

**RODRIGUES
THIRD REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Debate No. 1 of 2015

Sitting of Tuesday 03 March 2015

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. 1 of 2015

RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 03 MARCH 2015

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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), State Lands, Town and Country Planning, Fire Services, Prisons and Reform Institutions (Administration), 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, Cooperatives
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, Arts and Culture, Historical sites and Buildings

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

Debate No. 1 of 2015

PAPERS LAID

- (i) Certificate Financial Statements of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year ended 31 December 2013 (original); and
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POINT OF ORDER RAISED - MR. J. AGATHE

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have a point of order. By virtue of section 33 of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act. It is referred to the Annual Report. It is mentioned in the Act that the Chief Commissioner shall not later than three months after the end of every financial year forward to the Minister for presentation to the President a report reviewing the activities of the Regional Assembly during that financial year. Here, we have the financial year for 2013 and this Assembly has not received because this is mandatory, this Assembly, up to my mind, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, has not received the Annual Report for 31 December 2012. There is no annual report for 2012. How come now we have only the financial year ending for 31 December 2013?

Mr. Chairperson: It is not a point of order. (Not on recording)

The Chief Commissioner: I take notice. (Not on recording)

CYCLONE BANSI – DAMAGES/MEASURES

(No. B/1) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the passage of cyclone Bansi in Rodrigues, he will state on the:

- (a) different sectors which were mostly affected and to table the amount and cost of damages incurred to the economic sectors, buildings and public infrastructure, if any;
- (b) measures this Regional Government intends to take, if any, to mitigate the effects of flood on “*radiers*” and other prone areas of the island; and

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question it is fortunate enough that Cyclone Bansi did not affect adversely all the sectors of the economy. The economic sector which was mostly affected is agriculture. In fact, the heavy rainfall ranging from 124 to 167.2 mm around the island have caused the siltation of rivers, main drains and flooding of the agricultural land where water logged for 2 to 3 days but thereafter evacuated by natural drainage.

Otherwise, the road at Parc Tortue was damaged and dams at Pavé la Bonté, Cascade Pigeon and Camp du Roi were silted. Preliminary works was carried out within a week to render the road accessible and proper repair works for an approximate value of Rs 2.3 m. will be undertaken in the near future (upon the award of the rates contract) at Parc Tortue. Necessary remedial measures have already been taken to desilt the dams to the tune of Rs 180,000.

More than 85% of the population suffered electricity cut which was gradually restored by the CEB assisted by the Special Mobile Force. As regards the telecommunication sector, minor damages to the telephone network affected less than 7% of the subscribers. In other sectors, the damages were negligible.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that an island wide field assessment was conducted immediately after the cyclone in six regions by Agricultural Officers and that the total number of farmers visited during the assessment is 1374.

Concerning part (b) of the question, Mr. Chairperson Sir, the regional government initiated actions well before the passage of cyclone Bansi to mitigate the effects of flood not only on low water crossings also known as “*radier*” but as well as in all flood prone areas. To that effect, the Chief Project Manager and the Consultant, National Development Unit, (NDU) were on mission to Rodrigues from 03 to 06 April 2014 to carry out a comprehensive survey of the regions which are usually affected by floodings, including the low water crossings (*radiers*).

A first report listing the different flood prone areas including short term mitigating measures was submitted in June 2014. A preliminary engineering report on the proposed land drainage works for Rodrigues containing more elaborated mitigation measures and projects estimated cost was submitted in September 2014.

The preliminary cost estimate for the works related to flooding issues about Rs 375 m. out of which Rs 182 m. are for the raising of low water crossings (*radier*) by either providing a higher level crossing or the construction

of bridge and the remaining Rs 192.5 m. for drainage works. A request has been made to the National Development Unit for the financing of same.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, the Agricultural Services recommended the setting up of a scheme which would provide meaningful incentives to planters/farmers who sustained losses. Meaningful incentives in the form of subsidized inputs to those currently practicing agriculture so as to motivate them to kick off again their agricultural activities with a view to ensure the sustainability of the sector as a business after the natural calamity was elaborated.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is behind this rationale that in the aftermath of the cyclone Bansi, the Executive Council agreed to reboot agricultural production in Rodrigues by providing to all framers/planters:-

- (i) a 90% subsidy on seeds, eco-friendly fertilizers, eco-friendly pesticides, vitamins and de-worming drugs for animals. The RTMC is responsible for the sales of above products at the subsidized price;
- (ii) a one-off grant of Rs 2,500 to each surveyed planter/farmer who sustained losses to meet the cost of additional labour for the preparation of their land; and
- (iii) the setting up at the earliest of a Rodrigues Farmers and Planters Fund fitting the local context to provide support to planters and breeders affected by natural calamities or diseases and death of animal during droughts.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is worth pointing out that whilst some data is available on current agricultural production and land management there are still several data in the agricultural sector that are not regularly collected and made available to ease such post calamity assessment by technicians and for decision making by policy makers. This state of affair has impeded on the possibilities of making a more professional assessment of the damages and losses. It is expected that with the reform of the Agricultural Services, as proposed by FAO, the services of an Agricultural Economist and a Statistician will be available to strengthen this very weak area and to have such gaps filled once for all.

It is also regretted that the assessment of losses and damages was carried out in a way, which did not meet the expectations of management. For instance, important information required to implement the decision of the Rodrigues Regional Government, such as, the National Identity number of the concerned

planters/farmers, were missing because monitoring and planning at the supervisory level of the Agricultural Services were poor and insufficient. Bold corrective actions are being taken to review all aspects of post natural calamity assessment so that all the victims do not have to wait for long before they can kick off again their respective economic activities.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has just mentioned that in the wake of the passage of cyclone Bansi, the most affected area of our economic activities here is agriculture. He did mention that planters obtained seeds at a subsidized cost. Can I ask him what types of seeds were given to planters because he did not mention what types of crops were mostly affected? We need to know what types of seeds were given and whether there has been an assessment after the cyclone. Up to now it is more than two months, to see whether the sector has start up again and what is the production level as at that stage?

The Chief Commissioner: Well, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the seeds subsidized given to planters was usually vegetables seeds. As for onions and so on, we have those seeds at the RTMC. And it seems that agriculture has taken up and now we have vegetables and it seems that they are waiting for is the compensation of Rs 2,500 to help them to continue again for the production of vegetables and so on. We have also for the cyclone Amara, it seems fruits, bananas, mangoes and papayas, every cyclone these fruits are damaged and that is why now we have on the different demonstration plots by the government. Now they are growing new plants, small plants for bananas, papayas and so on. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner, il a mit le doigt sur un problème épineux et grave du secteur de l'agriculture à Rodrigues. Il à archi dit que l'agriculture c'est un de nos piliers économique le plus important. Là, il a parlé de *lack of data*. It is already more than three years that this Regional Government is in power, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner, is it only now that he has discovered that the major problem affecting this sector is lack of data. Since these three years, what has his Commission been doing in order to have the required data which will help him to plan for a better prospect for this major economic sector of our country, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? Without this, this sector will not boost up. We will always again and again come up with the same problem and can he tell us what he has just done in order to give a new hope to this sector, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, nous avons remarqué ça depuis 2012 et nous avons mis l'accent avec nos techniciens agricoles et c'est ça

encore un gros problème, il me semble nous avons remarqué que ces techniciens agricoles, on a vu ça l'autre jour avec la CIRAD que justement nos techniciens agricoles ont besoin d'une plus grande formation beaucoup plus qu'une formation professionnelle et des personnes sur le terrain. Et c'est pourquoi nous sommes en train de.. alors, il y a eu un mélange avec le Small Planters Welfare Fund, qu'on les voit jamais. Alors, qu'autre fois, au début nous avions mit, c'est ce que j'ai mentionné là pour les.. « *ah ben céki justement nou pé dire. Nu pou met en place* ». Justement, c'était dans le budget quand nous sommes arrivés en 2002. C'était là, mais après on l'a enlevé ça. On a enlevé, ça n'existe plus. Et on doit refaire justement pour qu'il y ait un Small Planters Welfare Fund pour que les planteurs Rodriguais contribuent à cela et quand il y a des problèmes et justement ce fond va les aider. Alors on a vu des planteurs participent a un fond Small Planters Welfare Fund de Maurice et quand il y a des cyclones on ne les voit pas. Alors, c'est ça justement qu'il faudrait voir. Il y a eu un peu de désordre dans le passé avec ici, là bas et maintenant on peut mettre quelque chose bien sur les rails avec des techniciens formaient. Et la FAO va nous aider dans ce sens, même avec un cadastre agricole. Tout ça on est en train de faire. Tout ça on est en train de faire. Justement on a remarqué ça depuis 2012 quand nous sommes arrivés. Un cadastre agricole à cause des gens qui continuent à faire des maisons sur les terres agricoles. On a eu un cas tout dernièrement là. C'est pourquoi justement il faudra revoir la structure même au niveau du service agricole. On est en train de revoir aussi d'après présenter par la FAO, un Manager à la tête de l'Agriculture ici avec des techniciens valables. C'est pourquoi on a parlé des statisticiens au niveau de l'agriculture il y a des officiers qui sont des statisticiens pour que vraiment on puisse avoir Monsieur un tel, il a tant arpent de terre, il plante du maïs, il plante des haricots et c'est comme ça on peut savoir tout au long de l'année qu'est-ce qui est planté. Il faudrait que nos techniciens agricoles soient des personnes au bureau mais des personnes sur le terrain accompagnant les planteurs et c'est ça ce qu'on veut. Et c'est pourquoi il faut une nouvelle formation à ces techniciens agricoles. Merci.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: *Merci, M. le président, j'ai écouté religieusement le Chef Commissaire parlait mais je suis en train de penser si les informations inscrit dans le Digest of Statistic as regards to Rodrigues is reliable ? My question is, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the price of vegetables; we can see at the market, here in Rodrigues, the price of one kilo of tomatoes is around Rs 300. What mechanism has been put in place so that the consumers do not feel aggrieve as regards to the price of vegetables in Rodrigues?*

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je sais que même à Maurice un demi kilo de tomate c'est Rs 120. Ce qui fait que chaque fois qu'il y a un cyclone, il y a un manque, les prix augmentent. Alors, nous aussi on se pose

cette question. Alors pourquoi le prix augmente ? Par rapport quantité, s'il y avait la quantité suffisante. On a même parlé hier avec des représentants de CIRAD concernant le haricot rouge. Le haricot rouge c'est sur la liste des produits qu'il faut protéger. Haricot rouge, le miel, le petit piment, le limon et tout ça, le safran, tout ça qu'il faut protéger et non pas que ça viennent de l'extérieur et puisse justement démolir tout ce qui est typiquement Rodriguais. Alors, c'est pourquoi on est en train de se poser la question est-ce qu'on ne peut pas faire deux plantations d'haricot rouge par an, c'est ça, alors qu'on fait une seule plantation. Alors là c'est une question d'eau qui se pose. C'est une question d'eau.

M. le président, si le le projet de dessalement de l'eau de mer, je répète encore ici, si le projet de dessalement de l'eau de mer que nous avons lancé en 2005 et que vraiment ils sont partis, ils sont venus, on aurait aujourd'hui 12000 m³ d'eau des-saliner et que cela aurait été utilisé pour l'agriculture. 12000 m³ d'eau désaliner et que cela aurait été utilisé pour l'agriculture. Donc, notre agriculture a souffert d'un manque d'eau et c'est pourquoi le Ministre des Finances justement a appuyé dessus. Il va mettre le paquet sur le financement de l'eau et on a eu un financement de l'eau pour l'Union Européenne. Il y a beaucoup d'organisation internationale qui s'intéresse à Rodrigues par rapport à notre vision de cette île Rodrigues. C'est ça qui est intéressant.

[Interruption]

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, you have the floor.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, le Chef Commissaire a parlé des techniciens valables à la Commission de l'Agriculture. Mais il faut lui rappelait que c'est lui le Commissaire c'est à lui de faire travailler ces gens là et de ne pas venir dire ici des techniciens valables. Il faudra qu'il fasse son travail.

M. le président, as regards to part (d) of the question, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner one question. He has been talking about measures taken well before Bansi regarding to meet again the effect of flood on "radiers" and the prone areas. Can he enumerate some of these measures, which has been taken as he says well before Bansi?

The Chief Commissioner: Especially for drains "radiers" and also rivers, drains *et les rivières* and at Camp du Roi there is a bridge. All the bridges must be drained but the problem is equipment to do these kinds of works. And, as this has been done by the Consultants of the NDU, Mr. ..., he came here last year and I mentioned it will be about Rs 375 m. to put into action

what has been said *et en suite j'ai parlé des techniciens valables*. Il y a des techniciens valables. Il y en a qui travaille. Il y en a qui travaille. Malheureusement, M. le Commissaire, ce que nous avons remarqués, M. le président, excusez-moi, ce que nous avons remarqués malheureusement, il y a ça dans la fonction publique des personnes qui sont sous l'influence politique. Alors ça il faut faire attention. Le problème de go-slow. Le go-slow, tout ça, justement. On c'est même des fonctionnaires ont été utilisés. Nous avons dit cela au Juge Domah qui était là bas, il faudrait que les fonctionnaires regardent le pays.

The Minority Leader: On a point of order. When the Chief Commissioner is pointing public officers, is attacking them, he should not forget that he is the head of this Regional Government, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I do not know to whom he is making... *il fait allusion à qui, M. le président, il fait allusion à qui ? Si moi je dénonce les fonctionnaires de son partie qui font de l'ingérence politique dans le service, M. le président, qu'est-ce qu'il a à dire ?*

Mr. Chairperson: What is your point of order ?

The Minority Leader: The point of order, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would ask the Chief Commissioner to remove this and to refrain from attacking public officers.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I did not mention any political party. I did not mention any political party. And, I did not mention all the public officers. I did not mention all public officers.

Mr. Chairperson: There has been no allegation, no personal allegation. So, you can continue with your answer.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have asked a question about the price. I want to know what mechanism has been put in place. Whether to import the vegetables from Mauritius or abroad to Rodrigues so as to make a balance between the demand for these vegetables and to reduce the high price on the consumers.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, concernant importait des légumes de Maurice ou ailleurs on n'a pas donné l'autorisation pour importer les légumes comme Maurice a permis d'importer des tonnes de carottes. Il n'y a pas eu ça de notre côté. On ne sait pas qui importe des légumes de Maurice. C'est pourquoi nous avons toujours dit à nos techniciens agricoles de contrôler c'est ce qu'on appelle l'importation des légumes de Maurice et la qualité de ces légumes et aussi l'importation des semences de légume. Pour savoir d'où ça

sort ? Il faudrait quand même protéger notre pays. Maintenant, s'il en manque c'est la loi du marché que les légumes augmentent. Alors avec le temps, ça va descendre quand les gens vont voir qu'il y a un tel qui vend moins cher, qui vend plus cher et ainsi de suite. Il n'y a pas de fixation des prix de légumes. Ça n'existe pas. Il n'y a pas de fixation des prix des légumes. C'est la loi du marché.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, part (a) of my question. There was also a part concerning building and infrastructure and I think here the Chief Commissioner has not given any reply to that. Can I ask him whether he is aware of this? I am going to table it. I consider this is also a public building, the Port Mathurin market. On top of it, on the roof. Just about the meat section. I think this was a solar panel heater. One of it has been blown off since Bansi. I personally took that picture and I printed it this morning just to prove it that this is a problem and still an eyesore in Port Mathurin. Is the Chief Commissioner aware of it and what does he intend to do, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

The Chief Commissioner: I will find out, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the Cyclone Committee or Natural Disaster Committee whatsoever committee, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner, *j'aimerais demander au Chef Commissaire s'il est vrai que le comité Natural Disaster or Cyclone Committee c'est rencontré juste après l'annonce pour la première fois cette année-ci juste après l'annonce du cyclone Bansi ?*

The Chief Commissioner: Non, M. le président. On c'est rencontré l'année dernière. Cette année-ci on c'est rencontré, oui avant le cyclone on c'est rencontré. Et c'est toujours aussi pour pouvoir, prévoir et aussi après. On c'est rencontré avant et après.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we see that in some villages some Community Centres cannot act as Refugee Centres because they need minor repairs. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner to consider this case as an urgent one because the concerned villages have to walk far away. I take the example of Eau Vannée. We have to walk far away from Eau Vannée to Rémir *pour se mettre à l'abri pendant le cyclone.*

The Chief Commissioner: Well, we have already discussed on the concerning the Community Centres, some are not equipped and we are working on that.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has mentioned desiltation work to the tune of Rs 180,000. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner, desiltation of dam would concern which dam? May be he has mentioned it in his reply and I did not listen properly. If such is the case, he can still skip this part of the question and the second part of my question is will this desiltation work be contracted out or do we have enough manpower and plant in the government centre to perform this desiltation works?

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of the question.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question.

PROGRAMME BASED BUDGET (PBB) 2014

(No. B/2) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Programme Based Budget (PBB) 2014, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the financial situation of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as at 31 December 2014 and to table a copy thereof;
- (b) if all the committed infrastructural projects and other programmes announced in the 2014 budget have been completed by the end of the fiscal year and, if not, to give the reasons therefor; and
- (c) the amount disbursed on each project so far and how the outstanding balance, if any, will be paid and to table a copy of same?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the financial accounts are being finalised and will be vetted by the Audit Office prior to making it public. The offices of the Audit Bureau will be in Rodrigues this week to complete this exercise. Once approved by the National Audit Office, same will be tabled in the library of the assembly as per usual practice.

As regards questions at (b) and (c), the detailed information is being compiled and will be tabled shortly. However, I am informed that the total Recurrent Expenditure for the fiscal year 2014 amounts to Rs 1,683,636,800 against a voted provision of Rs1,550,000,000. As regards Capital expenditure, the total expenditure amounted to Rs 485,324,928 against a voted provision of Rs 400,000,000.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to the reply of the Chief Commissioner, we clearly see that both for the Recurrent and the Capital Expenditure there have been over expenditure. Can he give an account; explain to the House about the excess on the expenditure on both Recurrent and Capital?

The Chief Commissioner: No, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, there is sometimes, what we call PRB increase and so on, you know, and as for Capital, there was an increase because we needed money to complete our different capital works especially the road of Gravieres and this was given to us by the Minister of Finance. I would like here to thank, the Ministry of Finance for having listen to us and helping us to finish all our capital projects. Thanks you.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can the Chief Commissioner give explanation to this House in 2014 Budget there was a voted provision of Rs 400 m. with regard to Capital Project. Among the number of project that this Assembly voted, as far as I remember, there were four desalination plants, which we know have not yet been completed. So, the money have not yet been spent. Correct me if I am wrong. I know that there was also the Community School at Montagne Goyaves which have not yet been completed. Therefore, the money have not yet been spent at all. There were also project of Area Health Centre at La Ferme which is not yet completed, Phase I. These are but a few projects that I can recall, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that are still ongoing, which were to be paid in 2014 Budget. And yet, the Chief Commissioner is telling us that he has to spend more money than the voted provision. Can I tell him whether these projects that he has paid were projects in the 2014 Budget or projects prior to that, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

The Chief Commissioner: Well, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I mentioned that the officers of the Audit Bureau will be in Rodrigues this week to complete this exercise once approved by the National Audit Bureau same will be tabled in the library of the Assembly. We are working in transparency. Yes.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I remember in 2013, I asked the Chief Commissioner what mechanism his office was going to put in place in order to have a better control over expenditure because he is the Commissioner responsible for finance, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I know that the Audit Bureau from Mauritius will be here to certify, to audit the account before it is published by the Director of Audit. We all know that. But in his office in Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what mechanism does he has in placed in order to.. he should know his dossier, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to know whether such and such projects which have been committed have been paid or not and how much money is left to be paid. This is my question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have in Rodrigues, the Head of the Finance Bureau, a Manager and usually, we work with this Manager of the Finance Section and very often he makes remarks on this and that. So, we have to follow his remarks and now also we are working closely. The Island Chief Executive is working closely with the officers of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Finance's officers always give their agreement to what we are doing with the agreement also of the Minister. Everything is being done in transparency and whether there are some projects which are still continuing they will be financed in this budget 2015.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given that the Chief Commissioner is the head of the Executive Council, I want to ask him in his budget speech, different budget speech he has had since 2012 up to now, he has placed on top priority - water. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether he as Chief Commissioner is satisfied with the situation of water being given, even we have granted.. he ought to install four desalination plants in Rodrigues. Whether he is satisfied with water problem in Rodrigues?

