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No. 12 of 2021

RODRIGUES

FOURTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2021

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RODRIGUES REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 26 OCTOBER 2021

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STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER

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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), 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, Education (Administration)
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-Ravina	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

Serjeant-at-Arms - Constant Perrine, Mr Stenio

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RODRIGUES

Fourth Regional Assembly

Debate No. 12 of 2021

Sitting of Tuesday 26 October 2021

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

The National Anthem was played

(Madam Chairperson in the Chair)

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PAPERS LAID

A. Chief Commissioner's office

- Annual Report of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the financial years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Madam Chairperson: Yes, the Fourth Island Region Member.

PROJECTS - NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT FUND

/UPGRADING WORKS - ILE AUX COCOS & CAVERNE PATATE

(No. B/131) Mr J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner, whether in regard to projects of his Commission financed under the National Environment Fund, namely the upgrading works at Ile aux Cocos and Caverne Patate, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matters stand as to date, indicating:

- (a) if contract has already been awarded therefor, the successful bidder, the start and completion dates; and
- (b) the scope of works and the breakdown of costs for each project?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, with your permission, I would like to answer questions B/131 and B/141 simultaneously as they both relate to the same subject matter.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, please proceed, Chief Commissioner.

The Chief Commissioner: As the House is aware, the two main eco-tourism sites, namely, Ile aux Cocos and Caverne Patate are managed by Discovery Rodrigues Co Ltd. As announced in my previous budget speeches, major development and upgrading are envisaged at the two respective sites in view of facilitating access of the visitors and uplifting these sites. Further to the request from my Commission, the National Environment Fund has agreed to fund the projects at the abovementioned sites.

Madam Chairperson, both projects at those two sites comprise of two distinct phases respectively, namely;

- **Ile Aux Cocos**

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Phase 1 – Departure point at Pointe Diable

Phase 2 – Upgrading works on the islet of Ile aux Cocos

- **Caverne Patate**

Phase 1 – Interior part of the cave

Phase 2 – Exterior infrastructure works

Madam Chairperson, the scope of work for the first phase of Ile aux Cocos departure point at Pointe Diable consists of the following: -

- (i) A shelter of 43 m² floor area;
- (ii) Construction of locker room of 71 m² floor area; and
- (iii) Construction of three kiosks.

Whereas the scope of work for the upgrading of Ile aux Cocos is as follows: -

- (i) Redesigning of the existing concrete building (interior and exterior) into an information centre;
- (ii) Public toilets;
- (iii) New picnic areas with light structures; and
- (iv) Construction of a new watchmen quarters.

Madam Chairperson, I am informed that following a procurement exercise, the contract for Pointe Diable project was awarded in October 2020 to Marday Caleemalay Co Ltd for the price of Rs 11,095,505 for a duration of six months.

The site was handed over in January 2021 and I am further informed that the project has been completed and the taking over of site was effected last week.

The project completion has been delayed due to:

- (i) The COVID-19 second wave lockdown in Mauritius; and
- (ii) The delayed delivery of ecological dry toilets since same are not commonly available commodities hence, had to be imported from abroad.

I am further informed that the consultant is assessing the request for extension of time related to this project and liquidated damage will be applied should the need arise.

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With respect to Ile aux Cocos, Madam Chairperson, I am informed that a first procurement exercise launched in November 2019 was proved to be non-conclusive. Therefore, Discovery Rodrigues Ltd decided to review the concept of the project and contracted the services of an Interior Design firm, Delahaye Interiors Co Ltd, to convert the existing concrete building on site into an information centre and to design new picnic areas for the visitors as well as watchmen/staff quarters while respecting the habitat of the wildlife on site. The contract was awarded to the company in July 2020 for the sum of Rs 500,000 for a duration of one year.

I am informed, Madam Chairperson, that the designer has submitted all plans and layouts and that Discovery Rodrigues has launched several tenders for the manufacturing of furniture and other items locally. Evaluation of bids are presently being carried out and it is expected that award of contracts will be made in November 2020.

With respect to Caverne Patate, Madam Chairperson, priority is being given to the implementation of the interior part component. The services of a re-known cave expert was contracted for the sum of Australian Dollar 14,245 for the design of the pathway and accessories.

The scope of work for the initial part of the project is the construction of a walkway of about 520 metres long in the cave made up of fibre reinforced plastic structure and handrails as well as electrical lighting and associated works.

I am informed that the tender was launched in February 2021 with closing date March 2021 which was further extended to June 2021 due to the second COVID-19 wave in Mauritius.

