we have been informed that the quality assurance division of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources in collaboration with the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate is carrying out a quantitative and qualitative analysis based on performance data to be submitted by schools. A national report will thereafter be prepared and it is expected to throw light on the strengths and weaknesses related to teaching and learning and direct strategies for remediation.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this is a very important issue. You will agree with me that we have to evaluate the skills and competence acquired by students by form of examination. The timetable is very important. There should be fluidity in the setting of papers. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, Form III National Assessment starts nearly at the mid of October to reach the end of October, English was on 18 October, 21 – we have had French and Biology, 22 – Chemistry and IT and 23 – Maths and Physics. Between 18 and 21, there is a time gap. We understand these are languages subjects but as from 21 to 23, the timetable is too.... for our students in Rodrigues. We all know here that more than 50% of students in colleges dislike subjects like Maths and Physics.

This timetable causes much stress on the student and unexpected low pass rate was observed in subjects like Maths, Chemistry and Physics. We know that in Rodrigues, you have only the Administration of Education but I think that through fruitful discussion with authorities, necessary change can be made. Can the Chief Commissioner then see into it that discussion be made at his level for the welfare of our students in view of the linear schooling where we see that the National Form III Assessment will be strengthened? We see that from 15 October to 31 October, the examination could have been made more fluid concerning National Form III Exam. Can he see into it at his office that same be made for forthcoming National Form III Assessment?

The Chief Commissioner: As I said, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we are waiting for the report from the REDCO and as from then, we are forwarding this report and observations to the Ministry of Education and the Mauritius Examination Syndicate. The work is being done.

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question!

CONSTRUCTION OF “BASSIN RONDS”

(No. B/160): The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme (Mrs. J. Ravina) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others

whether, in regard to the construction of “bassin ronds” of capacity of 4m³ each as announced in the Budget speech 2013, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:-

- (a) the number of families who have benefitted from this scheme as at to date and table a list of the beneficiaries;
- (b) the criteria to benefit from same and table a copy thereof;
- (c) the modus operandi for the construction of same;
- (d) the amount earmarked therefor and under which vote item; and
- (e) the amount spent as at to date under this project?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, there is no construction of bassin rond of capacity 4 m³ each announced in budget speech 2013. So, answers for part (a), (b), (c) and (d) do not arise.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I beg to disagree with the answer of the Commissioner because in fact, this was mentioned in budget speech by the Chief Commissioner. Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, if there has been an error in whatever it is, but in fact, there are projects of bassins ronds. Yes!

[Interruptions]

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question!

The Minority Leader: Non, non, non! The answer!

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question, please!

CONSTRUCTION OF SHELTER – PORT MATHURIN MARKET

(No. B/161): The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme (Mrs. J. Ravina) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others whether, in regard to the construction of a shelter at the Port Mathurin market, he will state where matters stand?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, on the 11 September 2013, my commission invited sealed quotation from five suppliers for Design,

Fabricate, Supply, Install and Commissioning of Roof Shade to Piazza at Market Fair – Port Mathurin. Two bids were received but the procurement exercise was cancelled as the lowest evaluated bid was substantially above the estimated cost. Subsequently, the Consultant has been requested to prepare design for the shade and its construction would be contracted out.

The Minority Leader: The Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether, this will be done before the end of this financial year.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the quotation has been relaunched and all will depend on the bid of the tenders and if not, it will be for next year.

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question!

PROMOTION OF RODRIGUES AS A TOURISM DESTINATION

(No. B/162): The Sixth Island Region Member (Mr. J. L. R. Perrine) asked the Commissioner responsible for Tourism and Others whether, in regard to the promotion of Rodrigues as a tourism destination, he will:-

- (a) state the number of promotional campaigns attended by the Commission and the Tourism Office since 24 April 2013 to date and the outcome thereof in each case; and
- (b) table a list of the promotional campaigns together with the names of the different officials attending same and the amount disbursed for each participant for the different campaign?

The Commissioner responsible for Tourism and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, with regards to part (a) of the question, the answer is six. According to reports submitted by the different Officials, many people visited the stand of Rodrigues on each and every occasion and everybody who knows about promotional campaigns and fairs also knows that it takes time to see the outcomes.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am tabling the information asked by the Member.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, before waiting for the paper to come, can the Commissioner enlighten the House regarding the

promotion of Rodrigues in Seychelles with regard to the project of Ile Vannée which forms part of the project of promotion of Rodrigues?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we are still working on it. We do not have a policy yet how to do promotional campaigns in Seychelles but I must inform the House that we have already started to participate in the Festival Créole in Seychelles and we are participating next year in the carnival. So, and, from experience, from discussions with the different people from Seychelles, we have seen that Seychellois are interested to come to Rodrigues. We are working on a policy to see how we are going to do promotional campaigns in Seychelles.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether, the experiences that he has obtained from Seychelles... He has just mentioned about carnival. Is he prepared to come up with carnivals in Rodrigues as well?

Mr. J. R. Payendee : Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, for the time being, no. We will participate in the carnival in Seychelles but we do not want to copy, you know, whatever people are doing but we are doing already sorts of carnivals here to attract tourists like *Festival de Kite Surf*. We will, this year, do a sort of *Festival de la Mer*, diving expeditions and all this is our type of carnival but we do not want to copy the same thing that Seychelles is doing or what about Brazil is doing. We do not want Brazil in Rodrigues. We do not want Seychelles in Rodrigues. We want Rodrigues to be Rodrigues with all its specificity. Thank you.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House with regard to the promotion of tourism in Rodrigues, when there will be the publication of new gadgets that is, posters, pen drives, maps and so on? I think that the last publication dates about five years ago. When will there be a new publication of these gadgets in Rodrigues to further promote tourism in Rodrigues?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I welcome this question because this is very interesting and the reason why most of the time, sometimes, our company, the delegation to some of these fairs is exactly to see how things are doing and what can we do to change things. I am glad to announce that we are working on the new ways of doing tourist promotion.

I must admit that for times like diving, there are no pictures about diving. Everybody shows only the beaches whereas there are quite a lot of things on Rodrigues that will definitely attract people. So, that is why we will be

participating early next year in January, itself, in the *Salon de la Plongée* and we are trying to do other things that Rodrigues has as specificity to make people come here. Of course, I will come. I am a professional Diver! Let me tell you. I am a professional Diver and I think I am the right person to go to sell diving on Rodrigues.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, referring to the paper tabled by the respected Commissioner, can the Commissioner enlighten us on the composition of these delegations? Since I see that, there are some participants in the papers who have attended these markets.

Mr. J. R. Payendee: There is no question. I do not see the question. Can you repeat the question?

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes. Tell us about the new policy, new criteria for selecting these persons to go on markets.

Mr. J. R. Payendee: The criteria has always been the same except for this government, we are sending professionals to these fairs. So, the policy is the same except and also, we take everything to the Executive Council. Everything is done in the right way and we send people who can really sell Rodrigues as a tourist attraction.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I see that in the composition of the delegation, there are trainees which are attached either to the tourism office or to the Commission for Tourism. Can the Commissioner inform us if these trainees are eligible to, if you are talking about professionals; are they eligible to go to attend the markets *au détriment des autres professionnels qui font partie de l'office du tourisme ou de la commission du tourisme*?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, let me inform the Member that these trainees are degree holders in tourism and they are professionals. If need be, I would invite the Member to come to the office and see the work that these people are doing, the quality of the work. So, these people are the future of the tourism sector on this island.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am not challenging the Commissioner but I would like to ask question. Can I ask the Commissioner again regarding the Ile Vannée Project because I see on the official site of the Ile Vannée Project that Rodrigues is not present?

I see different poles of excellence regarding Maurice-Seychelles, Madagascar-Seychelles, Seychelles-Réunion, Maurice-Madagascar and nothing regarding Rodrigues. I will refer also to the communiqué that has been launched/released on the 09 June regarding, I quote: “*Rodrigues aura également à marquer sa presence aux Seychelles lors de sa participation en tant qu’entité au Ile Vannée*”. Can the Commissioner explain to us this situation?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Ile Vannée Project, definitely Rodrigues forms part, Mauritius forms part of the Ile Vannée but we have been asking for Rodrigues to form part, the same as for the sport competition *Jeux des Iles*. We want Rodrigues to participate as an entity and the same thing we are working and if the Member checks on the internet and all the reports that have been written from the Ile Vannée Committee, they have said that Rodrigues will form part.