The Chief Commissioner: This question is out of order concerning the main question. No, I am not going reply. It is a substantive question not related to what has been put here.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have been informed that the financial year period will be back to square one, that is, from 01 July to 01 June. Can the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether there will be a changed in the financial calendar of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and if yes, what special prerogative has been given for the first year it will take effect?

The Chief Commissioner: We are going to follow what is being done in Mauritius there will be changed. What did he say, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

[Interruption]

Mr. Chairperson: Silence, please.

The Chief Commissioner: All this has been discussed at the level of the Executive Council. We are following what is being done in Mauritius.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, we know why the Chief Commissioner has not answered to this question because it is quite embarrassing for him to answer this question. But I would like to ask him as regards to part (b) itself, as regards to his Commission

whether he can enumerate one or two projects which have not been completed by the end of this fiscal year and to give the reasons thereof.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have what we call the Terre Rouge College, the second phase and Montagne Goyaves Community School.

Mr. Chairperson: Next, question please.

NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL – PISTACHES

(No. B/3) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) ask the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of a new secondary school at Pistaches as announced in the Budget Speech 2015, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) if the site plan and tender documents for same have already been finalized and, if so, to table copies thereof;
- (b) if any family/ies found within the perimeter or close vicinity of the proposed school will be relocated and, if so, where and under which conditions; and
- (c) if there are any agricultural lands found thereat which have been vested for the construction thereof and, if so, the modalities put in place for the compensation of these planters, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that the bidding process for the construction of a new secondary school at Pistaches has already been initiated. The bid was launched on 16 February 2015 and the closing date for submission of bids fixed for the 17 March 2015 at 13.30 hours at the Central Procurement Board in Mauritius. I am hereby tabling a copy of the site plan. However, with regard to the bid documents, it is essential to safeguard the confidentiality of the bidding process, thus a copy of same will be tabled only after the completion of the bidding exercise. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am further informed that there will be no need to relocate any family within the perimeter of the proposed college. I am further informed Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that the site of the secondary school is effectively on agricultural land but same was not under cultivation for many years. I personally visited the site in early 2014 and same was found to be in an abandoned state. Following a visit carried out thereafter on the 29 August 2014 by officers from the Land Unit and Extension Unit of La Ferme Agricultural Office who is responsible for the zone, only a plot of about 3700 m² was being

cultivated with maize at the time of the visit. One planter has claimed to be the owner of the land under maize cultivation, but according to records at the Land Unit, the permit she holds was for another site. The said planter was thus requested to stop occupation of the said plot. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, nobody holds a valid agricultural permit or lease on the said plot of land as at date according to official records from the Land Unit of the Agricultural Services. It is only after the visit of the Executive Council on the site and my official declaration to the press that a college will be built there on that site was thereafter illegally occupied. Therefore, the question of compensation to whosoever does not arise.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, my concern is about this particular site. I am not against that a new college will be built in that region. This is your policy. It is their policy, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, which I am not going to challenge. I shall come on that later on. But the question is, for me it is a paradox, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Chief Commissioner in his political agenda or whatever agenda he has for Rodrigues, agriculture is very very high on that, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. He has just confirmed that this site is an agricultural site, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Top prime agricultural land. Can I ask him, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in that particular region apart from Pistaches whether there are not other sites. My colleague has just mentioned Montagne Croupier. I was also thinking about this? Whether a large stretch of unoccupied land as well, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, which is bare land, unproductive land, not suitable for agriculture. Why did his Commission, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, did not think of choosing another site instead and give this land to prospective planters, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, so that agriculture can continue to survive to feed this country, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. Chairperson: There was an answer that the land was abandoned for years.

[Interruption]

The Chief Commissioner: Do you think, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that we are going to build a college at Montagne Croupier. At Montagne Croupier? We have looked everywhere and there is no place, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. In the region of La Ferme, there is no place. We have seen a place near Cascade Pistaches somewhere but not enough land. There were private land also there. There was not enough land. That is why we know but we think about our children, those children from Baie Topaze going to Terre Rouge. Incredible! Why? The number spent in travelling from Baie Topaze or to nearby to Terre Rouge. That is why we know this agricultural land but we are thinking much more about those students so that they can have enough time to study

instead of spending two or three hours by bus to Terre Rouge. That is why we have chosen this and this was abandoned land. Everything has been found out at the agricultural land at the Cadastral Office. The land was abandoned for many years.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner mentioned that the main reasons for him to come up with a college there is because pupils coming from that region were going to Terre Rouge. Does he exactly know what is the reason behind, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? It is about the admission procedures currently undergoing in our colleges, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The first criteria is about the grade aggregate. I do not know whether the Chief Commissioner is aware of it. It is about the grade aggregate. Second criteria, for admission is parents' choice, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And, the third criteria, which is applicable is proximity. When I was Commissioner for Education, I too face this same problem, Mr. Chairperson, Sir and I did not agree at all with that. I had a meeting with the MES to change the whole process, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. And this is the solution, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. In Executive Council in May last year it was decided, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. In April 2013, the Executive Council had taken note that a delegation headed by the Director of Planning from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources will be on mission in Rodrigues from 22 to 24 April 2013 to conduct a school mapping exercise, to plan for school infrastructure, needs for primary and secondary schools in Rodrigues over the next five years, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, to make proposal for a zoning system of regionalization of admission to secondary schools. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether he is aware of that and whether there has been recommendation from that delegation with regard to the zoning system in Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we had meeting with Mrs. Soonarain who came here. And she did talk to us about regionalization and that is what we are saying. All teachers everywhere are the same. Have you seen the results of the Le Chou College in HSC? Have you seen the results of HSC at Maréchal? That is why we are telling to parents regionalization is for the benefits of their children. All the teachers of REDCO colleges are the same and Rodrigues College is the same. Regionalization, that is why we listen to the.. we put into practice the regionalization, the zone made by Mrs. Soonarain. This is being practice. We are also talking about primary schools and so on, especially community primary schools, small schools. There will be one at Anse Quitor. Because if you go to Grand La Fouche Corail about 700/800 pupils. That is why we are decentralizing education and this is better for our students. 800 pupils but about 250 pupils in a school. It is more benefits for the teachers, for the parents and for the pupils. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question for..

The Minority Leader: I have again here the council paper which testify the decision of the Chief Commissioner to come up with the college at Pistaches, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Here again I am not going to challenge his policy but I can say that he is wrong in his approach, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. If you have to come up with proximity and have to avoid pupils coming from one remote area to another remote area, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. You have to build colleges everywhere near the pupils. There is one REDCO college in the north, which I started, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, now we are at the phase II. There is one in the east. There is one in the west. There are two in the centre. What about the south, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? There are two primary schools, one at Port Sud Est and one at Rivière Coco. Pupils coming from these two schools will still go to colleges far away from their homeland, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. This is why I have to ask the Chief Commissioner whether he is not wrong in his planning to build another college in the west right now instead of doing this in the south.

The Chief Commissioner: I take notice of the question.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Earlier this morning the Chief Commissioner has mentioned that there will be a cadastre agricole. Even if the land at Pistaches is abandoned, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is still agricultural land. This is the first thing and secondly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would make a request to the Chief Commissioner. I am not against constructing another college for Rodrigues. I am not against that policy. But, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I want the Chief Commissioner, they have a motto that said *democratie participative*, *democratie participative*. I want the Chief Commissioner to enlighten the House whether he has had meetings, consultation with different people or in the region of La Ferme or all the stakeholders prior to the construction of this college.

The Chief Commissioner: Well there has been consultation. We have a Steering Committee with different partners. There has been consultation with parents and PTAs and so on.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner whether just after construction the college at Pistaches will be full-fledged? That is, catering from Form I to Form VI students or will it have a dynamic trend with regard to its population and secondly whether after construction Citron Donis will remain as an annexed of Le Chou College which is now sheltering Form I students.

The Chief Commissioner: As for Citron Donis, we have not taken any decision whether this will be an annex of Le Chou College. Whereas the college at Pistaches will be a full-fledged college. I must also say there is agriculture will be one of the, not main, but interesting subjects for our students. Because we are now putting stressed on agriculture and what we call ...

Mr. Chairperson: Next question.

FILLING STATION - GRAND LA FOUCHE CORAIL

(No. B/4) Mr. G. Jabeemissar (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the filling station currently under construction at Grand La Fouche Corail, he will:

- (a) give details on the lease agreement, if any, between the promoter and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and to table a copy thereof;
- (b) state if an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) licence and/or a Preliminary Environmental Report (PER) has been obtained prior to the start of the project and, if so, to table copy of same;
- (c) state the security measures to be taken, if any, by the promoter to ensure the safety of the public and users of the existing sports ground nearby, presently and when same will be operational; and
- (d) table a copy of the conditions attached, if any, for the construction thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have to inform the House that the promoter, AEL DDS Ltd, has been granted an industrial lease over a plot of State Land of an extent of two thousand two hundred and thirty eight square metres (2238 m²) situated at Grand La Fouche Corail, Rodrigues for the construction of a filling station to be used solely for the handling and selling of diesel oil and other petroleum of similar class only for a period of nineteen and a fraction years as from 13 September 2013 to 30 June 2033. A copy of the lease agreement is being tabled here.

As regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that according to amendments brought to the Environment Protection Act on 1 October 2006, the construction of filling station does no longer warrant an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) licence and/or a Preliminary Environmental Report (PER) prior to the start of the project. However, the Ministry of Environment and

Sustainable Development has developed a special guideline with regard to construction of filling station to ensure that environmental issues are duly considered while implementing the project.

As regards to security measures for the safety of the public and users of existing sports ground at present, it is the duty of the contractor who is developing the site to take all security measures during the construction phase. Concerning security measures when the filling station would be operational, I would like to draw the attention of the House that a Petrol Service Station Licence is being issued subject to the production of the following documents amongst others:

- i. Approval from the Road Safety Committee as regards to the safety and security measures; and
- ii. Clearance from the Fire Services Department.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (d) of the question, I am tabling a copy of the Building and Land Use Permit as issued by the Commission for Public Infrastructure.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in the policy of this Regional Government with regard to démocratie participative, can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether his Commission or any of the Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has had any consultations with the community of Grand La Fouche Corail prior to the start of the project, and if yes, can he inform the House when and the outcome thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, si vous écoutez les gens de cette région, ils sont terriblement content. Terriblement content. Au lieu de dépenser un gallon d'essence ou diesel pour aller à Port Mathurin ou à Mont Lubin. Dites leurs à Mont Lubin on avait déjà donné à la DDS la terre après cinq ans ils n'ont rien fait. Cinq ans ils n'ont rien fait. Et là justement les discussions avec AEL DDS, c'est justement pour décentraliser aller encore être au service des gens de la région. C'est incroyable, comment les gens sont contents et surtout comment s'appelle là, ceux qui utilisent les bateaux, des moteurs, des pêcheurs tous ça dans cette région. Ils sont contents. Content, M. le président.

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is a fact everybody should approve this project. It is long overdue. Yes, I am not against, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. *Quand c'est bon, il faut dire que c'est bon. N'est-ce pas ? Oui, mais, M. le président, regardez ce qui vient de se passer à Port Mathurin*

récemment, M. le président. A question of safety. When you handle such dangerous things as petroleum products all the parameters, safety parameters should be closely observed and monitored, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. That is why in my question, I enquired about the safety measures. Do not forget, it is in a road junction where there is a playground. My question about whether he has met the people of that region, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whether the question of relocating that playground has been under discussion. How can you keep a playground in the vicinity within, I do not know I have not yet get the plan. Where is the plan which were to be tabled. Whether this playground is within the compound, I do not know. And if it has to be separated from the filling station then how are you going to ensure the safety of the users of this playground while the filling station is under operation, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? This is one question. Secondly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have got the environmental guidelines pertaining to filling station, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner who here in Rodrigues has got the responsibility to monitor the progress of work and see whether all parts of these guidelines are being observed.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, everything which is being done here according to filling station, the Environmental Order Act of 1 October 2006, the construction of filling station does no longer warrant an Environmental assessment EIA and PER. But there are people from Mauritius who will come to assist the Road Safety Committee as regards the safety of security measures, the Fire Services and so on in order to give him the licence to operate. Who is giving him the licence? Rodrigues Transport Committee, there is someone from Mauritius which is a member of the Road Safety in Mauritius. Whenever, we will see whenever we are going to relocate. We are going to discuss with the contractor whether he is.. he has been told to put a security wall and so on, I do not know. We will talk to him and see what is going to be done. Thank you.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the question of fuel depot and fuel transportation are important issues in the setting up of filling station and we know that the installation of the pipe lines in Rodrigues is very difficult and expensive with regard to our topography. Can the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether special routes will be given to the promoter for the transportation of fuel from Port Mathurin to Grand La Fouche Corail or they will be authorised to take any way from Port Mathurin to Grand La Fouche Corail at a specific time?

The Chief Commissioner: Usually this is being done at night. I do not know whether they are going to use a smaller route or they will use a special route for that. I do not think so. As this is being done at Mont Lubin. The road

from Autonomy, from Port Mathurin to Mont Lubin because of the big tyres, you know.

The Minority Leader: Can I know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, whether there will be a realignment of the existing road structure at Grand La Fouche Corail when the filling station will become operational, if so, can the Chief Commissioner say whether the Road Safety Committee has already planned for same and if no, when will it be done. And secondly, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, being given that this particular place is subject to stagnation of water during heavy rainfall, can I ask him whether there is a plan for a good drainage system there?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, si vous regardez le plan le contracteur est en train de construire sa route, sortir de la grande route pour prendre la route pour venir prendre de l'essence ou le diesel. Pour sortir aussi. La sortie c'est du côté de la route qui va à La Ferme. Vous comprenez là. Donc, il n'y aura pas de changement et parfois aussi c'est bon. C'est bon. Là je dis le travail de la Police. La Police aussi doit pouvoir dans des endroits où il y a beaucoup de circulation comme on a vu à Mont Lubin, il y avait quatre ou cinq policiers là. Ça aussi je pense qu'il nous faudra discuter avec le Divisional Commander que vraiment, il faut régulièrement mettre un policier. Même au carrefour la route de l'Autonomie, la route qui va à La Ferme, qui va à Rivière Coco tous ça c'est un grand carrefour il faudra qu'il y est des policiers là du matin jusqu'au soir. Alors c'est toute la question comment les autres secteurs vont entrer justement dans ce service. C'est un nouveau service qui apparaît là bas. C'est un nouveau service. Tout comme à Mont Lubin c'est un nouveau service et ça va être aussi là. A l'avenir aussi on ne sait pas si on va avoir une autre station d'essence mais c'est toute aussi une organisation de la Police pour faire circuler. Le contracteur lui il y a justement une route qui rente de la route de l'Autonomie à gauche. A gauche vous venez comme ça vous prenez votre diesel et vous partez vous allez loin là-bas à côté de ces enfants qui sont là loin là-bas. Il y a la sécurité. Il a prévu la sécurité. Je connais, M. Desvaux il a prévu la sécurité et nous avons des discussions souvent avec lui. Merci, M. le président.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question, please.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: M. le président, j'aimerais demandé au Chef Commissaire ce qu'il pense du faite que nous soyons autonome en tous ce qui est environnement à Rodrigues maintenant on entend dire qu'il y a eu des changements dans la loi le EPA à Maurice et le fait que Rodrigues soit une île, petite île nous sommes plus vulnérable tout ce qui est environnement. Et là on laisse je sait que c'est la loi, M. le président, mais toujours est-il que la question

de l'environnement à Rodrigues est primordiale. Que pense le Chef Commissaire le fait qu'on a omis de faire l'EIA ou bien PER pour cette station à Grand La Fouche Corail ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, évidemment toutes les lois nationale s'applique à Rodrigues. Nous pouvons aussi dans la mesure si c'est bien spécifique à Rodrigues, nous pouvons faire des lois ou des règlements. On n'a pas fait des lois ou des règlements sur le sac en plastique ? Nous avons ce droit là et justement nous sommes en train de voir au niveau des amendements à apporter à la RRA Act, c'est justement si on peut arriver à faire des lois. On a vu un petit peu à Tobago ils ont amendés la loi à Tobago justement pour que Tobago puisse faire des lois et nous aussi nous sommes en train d'étudier tout cela, comment nous pouvons faire des lois. Alors il y a une question dessus tout à l'heure sur le RRA Act. Il y a tout cela. Nous prêtons attention, nous regardons la spécificité de Rodrigues et si nous voulons protéger la sécurité de la population, l'écologie de Rodrigues et bien il y a beaucoup de chose à faire. Merci.

Mr. Chairperson: I invite the Deputy Chairperson to take the Chair, please.

At 11.52 hours, the Deputy Chairperson took the Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Next question.

AGRICULTURAL LAND – DEROCKING/PLOUGHING

(No. B/5) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to agricultural land, he will:

- (a) give details on the preparation, de-rocking and ploughing thereof in Rodrigues;
- (b) state how his Commission proceeds for the granting, if any, of these facilities to planters and, if not, will he consider setting up a mechanism for same; and
- (c) table a list of applicants, beneficiaries and proposed sites, if any, for agricultural development which has already been allocated or will be allocated from February 2012 to date?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question I am informed that the Land Mechanization Unit of the Agricultural Services is responsible for the provision of mechanization services,

including ploughing and de-rocking for the farmers community around the island and for implementation of such program and policy as decided by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

As regards part (b) of the question, presently the service is free of charge upon the filing of an application form by farmers at the nearest extension office.

On receipt of the application made on a numbered prescribed form the farmer is visited by the concerned extension officer who certifies that the plot of land can be safely mechanized. A program of work is then established according to the number of demands received, the type of operation to be carried out, the location and availability of the equipment requested.

In the context of the effective decentralization of the Agricultural Services, the land mechanization service has been decentralized in 2012 and tractors are now available at Trèfles and La Ferme offices. In order to ensure that the service is made available in all the regions of Rodrigues an agreement was reached between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Rodrigues Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Society (RAMCF) also assist in providing the same service. To that respect, a sum of Rs 2 m. was granted to the cooperative in December 2014 for the implementation of the project in 2015. I have been made to understand that the equipments will be received shortly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, it is felt that it would be unethical to table the name of applicants without the express consent of the concerned. However, any applicant who might feel aggrieved by the way their respective applications have been handled is encouraged to make a complaint to the Departmental Head or to any other appropriate institution of their choice to seek redress.

In view of the high demand of such services, in the last budget, I have proposed a subsidy of 50% up to a maximum of Rs 100,000 to genuine planters or associations/cooperatives who wish to purchase their own power.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, it has been reported so many time that the service of mechanization in Rodrigues are being offered on a sort of political ground. This question has been raised here in this House so many times. Can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether he has already set up a mechanism to control this kind of behaviour with regard to some officers at his Commission?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have sometime said this but we have Mechanization Committee very often with the persons

responsible at the different offices because we also heard that some drivers do take money from farmers. We do not agree with such way of doing things in government especially public officers. And now this is being controlled by different technicians at the level of different services. That is why I have said that after the farmers come to put his name for ploughing, the technician should go and visit the land. Because why? The ploughing of the land must not be done every year. It can be done every two years. Some farmers believe that ploughing should be done every year before planting maize and so on. It should not be done every year but we have decided every two years. And this is being announced long ago. Well as the Honourable Member insinuated we will find out whether they are still having this kind of conduct on the part of public services, especially drivers of these tractors. Thank you.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the facilities given to planters is a good one, motorculteur because here in Rodrigues many planters used to do backyard agriculture and the use of big tractors is not valued for money. But can the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether technical assistance has been sought from institution like MSIRI or other stakeholders involved in land preparation, de-rocking and ploughing to better help the planters in their choice of purchase of motorculteur?