However, after the evaluation of the bids, the procurement exercise was found non-conclusive. Further technical details are being sought from the Cave Expert prior to the relaunching of the procurement exercise.

The Phase 2 of Caverne Patate, that is, exterior works will consist mainly of construction of ticket counter, public area and coffee shop as well as toilets. This phase will be initiated once the first phase will be completed.

Mr Augustin: Yes, thank you very much. Can we know from the Chief Commissioner, he talked about Ile aux Cocos that there are two phases from Pointe Diable and building work that will be done on Ile aux Cocos; can we know from the Chief Commissioner how much it will cost these two projects for Ile aux Cocos, please?

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The Chief Commissioner: The following procurement exercise, the contract for Pointe Diable project was awarded in October (Pointe Diable project) to Marday Caleemalay for the price of Rs 11,095,505 (11 million) for a duration of... (we have mentioned for Ile aux Cocos? Excuse me I will find out and see). Concerning Ile aux Cocos, it is still under design phase, that is, the plan for the development of Ile aux Cocos.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Félicité. No? Yes, Respected Member, Augustin.

Mr Augustin: Can we know from the Chief Commissioner, how much money has been earmarked from the Environment Fund for the project of Ile aux Cocos and Caverne Patate?

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: ...of these two projects will be sorted and tabled later on.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can I know from the Chief Commissioner who will manage the site at Pointe Diable and do the maintenance?

The Chief Commissioner: As I have mentioned in my reply it is the Discovery Rodrigues Ltd who is responsible for the development of the tourism sites, that is, Ile aux Cocos starts at Pointe Diable and Caverne Patate, inside and outside.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can I know from the Chief Commissioner; there is an access road leading to Pointe Diable, which is in a very bad state; can we know whether there will be a new construction, whether it will be repaired or concrete road to enable the tourists to have a good access?

The Chief Commissioner: Well, not even from the main road to Pointe Diable, it is also for Caverne Patate, from the main road to Caverne Patate. I think it is in the hands of my colleague, Mr Nicolson Lisette, who is going to see that the work is to be done. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Augustin.

Mr Augustin: Concerning Caverne Patate, the Chief Commissioner talked about Delahaye Interiors, has there been an agreement signed with Delahaye Interiors and can we know about this agreement?

The Chief Commissioner: The services of a renown cave expert were contracted for the sum of Australian Dollars I said, I think it is someone from Australia, 14,205 dollars, for the design of the pathway and accessories. It is inside. Delahaye for Ile aux Cocos, not for Caverne Patate. (Not for Caverne Patate? Ile aux Cocos, Delahaye?) Yes, it is for Ile aux Cocos.

Discovery Rodrigues Ltd decided to review the concept of the project and contracted the services of an Interior Design firm, Delahaye Interiors Co Ltd. Is it local or from Mauritius, Delahaye? Delahaye Interiors Co Ltd, yes it is in Mauritius.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you, Chief Commissioner. Yes, Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I do not know whether I have missed part of the reply of the Chief Commissioner. I think the construction at Pointe Diable, there will be a toilet block too. Can I know, if in the affirmative, from the Chief Commissioner, how water will be stocked and to state the mean of supply?

The Chief Commissioner: For toilet, I have mentioned dry toilets. Dry toilets - I do not know what is a dry toilet, it means that it does not use water.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: Yes, Madam Chairperson, I see that the cost of the project is on the high side, it is Rs 11 m. If you go on the site, it does not really represent that sum. So, my question is whether, the bidding exercise was a restricted bidding exercise or open bidding? And, secondly, why...

Madam Chairperson: One question at a time, please.

The Chief Commissioner: It concerns open advertising bidding exercise. That depends on the value they give, you know.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Von-Mally.

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Concerning the exterior development of Caverne Patate, can I know whether this will include embellishment work with a beautiful garden? And, if I may, at Ile aux Cocos, can I know whether, there will be a pontoon for embarking and disembarking?

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The Chief Commissioner: I take notice of the question. And, for Caverne Patate, outside Caverne Patate, there will be what we call - *l'environnement, qu'est-ce qu'il va y avoir au niveau de l'environnement de Caverne Patate. Ça aussi on va voir. Parce que comme vous le savez Caverne Patate, à l'extérieur. Il n'y aura pas de l'environnement à l'intérieur, les plants à l'intérieur, non. C'est à l'extérieur.* Well, we take notice of your question. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader.

Mr Grandcourt: Can we know from the Chief Commissioner, what was the evaluated cost of the project at Pointe Diable?

The Chief Commissioner: I mentioned it. The evaluated cost at Pointe Diable is Rs 11,093,505, Rs 11 million.