We are waiting for this and the Chief Commissioner, himself, has already discussed with the President of the Ile Vannée Committee. I have, myself, met Mr. Didier Robert and we keep discussing on that. I will be very happy to be in the next... I hope Rodrigues will be represented in the next committee.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether, he have had meetings consultation with Association du tourisme réuni (ATR) on the Stimulus Package, which has been given to Rodrigues in 2013 to see on its outcome to have a better picture on its outcome on tourism for Rodrigues and to better fine-tuning the same that has been given to Rodrigues for 2014?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, Association du tourisme réuni is not the entity for tourism here. They form part... I do not work only with this committee. I work with all the stakeholders who are involved in tourism on this island. Yes, from the figures that we get, and this is from the statistics that we get from the entry of tourists from different places from the world that the tourism office is working on. We do get the figures to see their importance and also, we have seen that the Mauritians keep coming to Rodrigues, which means that Stimulus Package is definitely working and I am glad that the government could do it again for next year.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

The Deputy Chairperson: Last question!

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I will refer again to the promotion of Rodrigues. I know that at the tourism office, we do have a website. Is the Commissioner aware that this website is not working actually?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am aware that the website is working but we are working on it to make it better. We have already contacted a professional from Mauritius who is helping in this project.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner, I think, is telling false information to this House. I have been on this site this morning.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I have got a point of order! The respected Member cannot come... It is unparliamentary for a Member to say that the Commissioner is giving false information. So, I think that the Member should remove this word.

The Deputy Chairperson: Mr. Perrine, please, you should not input motives on other Commissioners or Members of this House.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I apologise. I remove the words, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, but I would like to... I have been on this website this morning and if you go to this site, the access tells you the page you requested was not found.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, how come the Commissioner now come and tell us that the website is working when it is not working? Can he explain to us?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: I did not say that, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. What I said is that we have seen that the website needs to be updated and we are already working with a professional in this field and of course, if you are building a road and you have some work to do, of course, you put a plate to say you cannot go today because you are working on it. That is what we are doing. We are working on it. Maybe when you went this morning, somebody is working on this page and you cannot work on the page and at the same time look at the page. This is what we are doing, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether there has been a certain arrangement with the last promoter of this website to frequently update same?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question! Next question, I said!

MISSIONS IN MAURITIUS AND ABROAD

(No. B/163): The Sixth Island Region Member (Mr. J. L. R. Perrine) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to missions in Mauritius and abroad, he will, for the period January 2013 to date, state:-

- (a) the different missions attended by him and the different Commissioners together with the reasons therefor and indicating the outcome thereof; and
- (b) the costs incurred for each and to table a copy of all the missions?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, with regard to Mauritius and abroad, I am to inform the House that I effected 13 missions to Mauritius and one mission abroad since January 2013 to date. My colleagues Commissioners effected 11 overseas missions and 27 missions to Mauritius during the same period. The details and costs incurred for each mission are being tabled.

The Deputy Chairperson: Next question!

TRAINING FOR ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

(No. B/164): The Sixth Island Region Member (Mr. J. L. R. Perrine) ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to training for Entrepreneurs in India for the period 2012 to date, she will:-

- (a) give details about these training;
- (b) state the criteria for selection of the candidates together with the names of the beneficiaries and to table a list thereof; and
- (c) state the costs incurred per participant as at to date and from which item vote funds were made available for same?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Indian Technical and Economic Programme was launched in 1964 and is today the cornerstone of the government of the Indian's International Corporation efforts owing to its wide geographical coverage and its innovative forms of technical partnership. In a mail dated 18 April 2012, the High Commission of

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India informed that the number of slots awarded to Mauritius has been increased to 170 and its status of utilisation reviewed in September and October 2012.

The ITEC Civilian Training Programme is fully sponsored by the government of India, which includes return international airfare by excursions or economical class, course fees, accommodation, hostel or hotel, leaving allowance of Rs 25,000 Indian Rupees per month. Candidates are expected to meet the expenditure for their meals from this amount and as per established guidelines, the training is offered to employees and officials in government, private and public sector, parastatals, universities, Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The applicant should have minimum five years experience, should be aged between 25 to 45 and should be medically fit. It is to be noted, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, that the decision for grant of scholarship rest solely with the Ministry of External Affairs Government of India.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the ITEC/SCAAP Training Programme is offered two semesters: semester one – from 01 April to 30 September and semester two – from 01 October to 30 May. Every semester, the financial secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development issue a letter informing the Island Chief Executive's Office about the number of slots in selected training fields for Rodrigues. Thereafter, the circular is forwarded to all departments of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, Parastatals and private sectors in Rodrigues.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, it is to be noted that the course offered and the number of slots reserved for Rodrigues varies each semester. Upon receipts of applications, a screening exercise is being carried out by the Human Resource Development Centre to check eligibility of applicants based on the following criteria: employees and officials in government, five years experience as I mentioned earlier and they must have working knowledge of English to follow the course.

Thereafter, verified applications are submitted to the Indian High Commission and it is to be noted that applications must reach the Indian High Commission before two or three months of the commencement of the course. Upon selection, the High Commission of India will inform the concerned department or agency who will in turn, inform the applicant.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regard to part (b) of the question, I am hereby tabling the criteria for the selection of the candidate together with the

names of the beneficiaries for period 2012 to date and as regard to part (c), the only cost incurred per participant is the cost of returned ticket Rodrigues to Mauritius and Mauritius to Rodrigues and the cost is met from vote item Training.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can the Deputy Chief Commissioner inform the House whether special attention is given to *Entrepreneuriat Jeunesse* at the level of her commission and if yes, what facilities exist, what facilities are given to them to follow training abroad for example, India?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, so what we have seen, what we have observed, is that all these trainings, they are dedicated for public officers or people already engaged in parastatal. While we are focusing on entrepreneur, that is, young people leaving schools and this is why I, personally, negotiated with the Indian High Commission, Mr. Pritam Singh where, we proposed, I proposed on behalf of the Regional Assembly, that these trainings in entrepreneurship be dedicated to entrepreneur and training in other fields: Management, Human Resource and so on, be dedicated to staffs of parastatal bodies and he agreed to this proposal.

But, however, he informs me that the decision remains with the university and students, those who want to follow the course, they should meet the criteria and actually, our main problem is that those people engaged in *entrepreneuriat*, very often, they do not fit in the criteria. So, we are looking to negotiate for out school students who will after their training in India, enter in the Entrepreneurship Sector. So, this has been taken into consideration.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, it is good. We get our young people trained but many parents have been questioning about the seriousness of this screening exercise. We have noticed and it is a fact that the training in India was done about September, October that is, the third term, the third semester for our pupils here and we have seen that there are many teachers that have been selected to go to India for this screening. I think we are not against these people getting the chance to study abroad.

[Interruptions]

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we are not against. This is not my phone. Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we are not against these people going to India but the thing is I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether it is the right timing for these candidates/applicants to get screened positively to go to this? Yes, the timing because in the third term, we have the

exams, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. Many parents have been questioning about this exercise, allowing teachers to go for training in India during the third term.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le vice-président, on fait appel aux gens pour qu'ils fassent leur application. Ils sont sélectionnés. Ce n'est pas à moi ou bien la commission de venir dire à la personne que vous devez... La personne a sa responsabilité envers son employeur, envers son travail. C'est à lui de décider. La première sélection est faite à Rodrigues. C'est l'université qui décide si la personne a la bourse ou pas. Moi, ce que j'ai appris aussi, c'est que quand les écoles, elles relâchent les professeurs, elles font les arrangements à l'intérieur de l'école.

Donc, jusqu'ici, on n'a pas été informé officiellement qu'il y a eu des problèmes. D'ailleurs, ce n'est pas current practice that only teachers who are going there. So, those teachers who go, mainly, I want to point out teachers teaching Business Studies, this is related to their fields; this will help them in their work. So, I do not see where there is a problem in that.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether public officers are allowed to follow this training?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I already answered to this question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, does these participants are... because my question was especially on training of entrepreneurs. Do these officers who attend or public officers or whatever they are, attend these trainings? Have they been there *au détriment de certains entrepreneurs qui auraient la possibilité d'y aller, d'y assister ?*

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le vice-président, j'ai déjà répondu à cette question. J'ai dit que jusqu'ici, ces formations sont dédiées aux personnes du gouvernement ou bien des corps paraétatiques et que nous, maintenant, on a négocié pour que ce soit les personnes, les entrepreneurs qui sont majoritairement les auto entrepreneurs. C'est maintenant qu'on a fait la négociation pour ça. Donc, on a eu l'accord du *Indian High Commission* qu'ils vont aller dans le sens que nous avons demandé.

The Deputy Chairperson : I suspend the sitting for one hour for lunch.

At 12.30 hours, the Assembly was suspended.

On resuming at 13.30 hours with the Chairperson in the Chair.