The Chief Commissioner: *There are specifications. What we call a motoculteur and parfois c'est beaucoup mieux qu'un gros tracteur. Pourquoi? Parce que le gros tracteur enlève la terre et détruit toute les fertilités de la terre. Alors c'est pourquoi nous disons qu'il ne faut pas labourer la terre tout les ans et aussi on a vu chez nous des gros tracteurs de canne à sucre qui ont été acheté dans le passé et ces gros tracteurs ne sont pas utilisés. Parce que c'est très mauvais ils enfourchent. Ils enfourchent dans la terre et ce n'est pas conseillé. Alors c'est pourquoi nous disons qu'il faut aller sur les motor culteurs par le MPCF que justement les motoculteurs et ils sont en train, ça va venir bientôt et c'est ce qu'on a dit. Si un peu partout les coopératives par ces petites machines des motoculteurs ou bien des petits tracteurs. C'est ça qu'il faut pour l'avenir. Que les gens eux même prennent leurs responsabilités. Que les coopératives eux même prennent leurs responsabilité et je suis sûre que des organisations internationale, comme l'Union Européenne va pouvoir les aidés. Il faut que les planteurs s'organisent en coopératives pour qu'il puisse être suivi par la section de la coopérative et savoir un peu au niveau de leur dépense. Et c'est ça l'avenir de Rodrigues et à ce moment là que ces gens là puissent venir à la coopérative. Et bien on va labourer la terre pour une petite somme d'argent et pas gratuitement mais il faut que le planteur puisse aussi participer et ne pas avoir tous gratuitement. Participer justement et c'est ça rendre la personne, le Rodriguais responsable de son avenir en participant. Alors je pense que ça pourra s'aboutir dans quelques années et qu'à l'avenir vraiment on aura du côté*

de La Ferme un garage pour vraiment des gens pour être employer comme mécanicien pour entretenir ces machines. C'est ce qu'il faut et c'est ça justement. Que se soit dans le nord, que ce soit ici, dans le sud ou l'ouest, il faut qu'il y soit ce type de coopérative pour aider les planteurs et pour que les planteurs eux même prennent leurs responsabilités.

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, simple question that I have to ask the Chief Commissioner. It is pertaining to application by the time a beneficiary applies for mechanization. Can the Chief Commissioner inform the House how long does it take to process thing and what is the lapse of time between application and actually receiving the mechanization.

The Chief Commissioner: Les applications sont fait tout au long de l'année et c'est vrai que ça parfois tarde et tout dépend. Là nous sommes en train de revoir les équipements et les tracteurs. Ils y en a des vieux tracteurs. Et c'est pourquoi on va revoir les équipements, les nouveaux tracteurs, pas des gros tracteurs mais des petits tracteurs et c'est ça justement que peut être à l'avenir nous pourrons mettre entre les mains des coopératives et c'est ça qui est important. Et à mon avis là il y a une autre manière de labourer la terre. Non pas toujours dépendre du gouvernement mais aussi que les agriculteurs dépendre d'eux même. Alors ces demandes de labourage ce fait tout au long de l'année et c'est vrai moi aussi très souvent je reçois des plaintes de la part des personnes. Ça tarde, ça tarde, ça tarde, mais il faut voir aussi des équipements qu'on a entre les mains. Merci.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the purpose of having a de-rocking machine is to plough the land and most of the time, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we saw these tractors on the road going up to Port Mathurin, La Ferme. *Toute la journée c'est comme ça là. En montant, en descendant sur les routes. A chaque fois c'est comme ça.* We do not have only this problem, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we have invasive plants, like *piquant loulou*. Mostly in the region of Baie du Nord and Camp Pintade like that. Can these planters have facilities in order to eradicate *ces plantes invasive*?

The Chief Commissioner: *Using tractors to eradicate piquant loulou. This is the problem. Perhaps my colleague of environment he himself because he is on this project* comment faire partir les piquant loulou. Vous comprenez. Et là il y a un projet justement d'enlever les piquants loulous pour que la terre qu'occupaient les piquants loulous puisse être utilisée pour l'agriculture. On a un gros travail à faire de ce côté-là. Alors les tracteurs qui va et vient se sont plutôt ces gros tracteurs qu'on a acheté dans le passé mais les petits aussi peut être « *zot ale rode diesel ça mo pas coné* ». Alors quand un tracteur sort il y a toujours quelqu'un qui marque où est-ce qu'il va. Un tracteur peut ne pas sortir

comme ça, il faut toujours quelqu'un là dans le bureau, il y a quelqu'un qui est responsable dans le bureau et qui marque qu'est-ce que ce tracteur est en train d'aller faire. Alors tout ça il y a toute une question de contrôle. Une question de discipline surtout dans ce secteur là et à mon avis c'est ce qu'il faudrait améliorer à l'avenir.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, with regard to agricultural land, can I ask the Chief Commissioner whether there has been any repossession of land, of agricultural land by the government recently in Rodrigues, if yes, give details on that?

The Chief Commissioner: Usually, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, if we fully possess the land, it means this person has not got an agricultural permit or a lease. This has been done in two or three months ago. It has even been a process with Mr. Brian Glover, Equal Opportunity Commission and the person has gone to Equal Opportunity Commission and the Equal Opportunity Commission has given us reason. Because the person has not got an agricultural land. And this agricultural land we are going to have a pasture there for our new project. Pastures land and around the pasture land, breeders will have their land and so on. And they go inside to cut the land instead of letting their animals roaming about.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: M. le Vice-président, sur une base humanitaire y avait-il pas d'autre solution pour régler ce problème qu'il y a eu à Deux Montagnes laissant à l'abandon, laissant à des animaux des centaines et des centaines d'arbres fruitiers qui ont été plantés sur ce terrain.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le Vice-président, c'est justement sur une base humanitaire pour aider les éleveurs, c'est dans notre projet, plusieurs pâturages. Il y aura Grenade, Deux Montagnes et du côté de Montagne Plate. C'est pour aider les éleveurs. Au lieu que les éleveurs lâchent les animaux pour aller manger les plantations des agriculteurs. Nous recevons tout le temps des plaintes dessus. *Zanimos vine mange tout céki mone planté.* Ce n'est pas possible. Il faut qu'il y ait de la discipline dans ce pays. Il faut quand même que ces éleveurs puissent dire qu'ils ne peuvent pas lâcher leurs animaux pour aller manger les maïs ou les haricots de cette dame là. Elle n'a pas le droit de vivre elle ? C'est ça justement que j'ai justement que ces éleveurs est aussi un sens de discipline, de partage et de respect. Mais malheureusement, celui qui a clôturé et nous nous avons prévu là un pâturage est venue comme ça. *Alors pou laisse li faire ?* Alors là le projet où ça va partir ? Alors moi je pense qu'il y a des gens qui croient qu'ils ont tous les pouvoirs dans ce pays.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Next question.

FOUR DESALINATION PLANTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

(No. B/6) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others whether, in regard to the four desalination plants under construction in Rodrigues, he will state:

- (a) if there has been any contest brought by any bidder/s before the Independent Review Panel (IRP) prior to the award of the contract and, if so, to give details thereof and to table the related documents;
- (b) how the pre-running tests of both desalination plants of Anse Quitor and Pointe Venus are being conducted and to give details and table on the quantity of water pumped per hour/day, the quality of the water and energy consumption per kw/h per meter cube of water produced to date; and
- (c) if the contract of the consortium J.V Hydro Plumbing Co. Ltd/Ocean Five Ltd has been terminated and, if so, since when and to give details about the contract and to table same?

The Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Yes Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, an unsuccessful bidder (Joint Venture Pro Construction and Renovation Works Ltd. and Alkafaah LLC) filed an application, to the Independent Review Panel, for review of the decision to award the contract to the successful bidder (Joint Venture Hydro Plumbing Co. Ltd./Ocean Five Limited). The application for review was set aside by the Independent Review Panel. In its ruling delivered in May 2014 the panel concluded that the bidding document of the applicant for review contains major shortcomings, which might have rendered it non-responsive.

I am tabling the related document on the finding out of the Independent Review Panel.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regards to parts (b) and (c) of the question due to the prevailing shortage of water my commission is operating the plants at Pointe Venus and Caverne Bouteille which have been partly completed to ensure a reasonable supply of potable water to the population. The required tests have been carried out to confirm that the water quality is in norms with drinking water standards. These two plants are functioning at less than 50% of their capacity of 1,000 m³ per day. Caverne Bouteille desalination plant is

producing approximately 480 m³ per day and Pointe Venus Desalination plant approximately 408 m³ per day.

A test was carried out at Pointe Venus Desalination Plant to investigate the energy consumption per meter cube of water produced and it was found that to produce 1 m³ of water 3.78 kWh was required.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is with much disappointment that I have to inform the House that the contract awarded to J. V. Hydro Plumbing Co. Ltd./Ocean Five Ltd. has been terminated on 05 February 2015 due to failure of the contractor to complete the works as per notice issued under the conditions of the contract. It is most unfortunate that due to the unsatisfactory performance of the contractor, this important project to address water problem of water supply is being unduly delayed.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, my Commission, with the support of the Global Consultancy firm Servansingh Jadav and Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd., is working out the options to complete the project through fresh procurement services.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner whether he is satisfied with the progress of the work which have been done up to now prior to the part payment of about Rs 19 m. that he mentioned made by his Commissioner.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this is why we have cancelled the contract because we are not satisfied with the contractor.

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, being given that the IRP considered that there has been shortcomings in their evaluation process. There were major omission etc. and the client, that is, the Commission for Water is not satisfied with the project. Can I ask the Commissioner responsible for Water whether he is prepared to undertake a commission of enquiry? I am going to quote, if need be, in order that RRA, to safeguard the interest of RRA. However, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I have to remind the House that during my intervention on Budget Speech, I did remind them. I have it here. I have it here, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. I will quote what I said and I remember the Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner told me to go to Court. *Voilà je vais lire, M. le président, je ne leur donne pas garantie cinq ans, je leur lance un défi. Il alloue ce contrat comme il l'entend dire très bientôt. Je ne sais pas combien de temps ça va prendre. Je leur donne une garantie de pas moins de cinq ans. Vous allez voir et vous allez dépenser Rs 56 millions.* This is government funding and so on. *C'est jeté de l'eau par*

la fenêtre. C'est ce qui est arrivé. C'est ce qui est arrivé, M. le Vice-président. On aurait dû dès le départ.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Ask your question please.

The Minority Leader: Why did he not take into consideration what the IRP suggested? That is to stop the tendering procedure and go ahead with a new tendering exercise.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the IRP has rejected bids of Pro Construction and Alkafaah but has not rejected the bids of Hydro Plumbing Co. Ltd. The Tender Board, the Central Procurement Board has approved to award the contract to Hydro Plumbing, it is not the Commission.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as far as the commissioning of the two plants is concerned. I would like to ask the Commissioner, first, whether there has been full commissioning of the plants prior to its running and distribution of water to villages. And secondly, since when officers of the Commission are running these two plants?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, with the termination of the contractual pay commissioning test does not arise but all the necessary tests has been made to ensure that the water distributed to the population of Rodrigues in the north and the south west of bringing standard quality. Our Commission has taken on site after the 05 February 2015.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, we have information that officers of the Commission have been running the two desalination plants since December and now the Commissioner comes here and says that same have been taken over by Commission since 06 of February. This is not true, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. Go through the enquiry. You want to set up an enquiry. We will ask for the enquiry. Go through the enquiry and you will see, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. I would like to ask the Commissioner to confirm to this House whether these two desalination plants have been taken up by officers of his Commission since the 06 of February, if he has the guts to repeat it to this House.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, this is the information of the Member, it is not mine.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Mr. Spéville.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the highest bidder quote for Rs 280 m. and the lowest Rs 156 m. for the project. A difference of about two folds, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir. Has the Commissioner for Water Resources make a *compte expertise* at the level of his Commission to see whether the project has been underestimated *pour interpellier les CBB* that the bid was not valued for money?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I am not in the possibility as a politician to contest the figures but the CBB has approved for the contractor J. V. Hydro Five for the sum of Rs 156 m. which is the lowest so this has been awarded by the CBB.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I will come to Anse Quitor desalination plant. I am informed that the concentration of iron is beyond the exploitation norms at Anse Quitor. Can the Commissioner inform/confirm the House about this problem?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: No, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the concentration of iron is less than the normal trend.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, is the Commissioner aware that whenever there is a major change in a project according to Public Procurement Act, there should be retendering procedures. Immediate. Whenever there is a major change, there will be retendering procedures. And secondly, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as regards to Caverne Bouteille, Anse Quitor project desalination plant, can we know from the Commissioner whether there has been tuning of two boreholes from this place and whether water is being pump from the boreholes or from the caves. And if not, give the reason why?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, as I have said in the last part of my answer with the support of the Global Consultancy firm Servansingh Jadav and Partners Consulting Engineers Ltd. is working out an option to complete the project through fresh procurement exercises. Regarding the two boreholes, we know that it is not suitable to pump water there - too much iron. We are pumping water from the cave.

Mr. Chairperson: Mr. Roussety.

Mr. J. Roussety: On a l'impression, M. le Vice-président, qu'ils sont encore une fois en train de remettre la charrue devant les bœuf. On entend parler de Servansingh Jadav and Partners qui sont des consultants Engineering General. Which I believe do not any specific specialised knowledge in

desalination. This is the problem of this project. They have rush within three/four months to complete a project which given its cost was not realisable. Can I ask the Commissioner whether he can ensure that consultants who are working on the project again, on the re-sit? This is a re-sit of the project. Whether these consultants Servansingh Jadav have appropriate expertise and whether this is in the scope of contract, which was allocated to them because otherwise project again will not meet standards.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, Servansingh Jadav is a firm; they have the Engineer who can work on desalination of water.

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, one of the main services required from the contractor according to the statement made by the Commissioner himself here is include training of the personnel in the operation and maintenance of the plant. Can I ask the Commissioner how many persons have been trained in order to operate and maintain the plants? What is the two which is operational now? And whether how his Commission is going to assess the competencies of these trained personnel to the satisfaction of running the plants properly.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, about 12 employees have been trained for the operation of the plant before the contractor vacate the site in December. And for the maintenance there are two persons which is full-fledged, they can manage if we however have problem on the plant. And for the maintenance we have a Maintenance Manager which can assess the other persons/staffs.

The Minority Leader: Can I know, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, whether the personnel that he has just mentioned are public officers and what are their grades? Right.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Yes, they are public officers, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: The grades, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir? He did not answer to the grades.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: I need notice of this question to have the grades.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Mr. Agathe, please.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, whenever the client terminates a contract can we know from the Commissioner whether the RRA,

since he is acting on behalf of this Assembly as Commissioner. He is Commissioner of this Assembly whether he has taken all parameters to assure this House whether the RRA is at fault or the contractor who is at fault. First of all, Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, I want to know from the Commissioner before the construction of desalination plant, is the contractor, is it the role of the contractor to go for the ... test first and construct the desalination plant or is it the RRA which have decided which place to place the desalination plant?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, the contractor has been late on this project for more than nine months and all the support that we have given to him has proved that he cannot continue this project. And regarding the site, regarding the rearing of borehole etc. it was the duty of the contractor as it was a turnkey project.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Mr. Perrine.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Deputy Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner whether the desalination plant of English Bay or Pointe Venus is working actually. If yes, if no why?

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

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: I suspend the House 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.

EMPLOYMENT RELIEF PROGRAMME

(No. B/7): Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the 300 beneficiaries of the Unemployment Hardship Relief and Social Aid under the Employment Relief Programme, he will state the criteria for the selection thereof and to table a list of the beneficiaries involved together with a copy of their contract, if any?

The Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I will provide the answer to PQ B/7, B/27 and B/31 together in the same reply as the three questions deal with the same subject matter. B/7, B/31.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Employment Relief Programme is a budgetary measure announced by the Chief Commissioner in his budget speech for the current financial year 2015.

The aim and objective of the programme is to provide placement to Unemployment Hardship Relief and Social Aid Beneficiaries with a view to train them so that they are empowered in terms of skills and capacity so that they can become more employable.

The programme involves four days practical field works at the different development sites of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and one day theoretical training through lecture series organised by the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office and also other training courses carried out in collaboration with the MITD.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, an Exit Plan will be prepared so that at the end of the programme, the trainees will be stimulated to identify an Income Generating Activity of his/her interest. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) will provide the appropriate support with the collaboration of different Commissions to assist them in the implementation of their identified projects.

The programme has already started since Monday 02 February 2015, when all the selected beneficiaries were convened at Mont Plaisir Leisure Centre for its official launching.

It is a one-year programme that targets 300 beneficiaries having the following eligibility criteria:

- (i) Resident of Rodrigues;
- (ii) must be aged between 18 and 45 years old;
- (iii) recipient of Unemployment Hardship Relief or Social Aid, and,
- (iv) registered as unemployed with the Employment Information Centre in Rodrigues; and

Also the following guiding principles have been used for the selection exercise:

- (i) 200 from beneficiaries of UHR and 100 from beneficiaries drawing social aid; and;

- (ii) the name was sorted in chronological order in relation to their registration date with the social security division, and also;
- (iii) Regionwise, according to the five social security regions; namely Port Mathurin, Malabar 1, Malabar 2, La Ferme 1 and La Ferme 2; with the principle of the rule of equity between the five social security regions based on the respective number of beneficiaries.

So, calculation was made on a pro-rata basis.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the list of selected beneficiaries as requested in question B/7. **(Appendix IV)**

As at date, the 300 selected beneficiaries have been posted on different sites of the Commission for the Public Infrastructure, Commission for Agriculture and Commission for Forestry. The conditions of the placement are attached in the undertakings, which the selected beneficiaries have signed. And, I am also tabling a specimen copy of the undertakings.

Preliminary arrangements have been previously made with different Commissions to ensure their supervision, attendance and submission of monthly reports. Coordination is being made by the Employment Office of my Commission which has been recently strengthened with two STM Interns for this purpose.

Mr. J. Roussety: There is a problem with this programme, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, since the beginning. I would like to know whether the problem is true. The problem is that the selected persons were in receipt of Social Aid pensions according to the Social Security Act.

I want to know whether it is true that these persons, these beneficiaries have been told that if they do not enter these programmes, their pensions would be cut, would be discontinued. One. And, whether, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when these persons, they end up with these programmes which I believe is for one year, they will qualify because we know the unemployment situation, the economic situation in the country. Whether, these persons who may have been forced to accept this out of their own will, whether these persons in the end, will be considered if they apply for Social Aid.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I do not see any problem with the programme right from the beginning because there was nothing as such which was explained or set to the prospective beneficiaries. They were not told that their pensions will be disallowed or discontinued or whatsoever. But, also,

we should note that there are regulations and laws which govern the pension USSR and Mutual Aid Act.

Therefore, if, after the programme, they are unable to find a job or to set up their own enterprise, if ever they apply and they are qualified according to the existing rules and regulations and laws of Social Security, then, they will continue to benefit from their pensions.

Mr. J. Roussety: What is the purpose, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? What is the purpose? The Commissioner is saying that this has not been said. He is not aware of what has been said. I have met many persons who have, by force, accepted to join this programme and this was told at meetings with them. "*Si ou pa accepté, ou pension pou couper.*" This is what has been said to them in Creole. And, what has been said more is that after the one year programme, you will get Rs 50,000 to start your business and then, forget. Forget about pension.

Go and make your enquiry! I am not lying before this House. It concerns mothers, fathers who were in receipt of a small pension who maybe, had some livelihood, rearing some animals, some pigs, some poultry, Rodriguan livelihood, taking care of their children, leaving their children at school, taking back their children when school is over and now, they have to go to work for government.

So, I want to know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, what about this matter of giving Rs 50,000 to start the business after the training programme? And, then, these persons have been told officially by those who have welcomed them, meetings which were held prior to their start of their placements, they have been told that they will not get any pension.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I do not know from where the respected Member obtained information. But, personally, I was there, present on the day of the launching of this programme with all the Commissioners, Departmental Heads and nothing as such, I can assure the House, nothing as such has been said. Maybe some people have spread some rumours, some political agents, but nothing as such. No Rs 50,000 was mentioned during this meeting. I do not know from where the member obtained these information but these are all wrong information.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I now come to the job that these persons are doing. Again, I have met three, four, five persons who are engaged in this. And, there has been to date, what have been told, only hard work for them; cleaning the drains, cutting down all the bush etc. along the roads, cleaning roads.

There has been no training up to date. You are speaking of four days of practical training and one day of theoretical lecture. Have these persons been recruited to do the jobs of government labourers? – Because this is what they are doing and they are complaining about it and they have left. Some of, most of them have left because again, they have not received their salary. I do not know whether, at this hour, they have received their salary. Up to yesterday, they had not received their salary.

So, whether this issue of salary has been solved up to now. Because up to yesterday... Go on Facebook! You are on Facebook all the time! And, go and see what the women are saying. *Zot pé crève la faim, zot pencor gagne zot travay, pa inn gagne larzan.* You are on Facebook all the time, go and see. Whether this... I do not see you there.