Mr Grandcourt: I do not understand what the Chief Commissioner just said. There is a different between the evaluated cost of the project and the cost. Sorry, sorry, what was the estimated cost of the project at Pointe Diable?

The Chief Commissioner: I need notice of the question, please.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Madam Chairperson, thank you. If we see, my colleague brings this picture this morning that he took at Pointe Diable. If you see the two buildings, *quand on regarde ces deux bâtiments-là et une des deux est moins grand que la maison du type Trust Fund. Qu'est-ce qu'il y a de si spécial dans ces trois bâtiments, qui vont être construits, à la hauteur de Rs 11 million, Madame la présidente ?*

The Chief Commissioner: We need notice of your question and I will find out what was the cost of each project at Pointe Diable. I think we should look for this. There is a construction of a new watchman quarters. What will be the cost price? New picnic areas will live structures and so on, you know. And, second wave lockdown in Mauritius and delayed delivery of ecological dry toilets. We will see and find out.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

HAEMODIALYSIS UNIT

(No. B/132) Mr J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the Haemodialysis Unit of Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table:

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- (a) the number of haemodialysis machines/equipment available thereat, indicating the number of patients receiving treatment therefrom;
- (b) the number of haemodialysis machines/equipment acquired during financial year 2020/2021; and
- (c) where matters stand in relation to the setting up of haemodialysis unit at La Ferme Area Health Centre?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that actually the number of haemodialysis machine equipment available at Queen Elizabeth Hospital is ten, with ten bionic chairs, one complete water treatment plant, with one dual reverse osmoser and one carbonate mixer. All of the item are in good running condition. There are 39 patients who are receiving treatment for the time being.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the Commission for Health has initiated tendering procedures for the acquisition of five haemodialysis machines, five bionic chairs and one carbonate mixer and a completer water treatment plant with dual reverse osmoser during financial year 2020-2021. Tenders are actually under evaluation at the level of my Commission.

With regard to part (c), I have great pleasure to announce to the Assembly that the setting up of a Haemodialysis Unit at La Ferme Area Health Centre is almost at its term. The building is ready whereas, the equipment is actually under tender procedure. As mentioned earlier, bids for the necessary dialysis equipment are presently under evaluation. My Commission will award contracts to the successful bidder during the course of this week. The contractual delivery period is 120 days at latest as from the date of the letter of award. We expect to receive the equipment during February 2022 to operationalise the Dialysis Unit at La Ferme during the month of March 2022 at latest.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we know from the Commissioner for financial year 2020-2021, Rs 25 m. has been made available for medical equipment, can we know from the Commissioner how much has been earmarked for haemodialysis machine?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, I do not have the answer with me. Can the respected Member come with a substantive question for next sitting?

Mr Augustin: Can we know from the Commissioner, he made a statement on December 2020, where he announced that there will be a second '*Centre de dialyse*'? *Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du commissaire de la Santé où en sommes-nous ?*

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, j'ai déjà répondu à la question. C'est que, les équipements sont en évaluation et le *supplier* à 120 jours pour délivrer les appareils. Et puis, nous espérons que d'ici février 2022, nous aurons les équipements et que le *Dialysis Unit at La Ferme will be operational in March 2022*.

Mr Augustin: Until 2022, can we know from the Commissioner in case of failure of equipment, what action will be done in order for these dialysis patients get their treatment?

Mr Roussety: This is hypothetical and we are here to maintain the dialysis machine not to get them breakdown.

Mr Augustin: Can we know from the Commissioner whether, there is an officer in Rodrigues who look after the management of these dialysis machines?

Mr Roussety: Yes, Madam Chairperson, there is a Bio-medical Engineer Technician. But if need be, we call more technician from Mauritius to repair if the machine/apparatus is broken down.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Madam Chairperson, out of the ten haemodialysis dialysis machines at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, can we know from the respected Commissioner how many are in good running condition?

Mr Roussety: Ten.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

**ROAD CONSTRUCTION/MAINTENANCE - ROAD LINKING RIVIÈRE
COCO, UPHILL TO CITRON DONIS/TARRED**

(No. B/133) Mr L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to road construction/maintenance in Rodrigues, he will arrange for the road linking Rivière Coco, uphill to Citron Donis, to be tarred, giving, in the affirmative, the time frame thereof, and, if not, the reasons therefor?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I would like first of all to thank the respected Member for the question as it meets the same expectation of the two respected Members of Region No. 2, namely, Member Collet and Member Nemours who have addressed the same issue to me.