LEGAL ADVISERS

(No. B/165) Mr. J. S. Swee (The Seventh Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the legal adviser appointed by the previous Regional Government, he will, for the benefit of the House:

- (a) state the yearly allowance which was paid from the date of his appointment to the end of his contract; and
- (b) table same, giving details with regards to cases/works concerned together with the outcome, thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that Mr. Marie Jacques Laval Panglose, Barrister-at-Law was appointed Legal Adviser on a part-time contractual basis under Rodrigues Regional Assembly by the previous regional government as from March 2007 for a period of one year and was renewed thereafter up to 02 February 2012. I am also informed, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the monthly allowance paid to the Legal Adviser was an initial package of Rs 19,400 revised to Rs 29,000 in July 2008, a month plus salary compensation at approved rate to perform the following duties:-

- To offer legal opinion and advise sought by the Executive Council and the Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
- To draft legislation of regional laws and regulations;
- To appear in Court on behalf of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

As a retaining fee, a total cost of Rs 2,137,976.99 has been paid to him during the contractual period. This contract with the previous Executive Council also made provision for the payment to him of additional fee for the drafting of specific bills to be presented by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and for appearances in Court for the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and this was subject to discussion on an ad-hoc basis as was required.

With respect to the part of the work for a total cost of Rs 3,013,640 has been paid to him for the period August 2006 to March 2012. Thus, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a total of Rs 5,151,666 was paid to the Legal Adviser

exclusively of air tickets, hotel accommodation and inland transport whenever he had to travel to Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am also informed that other lawyers were approached and their services retained on a case-to-case basis, namely Mr. Shiv Potayah, Barrister-at-Law and Mr. Woogassen Cowreea, Attorney-at-Law. Their fees were paid after discussions, with the then Island Chief Executive depending on the complexity of these cases. The fees paid to them during that period are Rs 69,000 and Rs 335,000 respectively.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House whether there has been any negotiation with same Legal Adviser and if yes, where the matter stand?

The Chief Commissioner: No negotiation with Mr. Panglose.

Mr. J. S. Swee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know if over and above benefits stated by the Chief Commissioner, if the Legal Adviser benefitted from other benefits also?

The Chief Commissioner: In fact, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, a lot of wastage of public funds has been noted during that period, with abusive claims and payment of legal fees as a result of mismanagement and maladministration. The following examples are fragrant:-

- (a) The part-time Legal Adviser accompanied Commissioner Mr. Louis Ange Perrine on mission in Reunion Island and claimed Rs 50,500 for advising the Commissioner nonstop during the mission. The sum was paid on 27 July 2011, in addition to Rs 31,460 paid as subsistence allowance for the three days mission.
- (b) In December of the same year, the same Legal Adviser claimed the same amount of Rs 57,500 after having assisted the same Commissioner as Counsel in the giving of a single statement to the Police on 01 July 2011 in a police case in which the Commissioner was involved.
- (c) The contract between the part-time Legal Adviser and the then Regional Government made provision for the Legal Adviser to draft legislation of Regional Assembly Laws and Regulations. Paradoxically, it also provided for the charging of additional fees for the drafting specific bills. In that connection, more than half a million rupees was paid on 05 May 2011 to the then Legal Adviser,

that is, for example, Rs 500,000 for the drafting of a Rodrigues Agricultural Reforms Bill, which was never passed by the outgoing regional government.

- (d) Though the main duty of the Legal Adviser was to offer legal opinion on advised sought by the Executive Council and the Commissioners of the Rodrigues Regional Council, a sum of Rs 230,000 was paid on to him 17 March 2011 to him...

Mr. Chairperson: This is not the relaxing time. You listen both sides.

The Chief Commissioner: A sum of Rs 230,000 was paid on 17 March 2011 to him for advice extended to Commissioner, Louis Ange Perrine in connection with lease of state lands. Rs 34,400 were also paid to the part-time Legal Adviser for vetting and ... of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Community Development Regulations. Fees amounting to Rs 46,000 were paid on the 27 June 2008 to the part-time Legal Adviser for providing legal assistance as counsel to a former Chief Commissioner in two civil cases in which individuals against the Chief Editor of a local weekly in the presence of the then Chief Commissioner now Editor in Chief of the same weekly. The same former Chief Commissioner benefitted of the legal assistance of the part-time Legal Adviser to give his statement to the ICAC to a tune of Rs 23,000 paid on 01 February 2010 from taxpayers' money.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, some high ranking public officers also made use of their positions to benefit from the services of these Legal Advisers as Counsel in their private cases as follows:-

- Rs 115,000 have been paid to the part-time Legal Adviser for assisting a former Acting Island Chief Executive giving two statements to the Police in July and August 2011.
- Rs 46,000 were paid to the part-time Legal Adviser for assisting a Departmental Head before the ICAC on 25 September 2009.
- Rs 51,750 has been paid to Mr. Shiv Potayah as Counsel on 21 September 2001 for assisting one Assistant Financial Officer, two Departmental Heads and one Acting Island Chief Executive called by the ICAC for investigation in alleged cases of corruption.
- Instead of seeking authority from the Ministry of the Civil Service Affairs for the provision of legal assistance involving such an amount of money, authority was sought from the former Chief

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Commissioner who approved the request made by the then Acting Island Chief Executive, thus usurping the powers of the Ministry of the Civil Service Affairs and Reforms.

- Rs 69,000 have been paid to Maitre Panglose as Counsel on 20 December 2011 for assisting a former Island Chief Executive as witness in giving a single statement in a case of alleged “*outrage against another agent of the civil authority*”.

Actions are being taken to eliminate such wastage. This government has unfortunately inherited a number of litigation on its assumption of office. Some cases might take up to five years or more in Court. The dominant aspect being leases of state lands for diverse object. We cannot afford to be over generous on legal fees per diem, airfares, transport and other facilities to Legal Adviser. This is why the new Regional Government appointed a full time Legal Adviser one renewable one-year contract alongside a proper agreement in cooperating reasonable terms have been worked out with part-time Attorneys-at-Law and such other professional. Such measure has drastically cut cost on fees for legal advice and assistance. Such measure has already yielded the expected positive result. Along the same vein, my office is currently setting up a pool of practicing Attorney-at-Law who wish to be enlisted for the purpose of offering their services with regard to the ordinary and complex Court cases and out of Court cases, such as, mediation, arbitration and negotiation on a part-time case basis. Expression of interest to that effect will soon be launched. Once the procedure is over, the pool will be constituted and cases assigned to the lowest bidders.

Mr. Chairperson: The table has been advised that questions B/166 and B/174 will be answered altogether by the Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Licensing.

ONION PRODUCTION

(No. B/166) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (The Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to onion production in Rodrigues for 2013, he will:

- (a) obtain, for the benefit of the House, information, from the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company (RTMC), as to:
 - (i) the total production thereof;
 - (ii) the quantity thereof exported to date together with the total value of export for that product; and

- (b) state if any planters have not been able to sell their onions and if so, the reasons thereof and to table their names?

(No. B/174) Mr. J. Allan Ladd Emilien (The Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to onion in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain for the period January 2013 to date, from the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company (RTMC), information as to:

- (a) the dates the company purchased onions together with the price thereof from planters of the region of Port Sud Est and Mourouk; and
- (b) the dates payment was effected in relation thereto?

The Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Licensing (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, the principal objective of the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Ltd. (RTMC) is to act as the executive arm of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to facilitate and promote the marketing of the local products of Rodrigues. Since its creation, the RTMC has focused its activities mainly on agricultural products, particularly onions which the company purchases from local onion growers.

Most of the onions purchased are exported to Mauritius principally through the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB) which has always been the main trading partner of the RTMC, with regard to the marketing of onion. There are also few private buyers who purchase onion from the Company at a lesser extent, and they are also free to buy directly from the planters.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this year Rodrigues encountered an unusual situation in the onion market due to certain external factors. In fact, some regions in Mauritius experienced an early harvest with a very high yield. Consequently, the RTMC was informed by the AMB (its main trading partner for onion) that there has been a considerable increase in the production of onion in Mauritius and that the onion market has reached saturation resulting to a surplus of stock, which is taking longer time to be sold. Subsequently, the price of onions on the Mauritian market drastically decreased from Rs 28 per kg to Rs 17 per kg. However, as a responsible government, committed to protect the interest of local onion growers in Rodrigues, the Executive Council decided in the first instance to grant a subsidy of Rs 3,400 per ton to guarantee a minimum price of Rs 30 per kg for Grade I and Rs 20 per kg for Grade II to local onion producers. The situation continued in Mauritius with downwards trend in the price of onion and on 30 September 2014, the Executive Council decided to increase this subsidy from Rs 3,400 to Rs 10,000 per ton.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the AMB then informed the RTMC it was no longer in the capacity to purchase additional onions from Rodrigues as it had already purchased a large quantity at a lower price in Mauritius itself, and had a limited storage capacity. In fact, they bought only 50 tons from the RTMC this year as compared to 155 tons last year.