Whether, this issue of payment has been solved, first. And, whether, the true spirit of a placement will be respected. These people are not the slaves of government. Because actually, this is how they are being treated. Okay? As the hard slaves of government to do all the dirty jobs that some people, government labourers should be doing.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: It is quite surprising that the respected Member is talking in such a manner. Because I understand that he does not know and maybe having been the Chief Commissioner, he should seek for information whenever he hears things from, I do not know, Facebook or... Because people are free to say whatever they want and these are all incorrect information.

So, first of all, these people are not slaves because they are doing certain job according to what has been very well planned in advance. And, they are not doing more than what government officers are doing. They were not recruited as general workers and also, we should note that as from tomorrow, all the training sessions; theoretical and MITD, will start as from tomorrow.

This is a real empowerment programme because it is also in line with our government vision that people should work harder to earn more. So many people are working hard and they are getting more. These people were earning Rs 2000, some only Rs 1200 as UHR; their allocation. That is why we want people to live in a better condition. We want people to earn more. And, this is a programme that, at the same time will help to combat poverty. And, as far as payment is concerned, for their pay, this is also...

I do not know from where he obtained these information but they have been paid according to the period for which they have worked from 01 February

to 20 February. And, then, in the coming month, they will be paid as from 21 February until 20 March which will then become a full month.

They will be paid according to the fees which have been prescribed. And, it is also to be noted that it is true; few people did not receive but you should ask for what reason. It is simply because their account number that they have given has been frozen in the bank. And, then, they will be paid by check whenever all the procedures are through the bank, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

Mr. J. Roussety: The salaries were not paid until yesterday. This is the fact. Accounts being frozen, this may be a major problem. I would like now to know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, these people, in their mind, what they have been told, what they understand, whether, at the end of their placement, when their placement ends, whether, they will automatically if they qualify, of course, reversed back?

You may say that there were earning Rs 1,500, Rs 1,100 as pensioners. But they were happy. They were happy! They were happy because they had their farming, they had their fishing! They had their own income generating activities and they were free. They were working as informal domestic persons. They get their money. Now, this government has forced them. It is true! You may not face the truth. It is the truth.

Mr. Chairperson: But what is your question, please? Come with your question now!

Mr. J. Roussety: My question is whether, these people, those who were in receipt of social aid, whether, these people would be part from receiving social aid after the completion, the end of this programme.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I have already replied to this question, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. As I have said, there are existing laws, rules and regulations. I know that some people do not like laws, here. But, if they are qualified, they will be paid for what they qualify. But I must also stress that we have not forced anyone. They have signed their undertakings. Because some people have refused! There are 16 persons who have refused to work and we have not forced them. It is their right. But then, they should also know, some of them, what are the consequences because...

[Interruptions]

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: See! I will tell you. I will tell you the law...

[Interruptions]

Mr. Chairperson: Please!

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have got a point of order. The Commissioner is answering to the question. Could the Member listen, please?

Mr. Chairperson: First of all, you should listen. You should not talk together.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Okay, I understand your frustration because you are not happy that 300 people are per earning a living. They are getting in fact quite the same as what the general workers were earning but here, it is a better empowerment programme.

I will tell you why I am saying what I have said. For Social Aid, this is something different but for Unemployment Hardship Relief (UHR), as the name itself says, this is paid for people who do not have a job or the opportunity to programmes that can help them to obtain a job. But the law relating to UHR clearly stipulates that if someone refuses to accept a reasonable offer, then, he is no longer qualified for UHR. And, let me tell you what has happened. Let me tell you! Let me tell you!

You know why some beneficiaries refuse? What he said, he said that “*I am not interested to work on this contract because I am earning more than that!*” “*I am earning more than that!*” That is why. It is not a right, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. So, go and study law!

Mr. Chairperson: Respected Member Grandcourt. You take the floor.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : *Yes, calmons les esprits.* Mr. Chairperson, Sir, 300 Rodriguans are working under the ERP. The Commissioner said that it was announced in the budget they are working for one year. And, now, we hear from the answer of the Commissioner that an Exit Plan will be prepared. You knew quite well that you are going to take these 300 Rodriguans under ERP. Quite well before!

Vous avez la vision. Mais pourquoi est-ce que maintenant vous venez nous dire dans cette chambre que vous êtes en train de préparer un *Exit Plan* ? Ce n'est que maintenant. Ces gens-là travaillent. Ils ne savent pas à la fin qu'est-ce qui va se passer parce que le commissaire est en train... Le commissaire va préparer un *Exit Plan* pour ces gens.

J'aimerais demander au commissaire. Je parle d'après ce qu'il a dit, d'après la réponse qu'il a dit. Moi j'écoute. J'aimerais lui demander pourquoi ce n'est que maintenant qu'il prépare l'*Exit Plan* pour ces gens.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I think that at least this government is in a better position to talk about this because we know what happened to some... X 245 workers who were wrongly informed about the real vision of the government. But, here, they are at least very much, very well informed that this programme is strictly for one year. Why we are talking about the Exit Plan? – Because it has to be prepared with the consultation of the respected beneficiary.

I cannot prepare a plan for someone and then, he does not like it. That is why we will. We know what we want. We have a lot of schemes in our budgets under the different commissions, some under the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office. With the Youth Employment Programme, we know what we want but we have to do it in line and in accordance to with what the person wants. That is the answer, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I heard just now that since yesterday, many of these beneficiaries did not have their salaries yet. That is true because I personally met some of them. But the question is that the Commissioner said that before they started the project, they had meetings, consultations, explanation programmes to these beneficiaries. But, the question is why is it that these beneficiaries were informed of all the modalities of this programme, they did not know until yesterday how much money they would earn for the month of February?

They did not know. I have met some 10 of them in the street at Port Mathurin. Because when they obtained their... they did not get any salary receipt, of course, which would clearly define how much they would obtain for the work, how much they would obtain for travelling. But, the fact that when they went to bank, on their account, there have been credited such a sum, it was not clear the sum was for how many days of work.

Mr. Chairperson: Say your question, please.

The Minority Leader: My question is whether for the month of February, now, in this House, we have just learned from the Commissioner, what is the modality, but the beneficiaries, themselves, they did not know. That is why, the question is: had the Commissioner explained during the explanation session to these beneficiaries, how much they would obtained in terms of salary and in terms of travelling for this first month during which, they started work?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, obviously, they have been explained. But I understand that it is quite difficult for some of them to understand. That is why; we have taken the decision to give them a sort of pay slips. This is what we have; the Monitoring Committee that we have set up because we know that it is a new programme and any room for improvement is here.

This is true, I have personally received some of the beneficiaries and they have asked me how it has come to this calculation. And, for this, I agree and we have already taken the decision that this will be done. But apart from this, there have been no other major issues and I must also say that some people who I personally met and explained these conditions, still, they are going somewhere, elsewhere to talk about things which are nonsense at times.

Mr. J. Roussety: Go and talk, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. I would like to come back to a previous answer which was given on this question where, the Commissioner has said that there were eight persons, eight beneficiaries who have not accepted to form part of this programme which is their right, this is my emphasis, and he spoke about that they will have to face the consequences. I would like to know what are the consequences.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I have already given. I think that the Member should listen carefully because I did not mention eight but I said 16. So, you have to listen carefully.

Mr. J. Roussety: Those 16, there may be others who have left. Some have left yesterday. They are still leaving. They are not satisfied with this thing. He states that... I was asking whether these persons would be able to get back their social aid benefits and he spoke about they will have to face the consequences. I would like to know what are these consequences!

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I have already given the answer, Mr. Chairperson, Sir! I have already. I have said and I am not afraid to say it because this is legal. We want people to work in this country and to earn more. We do not want people to be just like dependent/over dependent of the government. We are doing all the efforts. We will not spare any efforts to help these people to become empowered so that they are no longer being exploited by some people of this country who are sitting on the other side of the House. Some of them have done it.

[Interruptions]

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: On a point of order, Mr. Chairperson, Sir...

Mr. J. Roussety: M. le président, *point of order*. Je ne sais pas si ce matin, M. Baptiste s'est levé, il a cru qu'il est Dieu pour venir dans cette assemblée et venir dire que les gens de l'autre côté exploitent les gens, je ne sais pas quoi. *What is he speaking about ? This is unparliamentary !*

Mr. Chairperson: I think you have to withdraw your word, please.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I withdraw the words.

Mr. Chairperson: Now, Mr. Perrine.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to refer to the documents that are just tabled by Commissioner Baptiste with regards to Insurance section 2.

Mr. Chairperson: Please, listen, now!

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: The Commissioner just mentioned that the main reasons that these beneficiaries did not receive their salary or stipend, whatever it is, at the end of February last? – Because especially, they did not have an account at bank or their account was closed or frozen. But in paragraph 2, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, of the document that we just produced, it is mentioned, I quote:

'The monthly stipend will be paid to my bank account or in cash on a pro-rata basis according to the number of days of Attendance and Satisfactory Performance Report.'

I repeat, *'...the stipend will be paid by bank or in cash on a pro-rata basis.'* By bank or in cash. My question. How come that until yesterday, if it is mentioned that they can be paid by cash, how come that yesterday, we met some people in front of the DBM Bank still waiting for their salary or stipend? If ever they do not have problem with bank, why these people have not received their money in cash?

This is my first question. Because I know there will be more questions again. Does this contract or... Employment Relief Programme, the document that you just produced, is this programme renewable? This is my second question and third question: I have been informed that there has been a *cafouillage* in the Commission for Agriculture with regard to these placements of these beneficiaries. The Commission of Agriculture was not prepared to

receive these placements. Can the Commissioner enlighten us on these? *Merci, M. le président.*

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regard to the bank, payment by bank or cash, it should be noted that all the beneficiaries have submitted their bank account number and they wanted their money to be cashed into bank. But with these situations, the fact that all the documents have been processed to be paid through bank, you know that there are some procedures we have to await for all these to be back to the Finance Section so that then, we can proceed with manual payment by cash.

So, whenever we receive the document back, we have talked to the various banks so that they can do it at the earliest possible delay so that we can make necessary arrangements to pay them. And, with regard to renewable or not, it is clearly stipulated here if you read in your undertaking that I have tabled, it is said that it is non-renewable.

I know that I did not receive any complaint because I, personally, had meetings with all the Departmental Heads of different commissions, all the administrative cadre who are responsible, who will be involved in this programme. And, up to now, I have received no complaint to the fact that some people I do not know from which section refused to accept something else.

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have one question for the Commissioner. I have heard him talking about following the placement after one year, the people/beneficiaries will be allowed to get Rs 50,000 or set up an enterprise.

Quelque chose d'économique pour survivre. Est-ce que *it is the same thing as* le Plan Prestation Transitoire dont il avait parlé lors du discours budgétaire. *Is it the same programme? – Because it concerns the same persons. If people earning UHR and if yes, whether they have merged the two programmes together or does the Plan de Prestation Transitoire still exists as such?*

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I do not know from where this Rs 50,000 comes from. I said earlier. This programme has nothing to do with the *Plan de Prestation Transitoire*. And, we did not mention that we will give Rs 50,000 to the beneficiaries. But we have said that there is an Exit Plan. We are working with the different commissions and there are already existing schemes in the government where with the help of the different commissions, they will be... *Ils seront encadrés.*

We will help them, for those who are interested obviously, to set up their business. And, according to the different schemes, for example, in agriculture, if someone is interested with *cochon noir*, for example, then, they will get, they can benefit from the schemes which are already existing over there. But this is different from *Plan de Prestation Transitoire*. But they can obviously apply for it.

Mrs. J. Ravina: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, *un petit éclaircissement de la part du Commissaire*. After listening carefully to the Commissioner, I just want him to clear out this issue. If someone was receiving UHR has refused a work, will he/she no longer receive UHR?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I have already said. For social aid, there is enquiry being carried out by the officers of the Social Security to determine whether, the justification for the refusal is really genuine. And, I know that in some cases, then, they will continue obviously to benefit from social aid. For social aid... we do not have much problem but for UHR, it is clear in the law that if someone refuses because it means that the person is...

It is an offer which can lead to an economic empowerment but we should not be confused because at this particular point in time, whether it is a placement or training programme, they are earning more than what they were earning before. This should be clear.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question, please.

RODRIGUES TRADING AND MARKETING COMPANY LTD. (RTMC)

(No. B/8): Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (The Sixth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Ltd. (RTMC), he will

- (a) obtain and table, for the benefit of the House, information from the company as to the:
 - (i) financial statements of the company from the period January 2011 to January 2015;
 - (ii) agreement, if any, signed with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since 2012 and table same; and

- (b) state and table the business plan, if any, for its restructuring geared towards the strengthening of its financial bases since 2013?

The Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Financial Statements of the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company Ltd for the year 2011, 2012, and 2013 are being tabled. As for the year 2014, I am informed that same is still under auditing process and has not yet been finalised. My Commission is not in a position to table same at this point in time. I am also tabling a copy of the registered agreement which the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has signed with the company dated 18 November 2013. **(Appendix V)**

As regard to the business plan for the consolidation and strengthening of the company, same is being reviewed following the reconstitution of the Company Board of Directors which is still undergoing as we are still awaiting. We have been informed by the STC that there will be changes in Members of the Board of Directors.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, may I ask the Commissioner whether there has been any grant? *On appelle ça* grant? There has been any loan which the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has given or granted to the RTMC and if yes, under what condition?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the answer is yes and this is... All is clearly mentioned in the agreement that has just been tabled.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, has these money been returned back to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly or if there is still problem with it?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: No, the money has not yet been refunded/paid back and the company has returned for an expansion of this delay because it was still facing some financial difficulties.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Commissioner is surely aware of the remarks contained in the Director of Audit's Report regarding Rs 6 m. Am I right? Rs 6 m. which has been given. We remember when some people were sitting here and we were sitting there. How they behave? They said: *"Do not give money to private companies."*

Now, they take Rs 6 m. and they give it to Rodrigues Trading and Marketing and this has been highlighted by the Director of Audit. Can we know, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, following the Director of Audit's Report and in the

lights of these financial statements, how these Rs 6 m. are being treated in the financial statements?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I do not have the reply to this answer, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, because simply, I have gone through the audit report relating to RTMC and I have seen nowhere where there have been mention about Rs 6 m.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can we know as present, as at to date, as regards the situation now of Rodrigues Trade and Marketing, as at to date, what is the general commercial/cash flow situation of the RTMC?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: In fact, as it has always been since the beginning of this operation, we know that and we have said it that the situation is in the red. That is why; there is this plan which has been done. We have presented it to the Ministry of Finance last year during the budget consultation. And, we have given this plan so that we can get out of this precarious situation. That is why, the Ministry of Finance has now agreed to give/provide Rs 6 m. to be injected in RTMC but not the Rs 6 m. you are talking in the Audit Report.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Commissioner, being given that I have heard clearly from the radio that the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB) of Mauritius will purchase all agricultural products from Rodrigues, is there any problem with the Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Company?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: No, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have not talked about all agricultural products. We have talked about some specific agricultural products and all these will be done through the RTMC and very soon, there will be a mission of AMB, consultation with Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the RTMC. Everything will go through the RTMC because we believe in RTMC.

Mr. J. Roussety: Point of order, Mr. Chairperson, Sir. The Commissioner said that there was nothing on the Audit Report on the RTMC. The Commissioner says in the Audit Report, there was nothing. My point of order is that he is misleading the House. At page 7 of the Audit Report, it is said that an advance. I said Rs 6 m. question mark. He was a teacher. You were a teacher and the sum is Rs 2,600,000. A private company. So, the thing is there.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: ... And I insist, *je persiste, et signe qu'il n'y a rien concernant les six millions Audit Report.*

[Interruptions]

Mr. Chairperson: Please ! Please ! Okay. Now, the Commissioner replied there has not been 6 m. So, he gave the reply. That is all. Now, next question.

SCHOLARSHIPS
- POST-SECONDARY RODRIGUAN STUDENTS

(No. B/9): Mrs. J. Ravina (The Second Local Region Member of La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to scholarships offered to post-secondary Rodriguan students for Mauritius and abroad for academic year 2014 to date, he will:

- (a) state if there is any policy being implemented by the Central Government and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the allocation thereof;
- (b) table the list of beneficiaries and the conditions attached to the scholarship; and
- (c) state if all beneficiaries have received their stipend/allowance as to date and, if not, why?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the following scholarships are offered by the Central Government:

- (i) Four Scholarships under Rodrigues Open Scholarships;
- (ii) Two Scholarships under the Additional Scholarship Scheme based on Academic Merit and Social Criteria;
- (iii) One Scholarship under the President's Award Scheme and two under Science Related Scholarship;
- (iv) Eight from the Government of India under the "Aid to Africa Scholarships Scheme;
- (v) One from the People's Republic of China; and
- (vi) One from the Russian Federation.

While on the other hand, the following scholarships are offered by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as follows:

- (i) Chief Commissioner's Award Scholarship which is meant for professionals holder of a Degree in scarcity area to be determined on a yearly basis;
- (ii) Two scholarships from the BSP School of Academy and Management (one boy and one girl);
- (iii) Six scholarships under the New RRA Scholarship for REDCO students; and
- (iv) Two scholarships under the RRA Technical Scholarship.

The general policy implemented by the Central Government and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for allocation of scholarships offered to Rodriguan students is such that:

- (a) the students must be registered for HSC Examination at a Rodrigues Based Centre;
- (b) the students must have studied at least three years of primary schooling in aggregate in Rodrigues;
- (c) except for proven medical reasons, students must have studied from Form IV to Form VI in Rodrigues; and in addition
- (d) student shall have studied from Form I to Form VI at a REDCO Ltd College which is applicable only for the New RRA Scholarship for REDCO Colleges.

The applications for scholarships are screened by a Screening Committee according to the criteria of the respective scholarships and the Commission for Education subsequently submits recommendations for the award of scholarships offered by the Central Government to the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and scientific research for final approval.

The list of beneficiaries of the different scholarships which have been awarded detailing the conditions attached thereto is hereby being tabled to the House, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

With regards to part (c), Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that all beneficiaries of the scholarships mentioned in the list which has been tabled as well as beneficiaries of RRA Medical Scholarships tenable at Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam College have received their stipend/allowances included in their scholarships as at to date.

Mr. J. Roussety: Can we have the list of scholarships, please? In the meantime, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are aware that there were formally two scholarships from France and two scholarships from Australia which were, according to me, very prestigious scholarships enabling young brilliant students for example, to go and study in Europe, to go and study in Australia which are countries of high educational standards.

I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner what has happened to these scholarships from France. There were two scholarships from France and two scholarships from Australia, whether they are still there. I do not think. From the list, they are not there. Whether he proposed to because these scholarships are very important, I believe. Whether he proposed to pick up the issue with the French Embassy or Australian High Commission so that these scholarships could be reinstated.

The Chief Commissioner: Those scholarships, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, have stopped for many, many years ago. Why? Even Australia. – Because Rodrigues was under Republic of Mauritius. It was a question of the... What I call? *Non, non, le niveau de vie des populations.* Capital, yes. Capital.

Rodrigues, justement, est inclut avec Maurice. Et c'est pour ça que La France ne finance plus Rodrigues, ne finance plus aussi Maurice. L'Australie aussi ne finance plus Maurice. C'est pourquoi nous avons demandé que La France, et on a discuté de ça, nous donne des bourses pour ceux qui veulent étudier après. C'est-à-dire, pour être des professionnels et pour se spécialiser dans tel ou tel domaine et nous sommes en train de discuter là-dessus. Merci.

Mr. J. Roussety: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is sad to note that France, Australia etc., it is true that they deal with country and not with region like the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Another point I want to draw the attention of the House, is on the downgrade of the scholarships. – Because the first boy and the first girl, I think they got, what is called? The National Scholarships? What is called? – Rodrigues Open Scholarships. And, these persons will get an annual old inclusive grant of a maximum of Rs 300,000 for a first degree of a maximum duration of four years.

Rs300,000 pour aller étudier à l'étranger pendant une année. Ça ne paye même pas le loyer, M. le président. I think there is a problem with those who rank first. They are tempted to see, to look at the other scholarships because I do not know whether, it is 300,000 or 500,000. 300,000?

I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether, he proposes so that there is more motivation for HSC students to rank first, the boys and girls, because Rs 300,000 to go and study for one year in France or in Australia or in the UK, for example, somebody wants to study medicine in the UK or Scotland or in Europe, anywhere, Rs 300,000, even in China, even in the lowest countries in South Africa, this is not sufficient. I think there should be some resolution to increase this grant up to maybe what is needed to pay for air tickets, for lodging, for fees, etc.