Madam Chairperson, there remains 1.52 km of road with extension to the uphill of Rivière Coco to be tarred from Tamarin to Citron Donis to make it fully accessible to road users. My Commission completed 380 metres from the coastal road Anse Raffin up to Tamarin last year for the sum of Rs 20.4 m. Being given that this road will reduce the time of travel for road users, my Commission will, in a first instance, embark on its levelling to render it more practicable. The road forms part of the priority list that needs to be improved in the future.

It is to be noted, Madam Chairperson, that a track road from access road of *fond* Rivière Coco uphill towards Citron Donis has been constructed and provide access to the upper limit of the village.

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can I know from the respected Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, the track road from *fond* Rivière Coco to Citron Donis has been completely built?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: As far as I know, Madam Chairperson, it is serving the upper part. I think, to that part that we call '*Le petit masser*'. But, of course, it needs to be constructed additionally so that it can reach the main road that lead to Citron Donis. So, this is why this extension it is going to be carried out and we are going to proceed with the construction of the road from Tamarin to Citron Donis. They are going to take it in that portion itself.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, I put this question because it is a very, very important access road especially, for patients to get easy access to hospital. Therefore, can I know what is the time frame? Because this will greatly reduce the time taken by an ambulance to go to Queen Elizabeth Hospital especially, if you have a heart patient and you have to rush him to hospital, this will save ten or fifteen minutes. Therefore, can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, he will do diligence and have this access road completed very quickly? I think, this is very, very important for... not only for the inhabitants of Rivière Coco but for those in this region.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I perfectly understand the point of the respected Member but as I have stated formerly, at least those persons who are living in that part of the island, they do have an access that they can take if ever there is an emergency that they have to go to the hospital. But nevertheless, I should say it is a priority road, that is for sure, but we should understand also that there are also many other priority roads in Rodrigues that my Commission has embarked upon and where I should say, there is no

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access for villagers. I can take examples of roads that are being constructed that are also on the priority list and that need urgent action, as you are stating. We have, for example, Pavé La Bonté road. There is not accesses for villagers. They do not have even an access there. So, of course, going for the construction of that road, it is an urgency. We are proceeding with Saponaire, Anse Fémie. There is no road access for villagers there. This is an urgency. We are constructing Montagne Cabris road right now. Is it not an urgency, Madam Chairperson? I can go on citing so many roads in Rodrigues that need urgent action. But at least as regards to the point that you are raising with respect of Rivière Coco, if ever there is an urgency, we are sure that an ambulance can go there and fetch the people and go to the hospital.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, I think I have been mistaken, there has been a misunderstanding. Concerning the access road, there is only a short part that need to be to be constructed and we already have about Rs 100 m. earmarked for track roads. Then, this is really urgently needed. Why do we not construct it? There are less than 100 metres to construct, why not go ahead with it?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I fully understand the point, Madam Chairperson, but constructing a track road from the uphill to the main road, it may not serve the purpose as such unless or until we have completed the road from Citron Donis up to there. Because if we have not gone through the main road from Tamarin to Citron Donis and we construct only the part from '*les petits masser*' to the main road, then it is not going to be of utmost importance because there will remain that part of the main road which will remain untarred. So, it is better that when we proceed with the construction of the road from Tamarin to Citron Donis, we proceed also simultaneously with the construction of the road from '*les petits masser*' to the main road.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

ACQUISITION – NEW PASSENGERS CUM CARGO VESSEL

/REPLACEMENT MV MAURITIUS PRIDE

(No. B/134) Mr L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the acquisition of a new passengers cum cargo vessel to service the Rodrigues–Mauritius sea route, in replacement of the former MV Mauritius Pride, he will seek information from the relevant authority to inform the House on where matter stands, indicating when same will start operating?

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, the information requested has been sought from the relevant authorities in Mauritius. The House will be informed accordingly once all information will be made available.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, can I know from the Chief Commissioner whether, there has been prior discussions with Central Government or the Mauritius Shipping Corporation Ltd concerning the construction of the passenger cum cargo vessel to Rodrigues? Can I know when there have been discussions?

The Chief Commissioner: As long as I know, Madam Chairperson, a new vessel to replace the Mauritius Pride has been announced years ago by the Central Government. So, now it is a duty of the Central Government to replace the Mauritius Pride by another new vessel passenger cargo vessel. Now we have asked for information from the authorities in Mauritius and we will find out with them so that they can give us this information and we also, as honourable Member, we would like to see a new vessel. It is not so easy to say that every time we have this ship which is being paid by the government of Mauritius (what is the name?) Black Rhino. I think it is the government of Mauritius is spending a lot of money in that Black Rhino and it is time for the government of Mauritius to replace the Mauritius Pride with a new vessel as the Member did say, passenger cargo vessel. It is not only a cargo vessel; it is a passenger cargo vessel. I think we will follow the information from the authorities in Mauritius and we will publish or will table the information here in the House so that we all know here that the government of Mauritius has decided to replace the Mauritius Pride.