In the meantime, a considerable stock had already been purchased by the RTMC and thus the piling up and consequently capital was tied up. Fortunately, the RTMC could use its business strategy to find other markets by turning to other private buyers in Mauritius to try to overcome this situation. However, the export was at a slower pace than expected. The company RTMC had also to agree to give it a longer credit period to the private buyers, as the absorption rate was low, as compared to AMB, which normally pays RTMC immediately after receiving the consignments. This situation has led to some liquidity problems to the RTMC.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, concerning part (a) of question B/166, I am informed that the total production of onion this year is not yet available and is still being compiled by the Commission for Agriculture. I am further informed that the RTMC has purchased 300.3 tons of onions from a total of 519 local planters. Total amounts of about 202 tons of the onions purchased have already been exported to Mauritius to date amounting to Rs 5,271,000.45.

As regards to part (b), I am informed that all interested planters have been able to sell their onions to the RTMC. Therefore, the other part of the question does not arise.

Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am a bit surprised, the question pertaining to problems faced by onions growers in Rodrigues was raised by me at adjournment on the sitting of 20 August this year. Then after that, Executive Council on 06 September took decisions for provision of subsidy to enable the company to maintain the purchasing price of onions at the same level as last year. Then again, 04 October the Council decided again that there has been an unusual increased as the Commissioner has just said.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we know that the question of selling is a question of supply and demand on the market. We all know that. The market exigencies, but Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the policy of this regional government is to encourage planters to grow, to export. Now when these planters, once they have done so much, they have spent so much in terms of labour and money and so on. They expect to find their products being sold and you know how much difficulties these planters of onions have had? In the first instance, they could not sell, then

when they sold, they did not get their money at time, in the right moment, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Until last week or this week there are still some planters which have already sold but who have not yet got their money, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Now I see that RTMC is just being used as a scapegoat but the problem lies with the RTMC. It lies with the government policy, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. There has been a bad planning, a bad policy in ensuring that this year that our onions growers get their dues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

The question is, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, will the Commissioner admit that for this year they have badly planned. There has been a wrong policy as regards the sale of onions to the RTMC. The procedures and so on, we are not going to get into that. Planters do not want to know what is the problem. The question is, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what apart from the RTMC... Yes, the RTMC is just the buying agent, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The question that the planters are asking. I am asking the question on behalf of the planters why has the Executive Council not been able to plan to put in place a mechanism right in order to get them out of this situation. This is the question. They are just relying on the RTMC.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, if the Minority Leader has listened to some of the different statements of this government from the Chief Commissioner, you must have heard that we are going towards agri-business. We are not talking about agriculture because agriculture also is a business and we have to teach, train our planters to become business people because there are situation I have said. These situations are out of our control. We are in a global market and we have to be able to face different and difficult situations and I am happy that the RTMC has been able to buy all the onions. I am talking about all the planters who have made a request through RTMC to buy their products. They have been able to sell it and to date those people, may be some people, they have not yet taken their money at the bank but money is available and they have been given their cheques. So, if they have not taken it, it is not the concern of the RTMC but let me tell you that at the beginning of the campaign we are working for the interest of the planters, we were getting good price from certain private producers in Mauritius. You can go and ask some planters from Graviers who have early harvest, the price per kilo was at Rs 32 per kilo and then as I said the problem only arise Rs 32 per kilo, some planters at Graviers because we are getting a high price. Then this unexpected situation because normally Rodrigues used to have its harvest very early before people from Mauritius. These planters from Mauritius they are businessmen. They know that they normally get good price that is why, especially the region of Belle Mare, they have decided to start their growing of onions at an early stage. That is why now, we in Rodrigues, we have to talk to our planters so that they can also take necessary measures so that next time they do not have such difficult

situation. And let me tell you that in 2012 there was a record high of export of onions in Rodrigues, 353 tons. This has never happened since we have autonomy, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and obviously there have been more planters this year because there was a favourable situation last year and so many people wanted to enter into this business but this is the law of the market also but this government has taken the right decision at least to give subsidy to maintain the price at Rs 30 per kilo as compared to those planters in Mauritius who sold their products at Rs 17 during this particular period of time, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I understand that the Commissioner is replying also to question B/174. I do not know if the Commissioner has mentioned the date onions were purchased in these regions and the date payment were effected. Has such been the case? If such has not been the case, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to wait for the reply of the Commissioner on this issue.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to information from RTMC, planters of Port Sud Est and Mourouk, the exercise to place as from 12 August to 11 November 2013 at a price of Rs 30 per kilogram for Grade I and Rs 20 per kilogram for Grade II and the payment was effected within a time frame of two to six weeks as from the date of purchase and right before buying from these planters they were informed about the situation and some of them did not agree to sell to RTMC but many of them also accepted the condition.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is a very delicate issue because I meet these people rather nearly every day and the information that the Commissioner has got is not necessarily the right one because some planters have sold their onions and two months, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, two months later they still have not got their payment. I have been told this morning, I have been to Port Sud Est this morning, there are planters, I can give you names, weights, the date the onions were sold and they are still waiting. One lady who is going to have more than Rs 90,000 for her onions, have been told that yesterday she will be paid but till this morning, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, such has not been the case.

Mr. Chairperson: What is your question please.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Can the Commissioner explain to the House why there is such a situation?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to my information all the planters have received, they did not receive payment by cash, they received their payment by cheques and out of the 519 planters who sold their

products to RTMC as at yesterday, 31 have not yet collected their money and cash their cheques at the bank but money is available to meet all the obligation of the company. So, just asked them to go and cash the cheques.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may be most of the planters have got their cheques but not all. I can assure the House. They have not received their cheques. You can go and ask one Laval Clair what are the problems he is encountering there with these planters? We can go and ask him. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner, how is it that the RTMC bought onions at Rs 17 half a kilo for some planters. You have been explaining that the harvest has been earlier than in Mauritius. Rs 17 per half kilo, some Rs 15 and some Rs 13. Can you explain to the House, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: First-of-all, there is a system of grading, so some people for Grade II, it is Rs 30 per kilo according to information that I have except for planters of Gravières who have an early harvest, they got it at a price of Rs 32 per kilogram but from the information obtained, I am not aware about what you are saying.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: In the region of Port Sud Est also, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, and Songes have been selling the onions for Rs 34 a kilo. The Commissioner has said, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that those people coming from Mauritius they are businessmen. When the harvest started earlier in Rodrigues, they bought it at a better price and later on when the harvest started in Mauritius, of course, the price went down. But is the Commissioner aware that parts of the onion bought by the RTMC was sold to those coming from Mauritius for a higher price bought in the name of RTMC and sold to those people coming from Mauritius and some onions went directly from the fields to the container park. Are you aware?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: As you all know, RTMC is a private company with an internal amateurs but I will ask to enquiry about what you have said. If it is true, it is obviously not a current practice but I will ask the Chairman to look into this matter.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform the House, there has been a long delay for..

Mr. Chairperson: I think the Minority Leader...

Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, thank you. I heard the Commissioner said that last year for the first time RTMC has broken a record in

exporting I do not know how many tons of onions to Mauritius but let me just remind him, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to statistic Mauritius last year was the year when the onion production harvested in Rodrigues was the lowest during the last five years. In 2008, we produced 408 tons on 20 acres but... This is official Digest of Statistic for Rodrigues but last year we produced only 475 tons on 44 hectares and at the same time, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the yield in tons per hectare last year was the lowest again. In 2008, we produced 20 tons per hectare whereas in 2012 only 10.8 tons per hectare. This is to say, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. This is what I said when I refer to what I said previously, it is a question of policy, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. How are we going to keep onion as being one of our pillars of the economy, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Many planters rely on this, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I heard the Minister in Mauritius said that they are trying hard to make Mauritius become self-sufficient in onion. What will happen if next year, Mauritius produce enough onion and will not buy our onions, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The question is has this Executive Council thought about it. Have we the means to store enough of our onions that we have produced so that we can have it, our onions on our local market and not to rely in Mauritius for import. This is my question. It is a very important.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in fact, we already had a meeting between the Commissioner for Commerce and the Departmental Head, the Commissioner for Agriculture and Departmental Head, former Departmental Head for Agriculture, the Island Chief Executive and RTMC to discuss the orientations but to come back with the statistics you are talking about, I know that in the past, we have said it here in this House that we used to have big figures about production.

Yes, these are officials but I know statistics and unfortunately, with all the respect that I have, these are not reliable statistics. These are not reliable and Members from the other side of the House, also, have mentioned it in the past. Relating to production...

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, on a point of order, the Commissioner is challenging the figures that I have just mentioned. How are we going to trust that his figures are genuine, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: For export, it is genuine because it is clearly written here. There is a note down here that these figures have been compiled from Cargo Manifest.

Mr. Chairperson: Now, we have got two last questions on this, one for Mr. Spéville and then one... Yes?

[Interruptions]

The Minority Leader: I raised a point of order concerning the authenticity of official statistics...

