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No. 4 of 2018

RODRIGUES

FOURTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

Debate No. 4 of 2018

Sitting of Tuesday 22 May 2018

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

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

The National Anthem was played

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RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 22 MAY 2018

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ADJOURNMENT

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

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Madam Chairperson	-	Spéville, Mrs. Marie Pricie Anjela
Clerk	-	Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick
Deputy Clerk	-	Pulchérie, Miss Marie Rose Axelle
Serjeant-at-Arms	-	Constant Perrine, Mr. Stenio

PAPERS LAID

- (i) **Certified Financial Statements of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2017 (original); and**
- (ii) **Report of the Director of Audit on the accounts of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the financial year 01 July 2016 to 30 June 2017 (original).**

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Minority Leader.

**EASE/ACCESSIBILITY OF TRAVEL
– MAURITIUS AND RODRIGUES**

(No. B/1) Mr. L. J. Von-Mally (The Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Industrial Development and Others whether in regard to the sea water salt production project which was to be set up at Baie Topaze, jointly by Rodriguan natives in collaboration with French specialists from the “*Cooperative des Sauniers de Noirmoutier*”, she will state:

- (a) where matters stand concerning same, giving reasons if it has been cancelled; and
- (b) if cooperation between *Noirmoutier* and Rodrigues, following the twinning of both islands, still continues, giving reasons?

The Commissioner for Trade and Others (Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis): Madam Chairperson, *Noirmoutier* is a French Island in the Bay of Biscay and is renowned for its *fleur de sel* which is used by the most reputed and prestigious Chef worldwide. The salt of *Noirmoutier* has gained an excellent reputation of the time because its production in harvest has remained natural and traditional. Ranked among the top salt in the world, the salt of *Noirmoutier* is today regarded as an exclusive product. According to the *Noirmoutier* specialists, the presence of a clear and unpolluted seawater and abundance of clay soil and a persistence sea breeze among others represented ideal conditions for the production of salt in Rodrigues. These prevailing conditions were similar to that of *Noirmoutier*. The representative of the cooperative of salt of *Noirmoutier* therefore approached my Commission in 2012 to investigate the possibility of

setting up a Salt Production Unit in Rodrigues based on the analogous techniques of *Noirmoutiers*.

Since the project was appealing from an economic perspective, my Commission agreed to consider the project. In January 2013, two *Sauniers* from *Noirmoutiers* were on mission in Rodrigues on their own cost to initiate the project. It is to be noted that after prospecting on different sites around the island, Baie Topaze was identified as the ideal site for this project. Following different meetings and site visits in January 2017 at Baie Topaze, together with the representatives of the cooperative of *Noirmoutier*, eight persons of the village agreed to help the *Sauniers* subject to the condition that a stipend is granted to them during the trial phase. The pilot project was launched on the 12 February 2013.

Madam Chairperson, due to the difficult topography of the site, the *Saunier* proposed to build a dike on the seafloor of the bay of Baie Topaze. A wall built from clay which hardens after sun drying was anticipated to protect the saline during the high tides. And, the barrier was supposed to isolate the site allowing the construction of interlinked *conduit* to irrigate the saline with seawater and thereby, started the production of salt from sun drying. But what was initially a simple project turned out to be more complexed than expected. The site revealed to contain sticky clay particles making any movement in the muddy swamp extremely difficult. This rendered construction a challenging endeavour.

Moreover, the eight workers had to manage to erect the barriers between two tides. Unluckily, during the high tides, water infiltrated the clayed soil despite the presence of the barriers causing same to collapse. The work was therefore a painful and ever ending process of construction and reconstruction of dikes, walls and channels to maintain the site dried. It is to be noted that the two *Sauniers* left Rodrigues a few days after the construction started.

The site was then left under the supervision of one of the workers who reckoned knowledge in construction. Because of these obstacles, the pilot project was put on hold until the next visit of the *Sauniers* in view to obtain their advice and expertise. Officers of my Commission were regularly in contact with them to share updates on the progression of the works. However, after concluding that the project will not be suitable, the *Sauniers* cancelled the future visits to Rodrigues. Hence, since April 2013, the project is halted.

As regards part (b) of the question, according to records, we have not encountered any official document confirming the twining of the two islands.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, can I know from the respected Commissioner whether the two *Sauniers* of *Noirmoutier* obtained full collaboration of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, of the Executive Council to go ahead with the project?

The Commissioner for Trade and Others (Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis): Of course, Madam Chairperson, that is what explained in the answer. In fact, we contracted the service of eight persons at the total cost of the RRA.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, I have been made to understand that there has been another cooperative that was set up in Rodrigues because before that, before 2013, there was a cooperative, a Rodriguan cooperative set up. Can I know whether there has been another cooperative from Rodrigues that has been set up?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: With regard to this project, Madam Chairperson, there is no cooperative that has been set up.

The Minority Leader: Being given that the site is almost similar to that of *Noirmoutier*, and the site has been seen to be right one to produce salt and Rodrigues could have been a region/island where we can produce top-quality, what we called organic salt and maybe our salt could be better than that of *Noirmoutier*. Can I know whether her Commission will ask the cooperative of *Noirmoutier* to come again and to see by themselves? Because I have been made to understand that they have not identified the site, they have not seen by themselves whether there has been problem while consulting the dike and so on.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, I think that the respected Minority Leader has not listened to my answer. In fact, I mentioned a delegation from *Noirmoutier* who came to Rodrigues and they came, they started the work. They have seen that what from far seems to be the same as what they have in *Noirmoutier*, in fact, after having started the project, in fact, it is not the same thing. That is why they have not come again and I want to inform the Minority Leader and I am still in contact with representatives of this cooperative. But they know that this project cannot be done and this is what they have said themselves.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, it is rather paradoxical because prior to 2013, there was representatives of the cooperative of *Noirmoutier* who came to Rodrigues. I have met them. They went to the site, they did several tests and found out that the site was suitable for the production of salt. It takes some time of course, in *Noirmoutier*, it takes some time for the soil to harden and so on and

so forth but I am amazed that after you take power, after the OPR Government took power, the project was rejected completely. Can we know who were the two *Sauniers* from *Noirmoutier* who came? Can we have the names of those persons?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madam Chair, from far many times, you can see things. Normally, in English we say beautiful from far but far from beautiful. In fact, from far, the *Sauniers* also thought that this site would be the most appropriate one as it seems to look like what they have in *Noirmoutier*. I should also inform the House that not only before 2012, the delegation from *Noirmoutier* came to Rodrigues. There was also a high delegation from Rodrigues who went to *Noirmoutier*. We have been informed and you, the Minority Leader, was one among them.

In fact, Mr. Godfrain, Jean Philippe Godfrain, the one with whom we are in contact up to now, he informed me about same. Madam Chairperson, it would have been at the advantage of Rodrigues and the Rodriguans to have such a project! But unfortunately, technically, it has been proven that it is not feasible. So, we have never rejected the project like this; we have rejected the project based on test conducted because we have invested some Rs 75,000 to pay the eight workers.

We cannot continue to invest and the *Sauniers* themselves, two *Sauniers*, I do not have the names of the two *Sauniers* who accompanied Mr. Godfrain, who came numerous times and at this time, he even told me that the delegation came in France to visit the place where they produce salt and at this time, there were given lots of seeds of potatoes to distribute among the population. Same have never been distributed. So, we are informed about all these, Madam Chairperson.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, I am amazed that the respected Commissioner is saying something like that. Firstly, it is not true to say that this was seen from afar. It was not seen from afar. There was one *Saunier* from *Noirmoutier* who came here and he took boots at my place, he took spades at my place then he went there to do the study, to do the test and he saw that the place was suitable and he was talking of, if you allow me, he was talking of the seeds, potato seeds. These are the tests, the genetically tests...

[Interruptions]

The Minority Leader: It was brought to Rodrigues to allow for a pilot project and the Commissioner of Agriculture never did anything with that. This is what happened. Now, concerning... It was given to you! Concerning Mr. Godfrain, is it not true, Madam Chair, is it not true that the *Sauniers* from

Noirmoutier never obtained the full collaboration of the OPR Government to do this project?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, these are the words of the Minority Leader. I maintain that the *Sauniers* from *Noirmoutier* have been on mission in January 2013 and full collaboration, transport every day. Transport where they were living to the site every day was given to them. Or what they proposed, they also discussed and proposed that we pay these eight persons at a rate of Rs 200 per day per person. This is what we did. We have done what should have been done and unfortunately, it is not conclusive and I maintain that from far, the project seemed to be adapted to Rodrigues but the tests have been done and unfortunately, the project cannot continue.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: *Yes, Madam Chairperson, Madam, this project is similar to the project of desalination plant. Since this project is...* Ce projet, vous avez bien dit vous-mêmes, que ce projet, c'est un projet valable et qui peut à un certain moment donné, emmener Rodrigues dans une autre dimension de tout ce qui est production de sel, production de l'affaire de sel. On aurait pu être connu à travers ça. Pourquoi l'Assemblée Régionale ? Pourquoi votre Gouvernement n'a pas jugé bon de faire ce qu'il fallait faire ? Lancer une étude de faisabilité et trouver les recherches nécessaires pour pouvoir lancer ce projet de l'affaire de sel à Rodrigues, Madame la Présidente. Je trouve que ça, c'est anti Rodriguais. Excusez-moi. Ça, c'est une chose.

Madam Chairperson: This is out of order, respected Member.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: What out of order, Madam? What out of order? Explain to me what... My question is out of order?

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, please!

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members!

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Order from both sides of the House! Respected Members!

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: It would be much appreciated on your part from both sides of the House to use appropriate language to uphold the decorum of this Assembly and to maintain dignity in this Assembly. Thank you.

[Interruptions]

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: On a point of order, the Minority Leader, he said.... a “*couillon*”. I think that it is unparliamentary.

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, this is the problem about you speaking in a sitting position.

[Applause]

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: This behaviour is out of order, respected Members!

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Oui, Madame la Présidente, excusez-moi. Donc, je voudrais venir à cette question.

Madam Chairperson: You have already put your question! This is time for the Commissioner... No, this is time...

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la Présidente, personne ne peut contester la pertinence du projet de production de sel. Personne ! Nous savons tous comment le projet de *Noirmoutiers* dans d’autres coins du monde aussi les productions de sel apportent de la valeur économique à un pays. La question ici, c’est que par rapport à ce projet particulier de production de sel, les Sauniers qui sont les experts de ce projet sont eux-mêmes venus à Rodrigues. On leur a donné tout le support voulu. Ils ont été sur le site. Aujourd’hui, ils ont fait des tests. Ils ont vu que le projet n’est pas concluant. Madame la Présidente, on ne peut pas être plus royaliste que le roi ! A Rodrigues, on n’a pas l’expertise de faire du sel. Si les Sauniers ont trouvé que le projet ne marche pas, on ne peut pas faire le contraire. Donc, d’où pour moi, je trouve que l’idée même de commanditer une étude de faisabilité ne tient pas la route parce que les Sauniers qui sont les experts, ils ont vu que le projet ne peut pas se faire parce qu’ils ont testé et ils ont des preuves à l’appui.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

The Minority Leader One last question if you allow me. Can I know from the distinguished Commissioner who has talked about help and so on, can we know whether the *Sauniers of Noirmoutier* have received help from the officers of the Commission of Environment? I think this could have helped them greatly.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis : Madame la Présidente, en effet, c'était le Gouvernement qui portait le projet. Ce projet elle-même était apporté pour que le Conseil exécutif donne son avis sur ce projet. La Commission de l'environnement était partie prenante. La Commission du développement de communautaire à l'époque aussi était partie prenante. Donc, tous les acteurs qui devraient former parti de ce projet ont été embarqués dans le projet. D'ailleurs, je dois me référer à une question qui a été posée en 2013. Oui, le mardi 23 avril 2013 par rapport à ce projet à l'époque par l'ancien membre Johnson Roussety. En 2013, il y avait une question sur la production de sel et voilà, le *Hansard* nous démontre que...

Bon, il parlait de la production de sel en général mais il y avait une question aussi par rapport au projet de *Noirmoutier* et Rodrigues à Baie Topaze. A l'époque, le membre Agathe, à travers une question supplémentaire, il disait ceci, *I will quote:*

"I saw people, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, digging in the mud, in the sea. How come that we are going to have salt in the mud, in the sea, Mr. Chairperson, Sir? We have mud through which some people, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, had below their arm. How come that we will have at least one kilogram of salt there at Baie Topaze."

So, this time in 2013...

[Applause]

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Member Agathe was a full Member of the MR. He was in the precedent government. He was in the...

Madam Chairperson: Respected... Wait a minute, Commissioner. Respected Members from a sitting position, I am very interested to hear what the Commissioner is saying and I am having difficulty because of your interruptions. So, please...

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members! Member Perrine! Yes, Commissioner, you can proceed.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madam, Hansard is the bible of this Assembly ! Referring to Hansard means I am referring to bad documents? Because I am telling the truth? No, Madam Chairperson, Hansard...

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: On a point of order, Madam Chairperson, Madam, we never said that the Hansard is a bad document. I would like to ask the honourable Member to remove that word because we never said that. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, referring to the point of order from Minority side from the respected Member Perrine, I have been having much difficulty in hearing what one and other side have been saying. So, I will come back later after having gone through the recordings. Thank you.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, I believe that the best reference we can do in this Parliament is to refer to Hansard, what has been debated here. And I quoted what has been said by a Member of the previous government, MR Government while they were in power, they were contemplating the project and at the same time when they are in the opposition, they were discussing about whether this project can be done in the mud. So, I firmly believe that we have done what should have been done and unfortunately, this project cannot be done and maybe... Tomorrow never comes. So, I think they will never come.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

**PROJECTS AWARDED TO BENEFICIARIES –
EMPLOYMENT RELIEF PROGRAMME (ERP)**

(No. B/2) Miss M. R. Collet (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Employment and Others whether in regard to projects awarded to beneficiaries of the *Employment Relief Programme (ERP)*, he will, for the benefit of the House, state: -

- (a) the number of beneficiaries of agricultural projects with respect to the first and second batches thereof, indicating the implementation status of the respective projects as approved and funded; and

- (b) the measures set for the monitoring of the said projects detailing any collaboration between his Commission and other stakeholders, including the Commission for Agriculture, in connection thereto?

The Commissioner for Employment and Others (Mr. L. D. Baptiste):
Madam Chairperson, this Government is committed to make alleviation of poverty through empowerment as one of its main missions.

To this end, the Regional Government launched the Employment Relief Programme for 300 beneficiaries of Social Aid and Unemployment Hardship Relief in 2014.

This one-year programme aims at equipping the trainees, with necessary skills and knowledge to become more employable or to engage in a decent income generating activity so that they can become less dependent on the social safety net system.

With regard to part (a) of the question, for the first Batch, the number of agricultural projects approved and launched is 39 out of which 28 under the Chilly Farm Scheme and 10 in pig rearing.

As regards the second Batch, 65 projects in the Agricultural Sector have been approved by the Technical Committee as follows:-

Livestock	-	54
Crop production	-	09
Beekeeping	-	02

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (b) of the question, I can assure the House that my Commission works in close collaboration with the Commission for Agriculture in order to ensure training of the beneficiaries and proper monitoring of their projects by appropriate officers in terms of field visits and advice.

Moreover, Madam Chairperson, a one-year agreement was signed between Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Business Solutions Professionals in December 2015 to monitor the Chilli Farm Projects.

It is also worth to note that officers of the Employment Office with the support of two full-time STM interns make necessary regular follow-up to ensure that the different projects are on track and to provide them with necessary support on a case to case basis as and when required to maximise chances of success.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Madame la Présidente, en parlant de *chances of success*, j'aimerais poser la question suivante au Commissaire lui demandant : comment explique-t-il que sur le premier batch, 39 seulement des bénéficiaires ont opté pour des projets agricoles ? Comment peut-il expliquer le fait que seulement presque 10% de ces personnes, ces bénéficiaires ont opté pour des projets agricoles ?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: So, it is according to the choice of the beneficiaries. So, they had the alternatives to choose any type of project. Only this number opted for agricultural projects.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Madame la Présidente, le Commissaire n'a pas répondu à la question d'après moi. Comment explique-t-il ? Je n'ai pas dit s'ils avaient le choix de choisir. Comment explique-t-il le fait que ces gens-là ont choisi ? Seulement 39 personnes ont choisi à faire ce projet agricole. Est-ce qu'il a fait... Oui, c'est un choix mais derrière ce choix, qu'est-ce qui a motivé ces gens-là à opter pour les projets agricoles ? Pourquoi pas plus ? Pour être plus explicite, pourquoi pas plus de personnes ?