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I want to know from the respected Chief Commissioner whether, he is aware that on 28 August 2019, Cabinet in Mauritius has approved the construction of a multi-purpose cargo vessel only for Rodrigues. And, this cargo is supposed to be delivered before end 2021. It was supposed to be delivered in China in October 2021 and it will reach Mauritius by December 2021. Therefore, I would like to know whether the Chief Commissioner is aware of this?

The Chief Commissioner: I will find out, Madam Chairperson, what the Member is saying. I will find out.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, I put a question on 22 August 2017 and the Chief Commissioner at that time told me that they are working on a cargo cum passenger ship. And, with the arrival of the Minister of Finance, we have been made to know that it is only on 28 May 2020 that the Rodrigues Regional Government asks to explore the possibility of

converting the cargo vessel into a passenger cum cargo vessel. Can we know so that we can tell the population what is happening? Because this vessel is very, very important. For poor people, this is the only way to go to Mauritius because the price of air tickets is on the high side. Can I know from the Chief Commissioner whether, he has been kept aware of the recent development? Whether we will have this cargo ship recently not passenger ship?

The Chief Commissioner: I will find out, Madam Chairperson, on the different information given by the Member. I will find out.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

MOTOCULTEUR SCHEME

(No. B/135) Mr J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the “Motoculteur Scheme”, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the total number of beneficiaries thereof per year, since 2017 to date, indicating:

- (a) the total surface area of land allocated to each beneficiary;
- (b) the surface area under cultivation by each beneficiary; and
- (c) if additional land has been allocated to beneficiaries and to give details?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I wish to recall Members of the House that the scheme for the provision of subsidy to a maximum of Rs 100,000 to eligible local planters for the purchase of power tillers was set up in 2015.

The main objective of the scheme was to improve the capacity of farmers to prepare their agricultural land and foster farmers autonomy to decrease dependency on my Commission for land preparation services, encourage farmers to move from traditional farming methods to more professional ones and to provide incentives to improve productivity.

Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform the House that an initial batch of 14 benefitted from the Power Tiller Scheme prior to year 2017. I wish also to inform the House that the main criteria to benefit from the scheme were: -

- (a) a planter has to be cultivating a minimum of one acre of land;
- (b) he has to be cultivating the following crops: -
 - lemon;
 - onion;

- red beans;
- garlic;
- turmeric; and
- vegetables.

Madam Chairperson, following continuous monitoring and field visits effected by Officers of my Commission regarding different schemes to ascertain that public funds were being used efficiently, it was observed that: -

- (i) due to the low engine capacity of the power tillers, the equipment was not appropriate for the land in Rodrigues;
- (ii) we were having regular breakdowns;
- (iii) there was a lack of spare parts; and
- (iv) no proper maintenance.

Madam Chairperson, in view of the above, I wish to inform the House that my Commission has adopted a new policy for land preparation. Consequently, my Commission has invested heavily on new equipment such as excavator, JCB, caterpillar D6, etc., to the tune of Rs 25 m. for the rehabilitation and preparation of land which is a budget measure. My Commission will fence the land in blocks as in the case to the Mt. Goyaves. After a decision has been taken to assist Planters Association/Cooperatives in purchasing heavy duty tillers to minimise breakdowns and reach out to more planters.

Madam Chairperson, I wish also to inform the House that in order not to indulge into the same scheme, a new appropriate scheme will be devised.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Commissioner has not answered concerning the total surface area of land allocated to each beneficiary and the surface area under cultivation by each beneficiary?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, I have not answered this bit, because it is totally irrelevant with regard to the question. Because we are talking about 'Motoculteur Scheme' and, I have said in my answer that the planter has to have a minimum of one acre to benefit from the scheme. So, we do not give land for people to work with the power tiller. We give the power tiller to persons who have already land, to plough the land. So, it is totally irrelevant, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: *Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Dans sa réponse le respecté commissaire a dit que la commission is going to fence at Montagne Goyaves in one plot - un seul block. Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire s'il va - if he will extend this facilities to agricultural farmers at Plateau Caverne and Caverne, respectively?*

Mr Payendee: Oui, *Madam Chairperson.* C'est la politique du gouvernement pour essayer de clôturer les plantations en block. Parce qu'on a vu que quand on donne au niveau individuelle ça coûte beaucoup plus cher et en même temps c'est plus difficile à implémenter le projet. Définitivement, tous ces endroits où il y a des blocks, donc Plateau Caverne c'est un endroit qui forme parti dans cette liste, il y a aussi Port Sud Est, Mourouk, Anse Ally, Rivière Banane, donc tout ça.