Mr. Chairperson: I will give my ruling some time later. Please, continue.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: As regard to what I have said earlier, the statistics for exports are reliable because the note down here, it is clear that these figures have been compiled from Cargo Manifest available at the Custom and Excise Department, Rodrigues. I know that here, this is reliable but for others...

[Interruptions]

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given that there has been a long delay for the payment of onion to planters, can the Commissioner inform the House whether money is being sought for payment at the out-turns for the capital of RTMC or whether, money has been sought from a commission via RTMC to pay these planters? First question. Second question. Being given that Mauritius has reached *auto-suffisance alimentaire* in terms of onion, what is the policy of the government concerning production of onion in the forthcoming years? Will the Regional Government, here, adheres to it that an *allocation à la production* is needed to help these planters for the production of this commodity?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I said earlier, we already had a meeting to discuss about future orientations but as to date, we have not yet come to a conclusion because we also need additional information because we do not know. In Mauritius, they are planning this but we do not know what might happen next year because there are some other factors but we are thinking a lot about the future for onion.

But as regards to payment as I said earlier, a lot of onion's stock has been piled up and capital of RTMC has been tied up in the stock of onion which is unusual but then, as a caring government, the Executive Council took the decisions in line with Section 16 (3) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Investment Management Regulation 2008, so it is legal and we have approved on 15 November 2013 to provide an advanced money amounting to Rs 2,621,970 to the company to enable to cope with this problem of cash flow which has been tied up in the onions' stock and so that to ensure that everybody can be paid because we will also have apart from onion, other training activities, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question for...

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: *Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this problem of onion, à mon humble avis, je pense qu'il y a là, un problème de communication. Ces planteurs, quand la RTMC est arrivée sur place pour récolter/ramasser les oignons, ils n'ont même pas été informé de la date du payement etc. Ils ont*

donné seulement un reçu concernant le poids et l'argent qui doit être payé mais à aucun moment, ils ont été informés sur la date du paiement de leur argent.

Donc, pourrais-je demander au *respected Commissioner*, qu'est-ce qu'il compte mettre en place pour améliorer la communication entre ces planteurs et la RTMC ou les autres instances pour justement diminuer la pression sur la RTMC en premier lieu et deuxièmement, pour que ces planteurs-là puissent savoir quand exactement, ils auront leurs dus ? Parce que dans un passé récent, les planteurs de Port Sud-Est comme a si bien rapporté notre collègue, ici, les planteurs de Port Sud-Est n'ont pas pu fêter dignement la première communion de leurs enfants parce qu'il n'y avait pas d'argent concernant la vente des oignons. *Can the Commissioner see to it that this mechanism is being put in place to facilitate these communication strategies within these people?*

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that we have also to be very careful with what some people are saying. Obviously, I have listened to many comments, many things about people and my colleague, Mr. Emilien, but according to information that he gave last time, when I went to cross-check these, it was not necessarily what the person reported. So, we have to be very careful.

Few weeks back, there was a press conference. Some people talking about inability to sell their produce etc. but these people, some of them, I cross them nearly every day and I went to the RTMC. These people never made a request and some of them were neither planters of onion. So, we have to be very careful about what people say because so many people just try to make it a political issue but it is not as...

[Interruptions]

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am surprised to see some of the officers discussing loudly in this House as if they are Members of the Parliament. Yes, I am surprised, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that you do not notice that officers are discussing loudly in this House as if they are Members of this House. No, it is not my duty. It is the duty of the Chairperson.

Well, according to what the Commissioner just said, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, je voudrais demander au commissaire, c'est peut-être vrai qu'il a été au renseignement et qu'il a rencontré des informations pas nécessairement vraies, je voudrais demander au commissaire s'il est au courant qu'il y a une vieille dame de 66 ans à Songes qui a vendu ses oignons le 06 août 2013 et qui a dû avoir acheté un billet pour partir à Maurice pour aller voir sa fille qui s'est brisé la jambe, a dû rendre son billet et perdre une partie de l'argent avec lequel elle avait acheté son billet parce qu'au 13 novembre 2013, M. le président, elle n'avait pas encore reçu son argent. Si le commissaire n'est pas au courant, je lui demanderai est-ce qu'il envisage d'aller se renseigner sur ce cas-là ? Et il y a d'autres cas comme ça à Rodrigues.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes, if there are names, you can just submit it to me and, as per the information, I will give it to RTMC so that they can find out the... information.

ENTREPRENEURIAL IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/167): The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr. D. L. Guillaume) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to Entrepreneurial in Rodrigues, she will state the:-

- (a) number of entrepreneurs who have been provided with training during the past two years; and
- (b) quantity and quality of products (excluding agricultural ones) exported by entrepreneurs to mainland Mauritius and abroad for that period?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that in 2012, 381 potential entrepreneurs have been trained and in 2013, some 706 potential entrepreneurs have received training and as regard to part (b), according to figures, in 2011, the amount of handicrafts sold is one tonne, 2012 – one tonne and 2013 – not yet compiled. Salted fish in 2011 – 1.025 tonnes, 2012 – 1.4 tonnes and for 2013 – not yet compiled and for dry octopus, in 2011 – 2.025 tonnes, in 2012 – 3.150 tonnes and 2013 – not yet compiled.

Mr. D. L. Guillaume: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as I listened about 500 entrepreneurs have been trained; may I know from the Commissioner whether, after training, there is a post-training programme at the level of her commission in view to empower these entrepreneurs?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, training is empowerment! Training is exactly empowerment and what we are expecting these trained entrepreneurs to do is to perform their job in a more professional way. So, the training is a tool to help them just to become more professional. So, there is no need to have any post-training because we are just expecting professional and better ways of doing things.

Mr. D. L. Guillaume: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I know from the Commissioner how much money have been spent for these training sessions?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not have the exact amount spent for the courses but whatever the sum spent, we believe it is *l'argent bien dépensé, l'argent bien investi* because when we train people, we are sure to have better result. So, I do not have the sum.

Mr. D. L. Guillaume: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we see that existing entrepreneurs are being faced with great difficulties. May I know from the Commissioner whether a survey has been carried out in view to address this deplorable situation?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not understand to which deplorable situation the respected Member is making reference to. So, if he can clarify, if he can give examples, then, maybe I will be able to answer.

Mr. D. L. Guillaume: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I know from the Commissioner whether, Rodriguan entrepreneurs receive same facilities as those of the main land?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, yes and we are investing a lot of time to ensure that all the facilities given in Mauritius to entrepreneurs, these are given to Rodrigues and this is why entrepreneurs are benefitting from Mauritius Business Growth Scheme (MBGS), from Enterprise Mauritius Scheme and we still even proposed to have better facilities than offered in Mauritius and we have proposed under the Restructuring Working Group (RWG) where it is worth mentioning that actually, we have a delegation under the chairmanship of the Mr. Raj Makoond here in Rodrigues because we are elaborating again other facilities that we want Rodriguan entrepreneurs to benefit from.

Mr. D. L. Guillaume: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I come on the issue of post-training. May I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether after training, there is a committee at the level of her commission in view to help these entrepreneurs to commission their project?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I cannot understand the question.

Mr. D. L. Guillaume: May I know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, from the Deputy Chief Commissioner, whether, after training programme done by her commission, at the level of her commission, there is a committee to help these entrepreneurs to commission their project?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Maybe the respected Member is enquiring whether there are people helping entrepreneur to start the project. Is that it? If this is the question of the respected Member, yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at the level of the commission, we have people who help entrepreneur and

what we are doing is that we are structuring this help and as from next year, we will have a more structured way of accompanying entrepreneurs and of course, with the view to have them performing better.

PRICE OF POWDERED MILK

(No. B/168): The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr. D. L. Guillaume) asked the Commissioner responsible Commerce and others whether, in regard to recent increase in the price of powdered milk in the island, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) how the price thereof has been worked for both the wholesalers and retailers in order to determine their profit;
- (b) the buying price thereof by the wholesalers and their margin of profit together with the selling price of each brand to the public; and
- (c) if there is presently lack of some brands in Rodrigues and if so, the reasons, thereof?

The Commissioner responsible Commerce and others (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the prices of controlled commodities in Rodrigues including milk powder are fixed under the Rodrigues Consumer Protection (Control of Price of Taxable and Non-Taxable Goods) Regulations. These prices are calculated and fixed each time a new consignment reaches Rodrigues as the purchase prices may fluctuate.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (a), prices are determined by the Price Fixing Unit of the commission according to a prescribed legal procedure after necessary verification and confirmation by competent authority of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection. The new prices become effective after necessary regulations made by the responsible Minister.

According to the Price Control Regulation for Rodrigues dated 1977, every importer of controlled commodities shall submit to the Price Fixing Unit within a delay of five days as from the date of entry of the vessel in Rodrigues, a return of cost specifying the purchase price of the commodities in Mauritius and other costs factors relating to transport incurred for the shipment of the goods to Rodrigues.