The Chief Commissioner: Well, you know, that is why. We know all that has been said on the other side that even France would accept post-graduate students. We have an example as we, at the level of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, there is someone studying in South Africa and we are helping him to pay. How many? We have Rs 90,000 additional per year and we know that sometimes, our students, here, have some difficulties and we know that.

We have studied it at the cases and we are now going ahead and having money in our budget for that. Concerning those in France, even France has told us, even those students, they are too low at the HSC on their level of study so that they cannot go to France. That is why, we are asking them to go to the University of Mauritius and then, they can post-graduate scholarship to go to France. I think this is the wish of the French Commandment.

Mr. Chairperson: Let me remind that there are 17 minutes left for question time.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has mentioned a student in South Africa who is being helped to the tune of Rs 90,000 additional. Can we know from the Chief Commissioner what have been the criteria to choose this particular student in South Africa and not the others?

The Chief Commissioner: C'est un lauréat. Au lieu d'aller en Chine, il me semble il a préféré aller au Sud Afrique. Et c'est pourquoi nous l'avons aidé et il va continuer ses études au Sud Afrique mais même, nous sommes en train d'encourager nos étudiants pour la spécialisation plus particulièrement en médecine, d'aller au Sud Afrique dans les pays de la SADEC où ce n'est pas

trop cher. Alors, nous tenons compte, ce jeune homme-là, il nous a vu, ses parents tout ça. Donc, on l'a aidé pour continuer ses études au Sud Afrique.

Mr. A. L. Emilien: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I know from the Chief Commissioner whether, this measure will apply to other laureates in the future?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes.

Mr. J. C. Agathe: *Mr. Chairperson, Sir*, comme nous savons tous qu'à Rodrigues, il y a un manque de professionnel surtout dans les domaines de ingénierie, la gynécologie, etc., M. le président. C'est difficile d'avoir quelqu'un venir de Maurice pour venir travailler même sur contrat à Rodrigues, même pour un mois ou bien deux mois, c'est difficile. Est-ce que l'Assemblée Régionale surtout dans la spécialisation comme pour la gynécologie, il faut être spécialiste dedans, non pas généraliste ?

Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut voir avec les différents partenaires à Maurice, même le Ministère de l'Éducation, si on peut, pour un premier temps, augmenter le *quantum* ? Le *quantum* par rapport à auparavant, j'ai entendu que c'était plus vu qu'on veut augmenter le nombre d'étudiants, on a diminué la somme allouée aux universitaires ? Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut voir un coup qu'est-ce qu'on peut faire pour ces jeunes qui ont bien travaillé surtout les professionnels de Rodrigues ?

The Chief Commissioner: Oui, nous avons remarqué cela que les jeunes qui sortent d'ici pour aller étudier à Maurice plus particulièrement *Sir Seewoosagur Medical School*, et reçoivent, et ça, malheureusement, c'est le ministère qui, comment dire, légalise d'une certaine façon la somme à donner.

Nous avons déjà demandé au gouvernement, l'ancien gouvernement, justement, d'augmenter, parce que parfois, ils payent la location des maisons. Et c'est pourquoi, nous avons demandé à l'ancien gouvernement de revoir l'allocation allouée aux Rodriguais qui vont étudier même à Maurice. Et là, nous espérons, là, avec le nouveau gouvernement, là, qui arrive, et on va être beaucoup plus, surtout, Sir Aneerood qui est là, il va comprendre les choses un peu plus.

Et je suis sûr qu'on va aller dans le bon sens pour augmenter au lieu d'être comme à Maurice, mais pourquoi pas à Rodrigues ? Parce qu'à Rodrigues, on doit sortir d'ici pour aller à Maurice. Il faut payer et en même temps, trouver le logement. Quoi que maintenant, nous sommes en train de construire. On a le *hostel* à Maurice.

On va faciliter les jeunes au niveau de logement à Maurice. On va aller dans ce sens surtout et c'est ce qu'on a parlé, la spécialisation. La spécialisation pour les médecins, il y a déjà une personne qui va partir, là, pour une spécialisation en Suisse dans les domaines de la médecine. Et c'est ça, justement.

On a des ennuis avec les personnes qui sont des docteurs qui viennent ici pour un mois ou qui ne veulent pas venir. Il nous faudra venir dans des 5, 10, 15 ans avenir, avoir nos spécialistes. Et c'est ça, justement, avoir des spécialistes et je dis même, je dis ça ici, qu'il faudrait, on est en train de penser sur un hôpital spécialisé.

Tout ça, on est en train de voir mais malheureusement, ce n'est pas si facile, M. le président, de trouver un endroit pour construire un hôpital spécialisé à Rodrigues avec une île montagneuse comme ça. Alors, tout ça, on est en train de voir ; l'avenir de Rodrigues dans 10 ans, 15 ans, 20 ans, 50 ans. C'est ça qu'on est en train de voir.

Mr. Chairperson: Last question for respected Member, Mrs. Ravina. Last question.

Mrs. J. Ravina: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, d'après le papier qu'on nous a donné, là, je vois qu'il y a personne. On n'a eu personne pour la Chine. On n'a pas eu de candidat pour la Chine. *Three consecutive applicants, they all declined. May we know the main reason behind?*

The Chief Commissioner: Non, non, il y a toujours cette question il faut apprendre la langue de mandarin une année. Alors, j'espère qu'on va introduire le mandarin au collège, à l'école et ça va aider. Il y a même des médecins qui travaillent ici qui sortent de La Chine qui parlent le mandarin. Le docteur Veeraragoo parle le mandarin. Alors, c'est un peu ça peut-être. Pourquoi la Russie ? La Russie aussi, il y a toute cette question il faut apprendre le russe. Alors, tout ça, c'est un peu dur pour nos jeunes.

Mr. Chairperson: Next question, please.

RODRIGUES ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

(No. B/10): Mr. F. A. Grandcourt (The Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to the Rodrigues Environment Committee, in Rodrigues, he will

- (a) table the names of the members thereof together with their respective grades; and
- (b) state and table the dates of the meetings held from January 2014 to date together with main outcomes of the decisions taken during that period?

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, Commissioner?

The Commissioner Responsible for Environment and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am tabling the requested information. **(Appendix VII)**

Mr. Chairperson Sir, with regard to part (b), the Rodrigues Environment Committee met on 11 February 2014 and the following matters were on the agenda:-

- (i) The role of the Environment Division
- (ii) The Setting up of sub-committees
- (iii) The proposed Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Prohibition of Use of Plastic Bags) Regulation 2014.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, the main purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (Prohibition of Use of Plastic Bags) Regulation 2014 which eventually came into force on 05 June 2014, a historic day for Rodrigues. In line with the Environment Protection Act 2002 as amended in 2006, it is necessary to consult the Rodrigues Environment Committee before making regulations relating to the environment.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, can I ask the Commissioner, because he has mentioned that the Committee has met just once, in January 2014 or 2015?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: 14.

The Minority Leader: 14? February? February this year? 14! So, that is one year back. Okay. Does he know that according to the Environment Protection Act, the part which is being applied to Rodrigues, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, establishment of the Rodrigues Environment Committee, it is said on paragraph 93 that the Rodrigues Environment Committee shall meet as often as it is necessary but in any case, at least, once every month, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? And, now the Commissioner is telling us that it is meant since one year back. Can I ask him why this Committee has not met during that long period?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is true what the Member is saying but there is one problem in his question. It is that he said that the Rodrigues Environment Committee shall meet as often as it is necessary but the request of the Chairman, this is one thing which he did not mention in his question.

And, secondly, there are two sections in this: 93, the Member talked about the part (b) because there is a part (a). You should look at the part (a) before you come to the part (b). And, the part (a) says '*The Rodrigues Environment Committee shall regulate its meetings and proceedings as it thinks fit*'. And, we have thought it fit to meet and when we have a committee...

[Interruptions]

Mr. J. R. Payendee: *Zot pou gagne lokasyon pou poz kestion après ! Laisse mo fini ! Laisse mo fini !* The Rodrigues Environment Committee shall regulate a meeting and proceeding as it thinks fit and we have found it fit to meet once last year because we do not want to have committees just because we need to have committees.

We need committees to discuss on important things. And, I said also in my answer that one of the things that we discussed in the Rodrigues Environment Committee was the setting up of sub-committees because we believe that sometimes, you bring a lot of people together with different, you know, different organisations together and you do not really come to be what you want.

We believe that sub-committees are very important and we have based ourselves on meetings of sub-committees. If you can come with a substantive question, then, I will give you how many times the sub-committees have met and what are the outcomes of the committees.

The Minority Leader: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, according to the Commissioner, it is as if that he decides whether to meet or not but according to the act, it is a Chairman. Can I ask him, one, who is the present Chairman and secondly, whether, it is the Chairman who decided not to have any meeting at all or is it the Commissioner, himself?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is true also that it is the Chairman who decides and these people have been Commissioners of the Environment and all these times, they have not seen that there was a problem with the Rodrigues Environment Committee where, actually, if you look at the

people who are on this Environment Committee, the Commissioner for Environment is not a member actually. I am not a member of this. I have to become a... Let me finish, man! Let me finish!

The actual law, the EPA says that it is the Chief Commissioner. The reason for that is that all these times, the Chief Commissioner has been also the Commissioner for Environment. This is why they said Chief Commissioner. But for the people who were in force before, there was someone else Commissioner of Environment and there was the Chief Commissioner and these persons were not a member.

The Commissioner for Environment, on the other side, for five years, he has not been a member. He has to be co-opted because he is not a member. This is why when we came into power, we wrote to the Ministry for Environment and the law is being amended so that it is the Commissioner for Environment who chairs the meeting of the Environment Committee and this has already been sent to the legal organisations in Mauritius State Law Office (S.L.O) and they are working on it.

This is why we found it very important because we know the Chief Commissioner; he is the one leading the country. He has a lot of work to do and, also, we referred ourselves on sub-committees. So, you know, and I am glad, I am really happy that even if the Environment Committee has not met, I can say that the environment in Rodrigues is in the right direction and Rodrigues is clean. Thank you.

Mr. Chairperson: Respected Member Grandcourt.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : Mr. Chairperson, Sir, let me remind the Commissioner. He said that the Commissioner has to be co-opted but in the law, itself, there are establishment of the Rodrigues Environment Committee (REC). You have the Chief Commissioner as Chairperson but, also, you have two other persons designated by the Chief Commissioner.

The Chief Commissioner can designate the Commissioner to be on the committee. Why, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is important for the Chief Commissioner to chair this meeting? – Because this is a very important committee. The Chief Commissioner has to chair. I know it depends on the availability of the Commissioner which, I think, is your problem, actually. Actually, this is your problem. But, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we have many issues like desalination plant, filling station at Port Mathurin, Mont Lubin and now at Grand La Fouche Corail. And, here, the Commissioner comes here...

Mr. Chairperson: Put your question. You have only three minutes left.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : Yes. Let me use my three minutes. It is okay.

Mr. Chairperson: You are not making a statement! You should put your question now!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt : Yes. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether, he has not found it important to meet, to ask the Chairperson to call for the REC given that we have very important issues like desalination plant in Rodrigues, filling stations and so on.

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, we are not saying that. What I was saying is we have met. We have met for important issues like Plastic Bags Regulation. We met under the chairmanship of the Chief Commissioner. So, if we found it as it is rightly stipulated in the regulation, if we thought it fit to do another Environment Committee, we would have done it. But all the problems that the Member was talking about, desalination plant or whatever, all this is being taken into consideration through my commission under the sub-committee for desalination plant, the Coastal Zone Committee.

[Interruptions]

Mr. J. R. Payendee: *Li pa normal mais li coumsa.*

[Interruptions]

Mr. Chairperson: You have only one and a half minute left.

NEW SLAUGHTER HOUSE – BAIE DIAMANT

(No. B/11): Mr. F. A. Grandcourt (The Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the new slaughter house constructed at Baie Diamant, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand as at to date?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir...

Mr. Chairperson: Sorry, Chief Commissioner. You have only one minute left.

The Chief Commissioner: I have more than one minute.

Mr. Chairperson: You start and then, I will stop you at one minute, please.

The Chief Commissioner: Okay, thank you. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, many aspects of this project costing more than Rs 50 m. and which was initiated by the former Regional Government has remained blurred to the present government being given that the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has secured nine files relating to the construction and consultancy services of the slaughter house and the supply of equipment thereto.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, it is not known whether the preliminary design of the slaughter house has been worked out after consultation with different local stakeholders such as breeders, butchers and technicians of different Commissions but the concept and design of the slaughter house and its equipment has proved to be too costly to be operated in a way to obtain value for money. It is also reported that the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) did not address the water requirement for the project, hence, a major weakness in the preparation of the project.

With a view to fully exploit the potential of the livestock sector, decision was taken to operationalize part of the slaughter house on a smaller scale at the earliest to enable slaughtering of beef and pigs to provide cuttings for the butchers operating at the market of Port Mathurin.

In that respect, a team headed by the Scientific Officer responsible for livestock development has been set up at the level of the Agricultural Services to work and report on the following:-

- the list of equipment required to run the slaughter house, with specifications and list of potential suppliers;
- the sketches of equipment to be constructed with specifications;
- the quantities of the construction materials to be purchased with specifications;
- the full brief of the operation line;
- the training programme for those who will be called to operate the slaughter house.

The aim is to replace the initial set of expensive of equipment with more affordable and simpler ones, to reduce investment and operational costs of the slaughter house, without affecting the carcass quality and norms/conditions for all slaughtering activities.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, following a visit of the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance at the site of the project, the possibility of using one of the block of the building sheltering the slaughter house to process carcasses for export and to prepare a wide variety of value added products made with pork such as pâté, “*rillettes*”, ham and sausages is being seriously looked into.

Mr. Chairperson: Question time over, please.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

ICT DEVELOPMENT IN RODRIGUES

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I will have a short statement on ICT Development in Rodrigues. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Regional Government has, at heart, the development of the ICT Sector as an engine for job creation and economic development in Rodrigues.

This is why numerous initiatives have been undertaken from 2012 to date. The House would recall that in November 2012, the ICT Sector for Excellence was launched with a view to prepare the population to the upcoming development in the sector. During our mandate, the Wi-Fi Zones has been set up as well as the learning centres so that more and more people get access to the technology of innovation and communication.

From 2012 to date, Rodrigues has witnessed a significant increase in bandwidth namely from 37 mbps 155 mbps. This increase allows telecommunication operators of the island to better serve the public and at the same time, allows the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to instill the desire of private operators from mainland to engage into activities who will promote job creation for our youth.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is worth mentioning that from the 155 mbps, some 40 mbps are reserved solely for the development of economic activities mostly in the BBO and call centres sector. For having answered numerous questions on this subject up to now, it is common knowledge in Rodrigues, now, that the actual Regional Government will spare no effort in its endeavour to connect Rodrigues to the world via the Fibre Optical Cable for this is one of the very best ways for Rodrigues to develop economically.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, following the publication of the detailed feasibility study conducted by Axiom initiated by the outgoing Central Government, a Steering Committee was set up to execute the recommendations of the report.

The Detailed Feasibility Study (DFS) mentioned the fact that such project might only be realised in two to three years subject to the setting up of the financial model this year.

This means that Rodrigues, in the meantime, can only be connected via satellite as per the increased bandwidth. In the meantime, respected Members of the House would also note that though the last increase in bandwidth, note all those families and businesses with a quest to be connected to the internet, have been able to do so.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been made aware that at the time when I am talking, some 20,000 Rodriguans are connected to internet via the mobile handsets or tablets. Some 1,297 families are connected via ADSL while some 385 demands for ADSL are still pending.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am glad to inform the House that these pending demands will be connected very soon as during his recent visit, the Minister of Finance, Honorable Lutchmeenaraidoo has announced an increase of 30% of the bandwidth for the coming weeks. This will bring the bandwidth capacity from 155 mbps to 200 mbps. He also added that if needs be this amount, again, will increase by the end of the year up to 300 mbps.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in my capacity of Commissioner for ICT, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Minister of Finance on behalf of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and on behalf of the population of Rodrigues. This announcement has showed the determination of the actual Central Government to respond promptly to the needs of Rodrigues.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this is however, only an interim measure since the honourable Minister, upon discussion with the Chief Commissioner, after his visit to Rodrigues and upon discussion with me, personally, Wednesday last in his office, has confirmed the engagement of the Central Government to connect Rodrigues to the Fibre Optic Cable within the time frame defined by the Feasibility Study, that is, in two and a half years or three from now.

In the meantime, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly will pursue its effort to attract potential investors to develop ICT related activities which are job intensive as well as encourage our young entrepreneurs to embrace a career in the sector, also.

Initiatives will be supported by the numerous measures developed by both Central Government and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, that is, two years, free bandwidth, two years, free rentals and a discounted rate for another

two years, 100% refund for employment of youth under the Youth Employment Programme for a period of one year, access to loan from the coming SME Bank with no guarantee and eight years tax-free and as well as hiring of equipment under the Leasing Schemes.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the CSL Company, a filial of Mauritius Telecom, will set the pace for this development in the coming month followed by AJ Consultants. At the first throw of DBM Building actually under renovation where a total of 125 youths trained at the ICT Centre for Excellence will be recruited.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, some people might not be happy with this information as the Fibre Optical Cable, if not installed, would have been a subject for them to play with our youth. We, on this side of the House, will, however, not give them this pleasure. We mean business. We always walk our talk and we maintain that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly will ensure that Rodrigues be connected to the Fibre Optic Cable very soon. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir.

[Applause]

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Tuesday 28 April 2015 at 10.30 hours.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: Adjournment matters. Minority Leader.

MATTERS RAISED

WATER PROBLEMS IN RODRIGUES

The Minority Leader: *Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have a statement to make with regard to the water problems in Rodrigues. M. le président, la raison de mon intervention cet après-midi, c'est pour attirer l'attention de la chambre sur les nombreux problèmes d'approvisionnement en eau potable dont fait face plusieurs endroits de l'île en ce moment.*

M. le président, il est bon de rappeler à la chambre que dès le début du mandat de ce présent Gouvernement Régionale, le Chef commissaire a, lors de son discours programme et ses trois discours budgétaires consécutifs, cité l'eau comme étant le secteur prioritaire pour Rodrigues. D'abord, lors de son discours programme, il a dit, je cite, à la page 10 :

'La priorité des priorités de notre action gouvernementale est le développement et la restructuration du secteur de l'eau.'

C'est vrai. Lors du discours du budget 2013, il a encore dit, je cite :

« L'eau pour tous. Devant l'urgence de la situation » etc., il a dit *« nous avons décidé de consacrer 25% de notre budget de développement à l'amélioration de la fréquence. »* Et là, j'ai souligné de la distribution de l'eau et une somme de Rs105 millions a été allouée à ce secteur. Pour 2014, M. le président, il continue dans son discours comme suit. Il a dit *« l'eau pour l'économie et pour les besoins domestiques »*. Il a dit : *« Je vais réitérer mon engagement auprès de la population pour qu'ensemble, nous puissions réaliser l'objectif fixé en matière de production d'eau. »*

Et il a alloué la plus grosse somme de l'histoire de l'Assemblée Régionale en matière de l'eau soit Rs172 millions. Ce matin, nous avons entendu, M. le président, de la bouche du commissaire, lui-même, les quatre gros projets dont Rs172 millions avait été voté l'année dernière pour l'eau. Deux des quatre stations qui devaient être en opération.

J'ai été étonné de voir ce matin le commissaire venir dire lui-même que ces deux stations, à peine quelques mois, après son opération, produisent moins que la moitié, M. le président, moins que la moitié. Et là, M. le président, cette année-ci, figurez-vous, à l'heure où je m'adresse à cette chambre, qu'est-ce qu'on peut dire de l'engagement pris par le Chef commissaire ?

Il avait pris l'engagement mais moi, en entendant le commissaire, l'année dernière, il a intervenu, ici, dans la chambre. Il a intervenu à la télévision. Mais en entendant son optimisme pour ces projets de station de dessalement, je croyais qu'effectivement, en 2015, le problème de l'eau à Rodrigues serait chose du passé.

M. le président, parce qu'on devait avoir 4000 m³ additionnels par jour. Et là, en ce moment-là, je comprends. Le Chef commissaire aurait atteint son objectif, c'est-à-dire, soulager le pays de ce problème épineux. Hors, en portant toute son attention sur la construction des quatre stations de dessalement, j'ai

cru comprendre que le commissaire responsable, il a négligé les autres secteurs existants.