Madam Chairperson: Yes, thank you. Commissioner?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: I think it is better to ask this question to the beneficiaries themselves. I cannot answer on their behalf. It is simply because they feel probably that they have a certain interest and the potential to carry out this type of project but it is worth to note that others opted for other projects.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: It is very good to say, it is very easy to say they choose! Mais Madame la Présidente, le Commissaire, mais que fait-il ? Quelle est l'étude derrière ? Il aurait dû mener une étude pour voir comment ces gens-là, ils vivent, le *social background* de ces gens-là avant de venir me dire ils ont choisi.

Madam Chairperson: Come up with your question, please!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: *I am coming with the question.* On a des problèmes à Rodrigues, des problèmes d'eau. 28 personnes ont opté pour le *Chilly Farm*. *Plante ti piment*. Vous savez combien de petits piments est en train de mûrir et pourrir dans ces champs-là, Madame la Présidente ? Que fait le commissaire ? Et puis il vient nous dire que ces gens-là ont choisi ? Non, nous ne sommes pas d'accord ! Nous ne sommes pas d'accord. Il ne peut pas s'asseoir et venir le nous dire qu'il ne sait pas.

Madam Chairperson: Your question, please!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: *I am coming with the question. Yes. Avec tous les aléas climatiques. En ce moment, on a...*

Madam Chairperson: Either you come with your question now or you leave the floor.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: I am introducing my question.

Madam Chairperson: I have been very patient with you, respected Member. You come up with your question now.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Yes, I am coming with my question but bear in mind that we will not leave this House if ever there is a...

Madam Chairperson: No, respected Member!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: If ever there is...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member! I am on my feet, respected Member!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: My question.

Madam Chairperson: No, you do not have the floor anymore. Another question.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: How come? I am coming with another question.

Madam Chairperson: No! No! You have been given the chance to put your question.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Yes, I am coming with another question!

Madam Chairperson: No!

[Interruptions]

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: It is the first time. I have been here for 20 years.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: It is the first time that a Chairperson... to put a question. It is the first time. I am coming with another question. I can come with another question. Okay? Just give the floor, I come with another question. Come on! I have been elected by people, by my people.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

The Minority Leader : *Can I know from the respected Commissioner quel est l'encadrement qu'il a donné, que sa Commission a donné à ses travailleurs, ces gens qui ont opté pour le côté agricole ?*

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: So, in terms of technical advice by officers of the Commission for Agriculture and also in terms of accounting practices by officers from Youth Entrepreneurship Section and also, they see have been given agricultural plots, fencing materials, drip irrigation, chilly seedlings, fiber glass water tank and also other materials for construction of required infrastructures for pig rearing

The Minority Leader: Can I know whether they are regularly visited by technicians of the Agricultural Department?

The Minority Leader: In the first year, they were being visited regularly but now they have the support of STM interns, attached at the commission, as and when required because I think that they are now gaining experience and they are less dependent on the technicians from the service of agriculture.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: *Can I have a floor please? Yes, Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, je voudrais demander au Commissaire comment sa Commission est entrain d'aider ces gens-là à écouler leurs produits ? Comme je vous ai dit, il y a un souci avec l'écoulement des produits, surtout les petits piments Rodrigues. Comment est-ce que la Commission aide ces gens-là ?*

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: This is done with the help of the Commission for Entrepreneurship but to my knowledge, we have never received any complain about these beneficiaries having difficulties to sell their products, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Madam Chair, est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Commissaire si le projet est *fruitful*, si c'est rentable ?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: Yes that is why they have decided to forgo their pensions and to indulge themselves in such a project. It is income generating and

according to the survey carried out, they are all earning their living better than what they used to have before the setting up of this project.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

**EMPLOYMENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRY IN RODRIGUES**

(No. B/3) Miss M. R. Collet (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Employment and Others whether in regard to employment in the construction industry in Rodrigues, he will state to the House on any:

- (a) non-Rodriguan worker(s)/contractors who has been awarded contracts in the construction industry in Rodrigues for this financial year;
- (b) measures set by his Commission with all contractors to minimise any risk of exploitation or discrimination towards the female and male workers onsite; and
- (c) complaints registered with regards to dismissal or unduly low pay rates or tardy payments by contractors to the workers thereof?

The Commissioner for Employment and Others (Mr. L. D. Baptiste): Madam Chairperson, the construction industry is undergoing an unprecedented boom with the construction of roads, schools, administrative blocks, community centres, sports complex, upgrading of hospitals and different housing schemes amongst others. For the past two years, contracts have been awarded to different Contractors to the tune of nearly Rs 1.3 B.

Madam Chairperson, regarding part (a) of the question, I am informed that for this financial year, the following non-Rodriguan contractors have been awarded contracts for the construction industry:

1. RBRB Construction Ltd
2. Ecobat Ltd
3. SDR Construction Ltd
4. Laxmanbhai Co. Ltd
5. Aqua Science and Technology Ltd
6. Tayelamay & Sons Ltd
7. Numelec Ltd
8. EDCC Co. Ltd

9. Transinvest Ltd

With regard to part (b) of the question, I must inform the House that:

- (1) The commission hold meetings and workshops from time to time with the relevant contractors for sensitisation campaigns so as to discourage them to indulge themselves in such unlawful practices
- (2) Follow up are also made ensures that contribution to the National Pension Fund are made on behalf of the workers according to the minimum prescribed rate in the Remuneration Order;
- (3) The Labour Unit carries out inspections at places of work to ensure compliance with the provisions of the relevant legislations. In cases of discrepancies, formal recommendations are issued to employers, to the contractors for remedial action and in cases of recurrent non-compliance, legal action may be considered subject to the aggrieved workers being willing to depone as witness;
- (4) Aggrieved workers may also register their complaints at the level of the Labour Office of my Commission where conciliation and mediation meetings are held between parties with a view to settle disputes.
- (5) The Occupational Safety & Health Unit ensures the enforcement of safety and health legislations through inspections for the assessment of risks and compliance with legal provisions. Recommendations are issued for corrective actions on discrepancies observed and employers may be summoned to court for recurrent non-compliance in accordance with the law.

Madam Chairperson, regarding part (c) of the question, I am informed that:

- (1) During the present financial year, that is, for the period July 2017 up to April 2018, a total of 106 complaints of alleged “termination of employment” (dismissal) were registered. Following enquiry and confrontation meeting, it was observed that 96 cases concerned expiry and non-renewal of short terms contracts of less than 12 months and only 10 cases were in fact dismissal and loss of employment on grounds of misconduct and poor performance.

Out of these 106 cases, 44 have been admitted in the Workfare Programme and are benefitting from Transition Unemployment Benefits. Settlement has been

reached in 47 cases and workers have been paid an amount of Rs 424,655, and they have been able to secure another employment immediately. Enquiry is on-going on the remaining 15 cases.

- (2) No complaint has been registered regarding “underpayment or reduced payment in wages” (unduly low pay rates).
- (3) As regards to “late payment of wages” (tardy payments), 43 workers from one construction industry reported a case of late payment of end of year bonus. As per legislations, the bonus was due to be paid *5 clear days before 25 December 2017* and following negotiation and mediation, payment of a total amount of Rs 243,115 was subsequently paid before Christmas.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, thank you. Being given the relatively large number of foreign workers, non-Rodriguan workers who are being employed here, can I know from the respected Commissioner whether there is a lack of Rodriguan workers available on the market?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: The question was mainly related to contractors, workers awarded contracts. Just to be clear, workers have not been awarded contracts. It is only contractors, non-Rodriguan contractors who have been awarded contracts.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, allow me to recall, just allow me a few seconds, five seconds to recall the Commissioner that in the question, it says non-Rodriguan workers. We have been talking about workers, related to workers. So, I think the question of the Minority Leader stands good. So, I would like to ask him as regard to the non-Rodriguan workers. Who gave the permit, the work permit so that these workers come to Rodrigues and who gave the permit to allow them to stay in Rodrigues?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: In fact, there are procedures, established procedures under the existing regulations and laws, which is a national law regarding work permits being given to foreign workers. It is also important for the House to understand that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly does not have the power to give work permits to foreign workers. However, if for a particular or a specific project, contractors are requesting to have foreign workers, they should, first of all, put an application at the level of the Ministry for Labour in Mauritius, following which they will ask the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through the Commission of Employment as it is the case also in Mauritius. The local officers will have to give the views relating to the region where they are asking for workers and then, following enquiry, we may or may not recommend for the import of such workers.

The Minority Leader: This having been said, can I ask the Commissioner whether, Rodrigues being autonomous, whether he does not have any say in this matter?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: We did have because the Ministry asked the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as I said, through the Commission for Employment about our views. But as I mentioned earlier, we have so many projects nowadays in the Construction Sector, unprecedented Rs 1.3 B and we can notice that there is a shortage of skilled workers in Rodrigues. Just to give one example, one company having at least six major projects in Rodrigues, they wanted to import foreign workers to work in Rodrigues.

Obviously, what we did first of all, we go through all those people who are registered as unemployed at the Employment Office, having the skills required/needed by the respected contractors. We have issued a list of 117 workers, skilled workers some one month back and unfortunately, when they provided the feedback, it was only 13 of them who agreed to work with them. But our office made an independent enquiry and the officers phoned these 117 persons individually and we confirmed that *effectivement*, they were working with other companies of other local contractors.

Some two weeks back, we issued a *communiqué à la radio* for interested skilled workers to call to the office or to phone if they are interested obviously to work with such companies and as at date, we have received only 39 workers out of which only 32 are skilled, 15 masons, 9 carpenters, 4 tiles layers and 2 foremen. So, it clearly shows that we require additional skilled labour in Rodrigues.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, the distinguished Commissioner has been talking a lot of skilled workers. Can I know from him whether he considers removal of *coffrage* for example at the airport as being a work that needs skilled worker? And, secondly, can I know whether he gave his approval for the enrollment of these workers?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: So, skilled workers, they are multi-skilled workers provided that it is clearly specified. There are some cognate duties obviously but they are skilled workers. I can confirm and the inspections made by officers of the Labour Office confirmed that they are all skilled workers according to the work permit and all are clearly written and stipulated in their agreement. But it might happen from time to time that they can carry out some additional but it is not their main duty.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, j'ai écouté religieusement le Commissaire mais il y a une question qu'on a posé mais il n'a pas répondu. Je voudrais le poser cette question. Qui c'est qui a octroyé la permission ?

Madam Chairperson: You cannot be insisting on a question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I am not insisting. He has not replied! He has not replied the question.

Madam Chairperson: You put another question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, I will put another question. Qui a donné l'autorisation à ces travailleurs étrangers de venir travailler à Rodrigues ? Est-ce l'Assemblée régionale ou un autre institut à part de ça ?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: So, yes, it is the Ministry for Labour but with the concurrence of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly because we did not want the project to continue to lag behind and obviously, it is also, you have to note that there are laws which exist and the company can claim for penalties and all such type of charges if they do not have sufficient labour to complete their projects on time. So, I think that it is also clear that for each project, it is clear that they can import up to a certain percentage of foreign workers to Rodrigues but only in exceptional cases where there are shortages as it is clearly obvious here in Rodrigues. Even local contractors are now making application for foreign workers.

Mrs. M. T. Agathe: Madame la Présidente, je voudrais savoir du Commissaire si ces *skilled workers*-là, ils ont des certificats comme il faut certifiant *that they are skilled workers*. *Who certify this?*

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: From the body, from the Ministry for Labour right from the time when they have to come from their country of origin to Mauritius.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Thank you, Madam the Chair. Vu qu'il y a un manque de *skilled workers*, peut-on savoir du Commissaire s'il fait le nécessaire, si sa Commission fait le nécessaire pour augmenter le nombre de *skilled workers* en donnant des formations ?

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: We have talked about the project to train some 500 workers in the construction industries obviously with the help of the Commission for Training and this project has already started in April as we mentioned earlier.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, as far as the Occupational Health and Safety Officers, I would like to ask the Commissioner how many are working at his Commission and how many notice of contraventions has been issued if any to the Contractors.

Mr. L. D. Baptiste: As at date, there are two officers attached to my Commission. There will be the recruitment of an additional officer in the forthcoming budget and there is a new post, the creation of the Principal Occupational Health and Safety Officer because we know that there is the need to *renforcer le bureau*. But I do not have the figures as regard to number of contraventions.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

**PROJECTS ALLOCATED – ‘ATTESTATION DE FIN DE FORMATION’ –
BREVET PROFESSIONNEL AGRICOLE (BPA)**

(No. B/4) Miss M. R. Collet (First Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to projects allocated to holders of the ‘*Attestation de fin de formation*’ leading to the *Brevet Professionnel Agricole* (BPA) by the Commission for Agriculture, he will state, for the benefit of the House, the number of applications received at his Commission in relation thereto together with the number of approved projects currently being implemented following this training?

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee): Madam Chairperson, I have to inform the House that 17 students who successfully completed the *Brevet Professionnel Agricole* called BPA in 2016, have been awarded agricultural incentives schemes by my Commission to set up their projects as follows: we have four in local poultry farm, three in black pig model farm, two in goat integrated farm, one sheep integrated farm, two seeds production and five model orchard.

Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the second batch of some 20 BPA’s students are still waiting for their final results. They have already submitted their projects write-up which are being evaluated by a Technical Committee at my Commission. They will benefit from facilities to set up their farms including technical assistance by officers of agricultural services upon receipt of their BPA Certificate from the *Lycée Agricole de Saint Joseph de La Réunion* shortly.

The Minority Leader: Can I know, Madam Chair, from all these projects, how does the respected Commissioner reconcile the fact that despite all this, the agricultural production in Rodrigues is in net decline?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: I cannot answer this question. I cannot say that... The Member has to prove that the Agricultural Sector is in decline. But these projects are new. These are new projects. These are young students who have just finished their projects, who have just got the schemes, who are putting in place their projects and you cannot expect that tomorrow, the statistics will just raise like this.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

ADMINISTRATION OF PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT

(No. B/5) Mr. L. J. Von-Mally (The Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the administration of Plaine Corail Airport, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the relevant authority and state on the alleged taking over thereof by Airport of Mauritius Ltd., indicating the stand of the Regional Government concerning same, and specifying the new role to be held by the Airport of Rodrigues Ltd., if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, as this Assembly is aware, the aerodrome of Plaine Corail is vested in the State of Mauritius. During the budget consultation with the Honourable Prime Minister in February last, the issue of financing the new runway was discussed and explored. It was evident that Airport of Rodrigues Ltd did not have the financial capabilities nor credibility to raise fund for the airport development project.

I have been informed that it is at its meeting of 2nd March 2018, Cabinet has agreed for Airports of Mauritius Co. Ltd (AML) to acquire the whole shareholding of both Government and SIC Ltd in Airport of Rodrigues Ltd (ARL).

The transfer of shares was effected and ARL has become a fully owned subsidiary of AML since AML has acquired the 100% shareholding of ARL.

The acquisition of ARL's shares by AML was effected principally, with a view to enable ARL to obtain appropriate financial assistance, capacity and resources to undertake the Extension of the Plaine Corail Runway Project which is estimated to be around Rs 3 billion.

Madam Chairperson, I am further informed that no change in the management and administration of ARL will occur. The management and administration of the Plaine Corail Airport will remain under the responsibility of ARL.

My Regional Government was consulted on this issue and has strongly made it clear that ARL should continue to administrate and manage the affairs of the Plaine Corail Airport. Moreover, AML has been instructed to provide all necessary administrative and technical assistance to ARL for the implementation of the Plaine Corail Runway Project and in other fields where ARL do not have the required resources and expertise.

The Minority Leader: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner being given that Rodrigues is autonomous and we are in one Republic, if the Airport of Mauritius Limited have taken over the full responsibility for the construction of the runway, we believe that the Airport of Rodrigues of Rodrigues should be *partie prenante* in this. So, can we know whether any Member of the Airport of Rodrigues Ltd forms part of the board of the Airport of Mauritius Ltd?