Upon receipts of the returns, the Price Fixing Unit will add up all the cost elements except freight charges in order to calculate the landed cost of the said

commodities in Rodrigues. I must, here, recall the House that freight charges are no longer taken into consideration as this Regional Government has decided to subsidise same since January of this year. A profit margin of 6% for wholesalers and an additional 7% for retailers is applied to determine the selling price at wholesale and retail outlets respectively.

As regards to part (b), I am tabling the paper relating to the wholesale buying price as well as the selling price to the public based on the last consignment dated 24 October 2013 for the most common brand of milk powder namely Red Cow, Farmland and Anchor.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the increase in the price of different brands of milk, recently, both in Mauritius and Rodrigues is due to the increase in the purchase price at source. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c), according to information gathered from the main importers of milk, there is presently sufficient milk powder of different brands in stock to supply the local market. There is no shortage of this commodity and my commission has not received any complaints in this regard.

Mr. D. L. Guillaume: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when there is a decrease in price, *ceci a été médiatisé à l'attente à la radio, à la télé, dans les journaux* but, may I know from the Commissioner whether at the level of his commission, the public has been informed of this increase in milk powder's price?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, maybe the decrease that you are talking about was announced only when we just implement the policy to subsidise freight but as a normal practice and it has always been like that, it is broadcasted maybe on radio for all consumers and businessmen to come and collect the price list. So, any person can have access to it at the level of the commission.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I know from the Commissioner whether, at the level of his commission, there is a mechanism? Because we all know that whenever prices will go up, there are some tactics used by businessmen, here, *pour cacher certaines commodités* for.... Can we know from the Commissioner if there is a mechanism at the level of his commission to prevent these.... and to protect the consumers?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I agree with the respected Member. In fact, when we have suspected cases over such situation, if the officers of the commission are informed, they have the legal right to go and make inspections in the stock and this has happened in the past but when we have reasonable grants to have suspicious businessmen doing these types of malpractices. But it is also a fact

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that the regulations gives five days because the prices normally will change when we obtain new consignments and the importers have five days. So, if there is a decrease in price, they will normally take longer time to the last maybe five days to submit their returns but if there will be an increase in price, on the same day, they will submit it but unfortunately, for the time being, it is illegal but we are trying to, we are working out a new regulation so that we try to overcome some of the problems that you have mentioned.

Mr. Chairperson: Wait, please. There are three minutes left. May I inform you that question B/176 and B/177 have been withdrawn? Yes, please.

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner inform us whether before there is an increase in the price of commodities, inspection at the level of his commission is being made on a sample of businesses to ensure that these products are available as I said to Emilien that the shopkeepers do not keep the products apart for money day.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that I have already answered to this question. In fact, I have said that the officers often go to inspect especially when we have the doubts or if we receive complaints from Members from customers.

Mr. D. L. Guillaume: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I want to know from the Commissioner. I repeat this question to the Commissioner. When there is the increase in the price of milk powder, may I know from the Commissioner whether the public has been informed by the media of this issue?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I have already answered to this question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: I will come to the point of order... Question time is over, please.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday 19 December 2013 at 15.00 hours.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

Mr. Chairperson: Now we come to adjournment matters. I understand that some Members...

MATTERS RAISED

« DISTRIBUTION DES BASSINS RONDS »

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: M. le président, j'aimerais attirer leur attention sur un cas concernant la distribution des bassins ronds à Rodrigues. Malheureusement, le commissaire n'a pas répondu à la question tout à l'heure et là, il se trouve qu'à chaque fois, il part. Donc, on peut déduire, M. le président, que soit il a peur des.... soit il ne connaît pas ses dossiers et vous allez être d'accord avec moi, M. le président, lorsqu'il n'est pas là, je peux dire n'importe quoi sur lui parce qu'il est absent.

M. le président, sur la distribution des bassins ronds, il s'est passé quelque chose. Il y a eu au sein de la commission de l'eau, concernant la distribution des bassins ronds, un cas de politique de deux poids deux mesures. Il y a eu un cas d'abus de pouvoir, un cas de favoritisme, *dominaire* et il y a un certain monsieur, je vais citer son nom, M. Noël Perrine, alias M. Timote.

À Papayes, un handicapé alité, il a reçu, M. le président, des matériaux pour construire un bassin rond. Après quelques jours, un officier de la commission est venu lui dire non malgré que son nom fût sur la liste, on lui a dit que les matériaux ne lui appartenaient pas, lui n'étaient pas destinés. C'étaient destinés à une groupe de personnes, un groupe pardon. Non parce que je pensais dans ma tête. *Eh mo ène kréole moi ! Mo pa français moi !* À un groupe de personnes surtout... C'est ça, j'ai dit une. Je pensais aux dames de la région. Je fais des erreurs. Des dames, des *Ti Piment*, oui, le groupe *Ti piment* de Papayes. Par la suite, M. le président, savez-vous qu'est-ce qui s'est passé ? Attendez la suite !

M. le président, est-ce que je peux continuer ? Le Chef commissaire adjointe m'a dit que je suis un menteur.

[Interruptions]

Mr. Chairperson : Please, proceed !

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Oui, il ne faut pas me déranger. M. le président, on lui a dit à cette personne-là que ces matériaux étaient destinés aux dames de

Ti Piment. Après, par la suite, *toujours bon* ! Par la suite, savez-vous qu'est ce qui s'est passé, M. le président ? On a retiré ces matériaux-là, on a donné ça à une personne qui est parenté à un membre de la majorité, M. le président. Nous avons la preuve et moi, je tenais en ce jour, de venir dénoncer cela. On parle d'aider les petites personnes mais là, on voit que c'est un cas de favoritisme et je tenais à le dénoncer dans cette chambre. Merci.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: C'est une honte ! C'est une honte !

« SECURITÉ ROUTIÈRE »

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: M. le président, à l'heure où Maurice met fortement l'accent sur la sécurité routière et s'en donne le moyen, nous constatons avec regret et beaucoup d'intérêt qu'à Rodrigues, rien n'est fait pour améliorer la situation. C'est pourtant un problème qui devrait nous interpeller tous. Les autorités concernées devraient prendre cette situation très au sérieux car il y a de la vie de chaque citoyen.

Dans plusieurs endroits de l'île, nous voyons des panneaux de signalisation pourries comme à Soupir ou quasiment inexistantes. Pourtant, le *motto* de ce présent gouvernement est de faire Rodrigues une île écologique, ce qui est au contraire, a beaucoup de signes de dégradation qui restent intacts sur nos routes et les bâtiments publics. D'autres panneaux sont complètement obstrués par la végétation, M. le président.

M. le président, les panneaux et marquages de routes sont essentielles à la sécurité des usagers, piétons comme chauffeurs. Selon leurs formes et couleurs, ils aident à prévenir d'un danger et à indiquer l'intention des uns et des autres. Par exemple, à la jonction des *track roads* et des routes principales, il y a beaucoup de panneaux qui sont cassées et non remplacées. À Mont Lubin, il y avait un panneau d'interdiction de tourner à droite vers la nouvelle station de service.

M. le président, le marquage des routes est très souvent mal fait et mal placé sur nos routes. Cela démontre le non-professionnalisme surtout auprès des étrangers qui visitent le pays. Par exemple, contrairement au marquage effectué à la Rue de la Solidarité qui permet d'anticiper clairement l'intention, celui nouvellement peint à la jonction de Rue.... Ghandi et Max Lucchesie provoque des confusions et à chaque fois, il y a des corrections à faire. Ce qui a été fait au rond-point de Brûlé est une aberration. À Mont Lubin, le panneau qui est supposé indiquer le passage pour piéton est resté dans l'herbe pendant plusieurs mois. Il y a encore beaucoup d'exemples qui sortent.... M. le président.

Maintenant, concernant le *speed breaker* à Mont Lubin, on voit que la population a été informée trop tard par rapport à son implémentation. Beaucoup de motos ont été retrouvées à terre juste après *the setting up of same on the road. There is also a lack of warning sign*. La dernière fois, le *Minority Leader* et moi, quand on était en train de traverser les *speed breaker*, on a entendu...

Qu'est-ce qui s'est passé en ce moment, M. le président ? Après la pose du *speed breaker*, les motos continuent de rouler à grande vitesse sur les tronçons Citronnelle, Mont Lubin en passant par Boutique Will. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'entre l'extrémité du *speed breaker* à droite et la bordure de la route, il y a une espace *greater than the width of a wheel*.

Je sais qu'il y a un *Road Safety Committee* à la commission des infrastructures publiques mais les fautes détectées sur ces aspects des choses, marquage des routes, panneaux, *street lighting alimé lizour teigne asoir* sont déplorables et ça laisse un sentiment de non-professionnalisme in the *day-to-day running of the business of Rodrigues* mais là, on ne comprend pas qu'est-ce qui se passe. Alors, il serait temps que des actions concrètes soient initiées afin de remédier à la situation.