Sinon, pourquoi cette année-ci, depuis janvier jusqu'à ce jour où on a eu plus de 200 mm de pluie ? L'eau de surface, comment est-ce qu'on utilise, M. le président, en ce moment-ci ? Les robinets coulent à sec. Les camions citernes continuent à sillonner nos routes et l'eau, en plus, M. le président, dans certains endroits, l'eau, la qualité laisse vraiment à désirer.

Dans certains endroits, on me dit que l'eau sente mauvais, l'eau du robinet. Donc, ce qui fait, M. le président, tout cet argent qu'on a investi, je ne sais pas comment on l'a fait mais en retour, la population n'a rien eu en retour. Si vous passez par Bigarade, vous connaissez à Bigarade, il y a un *water tank* public. Si vous passez par-là, M. le président, et à Maréchal, également, vous allez voir, tous les jours, il y a des 4x4, il y a des camions avec leur drome et ces gens-là, ils sont chanceux. Ils sont chanceux parce qu'ils ont un moyen de transport mais figurez-vous, ces autres qui n'ont pas cette possibilité, M. le président.

Vous savez, j'ai été étonné de voir les gens de Petit Gabriel. Je me suis arrêté, lui ai demandé « Mais comment tu vas de Petit Gabriel pour aller à Bigarade ? Vous savez comment ils transportent, l'eau, eux ? – Dans une brouette ! Vous voyez là ?

Alors, maintenant, M. le président, mais la raison principale de mon intervention aujourd'hui, là, je vous ai dressé un tableau général, c'est au sujet des habitants de Camp Pintade et de Plaine Mao. La semaine dernière, on m'a appelé dans cette région pour me parler d'un problème qui a toujours existé et à chaque fois qu'on va là-bas pour faire... À chaque fois qu'on va tenir des conférences de presse, M. le président...

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please ! Listen, first, please! Commissioner, please, listen!

The Minority Leader: Soit qu'il écoute, M. le président, parce que le problème est vraiment grave. Soit qu'il écoute, M. le président, parce qu'il a parlé de 2006. Vous savez ce que, nous, nous avons fait depuis 2006, M. le président ? On a pu faire un *Brackish Treatment Plant* à Baie Topaze, M. le président. On a construit un réservoir de 1000 m³ pour soulager les gens de ces endroits, M. le président, mais une fois qu'ils sont arrivés au pouvoir, c'est *back to square one*. On a fait des conférences de presse à plusieurs occasions dans cet endroit, M. le président.

La semaine dernière, quand j'ai été là-bas, j'ai vu une dame avec son *touque dilo lor latete*. Vous savez où elle a été prendre cette eau-là ? – Dans la un puits que nous, nous avons fait construire à l'époque au bord de la mer, M. le président. Quant à eux, quand elle va faire ses démarches à la *Water Unit* de La Ferme, si quelqu'un va faire des démarches pour avoir de l'eau, le *water tank* vient pour approvisionner la personne en question seulement mais pas le village.

Et les gens de cet endroit, M. le président, depuis Noël de l'année dernière, ils ont reçu l'eau du robinet. Trois mois ! Leur réseau de distribution avait été déconnecté mais depuis décembre jusqu'à maintenant, personne n'a décidé de les reconnecter au réseau principal. Et la question que ces habitants se posent, M. le président, pourquoi et sur l'ordre de qui leur réseau d'approvisionnement a été supprimé ?

Pourquoi les autorités tardent-elles autant pour refaire la connexion et pourquoi n'y-a-t-il pas un plan pour que le village soit approvisionné en eau en attendant que le réseau soit rétabli ? Quand j'ai été à La Ferme, j'ai vu qu'effectivement sur la liste, il y avait le nom de plusieurs personnes mais pas les noms de tous ceux concernés dans le village. Vous savez pourquoi ? – Parce que ces habitants me disent que le *Valve Operator*, il choisit qui il veut donner l'eau.

Quand il envoie la liste à la *Water Unit* de La Ferme, il envoie le nom de ceux qu'il veut mettre mais pas pour tout le monde. Hier, j'ai rencontré quelqu'un dans la rue à Port Mathurin. Cette personne-là, lui, il vient de la région de Cascade Jean Louis. Vous savez ce qu'il me dit ? Il me dit il a tellement eu des problèmes avec l'eau ces derniers temps, il a bon été à la *Water Unit* mais personne ne pouvait le soulager.

Il a téléphoné à Finlay Salesse à Maurice, au Radio One et dans les autres radio privée de Maurice pour expliquer ce problème et c'est suite à ça que par miracle, qu'il a vu son robinet couler. Et vous savez, il a fait une réflexion. Voilà ce qu'il m'a dit. Il faut que je le dise là dans cette chambre. Il m'a dit :

« *Dépi ki mo koner OPR au pouvoir dan Rodrigues, tou lé temps finn gagne problème delo. Pli gagne larzan, pli gagne problème* » M. le président. « *Si ti donn sak Rodriguais sa larzan la, nou ti pou kapav ramasse tou la pli ki tomber, nou pa ti pou misère delo. Ala zot laisse tou delo ale dan la mer après zot ale dessaler.* » Voilà la réflexion de cette personne, M. le président.

[Applause]

Et devant ce paradoxe, M. le président, ce Gouvernement Régional qui encourage les Rodriguais à s'investir dans des projets de développement, entendez bien, la semaine dernière, j'ai été témoin. La MBC nous a démontré la débrouillardise des Rodriguais. Il y a une Rodriguaise dans la région de Pointe Cotton. J'ai été émerveillé de voir le concept touristique qu'elle a mis en place à Rodrigues. Bravo Richard !

Cependant, M. le président, vous savez ce qu'elle a dit ? Elle a dit : « *Comment voulez-vous qu'on ait le courage pour progresser ?* » Pour débouter les lipieds comment nous dire car elle doit chaque semaine investir au moins Rs4000 juste dans l'eau, M. le président. Juste dans l'eau ! Et quand j'ai interpellé certaines autres personnes dans la capitale, elle n'est pas la seule !

Il y a plusieurs d'autres établissements ici dans la capitale qui me disent ils doivent aller faire la queue devant le bureau à Baie Lascars pour pouvoir avoir un peu d'eau, pour faire fonctionner leur business, M. le président. Et là, tout récemment, j'ai entendu, tout le monde a vu à la télévision où le représentant de L'Union Européenne était ici pour donner Rs130000, si je ne me trompe pas, pour l'amélioration de la situation de l'eau dans l'île.

Écoutez, M. le président, si on a de l'argent et qu'en retour, la population est satisfaite, tant mieux ! À quoi ça sert d'avoir autant d'argent et puis qu'on a autant de problème ?

Mr. Chairperson: Order, please !

The Minority Leader: Donc, le seul problème, M. le président, et ce jour-là, j'ai été personnellement surpris. C'est la MBC qui l'a rapporté où le Chef commissaire a dit : « *J'espère que les commissions vont pouvoir utiliser cet argent à bon escient.* » Alors, est-ce une mise en garde envers ceux concernés ? Est-ce une mise en garde, M. le président ?

Mr. Chairperson: Please, listen! Please!

The Minority Leader: Est-ce une mise en garde envers certains de ces commissaires ? Je sais peut-être il avait en tête, il mettait en garde certains pour mieux utiliser cet argent parce que lui, le Chef commissaire, il n'est pas là, malheureusement, mais je sais qu'il le sait que la situation en eau à Rodrigues est chaotique, M. le président. Vous savez pourquoi ? – Parce qu'il n'y a pas une bonne gestion, M. le président. La distribution se fait encore comme au temps du mathusalem. La distribution est archaïque, M. le président. C'est contraire à cette vision.

On veut viser Rodrigues, le développement de Rodrigues. Le Chef commissaire, toujours, il parle dans 10 ans, dans 20 ans, dans 30 ans. Est-ce que dans 10 ans, dans 30 ans, on va continuer à gérer l'eau comme ça, M. le président ? Donc, voilà, il y a eu trop de *interruptions*, M. le président. Mais j'espère que cette part d'intervention aura permis à tous ceux concernés de mesurer l'ampleur de la situation, M. le président.

Et là, l'autre jour, le Ministre des Finances, il était là. « *Rodrigues aura l'attention voulu du Gouvernement Central.* » Mais il lance un vrai défi. Il lance un vrai défi, M. le président. Tout cet argent qu'on investi, *there must be return on investment.* Et là, la balle est dans leur camp. Moi, je suis là pour représenter la voix du peuple. Alors, je dis ici tout haut ce que les autres pensent tout bas. Merci, M. le président.

[Applause]

Mr. Chairperson: Yes, Madam.

CONNEXION AU CÂBLE OPTIQUE

Mrs. M. L. C. Meunier: Merci, M. le président, de me donner l'honneur, de me faire le privilège d'intervenir cet après-midi, il ne nous reste pas beaucoup de temps, d'intervenir cet après-midi sur un sujet qui nous a touché de près, il y a quelques jours de cela. Un sujet, considéré comme un *top most priority project* pour Rodrigues mais qui n'a pas eu, il y a quelques semaines de cela, l'attention voulu lors de la visite du Ministère des Finances à Rodrigues qualifiée comme douche froide et de déception allant même jusqu'à surprendre certains.

L'annonce du Ministre des Finances, l'honorable Vishnu Lutchmeenaraidoo concernant la connexion au câble fibre optique nous laisse un goût très peu savoureux en bouche malgré l'annonce que vient de faire la *Deputy Chief Commissioner*. Tous, nous attendions avec grande impatience, l'avènement que ce grand chantier et projet de développement, la connexion au câble optique enclenche sa voix vers son implémentation et sa réalisation imminente.

À bien y réfléchir, dès fois, on se demande si ce n'est pas parce que certain avait dit qu'ils allaient couper le câble que Maurice hésitent toujours à le financer. Nous, M. le président, qui attendions ce moment où nos jeunes trouverons de l'emploi dans le secteur des TICS avec les BPOs où les investisseurs s'intéresseront enfin à Rodrigues où nous pourrions jouir d'une

connectivité qui aurait permis à tous, locaux, pas certains, pas tant de mégabits réservé à tant, tel affaire. Non ! Tous ! Je dis bien, tous !

Les locaux et étrangers de pouvoir travailler en toute quiétude sur son ordinateur même quand ces derniers sont en vacances, n'est-ce pas, M. Richard ? Nous, qui espérions que le jour est pour bientôt où on entendra parler de *e-Health and de 'e' everything else*, de pouvoir télécharger en quelques secondes, de parler My.T et que les termes box numérique, fibre to home et tant d'autres possibilités seront désormais à notre portée. Malheureusement, on reste au stage d'enfant pauvre pour qui tout est trop cher.

Comme quoi, on ne saura pas la valeur des choses et qu'on ne pourra jamais faire fructifier et donner sa juste valeur à ce projet tant attendu de tout un chacun. Ce qui est plus malheureux encore, c'est que le présent Gouvernement Régional n'est point arrivé à redonner espoir malgré, je dis bien, malgré l'intervention de la *Deputy Chief Commissioner* cet après-midi à redonner espoir à cette population abattue et désarmée.

Presque 15 jours après l'annonce fatidique, aujourd'hui, la Chef commissaire adjointe vient ici à l'Assemblée, nous brosser un tableau flamboyant que l'espoir, il faut attendre, on aura. Nous, on n'a rien de solide. On n'a rien de concret. Ce qui a été dit entre la Chef commissaire adjointe et le Ministre des Finances, c'est en privé mais pourquoi ne pas venir en public ? – Parce que l'annonce douche froide était faite en public.

M. le président, maintenant, nous, on aurait voulu entendre quelque chose de positif. Tout le monde l'attend. Pourquoi ne pas tout de suite après percuter pour dire allons de l'avant, allons annoncer la bonne nouvelle à la population de Rodrigues ? C'est à se demander jusqu'à aujourd'hui, jusqu'à il y a quelques minutes de cela, c'était à se demander si vraiment on maîtrise ce dossier de câble fibre optique.

Où sont donc passé les recommandations et des études de faisabilité où Rodrigues avait bien un *case for connection* ? Comment ne pas démontrer au Ministre des Finances, au Ministère des Finances que connecter Rodrigues au câble optique peut être un avantage pour la République en termes de *backup*. L'île Maurice qui fait aujourd'hui face aux terroristes. Exploitions toutes les possibilités, M. le président. La réussite appartient à celui qui saisit chaque opportunité. Comment ne pas gentiment, *pa dir vinn défonce la porte ouvert, nou envi koner ki zot inn dir* pour défoncer la porte, justement ?

Comment ne pas gentiment et poliment, comme vous savez si bien le faire, démontrer que la notion de casser les barrières économiques, sociales et

géographiques entre Maurice et Rodrigues réside dans ce projet ? Comment composer avec l'explication que le projet est trop onéreux et peu profitable avec le fait que de simples constructions à Maurice, le budget dépasse largement celui de ce présent budget pour le projet actuel ?

The more we wait, the more expensive it will get, M. le président. Comment ne pas faire part au Ministre des Finances qu'il y a des bailleurs de fond qui sont prêts à financer comme énoncé par le Chef commissaire dans son discours budget 2015 ? Il avait bien dit cela. Plusieurs bailleurs de fond ont déjà exprimé leurs intérêts à participer au financement du projet.

Ce matin, ici même, à la chambre, il a redis la même chose. Il a réitéré encore l'attention des organisations internationales pour aider Rodrigues dans son développement. Pourquoi ne pas dire tout cela à l'époque qu'on on sait négocier, on aurait pu tout dire au Ministre des Finances pour ne pas avoir un couac et puis aller maintenant dire que ça va être possible dans deux ans. Je suis contente, moi, si ça se réussisse dans deux ans.

Parce que la connexion, je peux vous dire, est catastrophique. Là, on va augmenter la bande passante. Tout de suite là, le Chef commissaire adjointe vous dit : « *On va donner 1000 personnes, 2000 personnes, 3000 personnes.* Les chiffres, ça parle bien, c'est très jolis mais au niveau de la connectivité, vous savez ce qu'on perd, nous, les gens qui utilisent ? Peut-être qu'elle n'utilise pas. Donc, ce n'est pas la peine de venir parler d'augmentation de connectivité. On attend notre connexion au câble fibre optique, point barre.

Moi, je dis qu'ayant eu des bailleurs de fond qui avaient déjà donné l'intention, signifié leur intention de financer, on aurait dû proposer au Ministre des Finances de trouver tout simplement le *modus operandi* pour pouvoir avoir accès à ce financement et à nous, de rendre le projet profitable en attirant des investisseurs et de développer les créneaux touristiques entre autres et d'autres accès sur la connectivité.

C'est à nous de le faire, M. le président. Même si le ministre se sent concerné, c'est notre responsabilité. C'était l'opportunité, là, de vraiment démontrer que le Rodriguais *kapav diboute lor so deux lipieds*. De ce côté de la chambre, M. le président, on s'accorde tous à dire que nous soutenons ce projet de connexion au câble optique et nous voulons dans les deux, trois ans à venir, que Rodrigues formera encore plus partie de l'Océan Indien car elle sera enfin connectée par le cordon ombilical de l'information technologique à ses sœurs de l'Océan Indien.

Il est temps de prendre les taureaux par les cornes. Nous sommes prêts. Trop petit pour toi mais tu n'as rien fait jusqu'à maintenant ! Tu n'as rien fait jusqu'à maintenant ! Il est temps de prendre les taureaux par les cornes, M. le président. Nous sommes prêts du côté de l'opposition. Nous sommes prêts à donner le soutien et l'appui nécessaire pour venir à bout de ce projet quitte à aller faire des représentations nécessaires là où il faudra. Si seul le gouvernement ne réussira pas à aboutir le projet de connexion à la fibre câble optique.

Unissons-nous pour faire réussir ce projet qui était l'un des projets prioritaires de Rodrigues depuis 2006 et qui est passé au stage de *top most priority project* en décembre 2014 par la présente Chef commissaire adjointe. Parce que, M. le président, ce serait vaine alors de venir avec des grands discours *enn sel catégorie citoyen dan la République*. Palliez à la discrimination et injustice entre Maurice et Rodrigues ou encore de rattraper et éliminer le retard accusé par rapport à son développement.

Pour terminer, je dirais ceci : quand donc est-ce que Rodrigues égalera Maurice, qui jouisse actuellement d'à peu près, 3 gigabits en termes de connectivité et qui n'est plus suffisant pour les projets d'avenir ? Si nous ne faisons que nous contenter d'augmentation de la bande passante par 100 mégabits par seconde, simple calcul, M. le président, cela prendra plus de dix ans au rythme où nous progressons si, je dis bien, nous ne sommes pas connecté au câble fibre optique dans les deux à trois ans à venir.

L'heure aussi est arrivée, M. le président, de savoir écouter et de ne pas *faire enn laguerre* sur toutes choses. Il y a des choses qui sont bonnes. Là, c'est un projet de développement, pas pour Mme Lordana, ni pour Mme X, Y ou Z ou M. X, Y ou Z. C'est un projet de développement pour Rodrigues. Sachons nous unir ! *Si bisin demane coup de main, pa honter !* Entre Rodriguais, qu'on se soutienne !

Si on n'arrive pas à faire progresser les choses dans un sens, essayons de trouver comment faire progresser les choses ensemble, M. le président. C'est mon souhait, c'est mon désir, c'est la demande que je ferai à ce présent gouvernement qui, pour toute chose, doit se quereller, doit *faire laguerre, enn tapage*. Moi, je ne suis pas venu là pour faire du tapage. Je suis venu là dans l'intérêt de mon peuple, dans l'intérêt de la population de Rodrigues. Merci, M. le président.

[Applause]

STRAY DOGS

Mr. J. D. Spéville: M. le président, on dit que le chien est l'ami de l'homme. Mais, actuellement, à Rodrigues, nous voyons que les chiens agressent voire tuer les animaux tous les jours. Depuis les siècles, les humains ont tiré profit de la relation qu'ils ont développée avec les chiens. La négligence humaine a, par contre, renversé la vapeur faisant des chiens, les animaux nuisibles dans plusieurs pays du monde.

En effet, une irresponsabilité généralisée de la part des propriétaires des chiens a donné naissance à une surpopulation canine à Rodrigues. Si on ne fait rien maintenant, on se retrouvera dans une situation de mort d'homme plus tard. Et ce qui fait du meilleur ami de l'homme, une bête plutôt inquiétante.

Si ce risque existe aujourd'hui, M. le président, c'est bien dû à une indifférence généralisée et d'une inconscience certaine face à la question de chiens errants à Rodrigues. Leur omniprésence à des densités parfois démesurées, causent inévitablement un impact significatif sur la santé humaine, la faune sauvage et l'élevage d'animaux domestiques.

Toutefois, le problème de chien errant se pose de manière plus aigüe sur les plages publiques, dans les hôpitaux, dans les écoles, les plages et dans les hôtels. Et cela affecte davantage le développement touristique à Rodrigues. On a vu qu'il y a même des chiens qui habitent la plage. Pendant la journée, ils sont nourris par des piqueurs et le soir, ils conversent vers les hôtels. On avait commencé par un travail de partenariat avec la MSPCA de Maurice en passant par l'enregistrement des chiens.

Tout cela avait abouti par le projet d'installation de trappe, de casier pour les chiens sauvages dans différentes régions de l'île, les *dog catchers* et un *dog pound* à Montagne Plate pour éliminer et contrôler les chiens errants à Rodrigues avec la mise en place d'une instance pour contrôler par rapport à la mise en place d'un nouveau règlement qui émane du *MSPCA (Officers' Powers and Protection) Act*.

Même la transformation d'un véhicule pour le transport pour ces chiens avait déjà été initiée. Mais on voit que le projet est tombé à l'eau et qu'il n'a pas une permanence d'état par rapport à ce secteur. Et ce qui est dommage pour cette île économique qu'on prône.

M. le président, les chiens sont des prédateurs féroces et des charognards efficaces dominant plusieurs espèces de la faune sauvage. Je dois encore aussi signaler qu'avec le nombre grandissant de chiens bâtards est déroqué, les

répercussions des chiens errants sur l'élevage deviennent de plus en plus grave de jour en jour.