The Chief Commissioner: I have said Madam Chairperson, the ARL is responsible for the administration of the Airport of Rodrigues. The ARL has all the possibilities, all the responsibility to manage the Airport of Rodrigues but for the construction of the runway, the ARL cannot have the financial resources to go ahead with the project. But AML will provide the financial assistance to ARL to continue the project.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, mais c'est le monde à l'envers! We believe that Rodrigues should be *partie prenante*, fully *partie prenante*. The ARL should be fully *partie prenante* in this project. This is why I am asking again the Chief Commissioner whether there is any Member of the ARL forming part of the AML.

The Chief Commissioner: I take notice of the question.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Madame la Présidente, la question peut-être un peu... mais j'aimerais poser la question parce que je ne comprends pas. Est-ce que la ARL existe toujours, la compagnie ? Parce que le Commissaire a parlé de ça, oui, il l'a dit. C'est la question qu'on se pose. Deuxième chose, comment se fait-il...

Madam Chairperson: One question at a time!

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Yes, okay. You give me the floor next. Thank you.

The Chief Commissioner: Je l'ai dit dans ma réponse, Madame. ARL va continuer d'exister et va continuer d'administrer l'aéroport de Rodrigues.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Alors, Madame la Présidente, mais on ne comprend pas pourquoi ARL va exister et la réponse que le Chef commissaire a avancé devant cette Chambre disant que pour des raisons, pour la construction de l'aéroport, sachant que nous sommes dans une seule République, nous avons un seul budget pour développement de l'île Maurice et qu'une autre compagnie doit prendre, doit succéder à ARL pour faire le développement de l'aéroport à Rodrigues. On ne comprend pas pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'a pas envoyé directement les fonds à l'Assemblée régional, à l'ARL pour développer l'aéroport ou bien pourquoi est-ce qu'on n'a pas fait un MOU avec le AML pour tout ce qui est support technique entre autres. On ne comprend pas !

The Chief Commissioner: *J'ai dit dans ma réponse, Madame, que l'AML va apporter tous les supports nécessaires à ARL et il faut dire dans ma réponse, during the budget consultation with the Honourable Prime Minister in February, the issue financing the new runway... Excuse me. The new runway was discussed and explored. It was evident that Airport of Rodrigues Ltd did not have the financial capabilities nor credibility to raise fund for the Airport Development Projects. Otherwise, is ARL capable of raising funds? AML is a... I do not know.*

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la présidente, Rodrigues est autonome, nous avons à maintes reprises trouvées des solutions pour le décollage économique dans ce pays....

Madam Chairperson: Come up with your question, please.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Mais lorsqu'il s'agit des gros projets, nous avons l'impression qu'il y a un manque de confiance en la capacité Rodriguaise. Pourtant, le chef commissaire nous revient souvent la charge - *Rodriguais capave pa capave. May I know from the Commissioner whether* avec cette philosophie *Rodriguais capave pa capave*, est-ce qu'il y a la possibilité de revoir cette politique que les gros projets de développement concernant Rodrigues soient géré localement avec le support bien sûr de la république de Maurice mais qu'il soit géré ici ?

The Chief Commissioner: I takenote of the question.

The Minority Leader: I have one last question, if you allow me. Voyant comme je considère comme étant un recule de l'autonomie de Rodrigues, pourrais-je demander au Chef Commissaire, *whether his regional government has concurred with this state of affair?*

The Chief Commissioner: Oui madame, nous avons accepté cette formule puisqu'il y a L'AML et l'ARL travaille ensemble. C'est deux travaillent ensemble. Il n'y a pas une qui est à côté. Mais l'AML aussi apporte sa contribution à Rodrigues. L'AML aussi apporte sa contribution à l'ARL. Donc, ce sont deux compagnies qui justement travaillent ensemble. Alors, ça a été discuté avec le Ministre des Finances, qui lui aussi sait que nous avons l'autonomie de Rodrigues. Et, en ce qui concerne les millions et des millions, est-ce que ça peut aller entre les mains de ARL ou entre les mains de AML ? C'est toute une question de l'organisation qui peut justement gérer cet argent-là.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: I have a last question.

Madam Chairperson: One last one.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Est-ce que le Chef Commissaire peut nous confirmer si après l'allongement de la piste, est-ce que l'AML va se retirer pour laisser la gestion à l'ARL ?

The Chief Commissioner: L'AML va pas se retirer. L'AML va travailler avec la ARL. Parce que l'argent va être investi à l'AML et non pas la ARL. Ce qui veut dire, l'AML avec la ARL qui va financer justement le projet de l'aéroport.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICES - QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL

(No. B/6) **Mr. L.J. Von-Mally, GOSK (Minority Leader)** asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to improvement of services provided by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he will state the measures he intends to take with a view to:

- (a) reduce the number of patients transferred to mainland Mauritius for further medical treatment; and

- (b) alleviate the burden of the personnel working at the Laundry Unit?

The Commissioner for Health and Others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Madam Chairperson, with your permission I would like to provide the reply to Question B/6 and B/14 together as both questions concern the transfer of patients to Mauritius for treatment.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, permission granted to answer B/6 and B/14 together.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is good to note that the Minority Leader has rightly recognized the improvements made to services provided at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Thank you, Minority Leader for this fair spirit.

Madam, Chairperson, such improvements are attributed to the following various measures which have been implemented since our coming into office in February 2012 to date:

- (i) Specialists are posted on a continuous basis in Rodrigues in the field of Orthopaedics, Gynaecology, Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, Surgery and Paediatric.

A Gynaecologist is posted on a month tour of service while Specialists in the other fields, which I have mentioned, are posted on a six months' tour of service.

- (ii) Acquisition of specialized equipment such as the CT-Scan in March 2014, Operating Microscope for ENT (recently donated by the Teaching Eye Surgery (TES) Foundation of Switzerland and the Stress Test machine purchased in August 2016, among others; and
- (iii) Regular visits of Specialists in Cardiology, ENT and Ophthalmology, at least six times yearly.

Madam, Chairperson, as a caring regional government, we are conscious about the implications of sending patients to Mauritius, particularly for the patients themselves and their family. This is why we are pursuing our efforts to ensure the availability of adequate treatment in Rodrigues as far as possible as follows:

- (i) During the recent visit of Honourable Dr. Anwar Husnood, Minister of Health and Quality of Life to Rodrigues, it has been agreed in

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principle that a Nephrologist will visit Rodrigues at least every three months to enable better monitoring and treatment of patients with kidney disorders;

- (ii) We are exploring all possibilities of having a Gynaecologist for a longer term. In this context, we are benefitting assistance from the UNFPA. We are optimist that matters will be finalized.
- (iii) We are also exploring possibilities of recruiting a Cardiologist on contract. Unfortunately, same is not available from the existing pool in Mauritius. I have initiated discussion with the TES Foundation during their recent visit in Rodrigues and will pursue the matter further.
- (iv) In his budget speech for financial year 2018-2019, the Chief Commissioner has announced the introduction of two scholarships for Rodriguan Medical Officers to pursue specialized studies in Medicine with the view to upgrade their skills for specialized treatment in various fields. We already have two doctors who will be coming back next year upon completion of their specialized studies in psychiatry and internal medicine respectively.
- (v) The forthcoming Master Plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital makes provision for a state of art hospital with modern equipment. This will be accompanied by a Human Resource Development Plan for the Health Sector so that in the long run, we have the required professionals including Specialists to upgrade service delivery.

In the meantime, Madam Chairperson, the House will appreciate that we will still need to continue to send patients to Mauritius for treatment which is not available in Rodrigues. As is presently the case, the transfer of patients is done according to the existing protocol signed between the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

In general terms, the protocol makes provision for the joint responsibility of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life for:

- (i) the transfer to Mauritius and back to Rodrigues of patients referred by hospital in Rodrigues for their treatment in Mauritius; and
- (ii) the welfare of patients in Mauritius, among others.

From January 2017 to date, there has been a total of 719 patients transferred to Mauritius implying a total cost of Rs 19,877,288.66 for air tickets and subsistence allowance. So far, my Commission has received three complaints for which enquiry are ongoing. In the meantime, we will liaise with the Ministry for Health with a view to discuss about the updating of the existing protocol to address new issues that have emerged since its signature some years back.

As regards, to question put by the Minority Leader concerning the Laundry Unit, I must inform the House that two additional Laundry Attendants have been recently recruited. Additionally, my Commission has procured two industrial washing machines and one industrial Dryer for Queen Elizabeth Hospital. One of the two washing machines has already been installed and is presently under commissioning. For the second washing machine, tender is under evaluation.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chairperson, I would like to ask the Respected Commissioner. In fact, we can have as many specialists visiting Rodrigues as we want but if there is a lack of equipment they will not be able to perform correctly. Is it not true, I would like to ask the Commissioner, is it not true that the Honourable Minister of Health was astonished by the fact that there was a lack of many important equipment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Yes, Madam Chairperson, in fact, we are in lack of equipment but at any time the Minister for Health has talked to me about this lack of equipment.

Madam Chairperson: The previous question from the Minority Leader has been asking about an expression of opinion from the Honourable Minister, so this is not allowed.

[Interruption]

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Madam Chairperson, concernant les patients qui partent pour les traitements à Maurice, j'ai été témoin des patients sortant de l'avion avec des sérums à la main attendre leurs bagages à l'aéroport. Est-ce qu'il y a un protocole pour ces gens-là quand il débarque à Maurice pour qu'il y ait un transport pour qu'on puisse les prendre pour les emmener à l'hôpital ?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Oui, Madame la présidente, il y a protocole que l'hôpital à qui on envoie les patients, par exemple, hôpital Neeroo, ils envoient une ambulance sur le tarmac pour prendre des patients.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Concernant justement les cas qui sont référé à Maurice, tout dernièrement on a entendu un Rodrigues desk qui a été mis en place

à Maurice. Est-ce qu'il y a une liaison entre la Commission de la Santé de Rodrigues et le Rodrigues Desk qui est à Maurice pour voir quand ces gens-là ils débarquent à Maurice ?

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Le Rodrigues Desk, ce n'est pas la Commission de la Santé, c'est la Commission de l'Intégration Sociale. Mais à chaque hôpital régional de Maurice, il y a un Social Worker à qui nous nous adressons et au directeur de l'hôpital pour s'occuper de nos patients.

Mrs. M. T. Agathe: Madame la présidente, je voudrais savoir du commissaire qu'est-ce qu'il pense là-dessus et qu'est-ce qu'il compte faire. Parce que bien souvent les patients qui sont transférés à Maurice si leurs états s'améliorent, l'hôpital lundi qu'il faut quitter l'hôpital pour revenir dans 15 jours. Mais maintenant, quand le patient est parti, il est parti avec un accompagnateur. L'accompagnateur, la famille fait ce qu'on peut pour qu'ils puissent être accommodés. Maintenant, pour accommoder quelqu'un qui sort de l'hôpital dans cette même famille c'est parfois vraiment, vraiment, vraiment difficile. Et, avec le *subsistence allowance* qu'on a, je crois que c'est Rs 200, si je ne me trompe pas, parfois quand on va visiter les malades, il faut payer le transport. Si l'accompagnateur ne connaît pas Maurice, il faut payer le transport d'une autre personne. Qu'est-ce que le commissaire pense faire pour ça ? Merci, madame.

Mr. S. P. Roussety: Bon, je suis au courant de ces cas-là, Madame la présidente, et c'est pourquoi j'ai dit dans ma réponse nous allons revoir certains protocoles pour aider les patients.

Madam Chairperson: Next question. Wait a minute, please. Thank you. The table has been advised that PQ B/7 and B/31 will be answered together. Yes, Minority Leader.

**TRANSFER OF PLOT OF FREEHOLD LAND TO ONE S.S. OF MTIUS
- MT. CHARLOT TO ST. FRANCOIS**

(No. B/7) **Mr. L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (Minority Leader)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the transfer of a plot of freehold land belonging to one S.S. of Mauritius, from Mt. Charlot to St. François, Rodrigues, he will state:

- (a) the area concerned;
- (b) the reasons/s behind the said transfer, indicating if it is a case of compulsory acquisition;

- (c) if his commission is in presence of other such demands and, if so, to indicate the areas and sites concerned and the outcome for each case, as at date, giving reasons thereon?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, with your permission, I shall answer both questions B/7 and B/31 at the same time since the two deals with the same subject matter.

I am informed that Messrs. S.S. and K.C.R. were owners of a plot of freehold land of 703.5 m² each at Montagne Charlot. According to the original plan the two plots were serviced by two roads – Hitcher and Ricard Streets.

I am further informed that the Ministry of Housing and Lands in 1992 has been granting leases in view of regularizing squatters, without considering the existence of the two then earth roads. Hence, leases were granted..

Madam Chairperson: No comments from a sitting position, please.

The Chief Commissioner: Hence, leases were granted on the roads servicing the two private plots thereby depriving the owners of access to their property. In 1994, the two owners informed the Ministry of Housing and Lands that they could not develop their lands as there were encroachments on Hitcher Street and no access for their sites was available. At that time, action was supposed to be initiated to redress the situation and remove encroachments on the streets but same has remained unsuccessful. In view..

Madam Chairperson: Wait a minute Chief Commissioner. I have been saying, I am saying it once more. No interruptions from a sitting position is allowed. If Members persist, I will have no other option than to apply the Standing Orders to its full purpose and ask Members to withdraw from the House.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: On a point of order, madam. The Chief Commissioner is making statements. Can he come directly to his question and give us answers. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: He has been answering for three minutes. Chief Commissioner please proceed.

The Chief Commissioner: At that time, action was supposed to be initiated to redress the situation and remove encroachments on the streets but same has remained unsuccessful.

In view to address the issue and not penalising the private land owners, in 2006 approval of the then Chief Commissioner was obtained to identify two plots of State land around Anse aux Anglais or Terre Rouge in exchange of their land.

Madam Chairperson: Chief Commissioner, please there is a point of order raised.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madam, again. The Chief Commissioner is referring to matters arising in 1992, 2006. The question is not this. The question is regarding the transfer of a free plot of land. These, we want answers.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you, Respected Member for your contribution. It is much appreciated but to which Standing Order are you referring to?

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: 90.

Madam Chairperson: Chief Commissioner, please proceed.

The Chief Commissioner: Consequently, Madam, I am further informed that in 2011, the two owners strongly protested again to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly since no remedial action had been taken for almost 18 years. Therefore, in view of avoiding the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to enter into the lengthy and costly court procedures a mutual agreement was reached in 2014 whereby, two plots of State land of 500 m² each in the residential parcelling at Saint François were exchanged against the two freehold properties of 703.5 m² each of Montagne Charlot. To that effect, two notarial deeds for exchange have been drawn and signed between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and Messrs. S.S. and K.C.R. respectively and the matter was settled.

As regards to part (b), Madam Chairperson, I would like to draw the attention of the House that this is not a case of compulsory acquisition but instead is an exchange as per Section 26(2) of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act and Section 31 of the State Land Act. Furthermore, the two plots of land which have now been allocated to the two aggrieved persons have been granted on lease against private land.

Madam Chairperson, this exchange stands as an established process to avoid lengthy administrative procedures in the interest of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly.

With regard to part (c) of the question, I would like to inform the House that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has proceeded also with the exchange of

two plots of land of 643.68 m² and 126.63 m² at Mont Lubin owned by Mr. W.Y S.Y.Y.Y. against two plots of 800 m² each at Saint Francois as a result of the construction of market and planning works at Mont Lubin and the encroachment during the construction of la Route de l'Autonomie on the said property. At the request of the owner, the two leases were granted in favour of his children.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chairperson, being given that nobody, not even the Chief Commissioner is supposed to dispose of Rodriguan land according to his wings and caprices. Can I know the reason behind exchanging a plot of land on the mountain to another one *pied dans l'eau* at St. François? Is this not opening the Pandora box to everybody?

The Chief Commissioner: Ce n'est pas pied dans l'eau. Ce n'est pas pied dans l'eau. C'est dit dans un morcellement. Que le monsieur à Mont Lubin aussi a eu dans ce morcellement qui est à peu près 200 mètres de pied dans l'eau. Ce n'est pas au bord de la mer. Ce n'est pas au bord de la mer.

Madam Chairperson: Order please. Order.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que je peux savoir du Chef Commissaire étant donné beaucoup de Rodriguais attendre un petit lopin de terre et ça prend des années et des années. Mais là, parce qu'il y a deux routes qui passent à côté, *encroachment*. Can we know whether this plot of land belonging to Mr. S.S. - does the road pass directly on his plot of land or is it not just delimited by these two roads?