Mr Augustin: The Commissioner just said there are 14 planters prior to 2017 who got the Motoculteur Scheme. Can we know from the Commissioner, out of the 14 motoculteurs, how many are still functioning?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, in my answer I said that the policy has changed, because the power tiller... it was a trial but we started it in 2017, it was a trial but unfortunately, I have pictures to show that all these power tillers were breaking down. So, we have made a monitoring of all these tillers. And so, we cannot continue to give power tillers to planters which break down. That is why we changed the policy, we invested in heavy duty machines, like D6 and as we are doing in... We have to do derocking first. The problem of ploughing the land here is there is a lot of rocks in the soil. So, the power tillers are not strong enough to do that sort of job. That is why we invested heavily. After all the land would have been derocked then we will go back to the Power Tiller Scheme.

Mr Von-Mally: Can I ask the respected Commissioner, being given he has been talking of derocking. You know, derocking with the sloppy land in Rodrigues, we need at the same time to construct terraces otherwise, there are millions of meter cube of soil going to the sea at each rainfall. Therefore, can I know whether this will go together, the construction of terraces and the derocking?

Mr Payendee: Yes, Madam Chairperson, if I recalled from the last budget speech of the Chief Commissioner, we put Rs 10 m. for the construction of terraces. So, definitely this was heavily thought, that is why we decided to go towards derocking and together with

protecting the soil against soil erosion, that is, construction of terraces. This is a budget measure.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

SETTING UP – INTEGRATED ORGANIC LIME AND HONEY FARM/ANSE ALLY

(No. B/136) Mr J. R. Augustin (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and others whether, in regard to the setting up of a Lime and Honey Farm at Anse Ally, Rodrigues, he will for the benefit of the House, state and table:

- (a) the total cost of the project, indicating the successful bidder, the starting and completion dates thereof;
- (b) if a survey has been carried out prior thereto and to table the outcome thereof;
- (c) if the building is fully equipped, giving details thereon; and
- (d) when production operations will start thereat?

Mr Baptiste: Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (a), I am pleased to inform the House that following a call for proposal, my Commission entered into an agreement with the European Union on 02 July 2018 for the setting up of an Integrated Organic Lime and Honey Farm at Anse Ally and a Chilli Farm at Mt du Sable under the GCCA+ Climate Smart Agriculture Project.

The project aims at increasing the production of high value products and to provide sustainable livelihood for people enrolled in the ERP under PPT and beneficiaries of Social Aid and Employment Hardship Relief.

With regard to Anse Ally, following a bidding exercise, a contract was awarded to SDR Construction Ltd on 07 September 2020 for the sum of Rs 21,728,000 for infrastructural works for the setting of a lime and honey farm.

The scope of the works consists of the following: -

- Construction of a new rainwater harvesting pond at Roche Bon Dieu;
- Fencing around the site with gates;
- Construction of a nursery, store and toilet; and
- New track road leading towards the farm.

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The works were scheduled for completion within 210 calendar days, that is, by May 2021. However, there have been delays essentially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that the geomembrane has not yet been installed to the rainwater harvesting pond since the experts have to come from overseas. Photovoltaic system for the use of renewable energy at the building has also not yet been set up since the CEB is still working on the most appropriate proposal.

Madam Chairperson, with regard to part (b), before submitting the project joint site visits were carried out with the technicians from the Commission for Agriculture to assess the sustainability of the site and to define the scope of works. The outcome is that the site is convenient for the implementation of this type of project.

As regards to part (c), the building is fully equipped. It is a building of 60 m², fitted with two changing rooms, two toilets, two bathrooms, a store and a nursery for the production of lemon seedlings and melliferous plants by the beneficiaries.

Madam Chairperson, concerning part (d) of the question, in fact, all the requirements for production have already been satisfied. The beneficiaries have been trained by the Lycée Agricole de St Gabriel in Climate Smart Agriculture. Lemon plantlets and melliferous plants are being produced by private nurseries. Bee hives and colonies have already been procured and will be installed there shortly. A Technical Supervisor has been appointed since 11 October 2021 and a team of workers under the Tourism Alternative Livelihood Scheme are currently on site to start land preparation for lime plantation.