Les chiens errants mangent des moutons, des cabris, attaquent des bœufs et même des personnes. Cela a une répercussion très lourde sur l'élevage et on peut dire que le cheptel de moutons et de cabris va continuer à diminuer parce que les chiens entrent dans les troupeaux, égorgent les moutons. Et c'est tout un troupeau qui est fini et cela a une répercussion négative sur l'économie du pays. *Narnier pa rester.*

M. le président, en effet, la loi éveille de 1971. Aucune prévision n'existe pour différencier chien de race et autres types de chiens ni pour réglementer l'élevage sauvage de chien et encore moins pour les dispositions adéquate pour gérer les problèmes de chiens errants est dangereux. Jusqu'ici, les chiens ont été pour la majorité des Rodriguais, un animal assurant le gardiennage.

Désormais, tout le monde veut un joli toutou en entendant un molosse pour susciter la peur et éloigner les voleurs. Pourtant, les choses ne sont pas aussi simples que cela. Il est important aujourd'hui de donner une identité à nos chiens. On avait commencé à délivrer des médailles, des colliers pendant les enregistrements des chiens.

Il importe toutefois de savoir également que l'éducation du chien révèle de la responsabilité du maître. On avait commencé à entamer une campagne de sensibilisation en collaboration avec la MSPCA, le media et les affiches. Mais aujourd'hui, on ne sait pas *what is the way forward*. M. le président, la principale préoccupation aujourd'hui est de rationaliser la fascination des chiens. Il y a une grande méconnaissance de la psychologie des chiens à Rodrigues. Tout le monde veut un chien.

Mr. Chairperson: House stands adjourned. Time is over.

Mr. J. D. Spéville: Okay. *Mo a récontigne boute la.*

*At 15.16 hours the House was, on its rising adjourned
to Friday 28 April 2015 at 10.30 hours*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

VISIT IN RODRIGUES – HONOURABLE MINISTER OF FINANCE

(No. B/12) Mr. M. D. S. Perrine (The Ninth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the recent visit in Rodrigues of the Honourable Minister of Finance and his delegation, he will, for the benefit of the House, state on the different decisions already taken and announced by the Minister and any other forthcoming measures to be implemented this year and in the future?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, further to the visit of the Honorable Minister of Finance and his delegation from the 13th to the 16th February, several meetings were held whereby the Executive Council has had the opportunity to expose to the Minister the vision of my government with regards to the transition of Rodrigues' economy from a semi-artisanal to a more professional and productive one. Our plan of action to achieve same has been fully endorsed by the Minister. The Minister has further agreed to consolidate our vision as listed in our last budget speech.

Allow me, Mr. Chairperson Sir, to enumerate the main decisions and measures which have been agreed for implementation shortly, some of which with immediate effect:

- 1) Reduction in the cost of air tickets from Rodrigues to Mauritius from Rs 7,189 to Rs 5,430; that is a decrease of Rs 1,756 per passenger as from the 15th February 2015.
- 2) In order to boost up entrepreneurship in Rodrigues, the Minister has fully understood that there is a need for a positive discrimination in favour of Rodriguan Entrepreneurs.

The following measures have been announced and will be operational shortly:

- Setting up of two dedicated SME parks in 2015: One for ICT/BPO and the other one for agro-processing;
- Setting up of one stop shop for SMEs inclusive of an SME Bank in Rodrigues to provide technical and marketing support to entrepreneurs;
- Provision of a Tax Holiday for a period of eight years for all SMEs;
- Amendment of the Public Procurement Act whereby provisions would be made to allow 15% margin of preference for local SME's based in Rodrigues for contracts below Rs 5 m.;
- There would be no need for any personal guarantee for loans contracted by SMEs; and

- The market for the agricultural production of certain commodities (Onion, garlic, saffron, ginger, local bean and livestock) will be secured by AMB and MMA at guaranteed prices and any quantity produced.
- 3) The Youth Employment Programme (YEP) has been revised and adapted to the Rodriguan context whereby training/placement costs will be refunded in total to Rodriguan beneficiaries as compared to 50% refund in Mauritius. A special scheme has been elaborated to enable the placement of Rodriguan graduates in Mauritius whereby the cost of air tickets will be borne by the government. Under this programme, 2 batches of 150 students each is being targeted over 2 years.
- 4) As regards the long-term development of the island, several infrastructure projects have been approved by the MOFED.
 - (i) With regards the port development of Rodrigues, the extension of the quay and other associated works will be included in a new National Port Master Plan being prepared by MPA.

Furthermore, for the development of the fishing sector and a sea-food hub, the setting up of a semi-industrial fishing port at Pointe L'herbe has been approved by the MOFED.

- (ii) The financing structure of the airport development project, estimated at over Rs 1.5 b. is being actively examined with development partners.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce this House another measure that was announced last week during a joint press conference with the Honourable Minister of Finance, which is the direct flights, as from May 2015, from Reunion Island to Rodrigues operated by Air Austral.

- (iii) As regards ICT development in Rodrigues, available bandwidth capacity in Rodrigues through satellite shall be increased from 155 to 200 Mbps and up to 300 Mbps if need be in the short term.
- (iv) Additional investment in the water section will be made available both for domestic and irrigation purposes.

I understand that there is a PQ on the Optical Submarine Fibre Cable project to which my colleague responsible of ICT Development shall reply and give further details.

Mr. Speaker Sir, discussions are still ongoing on several issues pertaining to the measures to be taken for the prompt development of Rodrigues. Once same would have been finalized, this assembly will be informed.

INTERNATIONAL WOMAN'S DAY

(No. B/13) Mr. M. D. S. Perrine (The Ninth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the International Woman's Day, she will, for the benefit of the House, elaborate on the activities being organised by her Commission?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the International Women's Day is celebrated worldwide to pay homage to women who through their emancipation are contributing significantly to the socio-economic development of their respective countries in particular and the World in general.

2. It is no secret to us that in Rodrigues, women from different strata of our society are not only emancipated and empowered. Their role and responsibility towards the uplift of our society and preservation of family values cannot be underestimated.

3. For this reason, Mr. Chairperson, sir, My Commission has programmed a host of activities over the week starting on 4th and ending on the 9th March 2015 to pay respect to and honour our women. I have to point out here that in the different events organised we have taken care to rope in the Rodriguan women from all walks of life.

You would surely appreciate that our motto for these activities we have retained is: *"Fam pilyé nou sosyété anou continuer avansé"*. We are starting tomorrow with a workshop targeting the 100 women who have been enrolled under the Employment Relief Programme and the activities will end on 9th March 2015 with a seminar for women public officers in the leadership role.

4. The women entrepreneurs in Rodrigues will organise an 'expo-vente' on Friday 06 March 2015 to show case their *"savoir faire"* to the general public which will continue the next day and will be followed by a blood donation campaign because women do not only give life but they can also save life.

5. On the 8th March which marks UN International Women's Day per se, we are organising a workshop and a Round Table for the benefit of women entrepreneurs. As you are all aware, the UN has chosen the theme "Make it happen" for this year's celebration and we are committed to make it happen here. Two consultants from Mauritius have been invited to animate the two programmes. They are Miss Dhareena Thevenin whose thesis was based on a study of Women Entrepreneurs in Rodrigues and Mr. Manoj Vaghjee who last year developed the Rodrigues Label.

6. I am now tabling a copy of the programme summarising the week of activities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) DEVELOPMENT

(No. B/14) Mr. M. D. S. Perrine (The Ninth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) development in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission I am going to lump PQ B/14, B/16 and B/23 as they are linked to the same subject, namely ICT.

2. The Regional Government has at heart the development of the ICT sector as an engine for job creation and economic development in Rodrigues. In that respect request for proposal was launched on 09 July 2014. As at closing date on 18 August 2014 the following companies submitted their request for proposals:

<u>N</u>	<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>ARE</u> <u>A</u> <u>REQUIRED</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>N</u> <u>O.</u> <u>OF</u> <u>LOCAL</u> <u>PEOPLE</u>	<u>CAPA</u> <u>CITY</u> <u>REQUIRED</u>
.	CSL (Call Services Ltd)	560 m ²	100	80	10 mbps
.	Central Business Equipment Ltd	100m ²	3	2 – 3	1 GB
.	Ksi/AG Consultants Ltd	44 m ²	16	16	1 mbps

3. Following an evaluation exercise, proposals from two companies have been retained to set up ICT/BPO in Rodrigues namely:-

Ksi/ AG Consultants Ltd.; and
CSL (Call Services Ltd.)

4. The following incentives are given to all potential investors:
A capacity of 40 Mbps will be allocated in a first instance for the whole industrial development of the ICT sector in Rodrigues.

Rent free bandwidth for the first 2 years and subsidised at 50% for the 3rd year.

Rent free building space for the first 2 years of a total surface area of 600 m² and subsidised at 50% for the 3rd year. The 2nd floor of Ex DBM building is undergoing refurbishment works to accommodate the ICT Company and is expected to be completed by 10 May 2015.

Government is considering the review of the quantum of cost sharing under the ICT Skills Development Programme from 50% to 70%.

5. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to announce that following the official visit of the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the Central Government has decided to pay all 100% wages for the placement of unemployed youngsters in enterprises under the Youth Employment Programme. Furthermore, even those who are going on placement in Mauritius-based firms will benefit from free air tickets as well.

Further incentive is the Leasing Equipment Modernisation Scheme (LEMS).

Commercial banking institution operating in Rodrigues will be authorised to provide leasing facilities to SMEs, willing to do business in ICT sector (SBM, SBI, MCB and Barclays Bank).

Under this project, job opportunities will be created for unemployed youth who have completed their training at the ICT Centre for Excellence, other school leavers and graduates in line with the Regional Government policy to make the ICT one of the economic pillars of the island.

6. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regards PQ B/16, the Optical Fibre Cable project, it is true that the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Development during his meeting with the youth on Saturday 14 February 2015 did say that he was not ready to invest Rs 1 billion in the project. However, after consultations the Chief Commissioner and myself had

with him because his announcement gave rise to some reactions, he did make a *“mise au point”* on Sunday 15 February while visiting the ICT Centre for Excellence. He stated that he is not against the Optical Fibre Cable project. But as there is not enough demand for bandwidth for the time being, such a huge investment is not justified.

7. He also added that if in the future, the ICT sector will be fully developed and if there is sufficient demand for bandwidth, Government will definitely implement the project.
8. It is worth noting that as an immediate palliative measure the bandwidth allocation for Rodrigues has been increased by 30% from 155 mbps to 200 mbps. We believe that for the time being, this amount of bandwidth will be enough to cater for our immediate needs especially for the nascent ICT Sector.

EMPOWERMENT OF THE YOUTH – RODRIGUES

(No. B/15) Ms. M. D. S. Perrine (The Ninth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Others whether, in regard to the empowerment of the youth in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, elaborate on the strategies being put in place in favour of this target group?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I wish to thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to elaborate on the strategies that my Commission has put in place and the projects in the pipeline for the empowerment of the youth.

Let me first of all, say that the needs and aspirations of the youth today evolve constantly and we have to keep abreast of those changes. Strategies and actions towards Youth Empowerment is thus a complex task that requires time, commitment, vision, foresight, as well as multi-sectoral partnership, cooperation and across Commissions that is by Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in this line, my commission has been putting the stepping stones for a better empowered youth through the identification of several key strategic areas as follows:

1. Youth employment and employability
2. Youth health issues, family life education and counselling
3. Substance abuse prevention, combating HIV/Aids and other STIs
4. Access to ICT
5. Healthy leisure and sports activities

6. Training and participation in the decision-making process
7. Civic leadership and human
8. Promotion of artistic, cultural and historical values through the Youth Band and the Village of the Move, inter alia.
9. Promotion and protection of the environment by inculcating ecological values.

All these strategies Mr. Chairperson, Sir, summarize the whole programmes of the Commission and of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the youth implemented through the different structures that Youth Centres, Community Centres and Adolescent Youth Counselling Centre amongst others.

To begin with, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, when it comes to youth employment and youth employability, various concrete actions have been and are being put in place to ensure that our youth are capable of generating employment and have access to a job.

Under the Youth Entrepreneurship section of the Commission an “*état de lieu*” of the various projects submitted by our youths since 2012 and which have not been retained in various competition is being made. This to render the projects more viable and bankable. In the same breath, they will be able to benefit from the measures and facilities enumerated by our Chief Commissioner in his 2015 budget speech; for instance, subsidies on modern equipment to have more competitive businesses amongst others.

The Youth Entrepreneurship section will continue to provide training (capacity building), help young people to set up and sustain their enterprise as well as continuous sensitisation campaigns to make entrepreneurship one of the youth career options.

Indeed, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the creation and consolidation of “*l’économie communautaire*” is one to the greatest projects of this Regional Government. The young people are encouraged to be part of this project through the creation of cooperatives hence enhancing their participation to the “*créer une économie solide et durable*”. In fact actually five cooperatives where majority of the members are young people are emerging and doing their utmost.

Avec la *Commission des Coopératives*, 10 jeunes seront recrutées pour la mise en place d’un programme d’accompagnement et de comptabilité et de gestion. De plus, un projet agricole et élevage est en phase de finalisation en

partenariat avec le *Rodrigues Regional Youth Council* impliquant un groupe de jeunes incluant de Terre Rouge et Citronelle.

Moreover, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, under the service to Mauritius Programme 12 additional young graduates has been recruited in view to giving experience to the young people. Additionally, a project of high level training for Entrepreneurship for 30 young graduates will be realised by the Commission for Training and Industrial Development and Empretec Mauritius.

More importantly, Mr. Chairperson, sir, we promise the young Rodriguans a revisit and the contextualisation on the Youth Empowerment Programme (YEP) and after negotiations and consultations, the Minister of Finance announced the recruitment of some 150 youths for 2015 and another batch of 150 youths for 2016 to be on placement in both Mauritius and Rodrigues and the programme will be fully subsidised by the Central Government. However, an “*état de lieu*” of the various institutions capable of welcoming our youth in Rodrigues and Mauritius.

It is to be noted that actually through the Deputy Chief Commissioner’s Office and the Human Resource Development Centre, 25 young entrepreneurs are on placement in Mauritius in various fields.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, this announcement was made during a consultation with the youths on the 14th of February 2015 whereby, the young people had the occasion to voice out their expectations and aspirations to whole panel of Commissioners and Ministerial delegation including the Minister of Finance, Hon. V. Luchmeenaraidoo

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with the policy of the Regional Government to inculcate and promote a culture of entrepreneurship among the youth, a number of strategies has been devised accordingly. The strategies aimed at sharpening and focus to empower young people to become economically independent and more active both at micro and macro-economic levels.

The following strategies are being put in place namely:-

- (i) Consolidation of the Youth Entrepreneurship Unit of my Commission;
- (ii) Provision of a financial support to most viable projects put forward by the youth (six youth were provided a financial assistance for the purchase of their equipment).
- (iii) Technical assistance to youth groups to set up their enterprises

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, under the Entrepreneuriat Jeunesse Programme, the following main activities will be implemented

- Implement Jeunes Entreprises project in secondary schools and MITD centres
- Expo Fair for young entrepreneurs to help them in their marketing strategies
- Seminars, Forums, Workshops on thematic issues relating to entrepreneurship
- Concours National CONFEJES
- Outreach entrepreneurship training for unemployed people.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I will now come to a project which has proved to be very successful in Rodrigues, namely,

Ateliers de Savoirs project

The Atelier de Savoirs was set up in 2003 to provide training to youths (school drop-outs) aged 16-25 years old at the four Atelier de Savoirs specialised in Woodwork, Pastry/Food processing, Mechanics/Welding and Sewing/Fabrics respectively. Since 2003, 700 youths have been included in the different Atelier de Savoir. Some of the réalisations of the Atelier de Savoir project are:-

- 2 trainees from woodwork were offered two year advanced training courses at the MITD in Mauritius from February 2014 to 2016. The trainees are Ramso Ravina and Eddy Ravanne.
- An “Atelier de Savoirs” Agricole is being set up at Grand La Fouche Mangues to offer training in Bio-Farming. In the meantime, 15 students are starting courses at La Ferme Youth Centre to be eventually transferred to Atelier de Savoir of Grand la Fouche Mangues.
- Training in life skills management and training in Entrepreneuriat/Business start-up will be delivered in March and April 2015.

Mr. Chairperson, sir, with regards to the Atelier de Savoir around Rodrigues, my Commission will continue to provide all technical and financial support to enable efficient and effective functioning of same.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, another strategy of my Commission is empowering the future generation in responsible sexual behavior via the Adolescent Youth Counselling Centre and Youth Centres around the island.

Young people (10-24 years) are becoming sexually active at an increasingly earlier age with high rates of unwanted teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.

Teenage pregnancy is reported to be on the increase. There is a high unmet need for information, education and SRH services for adolescents and youth. It is therefore very critical that catering for their needs should be a priority on all fronts.

As such, my Commission is reviewing and revisiting the whole lots of programmes like the Peer Education and Peer Counselling in view of promoting that a service that is nearer to our youth and to ensure that they have the right information.

Owing to the fact that the youth are facing challenges from all quarters, it becomes imperative to have a greater insight of the youth behavior on the island. In the same vain, various consultations, workshops and meetings will be carried out with all partners and organisation working with the youth to ultimately culminate with a study of youth in Rodrigues.

With the support of the UNFPA, my Commission will continue the various education and counseling programmes in all the colleges in Rodrigues including the MITD on a weekly basis by youth Peer Counsellors.

Mr. Chairperson, sir for year 2014, 4346 students were sensitised in colleges on Sexual and Reproductive Health whose objectives were to:

- Improve life skills of young people so they can be empowered to make informed choices for SRH;
- Provide information on SRH to youth
- Consolidate counselling service for SRH at secondary institutions;
- Build capacity of youth and promote networking with agencies involved in ASRH activities and set up structures for youth activities.

Duke of Edinburgh International Award for young people

The award concept is one of individual challenge. It presents to young people a balanced, non-competitive programme of voluntary activities which encourages personal discovery and growth, self-reliance, perseverance, responsibility to themselves and service to their community. In this context, my Commission is contemplating to organise a Gold and Silver Award this year to reward all the youth who shown much effort and overcome all challenges set by the programme.

Empowerment through training and healthy leisure activities for young people

Throughout the year, training are organised for young people in the different Youth Centres around the island. Leisure activities vary from organised camping, indoor games, treasure hunts, Village on the Move, 7 A-side football, recreational days, hiking and film projections.

The Chief Commissioner elaborated on the new scholarship offered to REDCO Colleges. Specific training is also delivered in IT in all Youth Centres around the island are equipped with WIFI facilities with communication devices, modern and traditional dance, aerobic and music in different youth centres. The Commission has also invested in Youth bands in the different regions, and various new trainings in music and other sectors are being offered and upgraded. In addition, at the level of ICT Centre for Excellence, Camp du Roi, some 400 youth have been trained in ICT in view to preparing them in thinking and organising ICT centre enterprises.

Training in leadership and Club Management is also regularly organised for Youth Leaders and members of Youth Clubs. Youth leaders are regrouped through the Youth Leaders Committee in each region, a platform where they engage in decision-making process and have the opportunity to support youth initiatives.

The whole lot of activities will be reviewed and reinvented for the betterment of the youth.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, through the various programmes and actions that are being taken by my Commission and the Regional Government for the empowerment of our youth and to increase their employability. It is to be noted that, there is a full good factor that prevails amongst the youth and population at large. *“Investir dans la jeunesse, c’est investir dans l’avenir”* and this and this RRA Government are investing in the youth, hence in their future.

INTERNET CONNECTIVITY – RODRIGUES

(No. B/16) Mr. J. Allan Ladd Emilien (The Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to internet connectivity in Rodrigues insofar as to the optical fibre cable project, she will, for the benefit of the House, state on the stand of the Regional Government following the announcement of the Honourable Minister of Finance on this issue?

(Vide reply PQ B/14)

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS – RODRIGUES

(No. B/17) Mr. J. Allan Ladd Emilien (The Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Trade and Commerce and Others whether, in regard to petroleum products in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) if there has been any shortage thereof in the island as from December 2014 to date and, if so, the exact dates thereof together with its duration;
- (b) the incidence, if any, on the economic activities in the island and, if so, to give details thereof; and
- (c) the measures taken/envisaged to avoid recurrence of same?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that as from December 2014, there have been shortages of petroleum products as follows:

1. Firstly, on Sunday 10 December 2014, Diesel and Gas oil were in shortage at both the Port Mathurin Filling Station and Mont Lubin Filling Station for few hours. Requested information about same has already been provided in my reply to question B/128 on the sitting of 16th December 2014.
2. Secondly, customers in the island experienced shortages in the supply of Mogas (Essence) from Sunday 22nd February 2015 at about 9 hours up to Monday 23rd at 9 a.m. These shortages were attributed to the disruption of the dangerous cargo schedule of the Mauritius Trochetia which was delayed following cyclone Bansi.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, unfortunately, there was another brief shortage in the supply of Mogas in Rodrigues on Monday 23rd as from 14.20 hours to Tuesday 24th February at 6 a.m., following the outbreak of fire at the filling station of Port Mathurin.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as regard to part (b), I would say that these shortages did not have any incidences on the economic activities as they were only of short duration and both occurred on a Sunday where the level of economic activities are quite low.