The Chief Commissioner: Comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse, on a donné des baux à des personnes sur ces terrains, sur là où ces personnes passent pour aller chez eux/elles. Justement, ici il fallait bien lire, c'est pourquoi on m'a dit que *on a point of order*, ce n'est pas ça. Je suis en train de donner la réponse, donner les éclaircissements pourquoi ces personnes. Si on n'avait pas fait cela, on aurait été en cour. En cour, et on aurait été condamné par la cour pour tout ça. Alors, donc, on a préféré d'échanger ces terres privées pour des terres de l'état. Mais ils n'ont pas la terre de l'état en cadeau mais comme des baux. On leur a donné ces terres comme des baux, qu'ils doivent payer justement. Alors, c'est ça justement que la réponse à ma question c'est clair et net. On ne donne pas, on ne prend pas la terre privée pour leur donner un bout de terre de l'état en cadeau, comme transmis en terre privé. Ce n'est pas ça. On leur a donné des baux sur les terres de l'état, simplement pour les aider à utiliser la terre et en échange. C'est un échange entre la terre privée et la terre de l'état.

The Minority Leader: Madame, ce que je comprends du chef commissaire, c'est que n'importe qui peut faire n'importe quoi avec les terres de

Rodrigues. J'aurais aimé demander au chef commissaire. Oui, c'est ce qui se passe. *Nou péna droit van Rodrigues.* Can I know from the Chief Commissioner whether this decision to exchange the plot of land from Mt. Charlot to St. François, was this decision taken at the level of the State Land Committee? And, at the level of the Executive Council?

The Chief Commissioner: Madame la présidente, nous avons été obligé de faire cette transaction sinon on aurait eu à aller en cour pendant plusieurs temps. Alors, et en même temps, il n'y a pas simplement que ce monsieur-là. Il y a aussi, j'ai dit à Mont Lubin où on a construit le marché. On a vu qu'on a dû lui aussi donner un bout de terrain, là à St. François. Mais ce n'est pas le pied dans l'eau. C'est à l'intérieur sur une colline et sur une route à l'envers Patate Théophile. Tout ça. Alors, donc ce n'est pas, on la fait. Et, on la fait aussi peut être pour d'autre. Il y a peut-être d'après ce que j'apprends, il y a d'autres personnes qui pour faire des routes tout ça, on a pris leur terre. On est en train de voir comment leur rendre ou leur payer ces terres qu'on a pris justement.

The Minority Leader: Are we to understand, Madam, from the Chief Commissioner that there is a special deal between his Commission and that Mr. S.S.?

The Chief Commissioner: Ce n'est pas un *special deal*. C'est que ces gens-là ont exprimé leurs désirs de construire leur maison ou d'utiliser leur terre privée. Il y a eu des accès qui leurs interdisaient d'aller sur le terrain justement. C'est ça justement. Alors, justement ils ont fait des demandes au Ministère des Terres à Maurice. Ils ont fait des demandes depuis 18 ans. Et, là justement pour éviter des poursuites en Cour Suprême. Et là, on est d'accord pour leur donner non pas la terre de l'État devenu la terre privée, non. C'est une terre de – *the lease has been granted for a period of 99 and fraction of years.*

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: *Ki fer nou nou gagne 60 ans nou Rodrigues. Ki fer Rodriguais nou nou gagne 60 ans zot zot gagne 99 ans zot ?* Yes, Madam Chairperson, let me have one question. Madame la présidente, pourquoi Saint-François ? Pourquoi il n'y a pas d'autres endroits donner un morceau de terrain assez privilégié en 2014 ? Pourquoi Saint-François ? Et non pas un autre endroit à Rodrigues ?

The Chief Commissioner: On a cherché à Anse aux Anglais, à Terre Rouge, on n'a pas eu. Il n'y a pas eu de terrain là-bas.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la présidente, ce n'est pas correcte. Les Rodriguais attendre depuis des années pour avoir un morceau de terrain pour construire une maison. Et, alors là, les gens eux, pour ne pas aller en cour, le Chef

Commissaire vient nous dire qu'il fallait donner à tout prix ? Non, Madame la présidente. Ça c'est du vandalisme. On est en train de vendre notre pays. Pourquoi on n'a pas donné un morceau de terrain à Mourouk, à Anse Nicolas, pourquoi pas ? Vous venez de donner les 18 arpents à Anse Nicolas à votre petit copain. Pourquoi juste Saint-François ? Qu'est-ce qui se passe ?

Madam Chairperson: Order please. No comments from a sitting position. You have already put your question.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Next question. As guardian of the Standing Orders, I have the duty now to tell you, to point out Standing Order 21(4) – “An answer to a question cannot be insisted upon if the answer is refused by the Commissioner.” 22 – “Supplementary questions may only be put for the further elucidation of the information requested and shall be subject to the ruling of the Chairperson both as to relevance and number. Next question. Next question.

The Minority Leader: One last question very important. I am to understand that this owner of the land at Mt. Charlot, whether he did not know that there were two roads encroaching the land when he...

Madam Chairperson: Member, Grandcourt.

[Interruption]

ON-GOING CAPITAL PROJECTS - RRA

(No. B/8) Mr. F.A. Grandcourt (First Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to on-going capital projects initiated by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if any thereof is behind schedule, as per contract documents/obligations, and:

- (a) table a list thereof not completed to date, per Commission, including the penalty applied per project as at date, if any, and indicating the respective delay in each case; and
- (b) indicate what measures are being taken by his regional government to remedy this situation, if any?

[Interruption]

The Chief Commissioner: On a point of order, Madam Chairperson. Are we in a Regional Assembly, an institution or are we in a market or somewhere?

Madam Chairperson: Yes, on a point of order from the Chief Commissioner. I would like to remind Respected Members once more that we are in an assembly where we have all of us the responsibility to uphold the decorum of this House, to maintain dignity and discipline of the House. And, I am sure as wise ladies and gentlemen you are all able to do this. I am making an appeal to you for your collaboration for the proper running of the business of this House. Thank you. Yes, Chief Commissioner.

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, considering the high number of on-going capital projects and the level of details required for each project, the required information is still being compiled and will be tabled at the library of the Assembly.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: *Coum sa mem AML ine prend ARL.* Madam Chairperson, I put the question six months back, it was in the previous, previous, previous order paper.

Madam Chairperson: No, this is not allowed.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Yes, I want to...

Madam Chairperson: Come up with your question, now.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: I just want to point out this first of all. So, can I ask the Chief Commissioner, he has not been able to give for all the projects. What about his commission? He should at least as the Commissioner responsible for so and so sectors, he should be able to at least give me these answers. Why is it that he has not at least given me for his Commission? What is he hiding?

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame, sur une question de transparence et de bonne gouvernance comme souvent le Chef commissaire a dit, une politique autrement dans les finances. Respecter le Rodriguais c'est lui dire la vérité. C'est sa motto. Madame la présidente, est-ce que je peux demander au Chef Commissaire donner nous un *brief details* sur les projets encourus en ce moment, qui ont été fait par l'Assemblée Régional, ce qu'il a en tête pour qu'on puisse avoir une idée de ce qui se passe au sein de ce gouvernement ? Merci, Madame la présidente.

Madam Chairperson: This is not allowed Respected Member. It is a supplementary question, must not introduce matter not included in the original question. This is Standing Order 22. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Take one example, Madam Chairperson, I like to ask the Chief Commissioner where matters stand concerning the project of pre-primary school at Baie Malgache? Only one example. It is in his commission.

The Chief Commissioner: There is a question on the school of Baie Malgache.

[Interruption]

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

‘JEUX DES JEUNES TALENTS’

(No. B/9) Mr. J. N. Volbert (Second Local Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner for Sports and Others whether, in regard to the recent ‘*Jeux des Jeunes Talents*’ in Mauritius, she will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the detailed composition of the Rodriguan delegation, indicating the number of athletes involved per discipline together with all official concerned, including Commissioners, if any, and table the list thereof; and
- (b) all expenses incurred thereof, detailing the amount of stipend/per diem received by each athlete, coach and official, together with all equipment and/or accoutrements provided to each athlete?

The Commissioner for Sports and Others (Ms. M. R. L. Edouard): Madam Chairperson, the “*Jeux des Jeunes Talents*” is a rebranded version of the Jeux des Jeunes competition organised by the Ministry of Youth and Sports in collaboration with National Sports Federations for athletes of 12-13 years (born on 2004 and 2005). The competition is reserved for boys and girls and comprises 10 sports disciplines and was held in Mauritius from 08 to 10 November 2017.

For the purpose of this event, Rodrigues has participated in six disciplines namely, football, volleyball, boxing, judo, athletics and basketball. The delegation comprised of 85 athletes, 25 officials and myself. I am hereby tabling the list of the Rodriguan delegation as required by the question.

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With regards to part (b), Madam Chairperson, the following expenditures were incurred by my Commission:

- (a) Air tickets – Rs 684,700
- (b) Accommodation on full board basis
(Rs 182,310 being part payment) for the accommodation of delegation.
- (c) out of pocket allowance for Coaches of the Commission – Rs 1,330 for one Coach.
- (d) Equipment and accoutrement – Rs 89,630
- (e) Sum of rupees twenty-five thousand (Rs 25,000) provided to Head of Delegation to meet petty expenses for the delegation.

It should be noted that for such competition which comprise a big delegation, athletes and coaches are not given individual stipend as same is being catered under the sum allocated to the Head of Delegation to meet extra expenses related to refreshment, transport, medical support and any contingency that may arise. Thank you Madam Chairperson.

Mr .J. N. Volbert: Madam Chairperson, peut-on savoir de la commissaire si c'était exact que les athlètes ont eu Rs 100 à leur retour pour Rodrigues après les jeux pour sept jours ?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: I am not aware of this, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Since you are aware are you going to enquire into it?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Madam Chairperson, as I have said, there was Rs 25,000 that were allocated to meet the expenses for the athletes that were there and this money is used for them. This is first time information. We are going to see to it. But I do not know where this information comes from.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madam Chairperson, can I ask the Commissioner, what is the total sum of money given to the head of delegation for the catering of all the delegation in Mauritius? What is the exact sum of money given to the head of delegation?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: I have already answered to that question, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Can we know from the Commissioner, we have seen that there is stipend that coaches, athletes and officials have received. Is the

Commissioner aware that for a certain discipline coaches have requested money from athletes? Can the Commissioner inform us about this?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Madam Chairperson, we have not really received any official complaint on this issue. We have not received any because we have seen this question, we have looked in the file about this mission and we have seen no complaint from the side of parents or athletes. May be, I do not know where their source of information...

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Can I ask the Commissioner, whether she has a complaint desk or a complaint box at her commission with regard to complaints from members of public or athletes?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Madam Chairperson, I feel a bit shocked that I am asked questions based on hearsays but with regard to complaints at the end of every mission, each head of delegation is supposed and each Comité Régional also is asked and is compelled according to the guide lines of the commission to submit a formal report. And, from such report we have not seen any of these and with or without a help desk, requests/complaints are being taken at the level of the different commissions of RRA. Thank you.

Mr .J. N. Volbert: Madam Chairperson, est-ce qu'on peut savoir de la commissaire pourquoi nous athlètes ont défilé dans les T-shirts blancs et petits shorts bleue au lieu comme leurs collègues à Maurice, les autres sportifs à Maurice dans les *track-suit* et tout ça ? Quelles sont les raisons derrière ?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Madam Chairperson, for which event are your talking about? The *Jeux des Jeunes Talents*? So, I am a bit shocked, I do not chose which cloths they are going to wear. It is the athletes, the coaches that chose which equipment have to be given to the athletes. I am not a technician, I approve with my colleagues to go for the mission to allow the athletes to go and disburse the money. But with regard to what they wear, there are technicians that professional in that field and I rely on them.

Mr .J. N. Volbert: Madam Chairperson, est-ce qu'on peut savoir de la commissaire si les athlètes ont eu leur *track-suits*, leur accoutrement ou est-ce qu'ils ont eu ça lorsqu'ils sont revenus à Rodrigues ?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Madam Chairperson, there are equipment that, I need to tell frankly, that are delivered in Mauritius. And, it happens, it may happen that the equipment is not in order and according to all the procurement parameters, the procurement policies and recommendations, all these equipment that are faulty, that are not in good condition are returned back to the supplier and

until we are satisfied they have to give us the required equipment. And furthermore, I wish to highlight that despite all these problems that they are saying, the performance has been outstanding and the newspapers have been reporting and re-reporting that all the times.

Madam Chairperson: No comments from a sitting position, please.

The Minority Leader: If you allow me, one last question. Being given that there have been complaints, I do not believe that the Respected Commissioner must wait for written complaints to come to her in order to enquire. We have received the complaints; many people have received complaints. Yes, we received, we are elected by the people. So, can I know from the Commissioner, whether she will make an enquiry in order to see to it that there is no problem to these athletes. Because we have seen what has happened in Australia, in Mauritius we have seen what has happened, do not wait for written complaints to come, try to enquire.

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Madam Chairperson, I feel a bit shocked by the question of the Minority Leader. Why? Because the *Jeux des Jeunes Talents* has taken place since November last year and we are in May. They are aware of these and they wait for this assembly to come forward. So, you said you were doing your job, you should have written to the commission and we could have dealt with it. But I am responsible for the policies of the commission and I am going to ensure that every athlete, every coach in every discipline has the attention that is required. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

PROMOTION OF SPORTS - PLAINE CORAIL RODRIGUES

(No. B/10) Mr .J. N. Volbert (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner for Sports and Others whether, in regard to the promotion of sports at Plaine Corail Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) if there is any registered football team thereat and, if so, to indicate the training ground thereof;
- (b) on the actual ground thereat, detailing if same is classified as a football one and indicating the respective dates of construction and last renovation thereof; and
- (c) if the regional government intends to build a new football ground of required norms thereat, and if yes, when and, if not why not?

The Commissioner for Sports and Others (Ms. M. R. L. Edouard): Madam Chairperson, I am informed by the Rodrigues Regional Football Association that the Plaine Corail Sports Club is indeed a registered football team at Plaine Corail, Rodrigues. I am further informed by the Rodrigues Regional Football Association that the team actually trains on a football pitch in close vicinity to the Plaine Corail Airport.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (b) of the question, as per our records available at the Commission for Sports, this playground does not have the required standards for competitions, I say competitions. A pair of goal post was installed by the commission on the football pitch to ensure that proper training takes place. And, the exact date of the construction of the playground is not available at the commission now.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (c) of the question, as at date no request for the construction of football ground at Plaine Corail has been made by any party.

I want you, Madam Chairperson, to rest assure, that if ever there is a request from the village committee or sports club of the region, necessary steps would be undertaken by my Commission, just like we are doing for any other sports infrastructures in any other regions of Rodrigues.

Madam Chairperson, I have also to inform the House that the rehabilitation of the football infrastructure is part and parcel of the reforms that we are bringing about in the football sector in Rodrigues. And, I am sure that the technical committee assigned for this purpose will give due consideration to all the playgrounds and pitches which need to be rehabilitated for the new ones to be constructed.

Madam Chairperson, furthermore, we are seriously looking into the issue of a proper management of the sports grounds and pitches that are used for training in around Rodrigues in collaboration of the different partners. Thank you Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J. N. Volbert: Madam Chairperson, est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire étant donné que le terrain est dans un état décevant, piteuse état, est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire si elle va prendre des dispositions à court terme pour réhabilitation de ce terrain ? Et, je dépose, Madam Chairperson, deux photos de l'état de terrain actuellement à Plaine Corail.

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Allow me to smile, Madam Chairperson. As I have already said I am going to look into the issue as proposed by the technical

committee. But I am shocked this morning because I have a document from the Registrar of Association, right before my eyes asking the Secretary of the same club who is in front of my eyes also to submit, you are because the documents date March 2018. And you are asked to *de vous mettre en règle avec le Registrar of Association* otherwise, they will be forced to take legal action because the club is not duly registered. I think that the Secretary has to do his job on his part instead of taking photos, Madam Chairperson.

Mr .J. N. Volbert: On a point of order, Madam Chairperson. I am no longer Secretary of this club since 2013.

Madam Chairperson: If the Commissioner can prove the statement she has just said she does not have to remove.

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Madam, I can table the document in front of my eyes and I am tabling same.