Mr. Chairperson: Sorry, please. Do not disturb! *Je sais que M. Spéville est grand mais il n'est pas...*

Mr. J. Daniel Spéville: Des actions concrètes soient initiées afin de remédier à la situation avant d'occasionner des drames qu'on aurait pu éviter. Il n'y a pas plus sourd que celui qui ne veut pas entendre. Merci, M. le président.

« VOL SUR LES PERSONNES AGÉES »

Mrs. J. Ravina : M. le président, il y a un phénomène qui augmente de jour en jour. C'est des vols sur des personnes âgées. Récemment, il y a eu beaucoup de vols d'argent sur nos âgés, surtout les jours de payes. Il y a un groupe de personnes, on dirait même une bande organisée qui rôde autour des banques et autour de la gare. C'est vrai. Ils profitent sur les faiblesses de ces grandes personnes pour les dérober de leurs sous. Combien de nos aînés sont rentrés bredouilles et sont restés sans manger pendant le mois ?

M. le président, je fais un pressant appel au gouvernement présent de se pencher sur ce phénomène et pour savoir la vraie cause de ce problème social et si possible, essayer d'augmenter la vigilance et force de l'ordre pour protéger nos aînés. Tel est le respect qu'on leur doit. C'est tout et merci, M. le président.

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WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

“SPÉCIALE VACANCES 2013”

(No. B/169) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Youth and Others whether, in regard to the “Spéciale Vacances 2013”, she will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the objectives underlying same and the activities chosen; and
- (b) the number of participants targeted and the actual number of subscribers for the different activities?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Special Vacances Programme organised during school holidays targets in and out of school youths. It has main objectives:-

- (i) providing healthy and enjoyable recreative and leisure activities to the youth;
- (ii) strengthening the bond of friendship amongst the youth and getting away from daily routine;
- (iii) giving young Rodriguans opportunities to experience out-door activities and discover the multi-facets of Rodrigues through outings, hiking and visit to islets amongst others;
- (iv) enhancing youth awareness towards environmental issues, that is, conservation, preservation and protection of the environment; and
- (iv) marketing the various activities/services proposed and made available by the Commission.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, always driven by a spirit of creativity, my Commission has innovated this year through the inclusion of two cultural activities namely film projection at the Cultural and Leisure Centre of Mont Plaisir which was marked by the participation of some 200 participants and a cultural activity at CELPAC, Port Mathurin.

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Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Special Vacances Programme of this year comprises of the following activities:-

- (i) Visits and cleaning activities on Ile aux Cocos and Gombrani Islet;
- (ii) Randonnée Pédestre
- (iii) Visits to Francois Leguat Tortoise Nature Park and Cave Exploration;
- (iv) Film projection at the Cultural and Leisure Centre, Mont Plaisir;
- (v) Final 5th Edition Youth Karafun Competition on Sunday 1 December 2013
- (vi) Cultural activity at Port Mathurin CELPAC on Thursday 5 December; and

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Special Vacances Programme was launched on Monday 18th of November 2013 at Malabar with a “Randonnée Pedestre”, under which, some 230 youths were enrolled and the closing of the programme is due for the 5th of December 2013 with a cultural activity at CELPAC Port Mathurin.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we expected some 1800 participants to enroll on the programme and I am proud to announce that we have received 2300 subscriptions which shows an enthusiastic response to this year Special Vacances Programme. Thank you Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

PRIVATE LORRY TANKERS

(No. B/171) Mr. J. D. Speville (Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others whether, in regard to private lorry tankers contracted by the Commission to deliver water to the public and institutions for the period January 2013 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the:

- (a) number of lorries contracted therefore together with the names of their owners and their registration number;
- (b) scope of work assigned to each of the vehicles;

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- (c) tendering/procurement procedures for the selection process thereof; and
- (d) cost incurred for each lorry for this period

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my Commission has not resorted to any private lorry tanker to distribute water since January 2013.

**PUBLIC FOUNTAINS
- MALABAR, BIGARADE & MARECHAL**

(No. B/172) Mr. J. D. Speville (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others whether, in regard to the public fountains situated at Malabar, Bigarade and Marechal, he will, for the benefit of the House, state how same are managed for the time being?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the public taps from the fibre glass water tanks at Malabar and Marechal are being supplied on a 24 hours basis from Malabar pumping station and Marechal borehole respectively. With regard to the public taps at Bigarade which is supplied from “La collectrice en crete” the stop valve to the water tank is being closed at 14.00 hours every day; to maximize the volume of water being supplied to Quatre Vents Reservoir for distribution to the South West Section where there is an acute shortage of water. It was also observed that there was also an abuse on the part of some individuals who were taking water from these public tabs with large water bowsers.

PRODUCTION OF LETCHIS IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/173) Mr. J. D. Speville (Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the production of letchis in Rodrigues, he will:

- (a) give, for the year 2011 to date, the quantity produced together with the surface area of land cultivated;
- (b) state what is being done to enhance the cultivation thereof; and
- (c) inform the House what is being done regarding the massive problems of bats and other insects together with the problem of water adversely affecting the production thereof and for the possibility of an islandwise action to eliminate these problems?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, I would like to inform the house as mentioned in my reply Question B 29 earlier this year that litchi cultivation is still being done on a small scale basis in Rodrigues.

A litchi survey which is being carried out this year has revealed to date that 153 planters out of 3955 planters most of which are backyard cultivators are indulging in litchi production from a total of 419 bearing trees.

The surface area of land cultivated is estimated at 1700m². At present, since litchi cultivation occurs mainly in backyard, no official figures regarding the volume of production are being compiled by the Agricultural Services.

However, it is to be noted that being a biennial plant, litchi has a general tendency to exhibit irregular fruit bearing. This is characterized by a year of high fruit production is followed by a year of low fruit production. For instance, last year there was a good production of litchi at planters' level whereas this year, the same plants are resting to provide a good bearing again next year.

As regards part (b) of the question, my commission continues to produce and sell layers on station and there is better management of the mother plant improved production of layers. In addition, the planters/public are encouraged to indulge in the production and sale of layers as agri business. The planters are also advised to adopt good agricultural practices namely.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (c), I am pleased to inform the House that the Fruit protection scheme for the season 2013-2014 which was launched by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security has been extended to Rodrigues as from November 2013.

The scheme is implemented by the Agricultural Research and Extension Unit (AREU) which operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security.

Under this scheme, orchard owners and owners of fruit trees in the backyard are eligible to purchase anti bird net at 25% of the commercial value whereas the remaining 75% is paid by AREU. The scheme is also open to litchis, mango and logane trees and is open till 28 February 2014. The scheme allows for the purchase of one to ten units (for example 10 m x 12 m, 18 m x 12 m etc) and that one roll of 100m is equivalent to 5 units.

The scheme is being implemented in Rodrigues as follows:-

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- (i) The planters/public will have to make his/her application at the Extension Offices at Citronelle, Trefles, Oyster Bay Station, La Ferme and Port Sud Est Office as per the Application Form at Annex 2;
- (ii) The Extension Officers will then visit the applicant and thereafter upon eligibility will issue a voucher as per Annex 3 duly sealed to the applicant. The beneficiary will also be informed of the agreed suppliers in Rodrigues and in Mauritius; and
- (iii) The Suppliers will then forward their claims along with the vouchers to AREU for the payment of the 75%.

The agreed Suppliers in Rodrigues as submitted by AREU are (i) Blychem Ltd at Malabar; (ii) Krish Co. Ltd represented by Mr. Viyaye Kumar Mungul, Grande Montagne; (iii) Mrs. Vinita TAN WEE at La Ferme; and (iv) Mr. Perrine Renaud at St. Gabriel

As regards other insects, whenever a request or complaint is received, the Pest Control Unit of the Agricultural Service attends to same. In addition, through the extension services, planters are continually advised on ways and means to control these insects.

With respect to fruit flies, distribution of baits is being done on a weekly basis at the Agricultural Station.

Planters are being encouraged to indulge in rainwater harvesting. They are also advised to practise water conservation measures such as mulching, drip irrigation, use of compost, manure and windbreaks around orchards.

PROCUREMENT – ALL TYPES OF VEHICLES

(No. B/178) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the procurement of all types of vehicles, for the period January 2013 to date, by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he will, for the benefit of the House:

- (a) give a list thereof by stating the type, make and price CIF to Rodrigues; and
- (b) state if any vehicle was delivered with the official Coat of Arms of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly affixed thereon, and if so, the

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cost of this item per vehicle and indicating if same was removed and if so, the reasons therefor?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with the policy to renew the fleet of vehicle of the RRA on an annual basis, five additional vehicles were procured during this present financial year.