The supply of essential commodities in Rodrigues including petroleum products is under the close monitoring of the Consumer Protection Unit of my Commission. We are in a position to intervene in a proactive manner with the relevant authorities in Mauritius and Rodrigues once we foresee any shortages.

In this way, I must say that so far we have been able to minimise any impacts on consumers and as far as possible ensure a constant supply of these commodities on the market.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the House will note that the above shortages have emerged due to exceptional circumstances.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, discussions have already been held by the Chief Commissioner's Office with competent authorities in Mauritius to take urgent steps for the eventual replacement of M.V. Mauritius Pride.

My Commission will hold consultation with the management of the Company shortly for a deep analysis of the situations relating to exceptional circumstances and to make recommendations accordingly.

ROAD DAMAGED – ANSE BALEINE

(No. B/18) Mr. J. Allan Ladd Emilien (The Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others whether, in regard to the road damaged at Anse Baleine following the last heavy rainfall, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the measures taken/envisaged to bring back the fluidity of the traffic thereat and to ensure the security of road users in general?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the damage caused to the causeway along the main road at Anse Baleine has been filled the day after the all clear signal was issued by the Meteorological Services after the passage of cyclone Bansi to

render the road accessible. The proper repairs will be undertaken as soon as the next contract for road construction would be awarded.

PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION – RODRIGUES

(No. B/19) Mr. J. Allan Ladd Emilien (The Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to pre-primary education in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) if there has been any incident or complaint received regarding children below the age of three attending some pre-primary schools in the island and, if so, to give details thereof;
- (b) if any child has had to stop schooling a few weeks after resumption of classes in January 2015 and, if so, the reasons therefore; and
- (c) the total number of children who attended those schools in January 2015 and the total as at to date?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have been informed after enquiry conducted by the Education Unit that two children born 17 February 2012 and 29 March 2012 respectively have attended one Pre Primary School in January 2015.

Based on Early Childhood Care and Educational Authority Act – Government Notice No.176 of 2011, it is stipulated that pupils admitted in pre-primary schools should be above the age of three (3) and will attend pre-primary schooling up to the age of entry to a primary school. In fact, both children have not reached the age of three when they were admitted a Pre Primary School at the resumption of classes in 2015.

The Manager of the Pre Primary School informed that as she had only 13 pupils in her class, she has accepted enrollment of these two children following several requests from their respective parents and also because she has been personally impressed by their dynamism.

However, on 9 February 2015, the two children have stopped schooling upon the instruction of the *Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues* on the grounds that they were not of school age.

As any child can be admitted in a pre-primary school at any time during the year once he or she has reached the age of three (3). For instance, the child

who was born on 17 February 2012 and the second one born on 29 March 2012 are eligible for admission in pre-primary school in March and April 2015 respectively.

The *Association des Ecoles Maternelles* was not aware of this provision. I have therefore instructed the Departmental Head of my Commission to draw the attention of the *Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues* on the above regulations.

With regards to part (c), Mr. Chairperson, Sir, some 1430 pupils both age 3+ and 4 attended the pre-primary schools in January 2015 including the two children mentioned earlier and as at date, the number is 1428.

POSITIONING OF OCEAN ECONOMY

(No. B/20) Mr. J. C. Agathe (The First Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the positioning of the ocean economy as a promising sector of long term economic activity for the Republic of Mauritius, including Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if Rodrigues has, as at to date, participated in the elaboration of any strategic action plan therefor and, if so, to give details thereof and, if not, why?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I will answer this question since the subject matter falls under the aegis of my Commission.

Being given that the ocean economy constitutes a very important sector for long term economic development, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is keen to be part of initiatives aimed at making the Republic of Mauritius an Ocean Economy.

A Consultative meeting was done in Rodrigues by Dr. Sudhoo, the director of the Mauritius Research Council in 2013 with respect to the ocean economy and the vision of the National Government thereon. I also attended a workshop in 2013 in Mauritius regarding the Ocean Economy.

So far, my Commission has not been invited to participate in the elaboration of any action plan. However, during my mission to Mauritius in January this year, I took the opportunity to raise the issue of the Ocean Economy with the Honourable Minister for Ocean Economy, Mr. Prem Koonjoo. I was informed that the Ocean Economy is still a new concept and that structures have to be put in place to make it a reality.

I am also informed by the Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries, Shipping and Outer Islands that Rodrigues as part of the Republic of Mauritius, will be taken on board in the elaboration of any Action Plan on the development of the Ocean Economy and that Government is currently seeking technical assistance on the issue.

**SETTING UP OF SELECT COMMITTEE
– MEMBERS OF HOUSE**

(No. B/21) Mr. J. C. Agathe (The First Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he will state if consideration will be given for the possibility of setting up a Select Committee composing of Members of both sides of the House to look into amendments to be brought to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act in view of the forthcoming Regional Elections and, if so, when and, if not, why?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, it is a fact that after almost thirteen years of autonomy, there is a need to amend the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act to address a series of perceived weaknesses and omissions. A fundamental review of the proportional system of appointing members of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is also to be carried out to ensure that government majority is not put at risk. I have to stress on the fact that the amendments to be brought to the Act is not to cater for the forthcoming Regional Elections but to ensure that it provide the appropriate legal framework to enable the autonomy to achieve its full potential for the welfare of our people.

Mr. Chairperson Sir, there is currently two versions of the proposed law to be amended, one worked out by the Government which was under my responsibility from 2002 to 2006 and the other from the Regional Government which was in office from 2006 to 2012.

As at to date, a total of not more than twenty four amendments have been identified including eight consequential amendments to main existing legislations have been identified. The works is ongoing and the support of Sir Victor Glover, former Chief Justice has been enlisted.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I consider that the need to set up a Select Committee to look into the amendments does not arise. It is proposed that once the bill will be ready, members will be given ample time to study same before debate in this assembly.

**PARLIAMENTARY PRIVATE
SECRETARY (PPS) – RODRIGUES**

(No. B/22) Mr. J. C. Agathe (The First Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) appointed for Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if any vehicle of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly or any other facility has been provided to the incumbent and, if so, the amount of money with respect to diesel already disbursed during the use thereof in the island?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, consequent to the appointment of a Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) for Rodrigues, the latter has signified his intention to depart from the existing practice to take advantage of the privilege of having a big car together with police escort while on visit in Rodrigues. A request was made by the Prime Minister's Office to the Island Chief Executive to put a smaller vehicle at the disposal of the PPS as well as a driver.

In that context, a 4 x 4 pick-up van type vehicle from the pool of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly was put at the disposal of the PPS for that purpose.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I have to inform the House that as far as diesel for the running of the vehicle is concerned, a request will be made to the National Development Unit section of the Prime Minister's Office for the reimbursement of the cost of diesel used.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) DEVELOPMENT – OUTCOME

(No. B/23) Mr. J. C. Agathe (The First Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) development in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state on the outcome thereof to date?

(Vide Reply PQ B/14)

FIRE OUTBREAK – PORT MATHURIN FILLING STATION

(No. B/24) Mr. J. Roussety (The First Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, as regards the fire outbreak which occurred on Monday 23 February 2015 at the Port Mathurin Filling Station, he will state

is the existing equipment and manpower of the Fire Service were adequately equipped and sufficient, respectively, to cope with such a calamity?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that on Monday 23 February 2015 at about 14.20 hours, the Fire and Rescue Services at Camp du Roi received a call regarding a fire outbreak at the filling station of Port Mathurin.

Immediately, a crew of 16 Fire and Rescue officers attended the spot whereby, it was noticed that five containers used for the transport of inflammable products from the quay to the Filling Station were under fire and were emitting dense smokes. Fire and Rescue Officers who were off-duty were also immediately recalled and some 14 additional officers attended the fire spot providing assistance to the 16 officers to combat the fire.

Assistance from the Fire Services of Airport of Rodrigues Ltd, the Special Mobile Force and the Rodrigues Police to ensure security around the perimeter of the Filling Station were also requested.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, due to the professionalism and high commitment of the Firefighters, the fire was finally extinguished at 16.20 hours without any casualty.

Permettez-moi, M. le Président, de rendre hommage à ces vaillants pompiers, les policiers et les soldats de la SMF qui ont lutté avec corps et âme pour contenir le danger. Je salue tout bas leur bravoure et efficacité. Je compte les rencontrer incessamment pour les féliciter personnellement.

Presently, the Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Services is staffed by 48 officers, all grades inclusive and has the following existing equipment: one foam Tender Lorry, one water lorry, four (4) light vehicles, 40 rolls hoses, 600 litres of foam, one trailer pump, one (1) mobile pump, two (2) portable pumps, two trash pumps and six breathing apparatus and chain saws. It is a fact that some of the equipment need to be replaced.

The fire which has occurred at the Port Mathurin Filling Station has enabled us to have a full scale auditing of our capability to react to such disaster and as such a meeting will be held next week with all stakeholders concerned to identify the weaknesses so as to devise proper and adequate measures to address same.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, in line with our vision to develop and improve the Rodrigues Fire and Rescue Services, I wish to inform the House that it is for the first time that a provision of Rs 5 m. has been made in this present budget

comprising Rs 2 m. for Improvement of the Infrastructure of Fire Services as well as Rs 3 m. for procurement of additional firefighting equipment.

It is worth noting Mr. Chairperson, Sir, that in the Master Plan for the Port worked out by my previous Regional Government in 2003, provision was made for the construction of a petroleum island but it is unfortunate to note that the former Regional Government in the Master Plan of the Port 2008, has not considered same. Subsequently, my government with the assistance of the Mauritius Port Authority is reviewing the Master Plan. Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I shall ensure that provision for a petroleum island will be included therein.

Meanwhile Mr. Chairperson, Sir, necessary action would be taken to relocate the Filling Station from the fuel depot for security purposes.

SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY ISLANDWISE/PER ZONE – RODRIGUES

(No. B/25) Mr. J. Roussety (The First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure and Others whether, as regards the supply of electricity islandwise and per zone in Rodrigues, he could, for the benefit of the House, obtain information, from the Central Electricity Board, on the different dates of electricity cutoff since 01 January 2015 to date and indicate the main reasons therefor?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the information received from the Central Electricity Board, with the main reasons causing the faults.

TENDERING PROCESS – ALLOCATION SIX MEDIUM FISHING BOATS

(No. B/26) Mr. J. Roussety (The First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Fisheries and Others whether, as regards the tendering process for the allocation of the six (6) medium fishing boats, formerly managed by the General Fishing Co Ltd., to local fishers and/or Companies, he will state where matters stand?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am pleased to inform the House that last year my Commission had rehabilitated the six fishing vessels formerly managed by the Rodrigues General Fishing Co Ltd and they are all now fully operational. A first expression of interest exercise was done in November last year but had to be cancelled and relaunched in January this year in view of ensuring that the allocation of the vessels serve its purpose of promoting poverty alleviation.

Eighteen offers were received from the second expression of interest exercise. Same were referred to an independent evaluation committee which has recommended six most substantially responsive offers for the allocation of the vessels.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the Executive Council has just approved the allocation of the vessels and my commission is currently initiating actions so that the allocation is done in the near future.

**PERSONS ENROLLED
– EMPLOYMENT RELIEF PROGRAMME**

(No. B/27) Mr. J. Roussety (The First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others whether, as regards the persons enrolled under the Employment Relief Programme he will give details of the programme execution together with its conditions and modalities?

(Vide Reply PQ B/7)

**INSTALLATION/CONSTRUCTION
– FOUR DESALINATION PLANTS
– RODRIGUES**

(No. B/28) Mr. J. D. Speville (The Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Commissioner responsible for Water Resources and Others whether, in regard to the installation or construction of the four desalination plants in Rodrigues, he will give a description of progress of the project to date?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, it is with much disappointment that I have to inform the house that there has been no progress on this important water project meant to alleviate the problem of water supply to the population.

There has been no further development in relation to the progress report 1 tabled at the sitting of 16 December 2014.

Considering all the support and opportunities given to the contractor to complete the project and their failure and incapacity to do so the contract has been terminated as I explained in my reply to question B/6. My Commission has already cashed the Performance Bond of the contractor and has requested the bank to pay into our account the balance of the advance payment security to

allow us to fund the completion of the project. To this end, the Consultant is now working out new tenders for its completion.

**MASSIVE PROBLEM
– ANTS INVASION/“GRAND GALOP”
– RODRIGUES**

(No. B/29) Mr. J. D. Speville (The Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the massive problem of ants invasion and “*grand galop*” in Rodrigues and which is adversely affecting households, he will state if consideration will be given for the possibility of having an islandwise action to eliminate same and, if not, why?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson Sir, I am informed that no complaint has been received by any authority concerning the invasion of “*grand gallot*” or any other ants. I am further informed that these insects are not vectors of communicable diseases. It is recommended that adopting an improved housekeeping will considerably decrease the ants and “*grand gallot*” inside the house.

**SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (SC)/HIGHER SCHOOL
CERTIFICATE (HSC) RESULTS**

(No. B/30) Mr. J. D. Speville (The Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to post School Certificate (SC) and Higher School certificate (HSC) results, he will state:

- (a) results thereof, for each category, for all secondary schools genderwise;
- (b) number of students who secured a place in lower six together with their combination of subjects chosen; and
- (c) number of scholarships available and the number of students who have postulated for same per category?

Reply: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, the results for the School Certificate (SC) and Higher School Certificate (HSC) for academic year 2014 for all secondary schools in Rodrigues were both released on line on 21 January 2015 and 02 February 2015 respectively.

I am tabling the required information as per parts (a), (b) and (c) of the question.

Scholarships available and number of students who have postulated for same

Sn	Name & Number of Scholarship(s)	No. of students who have postulated
1.	Rodrigues Open Scholarships (4)	4 In process
2.	Scholarship from Govt. of India under “Aid to Africa Scholarship Scheme” (AFSS) (5)	8 for Science Related Subjects & 1 for other subjects
3.	Additional Scholarship Scheme – Academic Merit and Social Criteria Scholarships (24)	In process
4.	People’s Republic of China (1)	In process
5.	Russian Federation Scholarship (1)	In process
6.	President’s Award Scheme (1) Science Related Scholarship (2)	In process
7.	Scholarship for RECDO Ltd Colleges (6)	In process
8.	BSP School of Accountancy and Management (2)	3

School Certificate (SC) Results Academic Year 2014

	Entered	Examined	Passed	% Passed
Boys	326	326	263	76.59
Girls	385	385	288	70.28
Total	576	575	420	73.04

Higher School Certificate (HSC) – Academic Year 2014

	Entered	Examined	Passed	% Passed
Boys	149	149	97	65.1
Girls	201	201	149	74.1
Total	350	350	246	70.2

EMPLOYMENT RELIEF PROGRAMME (ERP)

(No. B/31) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (The Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the Employment Relief Programme (ERP) mentioned in the Budget Speech 2015, he could inform the House where matters stand?

(Vide Reply PQ 7)

MAJOR PROJECTS LAUNCHED/TO BE LAUNCHED

(No. A/1) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (The Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to major projects launched or to be launched shortly by different Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since the beginning of 2015 to date, he will, for each, state the names of same together with their objectives, status, completion dates and respective costs?

Reply: Projects launched or to be launched shortly by different Commissions of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since the beginning of 2015.

Projects by Commission

A. Chief Commissioner's Office

(1) Education

S.N	Project Name	Remarks
1.	Construction of Secondary School at Pistaches	Tender launched and Closing of Tender on 17 March 2015
2.	Anse Quitor Community School	Tender Documents uploaded by 05 February 2015 Closing date 18 March 2015

3.	Le Chou Multipurpose Hall	- Tender launched 05 February 2015 - Closing 11 March 2015
4.	Renovation Marc Etienne Primary Govt School	- Launch of Tender: 02 March 2015 - Closing date of tender 31 March 2015
5.	Additional classrooms Port Sud Est Primary School	- Tender Closed on 25 February 2015 - Bids under evaluation
6.	Construction Kitchen blocks in all primary schools	2 blocks completed - DH to finalise brief and costs within 1 week - Next week (before 06 March) to finalise
7.	Rainwater harvesting by EU and RRA	- Tender is being finalised - Expected date for launching of Tender is 04 March 2015

(2) Agriculture

S.N	Project Name	
8.	Rainwater harvesting (Retenue Collinaire)	- Graviers, Baie Malgache & Mt Goyaves – bids document to be finalised by 06 March - Mourouk - Document to be finalised by 13 March 2015
9.	Rehabilitation Youth Centre Fond Baie aux Huitres (Ex Shelter)	- Bids under Evaluation 02 February 2015 - Expected date of award 10 March 2015 - Forecast to be completed in 140 days
10.	Renovation of AMB building	- Tender will be launch: 01 March 2015 - Closing date: 20 March 2015 - Forecast to be completed Will be ready in 120 days

B. Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office

			•	
11.	Shelter Baladirou dormitory for boys, bathroom and toilets, playground	Consu ltant s to help to review the evaluation report in line with PPO guidelines	• Evaluation complete	

C. Commission for Public Infrastructure and Others

S.N	Project Name	Remarks
12.	Mont Lubin Market	• Evaluation in progress
13.	Pont Anse aux Anglais	Evaluation phase

D. Commission for Social Security

S.N	Project Name	Remarks
14.	Respite care Le Chou	• Tender launched • Closing date 19 March 2015

E. Commission for Health and Others

(1) Health

S.N	Project Name	Remarks
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15.	La Ferme Health Centre Phase 2	Tender already launched Closing date: 25 March 2015
16.	Extension of haemodialysis and laboratory	- Tender is ready - Finalisation for launching

(2) Sports

S.N	Project Name	Remarks
17.	Stadium Roche Bon Dieu	Document to be submitted in two weeks

F. Commission for Environment

S.N	Project Name	Remarks
18.	Watch Tower fisheries	Tender to be ready for 07 March 2015

G. Commission for Youth and Others**(1) Youth**

S.N	Project Name	
H .	Youth and Women Centre Anse aux Anglais	Tender launched Closing date 16 March 2015

PULLING DOWN OF TREES - SOLITUDE

(No. A/2) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (The Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to the pulling down of trees along the road at Solitude, he will state the nature of same together with its objectives and of the disposal of the wood collected thereat?

Reply: The pulling down of trees along the road at Solitude is a decision of the Executive Council in view of improving visibility for road users to avoid having branches falling on the road during cyclonic conditions. The works essentially consisted of cutting down trees and branches at a width of 1.5 metres from the roadside from Roseaux to Solitude.

Part of the woods generated has been sold to members of the public, others have been placed at Solitude nursery and others were left to decompose in the forest at Solitude.

Road users have expressed satisfaction with regard to the work done by Forestry Services in collaboration with the Commission for Public Infrastructure, Rod Clean Ltd and *La Police de L'environnement*. My Commission shall repeat the same exercise in other regions for the benefit of the population.

BOTANICAL GARDEN – MOUROUCK

(No. A/3) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (The Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner responsible for Environment and Others whether, in regard to the project for the setting up of a botanical garden at Mourouck, he will state where matters stand in relation thereto?

Reply: With regards to the setting up of a Botanical Garden at Mourouk, an expert named Joachim Gratzfeld from the Botanical Garden Conservation International (BGCI) was in Rodrigues from 16 to 19 December 2013. He has prepared and submitted a report entitled 'Rodrigues Botanical Garden – A review of progress and recommendations' whereby he has made proposals for the setting up of a botanical garden based on the specificities of Rodrigues. The review essentially includes an assessment of existing plans and documents and integrates reflections established through a number of discussions with stakeholders.

It will cost some Rs 90 m. to implement the Botanical garden project. My commission has already proceeded with fencing and weeding works at the site. We are currently working in close collaboration with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation to seek funding for the implementation of the project.

In the meantime, a field Genebank as announced in Budget Speech 2014, which is a component of the Mourouk Botanical garden, has almost been completed except for the planting operations which are awaiting raining periods to be started and finalised.