The Minority Leader: I am not understanding what the Respected Commissioner has said. To help these young persons/athletes/football players in that region, is the Commissioner contemplating the possibility of putting lightings round this football ground so as to help at a moment when we are combatting drugs and other *fleaux sociaux*?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: Madam Chairperson, I have already answered the question. The technical committee is looking on this issue in the context of the reforms.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: So, can I know from the Commissioner, the technical committee is looking into the matter, can we know the time frame? For how long will they look into the matter? And the time frame for which the pitch will be upgraded?

Ms. M. R. L. Edouard: **The time frame will be determined** according to what the survey will suggest.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

(No. B/11) Mr. J.N. Volbert (Second Local Region Member for La Ferme) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to electricity supply in Rodrigues, he will obtain information from the relevant authority and state, for the benefit of the House, on the number of days of occurrence for power

cut off and/or interruption, specifying if same were planned and unplanned, since November 2017 to date; the areas/villages affected and any remedial action/s taken or being envisaged to minimise inconvenience to consumers?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I am tabling the information sought as provided by the Central Electricity Board for electricity cut offs/interruptions that occurred for period November 2017 to 16 May 2018. The information revealed that there has been 38 days planned and 60 days of unplanned interruptions/cut offs. It is to be noted however that many of the interruptions are of very short period.

I am informed that the CEB has recorded an abnormal number of network failures during the months of January 2018 mainly due to the passage of cyclone Berguita that hit the Island and consequently weakened the network.

Madam Chairperson, as per information provided, it is noted that many transient faults have also been recorded on the CEB's network due to bats which caused contact between two phases of the CEB's bare high tension network and consequently tripping the feeders. I am informed by the CEB that in order to remedy the situation that they have already embarked on projects of replacement of their bare high tension network with insulated cables to minimize network failures due to bats and other transient faults.

Additionally, autoreclosers and sectionalisers are being installed on the high tension network to minimize the outages sustained by customers. These devices will automatically isolate any part of the network which is faulted while allowing the healthy part of the network to continue to be energized.

The Minority Leader: Madam, really it is a great problem is in Rodrigues being time to time interruptions on the network. Since, cyclone Berguita we have noted that. Being given that in Mauritius, the CEB is contemplating the possibility of putting the cables underground, can we know whether in Rodrigues this will be done also because I do not know whether the Commissioner, the Deputy Chief Commissioner has seen here and there in Rodrigues almost all the poles, the wooden poles and are benched in a pity position and even people have died because of that. Will he see to it that this is done?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I think that part of the electricity network is already underground. Actually there is one feeder leading from Pointe Monier of Port Mathurin to the different vital institutions, they are already underground. And, here I mean Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Central Administration, the Residence, the Fire Service and even the Meteo. And, I believe that in the policy of the Central Electricity Board, they will move ahead

with the continuous policy of putting the cables underground so that there is less damage that is caused during cyclone being given that this is major problem that we face in Rodrigues.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: Being given that the RRA pays for street lightings, so we know that there are some that are metered, some are not metered. So, how is the Commissioner addressing this problem, the fact that, even though there is a problem on the network we are still paying for the street lightings. So, how is he addressing the problem with the CEB, so that we do not overpay the CEB for those lights which are not in good working condition due to the bad network?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I do not think that the question is related to the main question but nevertheless, I believe as I have said in my answer that the different cut offs and interruptions that have occurred, they are mostly of very short period. If I take the example of say for the month of November 2017, there has been interruptions from 3h24 to 14h12, 7 November – 1h33 to 1h43 – ten minutes. 7 November 1h33 to 1h44 – ten minutes. 30 November 8h41 to 9 o'clock.

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner please address the Chair.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: It is clear that the power cut offs they are very short periods. If you look at the information that have been tabled, they are very short power cut offs and ultimately, I do not think that this has an impact as such on the payment that is being made by the Commission for Public Infrastructure as regards to street lightings.

Madam Chairperson: No question from a sitting position, please. I suspend the House for one hour for lunch.

At 12.27 p.m., the sitting was suspended for one hour.

On resuming at 1.36 p.m. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Madam Chairperson: The Fourth Island Region Member.

CONSTRUCTION OF *RETENUES COLLINAIRES* – RODRIGUES

(No. B/12) Mr. J.R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether in regard to the construction of *retenues collinaires* in Rodrigues, he will state and table the:-

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- (a) number thereof constructed since 2012 to date, indicating the respective location site/s and operational state, together with the purposed service users in each case;
- (b) total cost and name of the contractor allocated for each one thereof; and
- (c) starting and expected completion dates as stated in their different contract/s and indicating any delay in the commissioning thereof?

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Others (Mr. J. R. Payendee):

Madam Chairperson, with regards to part (a) of the question, in view of increasing agricultural production through providing water for irrigation to farmers, four rainwater harvesting structures, *retenues collinaires* have been constructed by my Commission as follows:

- (i) At Roche Bon Dieu which is capacity of 1500 m³ which was aimed to target 21 onion planters of Anse Ali and the project was completed in 2014;
- (ii) Montagne Goyaves – 5000 m³ completed in 2018. Target groups was chili planters of Montagne Goyaves and Baladirou;
- (iii) Batatrand, same sort of time – 3000 m³, target groups: onion and lime planters of Gravières; and
- (iv) Baie Malgache for the planters of Baie Malgache Valley with a capacity of 8000 m³.

Madam Chairperson, with regards to part (b) of the question, all four rainwater harvesting structures have been built by Laxmanbhai and Company. For Montagne Goyaves, the cost was around Rs 16 m., for Baie Malgache – Rs 20 m., Batatrand – Rs 8 m. and Roche Bon Dieu – Rs 6.6 m.

With regards to part (c), Montagne Goyaves, the start date was on 29 June 2016 and completion date was supposed to be on 09 April 2015 but it went until 10 January 2018. There were only three months' delays because the extension time was revised. For the one at Baie Malgache, start date was 03 February 2017 and completion date was supposed to be 15 September 2017 but it went until 05 March, completed on 05 March 2018. Again, the completion date was revised and there was only three months' delay.

For Batatrand, start date 21 February 2017 supposed to finish on 08 August but was completed on 07 March and the same condition applied was... And

finally, for Roche Bon Dieu, it was start date in 02 December 2013, was supposed to finish on 24 March 2014. It was completed on 30 July 2014 and there was only a delay of 11 days. I am tabling the required information, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Yes, Madam Chairperson, can we know from the Commissioner the state of Roche Bon Dieu *retenue collinaire*?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Madam Chairperson, since quite some time, the one at Roche Bon Dieu is damaged and normally, there was a dog that fell in the thing and then... But as everybody knows, this is something that is not easy to repair. It is not like the tires, you go to Yvon and then you solve it. You need specialists for that and the guys came and the repair has been done. Even after repair, it seems that it is still leaking.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Can the Commissioner give us more information about the implication of this dog, the damage in the *retenue collinaire* at Roche Bon Dieu?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Implication of the dog, you know, the slope, all *retenues collinaires*, on the borders, it is like a slope of about 45 degrees. If a dog falls in that, it cannot get out of it. It keeps crawling to be able to get out and everybody knows how feet of dogs are. So, it was damaged by dogs and I have been witness. The same thing happened in Montagne Goyaves. When we were there, a small dog fell in it and to remove it, I had to sort of swimming in the thing to remove the dog. So, otherwise, the dog will just die because it is impossible to get out of it.

Mr. F. A. Grandcourt: I am interested to put one question. When the dog crawls, it crawls along the wall. So, how come when there is no... If the liner has been damaged on the walls, so, there should be at least some water in the *retenue collinaire*. So, how come that there is no water? How come? If I apply your logic, it should be on the wall, not down on the flooring of this *retenue collinaire*. So, I do not understand.

Mr. J. R. Payendee: The answer is simple. It depends how much water there was in the thing when a dog fell in it. So, if it was at same sort of... it depends. But the dog, it is sure that it is the dog because at some points, it took a lot of time before the thing started to leak. The dog was removed from the thing after that. *Non, eh ou la, ou pas koné ou.*

The Minority Leader: It is very funny, Madam Chair. I would like to ask the respected Commissioner what is the lining that thing, so that the dog can scratch it and damage it? Has the dog had razor blades instead of claws?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Madam Chairperson, it seems that the Minority Leader knows nothing about dogs, you know. I do not know if he has ever been scratched by a dog. But yes, of course, it is like razor blades! Yes, I agree, it is like razor blades.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Can I know from the Commissioner since when the *retenue collinaire* of Roche Bon Dieu has not been operational?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Since 2015.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Can we know from the Commissioner? There are two other *retenues collinaires*: one in Papaye and the other in Baie Topaze. What is the state of these two *retenues collinaires*?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Madam Chairperson, it is not just the two in Papaye or Baie Topaze but there are quite a lot of *retenues collinaires* actually which are not working. That is why in the speech of the Chief Commissioner, it is written *de 'l'eau pour l'agriculture' à la page 16*. I quote:

'...la mise en place de réseaux de distribution d'eau autour des nouvelles retenues collinaires à Batatran, Mt. Goyaves et Baie Malgache et les autres retenues qui seront remises en état de fonctionnement ;[...]'

Mais par rapport à la question du membre pour la retenue de Baie Malgache... Pas Baie Malgache, de Camp Pintade, Papayes. Baie Topaze, *the one in Baie Topaze*. Le problème de la retenue de Baie Topaze, c'est que ça a été mis dans la ligne, dans la rivière de Baie Topaze. Donc, normalement, on ne met pas une retenue dans une rivière parce qu'il y a toute sorte de truc qui vient, les débris, les branches qui s'accrochent. Là, ce n'est pas les chiens. Là, c'est les branches qui viennent avec la puissance qui déchire le truc.

Donc, on va essayer de remédier à la situation mais définitivement, le *lining*, on peut faire quelque chose dans le lit d'une rivière mais ça ne doit pas être avec le *lining* en plastique. Il faut que ça soit en béton. Peut-être qu'il faut revoir le truc. Mais pour les autres retenues, on va travailler là-dessus. On a déjà fait un genre de *survey* pour voir comment on va réparer tout ça. Bien sûr, on ne va pas laisser les retenues comme ça. *Dog-proof as well, yes.*

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madam Chairperson, with regards to security in the vicinity of these *retenues collinaires*, est-ce qu'il y a suffisamment de sécurité concernant... pour que les chiens ou les animaux, les bœufs, les cabris ou les gens n'entrent pas dans ces *retenues collinaires* ? Comment se fait-il qu'un chien ait pu

entrer dedans alors qu'il est supposé être bien clôturé même avec des gardiens, non ? J'ai appris, des gardiens.

Mr. J. R. Payendee: *Madam Chairperson*, c'est vrai que normalement, les chiens ne doivent pas entrer mais c'est rentré. Je ne sais pas comment mais le chien est entré. Mais il y a aussi des gens qui sont... Il y a pas mal de méchanceté qui se fait à Rodrigues. Si vous allez sur l'île aux Chats aujourd'hui, vous verrez des chiens, des chats lâchés et la hauteur du *fencing* n'empêche pas... Quelqu'un a balancé son chien là-dedans, je ne sais pas. Mais normalement, c'est fait d'une façon pour que ni les humains, ni les chiens rentrent. Mais il n'y pas de système qui est infaillible. Donc, il se peut que quelque part, il y a eu un petit problème, le chien est rentré, voilà.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la Présidente, pourrais-je demander au Commissaire quel est le coût actuel ? Le coût, j'ai appris qu'il y a eu un rapport. Quel est le coût pour la remise en état de ce retenue collinaire actuellement ?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: *Madam Chairperson*, je n'ai pas cette info pour l'instant mais je peux communiquer plus tard.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Commissaire de l'agriculture concernant les surplus d'eau dans les retenues collinaires ? Est-ce que la provision a été faite pour régler ce problème ?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Bon, tout surplus d'eau normalement, il y une façon pour évacuer. On ne peut pas. Si on a une retenue qui peut contenir 800 m³, si on a 10000 m³, c'est normalement que ce qui est en plus va partir à la mer. Mais la capacité de la retenue, ça a été calculé par rapport au quantité de bénéficiaires, de planteurs qui vont bénéficier du truc aussi par rapport au coût. Si on pouvait faire des retenues pour toute l'île d'une dimension extraordinaire, on l'aurait fait mais le problème, c'est qu'on est coincé par rapport au coût et aussi par rapport au quantité de bénéficiaire de l'eau.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Je voudrais parler exclusivement de la retenue collinaire de Batatrand. La terre est jetée juste à côté et puis, quand il y a surplus d'eau, toutes ces eaux-là, elles descendent dans la cour des gens. C'est pour ça que j'ai posé les questions est-ce que des provisions ont été faites à ce sujet ?

Mr. J. R. Payendee: Normalement, ça, c'est en dehors du contrat. Ça, c'est nous qui allons faire. On va faire des canaux, des drains pour diriger l'eau pour que ça passe en dehors des maisons. Mais comme vous le savez, les retenues viennent d'être terminées. Il y a encore du travail à faire et comme il a pas mal

plu ces derniers temps, c'est difficile pour nous d'accéder à ces endroits en dehors de la retenue pour pouvoir faire des drains mais des drains seront faits.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

REFORM OF FOOTBALL IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/13) **Mr. J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Commissioner for Sports and Others whether in regard to the reform of football in Rodrigues, she will inform the House on where matters stand in relation thereto, stating: -

- (a) all parties involved therewith, highlighting if same will embrace professional football and the "*académie de football*", giving reasons for any shortlisting and/or selection exercise in regard thereto, if any, and to table same;
- (b) all existing or new infrastructures that will be required therefor, indicating the respective state thereof as available as at date; and
- (c) if the grant scheme to football teams/clubs has been taken into consideration therein?

The Commissioner for Commissioner for Sports and Others (Ms. M. R. Edouard): Madam Chairperson, with regards to the reform of football being implemented by my Commission with the full collaboration of the Regional Football Committee and the Football clubs of Rodrigues, I wish to highlight that it is the first time that Rodrigues is implementing such reform and it is through its implementation that we will be able to weight really its strength and weaknesses. Madam Chair, things are moving and we are hoping to have the results expected.

The need for the reform has arisen due to some shortcomings encountered that were impeding on the overall development of football in Rodrigues. Hence, we are convinced that these reforms will provide the following outcomes:

- (a) the restructuring of football leagues and clubs;
- (b) recruitment of qualified referees;
- (c) improvement of sports infrastructure so that they meet competition standard;
- (d) provision for adequate medical and paramedical support during matches;
- (f) access to funds;
- (g) enhancing of feminine football; and

- (h) continuous improvement of existing sports infrastructure.

The conditions of the reform and grants were discussed in several consultative meetings with the Regional Football Committee, the club representatives and were confirmed and validated in a workshop that was organised on 20 September 2017. Consequently, an action plan was prepared and a technical committee comprising of the Head of Sports, the President of the Regional Football Committee and the club representatives was set up to inter alia:

- (i) look into the right timing of implementation of the reform;
- (ii) work out the budget and advise on possible sources of funding; and
- (iii) monitor, evaluate and report on implementation of proposed actions and identify bottlenecks for remedial actions.

The main actions that have been approved under the reform include: -

- (i) restructuring of football clubs, limiting the number of clubs in the 1st Division to eight and 2nd Division to ten and organisation of Regional Football into pool system and provision of special scheme to allow regional clubs to merge with First or Second Division Clubs;
- (ii) organisation of courses in resource mobilisation for clubs' representatives;
- (iii) organisation of Inter-Island Football competition in Rodrigues;
- (iv) new system of management of referees;
- (v) measures to improve football infrastructure;
- (vi) special measures for improvement of feminine football;
- (vii) creation of appropriate mechanism for conflict management in clubs and regional committee including setting up of disciplinary committees;
- (viii) medical follow-up of players and injury management; and
- (ix) creation of under 20 Football selection and participation in national and regional competitions.

Madam Chairperson, the reform that is taking place does not include professional football and *Académie* as such but its main focus is to uplift the level of football in Rodrigues.

In the short term, Madam Chairperson, we are not envisaging to have an *Académie de Football* as such though it is in the vision of this Government in the long term. An under 20 football selection is being set up instead as the next step for our under 18 football players to consolidate their football skills before they integrate football clubs. The creation of the under 20 selection is underway and it is expected to be operational in September 2018. The facilities that will be given to the participants are included among others:

- (i) equipment in terms of sportswear (shorts and jerseys, tracksuits, football shoes, training shoes amongst others);
- (ii) food supplements as appropriate;
- (iii) refreshment; and
- (iv) transport.