Invitation for bids was launched on 22 July 2013 and on closing date on 14 August 2013, three bids were received. The contract for the supply of the five vehicles was awarded to ABC MOTORS CO.LTD and the vehicles were delivered to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in October last.

The costs of the vehicles (CIF) are as hereunder:-

- (i) Three fully executive Nissan Pick Up Navara Double Cab Four wheel Drive at the cost of rupees one million two hundred and forty five thousand and cents thirty-five each (Rs 1,245,000.35) inclusive of VAT; and
- (ii) Two Nissan Pick Up Double Cab Four Wheel Drive Standard Type at the cost of rupees eight hundred and eighty-four thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine and cents seventy-five each (Rs 884,999.75) inclusive of VAT.

The vehicles were delivered with the official Coat of Arms of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly affixed thereon though it was not a requirement of the specifications at no extra cost. The policy of the Regional Government being to ensure that the Coat of Arms is not inappropriately displayed to ensure the upholding of its worth and value, the stickers were therefore removed.

STATE LANDS – AMENDMENT/STATE LANDS ACT

(No. B/179) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to state lands in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if this Regional Government will use its good office to see to it that amendment be brought to the State lands Act, in the light of paragraph 489 of the National Budget Speech 2014, to also include those families of Rodrigues with very modest means?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the paragraph referred to by the Island Region Member in his question is about legislative amendments to be brought by the Minister of Housing and Lands to give to those families in the island of

Mauritius who have a housing unit on leased land belonging to the State the option to buy the land at a nominal price not exceeding Rs 2000 per lot.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this measure cannot be looked in isolation as it forms part of the central government National Home Ownership Programme which also comprises of a Housing Empowerment Scheme to support middle-income families in Mauritius earning up to Rs 50,000 per month and a Social House Construction Programme for 1,765 families in Mauritius to benefit from either a housing unit or a serviced.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, any action that will be taken by the Regional Government regarding the legislative amendments to be brought by the Minister of Housing and Lands for the amendment of the State Land Act to implement the budgetary measures will no doubt be in line with the Regional Government's state land and housing policies enunciated in the RRA Programme 2012-2017 presented in this House on 30th March 2012 which can be summarised as follows :-

My Government will ensure equitable access to land through a programme of more efficient land allocation, through a reduction of the time between the application and granting of leases, the streamlining of the procedures for the "Pledge of Rights", in favour of the middle and lower income groups the establishment of a 'Fast Track System' for the granting of leases to the most vulnerable, mainly those who must rebuild their roof slabs and those considered as hardship cases.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, our moto for social housing is 'one family, one decent house.' This was, is and remains our mandate.

As such the Regional Government is mandate bound to request the Minister to ensure that it is stipulated that the proposed amendment does not apply to Rodrigues "*dans le plus grant respect de l'autonomie*".

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is what was plebiscited by the people of Rodrigues on the 5th February 2012 and the verdict delivered on the 6th of February 2012 is crystal clear on the need for respect of our autonomy.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the project of allowing beneficiaries of residential leases to become owners of the State Land occupied by them is not a project of the new Regional Government. When a Select Committee was set up by the previous government on 24 April 2007 by way of motion to examine this project we were then part of the Minority Group and *Fidèle à nos principes et à notre vision* we did immediately inform the then Chairperson of the RRA by

way of a letter dated 8 May 2007 that we will not form part of the said Select Committee because this project was contrary to our vision and political programme.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir the Rodriguans have lucidly captured our message on such a rejected project, has rejected it and have knowingly taken a decision with wisdom and intelligence to adhere to the OPR's plebiscited policy on land management which in short is "access to land is both a right and a responsibility to the landholder in a model of development that would gauge the all risks associated with all land management measures, propose the precautionary principles under which the RRA would gorge ahead, whilst safeguarding the overriding interests of the Rodrigues population and the future generation.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the lease of State Lands to the Rodriguan community for both residential and agricultural purposes has been a continuous practice of State intervention from the Mauritius Government since around 1945. It is a blessing for Rodriguan families that they do have this ready access to state lands. Poor families in Rodrigues are presently uniquely advantaged in as much as there is ready access to State Lands for shelter and they do not need presently to be protected against spiraling land prices as may be the case in Mauritius or among freehold land owners in Rodrigues itself. Very importantly, land cost does not enter into the components of a housing unit as it does in Mauritius. According to our records, there are a number of some 13,000 residential site lessees in Rodrigues out of which 1061 have been found to be of modest means by the NEF and are eligible for a NEF house on the State Lands leased to them. As a caring and compassionate Government due attention should also be given to the middle and low income group families. Pledging of rights is granted under Article 1778-5 of the Code Civil under a series of strict conditions but the Regional Government has widened the scope in respect of which applications for permission to pledge their rights in order to encourage business activities, purchase of immovable properties, purchase of vehicles and payment of university fees for students.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this government is fully conscious of the exiguity of the island, the high demand for competing needs, the need to make judicious use of State Land and the need to safeguard against abuse and over exploitation. Any change in land policy to accelerate change of leasehold rights into free hold rights need to safeguard against a major rise in property prices in Rodrigues which will militate against the middle-income Rodriguan families, in the same manner as many Mauritian families are today affected by the entry into the market of buyers laden with Euros or Dollars. A priority for the Regional Government in order to safetuard the long term needs of its lower economic

groups, is to retain a land bank of available lands that may be granted in lease to its lower economic groups as and when the need arises.

It is a fact that to date the residual amount of State Land left to the RRA that could constitute a land bank for economic projects is still not known. Contrary to the situation prevailing in Rodrigues, Mauritius is a country where the majority of land is freehold. In fact only around 20% of the land in Mauritius belongs to the state as compared to 90% in Rodrigues. Even within that 20% of land, some 70% would be State Forest Land or Land settlement areas under the control of the Ministry responsible for the subject agriculture. With the competing uses for public beaches, industrial and hotel sites, agricultural leases and lands vested in various Ministries, there is indeed limited amount of free stateland available. Contrary to Rodrigues situation, there is a significant pool of private land, specially from large sugar estates, in respect of which government may negotiate from time to time in order to carry out its social projects.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the change from State Lands to freehold will be a policy matter that necessitate deep reflexion. Once such a change would be implemented the owner would be free to do as he pleased with his land.

ILLEGAL FISHING IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/180) Mr. J. ROUSSETY (First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to illegal fishing in Rodrigues, he will, for the the benefit of the House, state if he is aware of any suspected cases of collusion between certain Fisheries Protection Officers and illegal fishers who operate freely during the hours of duty of the latter and if so, will his Commission propose or cause an enquiry to be conducted thereinto?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am not aware of any collusion between certain Fisheries Protection Officers and illegal fishers as stipulated in the question but I will be happy to know if such practices exist.

“SYSTEM DYNAMIC MODELING” - ORGANIZATION/PROJECT ISLANDS

(No. B/181) Mr. J. Roussety (First Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards a proposed “System Dynamic Modeling” by the organization/project ISLANDS, he will give details thereof and state if the scope of the SIDPR was fully taken on board?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the Indian Ocean Commission ISLANDS project is promoting the use of the System Dynamic Modelling as a tool to support integrated development planning. An introductory workshop was held on 28th and 29th October last so as to raise awareness about the methodology among public officers and identify areas in which the ISLANDS project can support Rodrigues in the evaluation and preparation of policy and strategy documents.

No decision has been taken yet as to whether the proposed methodology will be used to review the SIDPR and the ESTP.

ROAD SAFETY IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/182) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others as regards to road safety in Rodrigues, will he, for the benefit of the House, state-

- (a) If any action plan regarding same has been elaborated and if so, to table a copy thereof; and
- (b) whether there has been any consultation with the villagers in the vicinity of Mt Lubin and the public prior to the changes made on the road together with the placement of traffic signs and speed breakers at Mt Lubin and if so, when?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, at the request of the Chief Commissioner a report on Road Safety in Rodrigues was prepared and submitted by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, Land Transport and Shipping in collaboration with Road Safety Unit of Prime Minister's Office in June, 2012. A copy of same is being tabled.

The changes in traffic management at Mont Lubin have been made in view of the coming into operation of the new Petrol Station thereat.

The changes have been approved by the Road Safety Committee after consultation discussed with officers of the Road Safety Unit of the Rodrigues Police Force, Officers of my commission and upon the recommendation of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit (TMRSU) during its mission in May, 2013.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, these measures have been well accepted by the inhabitants of Mont Lubin, all pedestrians attending this part of Rodrigues for shopping and other businesses. The pedestrians appreciate these changes in the

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traffic flow at Mont Lubin, stating that this will reduce accident Even automobilists have welcomed this type of speed calming device, preventing them to drive at uncontrolled speed, thus preventing them from causing accidents.

Such devices will be installed in some other villages where automobilists do not respect speed limit.