A Purchase Order has already been issued for the procurement of specialised equipment for digging of holes at Anse Ally for the plantation of 2,000 lemon plantlets and 2,000 melliferous plantlets. Delivery of the machine is expected in December 2021 since it has to come from China.

Madam Chairperson, based on technical advice from the Commissioner of Agriculture, it will take some three years to harvest the first lemon produce and some six to nine months for honey. Thank you. Madam Chairperson.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we know from the Commissioner, he talked about a rainwater harvesting pond at Roche Bon Dieu. Can we know the capacity, the volume of the rainwater harvesting pond and for how many months or days this water will be available for this project?

Mr Baptiste: It will be of a capacity of 1,000 m³ and obviously, you know lemon it will be a Smart Agriculture, as we have said, there will be minimal use of water. But I do not have the information. All these have already been calculated by the technicians from the Commission for Agriculture. But it is also worth to note that the system can be connected to other sources of water in case of drought seasons.

Mr Von-Mally: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Being given that the respected Commissioner has said that water is being harvested at Roche Bon Dieu and they have to lay pipes about two or three kilometres from there. Can I know why in this project we have not contemplated the possibility of rehabilitating the dam, that is nearby. There is a dam in the valley that was constructed by the late Philip Hotchin together with his counterpart from agriculture; why he has not contemplated to rehabilitate this dam? This could have helped the planters at Anse Ally also.

Mr Baptiste: In fact, this option has been studied but it is not cost worthy because during most of the time there are dry seasons and the water does not reach that spot on a continuous basis. There is a connection from a *batardeau* upwards which come next to the structure, this can be used. But the rainwater harvesting pond is more beneficial because it can collect run-off water from the road, from Trèfles to Roche Bon Dieu. So, even during dry seasons, if we have some rain, we can collect easily run-off water along the road but not from the Hotchin dam which has been studied as I have said and it is not cost worthy.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members are reminded to abide to the law by wearing face mask properly, covering both nose and mouth. Thank you.

Mr Von-Mally: Can the respected Commissioner enlighten the House concerning this Hotchin dam? I would like to know whether, personally he has been there? Since you have said that water is not enough during the rainy seasons to fill this dam. Well, I have been there, we can see that with the force of the water, part of the dam has been pushed downwards by this force of the water. Therefore, indeed, there is plenty of water during the rainy seasons and this could have helped all the planters in this valley. Therefore, can I ask the respected Commissioner to have this studied anew so that it can, not only help the honey workers, the beehives, etc., this will also help all the planters in this valley and the surrounding.

Mr Baptiste: As I have said, Madam Chairperson, I have been there so many times. I have met planters from the valley of Anse Ally. We have discussed also with the people involved in the water sector. This can be contemplated may be in the long run but for the time

being, it is not worthy because it will cost millions of rupees and unfortunately, even I can say since the beginning of the year, we have never had enough rainwater to collect water from this dam. So, it will cost so much but it will not bring that much benefit as you are saying.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

UPGRADE - QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL, CREVE COEUR

(No. B/137) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the resumption of commercial flights between Mauritius and Rodrigues on 01 November 2021, he will: -

- (a) state where matters stand concerning the preparedness of his Commission to manage any spread of the COVID-19 virus in Rodrigues; and
- (b) table any report/recommendations made by any professional/expert regarding same?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, as the House is aware, the resumption of commercial flights between Mauritius and Rodrigues has been postponed to 01 November 2021. As from this date, the risk of introduction of COVID-19 pandemic in Rodrigues is significant. It has become mandatory for each and every stakeholder in Rodrigues as well as in Mauritius to act in a responsible manner to avoid any risk of contamination within the community in Rodrigues.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic in Mauritius in March this year, my Commission with the good collaboration of other Commissions and the different stakeholders in Rodrigues has endeavoured to get fully prepared to prevent the entry of the SARS-CoV2 viruses in Rodrigues in the first instance, and in case it is entered, to contain the disease and avoid contamination within the community.

Madam Chairperson, we have been successful to prevent the entry of the disease in Rodrigues until the last series of the three repatriation flights on the 08, 14 and 18 October 2021. Unfortunately, during these flights, nine imported positive cases have been detected in quarantine centres (Les Cocotiers, Konokono, Auberge Anse aux Anglais, Les Filaos, Escales Vacances and Le Flamboyant). Due to our well-defined protocol, we have been successful to prevent transmission of the virus within the community and as at date, there is no positive COVID-19 cases detected outside the quarantine.