With regards to part (b), Madam Chairperson, one of the tasks assigned to the Technical Committee for the implementation of the reform system is to make an assessment of the present status of football infrastructure and to come up with recommendations for upgrading and renovation works that need to be carried out and also new infrastructure that need to be set up to meet the needs of the football discipline.

A first draft report of the committee is expected by end of June. In the meantime, Madam Chairperson, the maintenance of all sports infrastructure is an ongoing process and in the first instance, the Roseaux sports ground is being upgraded and Mourouk football ground will be awarded soon hopefully, provided there is responsive bidders and also, the installation of professional lightings is also ongoing.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (c) of the question, the Grant Scheme for football club is an integral part of the reform. I am pleased to announce that the administrative procedures for allocation of grant has already started and the allocation of funds to clubs who are eligible will be granted by the end of May.

However, Madam Chairperson, the grant is subject to a series of conditions including amongst others the necessity for clubs to be fully registered, follow some administrative and management procedures and to have qualified coaches to conduct training which for sure have been discussed by the different stakeholders.

Thank you Madam Chair.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Can we know from the Commissioner concerning infrastructures for football? What is the real state of the Camp Du Roi Stadium and Roche Bon Dieu?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: With regards to the sports infrastructure, I have already mentioned that we have the Technical Committee working on it and of course, with regards to Camp Du Roi and Roche Bon Dieu, we are studying according to what procurement laws prescribe, we are going to act according to that.

The Minority Leader: Can I ask the respected Commissioner whether actually, we have a stadium that is according to international norms... *S'il y a un stade qui a été homologué ou si* in the future, there will be such a stadium in Rodrigues.

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Indeed, Madam Chair, we have discussed the issue on various occasions at the level of my Commission and at the level of the Executive Council. We are looking forward to *l'homologation de Camp Du Roi* and of course, we are working on the master plan for a new stadium at Grande Montagne. As spelt out in his speech, the Chief Commissioner mentioned a fully operational and full-fledged stadium at Grande Montagne and for sure, we are going to do everything that for sure that we can register records that are being made by our young athletes here.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Can we know from the Commissioner whether there is a timeframe for the upgrading or for the new infrastructures that will be constructed?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: As I said, it is ongoing. There are projects that are implemented and of course, when they are implemented, they are given a timeframe as he said and wherever this is not respected, actions are taken accordingly. But with regards to minor works, it is ongoing. We do not fix a timeframe as such and of course, we are going to consolidate our actions on the pending... By June, we will receive the recommendations of the Committee to have a more full vision of the situation.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: Yes, can we know also from the Commissioner whether, the Medical Unit set up in Malabar has been taken into consideration for the proposed action plan for the reform in footballs?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Indeed, Madam Chair, the Medical Unit at Malabar is of course taken on board and we are working at it that our players get the best medical support.

Mr. J. R. Augustin: We have been here in this Assembly, talking last time about overtime for drivers or for people who take athletes after their training. Has this item also been considered also for the referees?

Ms. M. R. Edouard: Transport issue is under consideration in the reform.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

PATIENTS SENT FOR TREATMENT IN MAURITIUS

(No. B/14) Mr. J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether in regard to patients sent for treatment in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House state:

- (a) the protocol set for case processing and/or monitoring;
- (b) the number of cases referred since January 2017 to date together with the total cost involved therefor indicating any increasing/decreasing trend noted per disease; and
- (c) if any complaint has been received so far regarding the transfer methodology of patients to Mauritius?

[Vide reply to PQ B/6]

PROLONGED TRAFFIC JAM – PUBLIC ROAD QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL COMPOUND

(No. B/15) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to an incident of prolonged traffic jam which occurred on the public road which runs through the Queen Elizabeth Hospital compound in the afternoon of Saturday 28 April 2018, he will seek information from the relevant authority, including the Commissioner of Police, and state the cause thereof, indicating measures taken or being envisaged to prevent the reoccurrence of such incident thereat or in Rodrigues generally?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I am informed by the Divisional Commander, Rodrigues that no complaint has been filed to the Police for any incident that occurred on Saturday 28 April 2018 in respect to any

traffic jam occurring on the public road which runs through the Queen Elizabeth Hospital compound.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la Présidente, je suis désolé, c'est vrai qu'il y a eu un incident, mais malheureusement ça n'a pas été reporté, je ne sais pas pourquoi mais il y a eu un incident à Crève Cœur, Madame la Présidente. *Here is the picture referring to the said incident that happened on the 24 April last, 28 of April last, excuse me.* Madame la Présidente, si cette affaire-là aurait été duré cinq secondes, dix secondes, cinq minutes, ça n'aurait pas été un problème. Regardez dans cette photo-là, à deux extrémités, nous avons les bus stockés et un homme debout la main croisée en train de regarder le bus, d'accord, obstruant le passage clouté des piétons...

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: On a point of order, Madam Chairperson. The Member is making a statement rather than asking a question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I am introducing...

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, the Member is making a statement rather than asking a question. That is it.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, referring to the point of order raised by the Deputy Chief Commissioner, yes, indeed respected Member, your supplementary question should be concise please.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madam Chairperson, yes.

Madam Chairperson: You table the picture and...

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I will table the picture.

Madam Chairperson: What is the question?

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I am coming with my question.

Madam Chairperson: Now, you put your question, now.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Whether he is aware of this picture. Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner, can the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether he is aware for this incident that floors upon the media, the social network...

Madam Chairperson: Yes, thank you, respected Member.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: It is clear in our Standing Orders that we do not have to refer to matters which refer to newspapers, to *réseaux sociaux* and everything. *I am not aware of this incident, Madam Chairperson.*

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, well, it is amazing. I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner, his Chief Commission demonstrates against himself or against his own Government and he says he is now aware? Well...

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, I am on my feet. It is not allowed to attack the...

The Minority Leader: This is not attacking!

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Will I be allowed to continue?

The Minority Leader: But he will not be allowed to do this again.

Madam Chairperson: You are not allowed to attack the behaviour of the Chief Commissioner or any Commissioners in this House. Please, respected Member, you table the picture now. Next supplementary question.

The Minority Leader: It is already on the table. You can keep it but anyway, Mrs. Chairperson, Madam, *cela ne fait pas honneur à notre Assemblée régionale venant de la part d'un Chef commissaire de Rodrigues.*

Madam Chairperson: Your question, please!

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I reiterate my point of order... The Member come up with a straight question as regard to the issue under discussion.

Madam Chairperson: Come up with a straight question concise, please! No statement!

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Can the Commissioner inform the House what is his Commission doing to prevent such a thing arriving in the future?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, being given that I have informed the House that I am not informed and I do not know about the issue, I do not see why my Commission should get into something that I do not know.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: History will recall that you form part of this Government and we are giving bad example to our population. *C'est une honte!*

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, I am coming. B/16, Madam.

FIBRE OPTIC CABLE

(No. B/16) **Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Information Technology and Telecommunication and Others whether, in regard to fibre optic cable connecting Rodrigues to the rest of the world, she will state:

- (a) the number of cables that are to be laid therefor, indicating the respective promoter/s besides those related to the Mauritius and Rodrigues Submarine (MARS) cable, if any; and
- (b) the completion status of the survey that was to be carried out therefor, stating if any report has been submitted in regard thereto and, in the affirmative, to table same?

The Commissioner for Information Technology and Telecommunication and Others (Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis): Madam Chairperson, there are two projects regarding the connectivity of Rodrigues to the fibre optic cable namely the one that will be laid down under the initiative of the RRA through normal tendering procedures and by which, Mauritius Telecom has been the successful bidder and the second one is a purely private initiative by IOX Cable Ltd.

Regarding part (b) of the question, there have been two survey vessels in one same fortnight in Rodrigues. By the end of April 2018, the survey report for the project that is being mounted by the RRA is not yet available and the one which has been done by the private also, this will not be available because it is a private initiative.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, Madam Chairperson, Madam, nous avons attendu près de 25 ans pour avoir une connexion d'internet à Rodrigues à travers la fibre optique. Heureusement, la connexion va arriver bientôt. Actuellement, nous constatons qu'il y a un genre de bataille pour l'emplacement d'un câble optique à Rodrigues. Aujourd'hui, on a deux câbles qui vont relier Rodrigues : one private and the another one, RRA etc. Can the Commissioner inform the

House about the cost of the cable that will connect Rodrigues to Mauritius actually?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madam Chairperson, let me tell the House that there is no *bataille*, absolutely no *bataille* regarding the laying of the fibre optic cable to Rodrigues. I do not know where the respected Member has been searching for that. So, the cost of the fibre optic cable connecting Rodrigues to Mauritius in the project that is being implemented by the RRA will cost 44,784,694 USD exclusive of VAT.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madam, can we know who will bear the cost of this fibre optical cable and how long?

Madam Chairperson: One... Okay.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: As usual, Madam Chairperson, every capital project in Rodrigues, the cost is borne by the RRA on behalf of the Government of Mauritius.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: *Madam Chairperson, Madam, we are having two cables in front of Rodrigues, one connecting Rodrigues to Mauritius and one connecting Rodrigues internationally by IOX. Est-ce qu'on ne voit pas d'un autre œil cette affaire-là ? Pourquoi ne pas connecter Rodrigues directement avec la fibre IOX qui va nous coûter meilleur marché au lieu de nous rallier à 750 km et ici avec IOX, nous serons à 96 km de distance de câble. Madame, est-ce que je peux demander à la Commissaire, la respectée Commissaire si elle peut voir dans cette direction-là pour que ce soit cost-effective in that line and do not hang Rodrigues ? Et ne nous met pas en hedging pendant 30 ans !*

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la Présidente, ce sont des choses reçues de je ne sais où. Les gens disent n'importe quoi dans les journaux et malheureusement, il y a beaucoup de personnes qui leur prennent pour du sérieux. Aujourd'hui, dans le monde entier, les pays se battent pour avoir plusieurs câbles parce qu'il y a toujours ce qu'on appelle la redondance. Il y a toujours aussi... Je ne sais pas si les membres de cette Assemblée ont déjà été informés qu'un moment, les Seychelles avaient été coupés du monde parce qu'il n'y avait qu'un câble qui avait été coupé.

Aujourd'hui, Rodrigues a la chance. On demandait un câble, le bon Dieu nous donne deux. On ne fait que payer pour un câble. On n'a pas un sou à payer pour le projet de IOX, pas un sou et vous savez, Madame la Présidente, tout ce que nous faisons, on trouve des choses à dire. Ma question aujourd'hui, est-ce

que le respecté membre me demande aujourd'hui d'annuler un de ces projets ? Est-ce que c'est ça son point ? Alors que...

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: On a point of order, it was my question. It was me who asked Madam the Commissioner question; not her! She cannot put question to me! I cannot answer her question.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madam Chair, I am answering by questioning his pertinence of this question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: I want you to rule on that; not the Commissioner, please.

Madam Chairperson: Your point of order is not valid, respected Member. Please, proceed, Commissioner.

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madam Chair, I am questioning the pertinence of the question of the respected Member on behalf of our children, on behalf of our youth. Why is it so important for us today to have these two cables even if we will have three, four, we will be happy but the Government will not be investing directly in these projects. Madam Chairperson, you would recall that the RRA projects to connect Rodrigues to the fibre optic cable. The launching of the tender was done on the 10 April 2017 and the date for the closure of the bids was on 30 June. On the 28 September 2017, we had the contract awarded to Mauritius Telecom and of course, on the 18 November, the Prime Minister came for the official launching of the cable.

While regarding the very good initiative of the IOX Cable Ltd which remains as I said, a private one, the company only made a request to the RRA on the 24 October 2017 while the tender was launched on the 10 April 2017 and I should remind the House that the 10 April was the second tentative for the launching of the fibre optic cable and if we have waited for IOX to come, the opposition would have been the first one *pour manifester*, Madam Chair. We are happy. Tomorrow on the 23 May, the second cable, the launching of the second cable will be done in Rodrigues for the development of Rodrigues, for the economic development to connect Rodrigues to the world. The RRA has got no cost at all for this project and we are very happy to have it. We are very lucky and Rodrigues is very lucky.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chair, I have been listening very carefully to the respected Commissioner. We all agree that we can have many cables connecting Rodrigues. She has been talking of the cable of the Seychelles that have been cut off. This was a terrorist attack in Egypt, near Egypt but here, we

are being connected by IOX from Pondicherry, Rodrigues, Mauritius, Reunion and East London in South Africa. We will be connected at 96 km from here. It will cost us much less.

Now, what is the reason behind having another cable since we are having one here on the cable of 750 km? And, she is saying that Rodrigues will pay nothing. I beg to disagree, Madam. I would like to have the answer on that because I have been made to understand, is it not true that Rodrigues will pay its connectivity during about 30 years at the fixed price? It is tantamount to a hedging for 30 years. So, if RRA is not paying, the people of Rodrigues will pay and this is the plain truth, Madam. Will she enlighten us on that?

Mrs. R. M. F. Gaspard-Pierre Louis: Madame la Présidente, le *IOX câble* qui va connecter l'Afrique du sud, l'Asie, l'Inde est un câble d'une longueur de 7967 km et le promoteur de ce projet, on a eu l'occasion, le Chef commissaire et moi-même de rencontrer les responsables de ce projet. Ils se sont dit qu'il ne passe pas loin de Rodrigues. En investissant dans un câble de 7967 km, pour eux, ils n'ont pas grand-chose. Ça ne coûte pas grand-chose pour eux de connecter Rodrigues seulement 96 km. D'ailleurs, j'ai bien donné les dates. Le projet de IOX est venu à Rodrigues. La demande a été faite qu'en octobre 2017 alors que le contrat pour le *Mauritius Telecom cable*, ce que le RRA paie, avait déjà été donné.

Donc, aujourd'hui, c'est pour ça que je dis que le projet IOX, c'est comme un cadeau qu'on a aujourd'hui et on n'a pas à payer un sou à IOX pour la connectivité. C'est bon qu'on soit clair, qu'on induit pas la chambre en erreur, qu'on ne donne pas les informations erronées à la population. Bien sûr, l'investissement que nous faisons à travers le contrat donné à *Mauritius Telecom*, mais comme tout projet, ça a un coût et j'ai donné d'ailleurs le montant pour lequel on va devoir payer pour ce projet. C'est la population qui va gagner. Je pose ma question de nouveau. Est-ce que le *Minority Leader* à notre place, à ma place en tant que Commissaire de l'Informatique ou à la place du Gouvernement, s'il était à notre place, est-ce qu'il aurait annuler le premier projet parce qu'il y a un deuxième qui vient après ? Moi, j'aurais voulu savoir comment il perçoit ce projet-là ?

The Minority Leader: Madame la Présidente, étant donné que le projet IOX, j'aurais aimé demander à la Commissaire est-ce que le projet IOX ne date pas de quelques années ? C'est ça, la vérité. Est-ce que ça ne date pas de quelques années et moi, si j'étais à sa place, puisqu'elle m'a posé la question, j'aurais annulé le projet entre Maurice et Rodrigues et j'aurais connecté Rodrigues seulement avec IOX ? Ça aurait coûté moins cher et ne pas mettre « *ene laké fer blanc dans licou Rodriguais* ».

[Interruptions]

Madam Chairperson: Order, please.

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: J'ai dit et je redis, peut-être...

Madam Chairperson: Order.

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Monsieur le Minority Leader a été ministre de Rodrigues. Je pense qu'il sait comment fonctionne l'administration. Donc, nous sur la table de l'assemblée régionale la demande date de 24 octobre 2017. S'il a une lettre chez lui en tant que Minority Leader, ça c'est autre chose, ça je ne sais pas. Vous savez, très souvent on a remarqué aussi si eux ils font *juicy business* il pense que tout le monde est pareil. M la présidente, on claire, on est content, on est fier qu'aujourd'hui Rodrigues en 2019 ce sera historique, Rodrigues sera connecté à deux câbles qui va permettre la création d'emplois. Deux câbles, moi je dis franchement pour moi il est *God's given*. We wanted one, we insisted to have one, God gives us two at no cost, at no additional cost. Et, moi ce que je suis contente, aujourd'hui dans la population, qu'est-ce que les jeunes demandent ? Ils veulent voir des résultats. Ils savent aujourd'hui l'effort que nous avons fait. Aujourd'hui toute la population est contente d'avoir un deuxième câble. Je ne comprends pas pourquoi, le Minority Group insiste et trouve qu'on devrait annuler. Moi enfin, l'histoire retiendra, l'histoire retiendra que le Minority Leader aurait annulé un projet de câble alors que c'est important d'avoir plus d'un câble pour assurer qu'un pays n'est pas coupé du monde.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la présidente, je voudrais faire appeler au commissaire et à tout le monde dans cette chambre que le Minority Group n'est nullement contre l'implantation du câble optique. C'est vous qui à tout moment saccagez le projet câble optique *even in this assembly*.

Madam Chairperson: Come up with your question, please.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: M la présidente, j'aurais aimer demander à la commissaire en responsable de la télécommunications sur une question de transparence, sur une question d'endettement, de diminuer le coût. D'ailleurs Rodrigues ne décolle pas en ce moment. Même depuis quelques années. Sur une question de transparence. Dans un premier temps on aurait dû aller chercher câble the IOX à 96 km, on aurait eu une connexion internationale directement. Là, on passe par Maurice et toute la communication est bloquée et on sait comment ça se passe actuellement. Je voudrais demander à la commissaire une question, ce qu'on dit là ce n'est pas du bla-bla-bla, c'est une question de transparence. *Will she, can she enlighten us or will she consider* l'option de revoir, pour le bien-être de la

population de se connecter, de connecter Rodrigues directement à un niveau international au lieu de connecter Rodrigues avec Maurice ?

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame, comment peut-on me demander de faire un choix. Malheureusement, je ne trouve pas le mot. J'ai un mot je sais que je n'ai pas le droit de le dire ici. Madame la présidente, lorsqu'il s'agit de transparence le projet que l'assemblée régionale met en place, on a assuré la transparence, on a fait l'appel à la candidature, le *tendering procedure*, il y a eu trois *bidders*, on a eu l'évaluation et aujourd'hui vous savez, des grosses ISP à Maurice aujourd'hui sont contents qu'il y a encore... si vous voyez l'histoire de l'Internet à Maurice, plus ils ont des câbles plus ils sont contents. Il n'y a pas un câble, il y a plusieurs qui vont arriver. Et même dans ce câble que le IOX pose, les ISPs, les plus gros, ils trouvent l'importance, la pertinence, d'acheter de grosses quantités de bande passante de connectivité. Donc, pour vous dire que, malheureusement, je n'arrive pas à trouver un mot mais ce choix qu'il me propose aujourd'hui, Madame la présidente, démontre que beaucoup ne comprennent pas trop comment fonctionnent cette affaire d'informatique et quelle est la pertinence surtout pour un pays de rester tout le temps connecter. Le câble que nous posons entre Rodrigues et Maurice 700 km de longueur, ce câble connectera Rodrigues au monde comme le câble IOX, sauf bien sûr, il y a des variantes, il y a des variantes. Il y a des variantes, bien sûr mais puisque c'est vrai avec le, c'est clair que ce câble 7967 kilomètres. Le besoin en termes de connectivité est vraiment immense par rapport à tous ces pays qui seront servis ce qui fait que je redis, c'est une aubaine pour Rodrigues avec ce câble on aura 13.5 terabyte de connectivité. C'est une aubaine à zéro cout. Donc, moi je maintiens les deux projets, reste pertinent. Et, je suis sûre que les jeunes prient pour que demain, il y ait un troisième câble qui arrivera Rodrigues pour plus de compétition, ou plus d'ouverture, pour plus de perspectives au niveau économiques.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la présidente, je voudrais féliciter le commissaire en question.

Madam Chairperson: One last question is allowed.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, yes I am congratulating her because she just said, il vient de faire son *mea culpa* admettant que ce câble IOX à 96 km ...

Madam Chairperson: One last question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Yes, I am putting my question. Let me have at least five seconds, please. Ce câble qui va être connecté à 96 km se sera plus rapide et se sera une plus grande aubaine et Rodrigues sera connecté directement sur la route internationale. Là, elle reconnaît c'est ce qu'on vient de dire là, elle

reconnait ça. Donc, moi j'aurais aimé lui poser cette question. Puisqu'elle parle de la transparence, puisqu'elle parle de la bonne façon de faire les choses, est-ce qu'elle peut nous dire à cette chambre s'il y a eu un ou deux exercices de *bidding procedure for this cable which will connect Rodrigues to Mauritius* ?

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Yes, Madam Chairperson, because the first one was not responsive.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

RODRIGUES TRADING AND MARKETING CO. LTD. (R.T.M.C.)

(No. B/17) **Mr. Z. Félicité (Fifth Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Others whether, in regard to the operation of the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Co. Ltd. (R.T.M.C.) in Rodrigues, she will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the company to: -

- (a) state and table the composition of the board of directors indicating their respective occupational background together with the actual strength and organigram thereof;
- (b) table a list of its assets and liabilities to date;
- (c) list and table the annual value of products imported and exported since 2012 to date thereby showing occurrence of profit or loss per year; and
- (d) state how many annual reports have been published since 2012 to date, and to table same?

The Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Licensing and Others (Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis): Madam Chairperson, I am hereby tabling the requested information and the RTMC, the Rodrigues and Trading and Marketing Co. Ltd. is under my portfolio since March 2017. The Board of the RTMC is actually composed of the Chairman and five Directors following the disinvestment of the State Trading Corporation as follows:

- The Chairperson has as educational background, Management and occupational background, Management and Accounting;
- Director 1 – Finance;

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- Director 2 – Agriculture Organic Farming and Equipment;
- Director 3 – Agriculture;
- Director 4 – Management and Trade; and
- Director 5 – Industry and Trade

With regard to part (b) of the question. So, the financial reports have been laid down on the table this morning. And, regarding part (c), the amount of imported and exported products since 2012 to date. So, the total export for:

- 2012 amounts to Rs 4,650,000;
- 2013 – Rs 5,024,000;
- 2014 – Rs 5,210,000;
- 2015 – Rs 1,137,900;
- 2016 – Rs 454,182.40; and for
- 2017 it amounts for the export to Rs 1,650,000.

With regard to the import, the figures are for:

- 2012 - Rs 2,999,000
- 2013 - Rs 1,309,610
- 2014 - Rs 510,000
- 2015 - Rs 356,000
- 2016 - Rs 1,218,500
- 2017 - Rs 1,048,138

With regard to part (d) also, all these reports have been tabled this morning.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chairperson, if you will recall that on the day we put that question, all the five reports on the RTMC. It is very bizarre. Can I ask the Respected Commissioner whether the RTMC is doing the work that it should be doing concerning the buying of Rodriguan products?

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Yes, Madam Chairperson, the RTMC is actually doing its main role, ensuring its main role, that is, buying the local produce either to sell on the local market or to export to Mauritius.

The Minority Leader: Madam Chairperson, I have been made to understand that the RTMC is here, has been put in place by our government so as to help selling the different products in Mauritius and elsewhere. So, can we know why actually we have plenty of lemons in Rodrigues that are rotting under the trees. Then, can she tell me what the RTMC is doing?

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je pense qu'il y a un problème de mémoire. Le RTMC est le bébé du premier gouvernement régional qui a été mis en place en 2006 et l'assemblée régionale à l'époque avait 100% d'action au niveau de...

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: On a point of order, madam. Yes, the Commissioner is mentioning that the RTMC is their baby. She should... Can she sustain that?

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, I am on my feet, please. Respected Member, the Commissioner is giving an answer. She has not completed. Let her reply first. Thank you.

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, je maintiens que le RTMC a été incorporé en 2006 par le premier gouvernement régional, l'adjoint au chef commissaire était alors commissaire du commerce et qui a même aussi défini toutes les... Donc, la constitution de cette compagnie qui avait et qui a toujours pour vertu de promouvoir les produits locaux, que ce soit à Rodrigues ou ailleurs et à l'époque c'était une compagnie qui était détenu 100% par l'assemblée régionale. Malheureusement, quand ils sont venus ils ont troqué quelques shares dedans et ce qui a fait aussi que la compagnie n'a pas vraiment pu décoller comme il se doit. Et nous aujourd'hui, en fin de l'année dernière, nous avons pu acheter de nouveau tous les shares de cette compagnie et aujourd'hui RTMC est redevenu 100%, l'assemblée régionale comme actionnaire. Et, oui au niveau des limons, au niveau des safrans, des oignons, RTMC travaille pour envoyer les produits à Maurice et je pense que déjà on est en train avec la RTMC de ne pas seulement envoyer les limons *fresh* à Maurice mais surtout le plus important c'est de travailler à la valeur ajoutée. Je suis fière d'annoncer une fois de plus à la chambre ici, que le Chef Commissaire a annoncé dans le budget 2018-2019 qu'il y aura ce projet d'extraction de l'essence de limon à Rodrigues. C'est le RTMC qui mène ce projet. D'ailleurs, la semaine dernière, le Chairman de RTMC a été en mission en Italie pour voir toute les équipements qu'on a besoin pour mettre en place ce projet. Nous travaillons très sérieusement et nous voulons que d'ici la prochaine récolte nous allons pouvoir exploiter et travailler les 200 tonnes de limon produit par nos planteurs à Rodrigues.

Madam Chairperson: Wait a minute, please. Respected Members, the table has been advised that PQ B/18, B/19, B/20, B/21, B/22, B/23, B/24, B/25, B/30, B/32 and B/33 have been withdrawn. Yes.

The Minority Leader: Can I ask the Respected Commissioner, having said all that, which is in fact, wishful thinking, can I know from the Respected Commissioner, why the RTMC is going from lost to lost and is becoming a

gouffre financier actually and why the STC has withdrawn as partner from the RTMC?

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madam Chairperson, STC has not withdrawn themselves from the company. In fact, we have been fighting for that because we have seen that it would be better because this is where the problem resides. When they came they did not understand the need to have an RRA company with full capacity to export our products. And, telling today that this is why STC removed themselves, this is being not aware of the truth. We have been negotiating for that and we are happy we have been successful. In fact, RTMC is not cumulating lost and lost. We have seen that with regard to the different figures. In 2016, exceptionally in terms of export we have an export of Rs 454,182.40, *tout simplement parce que si vous regardez les statistiques. Les statistiques officielles le démontre bien, en 2016, il y avait une sécheresse vraiment dure, the rainfall was on the very low side ainsi que la production d'oignon. N'oublions pas que la majeure donc jusqu'ici, l'activité majeure de la compagnie de RTMC c'est l'exportation de l'oignon. Si on regarde, les productions de l'oignon en 2013 c'était 600 tonnes, en 2014 – 448 tonnes, en 2015 – 77 tonnes seulement dû à la sécheresse et 2016 -34 tonnes seulement. C'était dû à la sécheresse. C'est la raison pour laquelle la compagnie n'a pas pu faire mieux. Aussi on a vu que de plus en plus, il y a des compagnies privées qui viennent pour faire l'achat des oignons. On est content, le plus important c'est que les planteurs trouvent un marché pour leurs produits.*

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la présidente, l'assemblée régionale a investi une fois Rs 2,600,000 au sein de la RTMC. Et, en 2015, si je ne me trompe pas, il a investi Rs 6 millions. Les chiffres parlent d'elle-même, Madame la présidente. Aujourd'hui la RTMC fait des pertes d'année en année depuis 2012. Il a en 2016 c'est à peu près Rs 1 million de *lost*. Madame la présidente, *can the Respected Commissioner inform the House what is the figure, the amount of money disbursed for the running of the business in these years, especially, in 2016 with regard to the administrative cost thereon?*

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, aujourd'hui au niveau de administrative cost nous avons les salaires bien sûrs, nous avons les fees pour les Board Members mais nous avons travaillé récemment un business plan pour le RTMC avec aussi des activités nouvelles. J'ai parlé ce matin, juste avant de ce projet de limon qui va être un projet d'envergure. Madame la présidente, nous croyons que la RTMC ne doit pas être une compagnie qui fait des profits justes pour faire des profits parce que le plus important c'est la vente des produits de nos locaux. C'est ça le plus important. Le profit c'est pas nécessairement ce n'est pas le premier rôle, la première vertu de la RTMC. Mais bien sûr on va devoir travailler pour qu'on arrive de plus en plus à améliorer notre

chiffre d'affaires. Et, moi je suis confiante qu'après le travail que mon collègue, le commissaire Baptiste, va démarrer aujourd'hui, on continue à travailler, à bâtir sur ce qu'il a fait. Donc, moi je suis très confiante et très bientôt la RTMC va travailler encore mieux et va apporter encore plus de résultats et surtout sera encore plus présent auprès des producteurs.

Madam Chairperson: This is the last question.

Mr. J. L. R. Perrine: Madame la présidente, en 2016 a fait un *gross profit* de 3,000,900 et quels roupies. D'accord ? La compagnie *over and above* Rs 3,900,000, la compagnie a payé Rs 3 million pour le *gross profit*, Rs 3,200,000 mais pour administrative work Rs 3,900,000, un lost de Rs 700,000. Nous avons injecté Rs 8 million depuis plusieurs années et la RTMC devait rendre, il n'a pas rendu cet argent-là, M la présidente, this is public money. *May I ask the Commissioner, if whether they find this correct to handle public money in such a way that lots and lots of money is being lost, go down the drain* pour le bien-être soit disant, soit disant pour le bien-être de quelque ça et elle nous dit que le profit n'est pas important. Donc...

Mrs. M. R. F. Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madame la présidente, il faut bien savoir quelle est la raison qui les a poussés à vendre des shares à la STC quand ils étaient au pouvoir. C'est parce que il n'arrivait pas à faire fleurir la compagnie au contraire ça partait de perte en perte. Et, aujourd'hui ce n'était pas la solution parce que c'est maintenant qu'on voit, parce que il y a quand même des problèmes administratifs. Il y a des contraintes administratives qui ont fait qu'avec un autre *shareholder* c'était plus difficile d'avoir des réunions où tous les membres du board étaient présents pour prendre des résolutions importantes. Donc, aujourd'hui il a mentionné des chiffres, on est en nette progression et qu'ils ont voulu vendre pour faire simple, pour gagner. Ce n'est pas la solution. Aujourd'hui, on trouve qu'on va pouvoir de plus en plus et je suis sûre que dans deux ans on viendra ici pour montrer la pente qu'on aura faire avec que ça. Et s'ils veulent arrêter un jour quand ils vont venir ils arrêteront.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

'TECHNOPOLE'

(No. B/18) Mr. Z. Félicité (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Information Technology and Telecommunication and Others whether, in regard to the setting up of a 'technopole' in Rodrigues at Mont Venus, she will enlighten the House as to where matters stand?

[Withdrawn]

TRACK ROADS & FOOTPATHS

(No. B/19) Mr. Z. Félicité (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to track roads and footpaths constructed or to be constructed all around Rodrigues per the approved Budget for financial year 2017/2018, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the list thereof and by indicating: -

- (a) their respective lengths and exact location, specifying actual geographical positions being linked; and
- (b) the total contractual costs implicated therefor and the names of the contractor/s involved therewith, if any, per site?

[Withdrawn]

COMPLAINT - CONTRIBUTORY SCHEME/EMPLOYEES WELFARE FUND

(No. B/20) Mr. J. L. R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to any contributory scheme set under the Employees Welfare Fund, he will seek information from the relevant authority and state to the House as to if any complaint has been made thereat and/or at his Commission concerning any request for refund of contribution made thereto from any former contributor therefor in Rodrigues and, in the affirmative, to give details thereon, indicating the number of such request/s received as at date together with the outcome for each case?

[Withdrawn]

NATIONAL PROJECT – TABLETS/PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(No. B/21) Mrs. M.T. Agathe, PMSM (Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the national project of providing tablets in primary schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table: -

- (a) the number of tablets received therefor by his Commission up to now; and

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- (b) if same have been distributed in Rodrigues; if not, why and, in the affirmative, to which classes?

[Withdrawn]

FREE BOOKS – PRIMARY/SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

(No. B/22) Mrs. M.T. Agathe, PMSM (Third Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the free books provided to students in both primary and secondary institutions, he will inform the House on:

- (a) if every student has been provided with all books needed for this present year; and
- (b) when the last stock was received at his Commission and distributed thereto?

[Withdrawn]

SHORTAGE OF STAFF - HEALTH SECTOR

(No. B/23) Mrs. M.T. Agathe, PMSM (Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the reported shortage of staff in the health sector, he will, for the benefit of the House, state measures taken to ensure:

- (a) that all patients, especially those bed ridden and/or having just undergone surgical interventions, receive the appropriate treatment and consideration; and
- (b) adequate supervision so that patients do not leave their respective wards without authorisation?

**LAST CYCLONE & RECENT HEAVY RAINFALLS – COMPENSATE/
FARMERS AFFECTED**

(No. B/24) Mrs. M.T. Agathe, PMSM (Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the last cyclone and recent heavy rainfalls, he will inform the House of measures undertaken by his Commission to compensate the farmers affected thereby and to reduce damages caused by such heavy rainfall in the future?

[Withdrawn]

TOURISM ENTERPRISE LICENCE UNIT

(No. B/25) **Mr. J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Tourism Enterprise Licence Unit, he will, for the benefit of the House state: -

- (a) the objective/s thereof, the number of officers attached thereto, indicating their positions together with the respective qualifications therefor; and
- (b) if measures and decisions taken by the Mauritius Tourism Authority are also applicable in Rodrigues?

[Withdrawn]

MASTER PLAN - HEALTH SECTOR IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/26) **Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel)** asked the Commissioner for Health & Others whether, in regard to the finalization of a master plan for the health sector in Rodrigues, he will enlighten the House as to where matters stand, indicating:

- (a) on consultancy services retained therefor indicating the cost thereof, the name of the contractor/consultant, the scope of work and the expected completion date;
- (b) if consultation will be made with any other stakeholder and, in the affirmative, to give details thereon; and
- (c) the timeframe for the commencement of any work resulting therefrom and the funding thereof?

The Commissioner for Health and Others (Mr. S. P. Roussety): Madam Chairperson, I must inform the House that the development of a Master Plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is a joint initiative taken by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and my Commission. In view of developing the plan, Consultancy Services from the Hospital Services Consultancy Corporation (HSCC) from India has been appointed under a Government to Government (G to G) Agreement between the Government of Mauritius and that of India.

The main scope of services of the HSCC include, *inter alia*:

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- (i) preparation of preliminary designs and detailed designs based on requirements/specifications prepared initially by the Employer (User Department concerned and/or its representatives);
- (ii) preparation and floating of tender documents for construction works, procurement of building services, and procurement, installation, testing and commissioning of equipment where appropriate and relevant;
- (iii) evaluation of bids;
- (iv) recommendation for award(s) of contract(s) to the successful building contractor(s)/supplier(s);
- (v) supervision of construction works over the construction period;
- (vi) advising on any issue which may crop up during the defects liability period.

The Consultant will be paid by percentage of the total project value. At this stage, I am not authorized to specify the rate as this contract is a contract agreement with two partners and we need to have the written consent of the other party.

As at date, the draft Master Plan has already been presented to key stakeholders in Rodrigues during a presentation by the HSCC Consultant held on 3 May 2018 in the Conference Room of the Chief Commissioner's Office in the presence of the Minister of Health and Quality of Life. Various points were raised and the HSCC has been requested to finalise the plan and to submit same by the end of May 2018 (that is, this month itself). Further consultation will be made during the detailed design stage prior to launching of tenders for construction works.

The project will be funded mainly through Government funding. The Chief Commissioner's Office has already liaised with the Prime Minister's Office responsible for Finance and Economic Development in this connection.

As regards to time frame, we hope to be able to initiate tendering procedures in September 2018 so that construction works for the first phase can be kick started in July 2019.

**STRUCTURES TO CANALISE/COLLECT SURFACE WATER -
BLOCKED/INAPPROPRIATELY SIZED DRAINS, SILTED DAMS &
RESERVOIRS**

(No. B/27) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the structures to canalise or collect surface water all around the island including blocked/inappropriately sized drains, silted dams and reservoirs, he could enlighten the House about measures, if any, that his Commission is contemplating and, in the affirmative, to give details about the scope of work, the amount of money to be disbursed and the expected time frame for the completion of same?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, as I reported in my reply to Question B/43 last year, upon a request of the Chief Commissioner's Office in 2014, an in-depth survey on flooding problems was carried out by Consultant Desai and Associates and remedial measures were recommended.

Based on the report, several works have been initiated and completed and others are still under way. The works initiated/completed are as follows:

Contract for no less than 10 box culverts have been issued. I am tabling a copy of work orders issued or to be issued for the construction of box culverts around the island, their status and their respective costs.

Madam Chairperson, the upgrading of existing cross drains and box culverts is an ongoing programme of my Commission to avoid flooding of roads and accesses in villages. Furthermore, my Commission has launched two tenders for the construction of drains at Fond La Digue and Camp du Roi. I am also tabling the scope of work for the two drains as spelt out in the tender documents.

I would like to report to this House, Madam Chairperson, that following the launching of tenders for the two drains that I have just mentioned, one bid was received for the drain at Fond La Digue and two bids were received for Camp du Roi. My Commission is actually evaluating the different bids and the contract will be awarded if the bids are successful and conclusive.

Madam Chairperson, the cleaning and maintenance of roads drain is also entrusted to RODCLEAN Ltd. The Company is mainly responsible for the cleaning of open and covered drains, gutters and canals in different villages around Rodrigues.

In an attempt to speed the cleaning of blocked drains around Rodrigues, the Executive Council has agreed that upon the forthcoming recruitment of General

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Workers in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, six teams of workers will be constituted and attached to my Commission for the exclusive maintenance of road drains around the island.

As regards to dams which have been silted during the torrential rains recorded at the beginning of the year, my Commission has contracted out: -

- (i) The desilting of gabions dyke at Pavé la Bonté for a total sum of Rs 114,125.00. Works is expected to be completed by 11 June 2018
- (ii) The desilting of Pavé la Bonté Dam for an amount of Rs 71,875.00. Work is expected to be completed by 11 June 2018.
- (iii) Bids have also been sought for the cleaning of Camp du Roi Dam and the closing date for submission of bids is 23 May 2018, that is, today itself.
- (iv) The dam at Cascade Pigeon will be desilted with funding from the European Union during the dry season later this year. And here I would like to point out that tenders for same have been launched three times but unfortunately the bids have not been successful.
- (v) It is worth noted, Madam Chairperson, that some villagers are giving us a helping hand and villagers of Grand Baie and Fond La Bonté have cleaned the dams of Grand Bay and Tindoye respectively.

The consultants have also been entrusted to work on the tenders for the drainage work at Camp du Roi for the water coming from Mont Charlot while my commission is surveying the drainage works at Pointe l'Herbes.

Madam Chairperson, based on the Desai's report and upon consultation with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the NDU has started to implement some projects. The first batch of projects already implemented includes: Drain at Petit Gabriel, Construction of Bridge at Fond Baie aux Huitres, Drain at Lataniers, Drain at Allée Tamarin, Drain project in Port Mathurin for a total cost of about Rs 22.7 m.

The National Development Unit has informed my office that a second batch of drain project is at consultancy stage and comprise of the following: -

- (i) construction of drain and box culvert at Camp du Roi and Rivière Cocos;
- (ii) construction of Bridges along the alignment of existing "*radier*" at Anse Ally and Grand La Fouche Mangues; and

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- (iii) Second phase of drain project of Port Mathurin which will include Max Luchessi Street in front of Cliderlex Building, Rue Victoria and others.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you, Deputy Chief Commissioner. Time is over.

CONSTRUCTION - COMMUNITY SCHOOL AT BAIE MALGACHE

(No. B/30) Mr. J. N. Nemours (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of a community school at Baie Malgache in local electoral Region Number 2, he will state:

- (a) the date of the award of contract;
- (b) the start and intended completion dates thereof; and
- (c) if progress of work is as planned and, in the negative, to give reasons therefor and to provide details on any remedial action envisaged by the Commission in regard thereto?

[Withdrawn]

**TRANSFER OF PLOT OF FREEHOLD LAND TO ONE S.S. OF MTIUS
- MT. CHARLOT TO ST. FRANCOIS**

(No. B/31) Mr. J. N. Nemours (Second Local Region Member of Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to State lands in Rodrigues, he will give details of the number of private lands exchanged therefor from 2012 to date and the reasons thereof?

(Vide Reply PQ B/7)

PETIT GABRIEL TO ST. GABRIEL ROAD PROJECT

(No. B/32) Mr. J. N. Nemours (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Petit Gabriel to St. Gabriel road project, he will table a list of landowners whose private

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property have been compulsorily acquired in respect of Phase I, II and III indicating in each case:

- (a) amount of compensation paid; and
- (b) exact extent of the land or building?

[Withdrawn]

PUBLIC BEACHES - SOUTHERN COASTLINE/PETITE BUTTE

(No. B/33) Mr. J. N. Nemours (Second Local Region Member for Maréchal) asked the Commissioner for Environment and Others whether, in regard to public beaches along the southern coastline, specifically at the level of Petite Butte, he will indicate:

- (a) the respective environmental status thereof;
- (b) the measures envisaged to protect same from degradation; and
- (c) details aiming at rendering it more pleasant, cleaner and safer for visitors?

[Withdrawn]

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

BRIEF - ACHIEVEMENT IN SPORTS

The Commissioner for Youth and Sports & Others (Ms. M. R. L. Edouard): Thank you, Madam Chairperson, I would like to do a brief statement on the achievements in sports since the beginning of the year as to date.

Madam Chairperson, allow me to apprise the House of the major achievements of my Commission since the beginning of the year with respect to major participation of athletes in Mauritius and abroad. The yield of medals for all competitions for the period January 2018 to date is 158 medals, that is 84 Gold medals, 42 Silver medals and 32 Bronze medals. We should be proud of this result which is a clear indication of the effectiveness of our sports development programme and which are being carried out with close collaboration with the different Regional Sports Committees.

Madam Chairperson, I am happy to highlight the outstanding performances of our Volleyball team namely the Olympique Montagne Goyaves sports Club and

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the honourable participation of Oranges Club Sportif d'Amitié in the 'Coupe de Clubs de la confederation Africaine de Volleyball de la Zone 7'. In fact, the Olympique Montagne Goyaves Sports Club obtained the Bronze medal by winning against the champion of Mauritius during the qualifying round.

Madam Chairperson, I wish also to highlight the performance made by our youth from the category 14-15 years and 16-17 years for their outstanding performances in the *Jeux des Jeunes Elites* held in Mauritius from 1-8 April 2018. Indeed, for the first time my Commission sent a large delegation of 227 participants (athletes and officials) in these games which was organised on an inter-region basis.

Rodrigues won the title of the best region by winning 78 medals overall, out of which 41 gold medals, 18 silver medals and 19 Bronze medals. I wish to point out also that it was the first time that badminton, handball, table tennis and basketball were represented in these games and the results were outstanding also.

Following the *Jeux des Jeunes Elites* in Mauritius, the Handball Federation selected four players in the category 16-17 years to participate within the National selection in the CJSOI games in Djibouti from 18 to 29 April last. Although they did not win any medals, the contribution of the four Rodriguans in the national team was highly significant, allowing the team to compete on an equal playing field.

In addition, Madam Chairperson, six athletes and one coach from athletics also participated in the games. They won six medals in all out of the 10 medals won in athletics, that is, 3 gold medals, 2 silver medals and 1 bronze medal. During the same period, three athletes participated in the SAR (South African Region) Championship, the under 18 Championship whereby they won the gold medal.

Madam Chairperson, I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate all sportsmen and sportswomen of good faith who are striving for the development of sports in Rodrigues. Special thanks also go to the coaches, officers of my Commission, all the Regional Committees and the Executive Council for their support and in working with the same objectives. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that this Assembly be now adjourned to Tuesday 10 July 2018 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 14.51 hours the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Tuesday 10 July 2018 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

INFRASTRUCTURAL PROJECTS ALREADY STARTED

(No. B/28) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to infrastructural projects already started around the island, he will state and table the status of each project as at to date, specifying if each contractor is complying with the terms of contract and, in the negative, to state the actions being taken by his Commission to address same?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, I am tabling a list of projects which fall under the purview of my Commission and their relative status. Many of the projects are behind schedule and have accumulated delays. The reasons advanced by the different contractors are:

1. Bad weather conditions during the first term of this year
2. Lack of raw materials such as cement
3. Lack of skilled workers

I would like to add that I am not satisfied with the performance of some of the contractors and the following steps have been taken:

1. The supervising officers of my Commission and the Consultant have been instructed to closely monitor and to take necessary actions as per contractual terms so that the contractors take remedial actions and expedite progress to complete the works.
2. Regular meetings are held with the Consultant to see whether the reasons are acceptable and it averred that many are not justified. As a result, letters have been sent to the respective contractors for remediating their course of actions

3. Liquidated damages have been applied as depicted in the information table in some cases and liquidated damage will be applied for unjustifiable delays in accordance with the conditions of the respective contracts.
4. My Commission is contemplating to terminate the contract with the defaulters after several warnings have been made.

‘YOUTH ON THE MOVE’ PROJECT

(No. B/29) Mr. J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St. Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Others whether, in regard to the ‘Youth on the Move’ project, she will enlighten the House thereon, stating its objective(s) together with its time frame, expected cost and the number of youths targeted thereby?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, as announced by the Chief Commissioner in his last budget speech, my Commission is launching a new programme for our youth, named, the “Youth on the Move Programme”, which is in fact a “Jeux des Jeunes” with three major pillars being put forward, that is Youth Activities, Sports and Art Activities.

The Youth on the Move Programme is organized for the first time in Rodrigues and will be held on Sunday 22 July 2018 at the Malabar Youth and Sports Complex.

Madam Chairperson, the Youth on the Move Programme is a celebration of the youth and aims at:-

- (i) Providing healthy and sound activities to the youth during the forthcoming school holidays;
- (ii) giving young people the opportunity and a platform to practice sensitisations, recreational, cultural and sport activities;
- (iv) identifying potential talents for the setting up of the “*Ecole des Sport*” and “*Centre de Formation*”;
- (iv) to revive, boost and support some sports disciplines such as handball, cycling, table tennis, badminton and Petanque among others; and

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- (v) sensitizing the youths on a number of social issues and on the need for them to engage in prevention against teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and substance and drug abuse and misuse of social media.

Madam Chairperson, the Youth on the Move Programme, with the driving spirit 'For a Clean Youth', will comprise of the following activities:-

(i) Youth Activities

- (a) Quiz Competition (group of 3 and mixed)
- (b) Elocution Contest
- (c) Indoor Games (domino/scrabble) competition
- (d) Play Station 4 Competition
- (e) Short Mobile Video Competitions on the theme: Prevention against Teenage Pregnancy, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STI), Drugs and Alcohol
- (f) Voluntary Screening (HIV/AIDS, Diabetes)

(ii) Cultural Activities

- (a) Slam Competition
- (b) Short Sketch Competition
- (c) Song Competition
- (d) Music Instrumental Competition (guitar/tambour/accordion)
- (e) Dance Competition

(iii) Sport Activities

- (a) Cross Country (Malabar – Petit Gabriel – St Gabriel – Mon Plaisir – Malartic – Ti Reserve – Malabar)
- (b) Table tennis Competition
- (c) Badminton Competition
- (d) Handball Competition
- (e) Petanque Competition
- (f) Cyclism Competition

(iv) Chasse aux Trésors (open to all and Mixed)

- (v) **Sensitisation and exhibition on Sexual Reproductive Health, HIV/Aids, Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Non Communicable Diseases, Drugs and Alcohol and Road Safety**

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To further inform of their activities and programmes and to carry out sensitisation sessions, a stand at Malabar will be provided to the following organisations/institutions namely:

- (a) The La Croisée Adolescent Health and Youth Counselling Centre
- (b) Action Familiale
- (c) MFPWA/Youth Action Movement Team
- (d) Rodrigues Aids Unit
- (e) Diabetic Pro
- (f) CRAC Anti-Drug Group
- (g) The Police (Brigade des Mineurs, ADSU, Family Protection Unit, Cyber Crime Unit and Road Safety Unit)

Madam Chairperson, following a coordination meeting, further proposals have been put on the table and we are expecting feedback from the different institutions contacted before communicating the outcome to the public and to the House.

Madam Chairperson, through the Youth on the Move Programme, we are targeting some 1500 youths aged 14 to 35 years. The activity will start with a rally of all the participants from Mont Lubin Bus Terminal to Malabar, where the activity will be held.

Madam Chairperson, the organization of such a Premiere in Rodrigues will cost around four hundred thousand rupees (Rs 400,000). I had already had two meetings this month with all partners and stakeholders working for the well-being of the youth in Rodrigues and they are all enthusiastic to participate in such a good endeavor for us to obtain a clean youth in Rodrigues. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.