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My Commission will pursue in the same direction as we are leaving no stones unturned to protect public health in Rodrigues, particularly that of the vulnerable persons including the elderly, the handicapped persons and persons with co-morbidities. This is indeed our ultimate goal in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to achieve this goal, my Commission has set the following objectives in the preparedness programme in view of the forthcoming resumption of commercial flights on 01 November 2021:

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Roussety: *To gagne droit pas dakor mais mwa mo dakor mwa.*

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Roussety:

1. Prevent or at the most, minimise as far as possible further entry of the SARS-CoV2 virus in Rodrigues;
2. Prevent its transmission and contamination within the Community; and
3. Avoid any medical complications and mortalities in case of contamination.

In order to achieve these objectives, my Commission with the collaboration of other stakeholders is presently finalising a series of actions which may be grouped into four strategies:

The first strategy is to develop a well-defined and comprehensive Rodrigues Response and Contingency Plan against COVID-19. This document provides for all measures and protocols to be followed concerning the conditions of travel to be fulfilled by passengers among many other aspects.

The draft protocol has been amended slightly in the light of the discussion held with the team of experts from the Ministry of Health and Wellness which visited Rodrigues from 14 to 18 October 2021. The amended protocol has been transmitted to the Prime Minister's Office and to the Ministry of Health and Wellness for endorsement.

In a nutshell, the plan makes provision for governance, communication, prevention and treatment aspects of the response. As from 01 November 2021, only vaccinated passengers and persons under 18 years old will be able to travel to Rodrigues under defined protocol.

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All passengers will be subjected to a first PCR test five to seven days prior to departure to Rodrigues and a second COVID-19 test on the day of the departure at the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport before boarding, followed by a rapid antigen test on Day 5 at the nearest Flu Clinic in Rodrigues. Passengers from Rodrigues who travel to Mauritius for a short stay (less than five days) will be required to undergo a COVID-19 test on the day of departure to Rodrigues, followed by a rapid antigen test on Day 5 at the nearest Flu Clinic in Rodrigues.

Any positive cases of COVID-19 will not be allowed to travel to Rodrigues and will be taken in charge by the health authorities in Mauritius according to current protocol. People who have been in direct contact with any positive case of COVID-19 will be self-isolated. Those detected positive by rapid Antigen test will be confirmed by a PCR test at the laboratory of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the isolation protocol will be triggered accordingly followed by contact tracing exercise. Social distancing as well as wearing of masks will have to be strictly enforced in public places, public gatherings, religious ceremonies and events.

In case of the intensification of the pandemic, the CRAC Centre will be converted into a treatment centre for the COVID-19 with a bed capacity of 12 followed by the Area Health Centre at La Ferme with a bed capacity of 35 beds. Services will be offered at the La Ferme Area Health Centre will then be shifted to the Community Centre in the nearby locality.

The Health Services will be reduced to allow redeployment of resources to deal with the pandemic. Additional manpower in terms of Anaesthetist and at least ten Medical and Health Officers will be required from the Ministry of Health and Wellness as from 01 November 2021 to face with the increasing risk of exposure to COVID-19.

The second strategy of actions concerns capacity building of stakeholders and the population at large through proper communication, sensitisation and training programmes. For this purpose, a communication Committee has been set up at the level of the High Powered Committee to develop communication strategies on all matters pertaining to COVID-19 and to keep the population informed in a timely manner about any event pertaining to COVID-19 in Rodrigues. As at date, a Facebook platform has been set up, a film to sensitise the public on the sanitary barriers against the disease has been developed, coupled with regular radio/TV talks on the subject.

At the level of my Commission, we have set up a Training and Sensitisation Committee comprising of one Medical and Health Officer, one Ward Manager and a Public Health Officer

to train all stakeholders on the need for vaccination against COVID-19 and protocol for Infection Prevention Control.

As at date, key staff of the Health Services, other commissions, the Police, educational institutions, village committees, the public transport sector, commercial establishment, religious bodies and the Senior Citizen's Association amongst others have been reached and trained.

Madam Chairperson, our third strategy is the vaccination programme against COVID-19. We kick-started this programme on 07 February this year with the collaboration of the Ministry of Health and Wellness. As at 25 October 2021, 25,608 persons have been vaccinated with the first dose, representing 85.3% of the adult population. 24,859 representing 82.8% of the adult population have already reached their second dose.

The vaccination programme is ongoing. Among a population of 30,032 adults, according to our figures, there are some 4,424 persons who have not yet been vaccinated with their first dose in spite all efforts deployed by my Commission.

Madam, Chairperson, I avail myself of this opportunity to call all those who have not yet been vaccinated, particularly persons with co-morbidities, to get vaccinated as soon as possible as they are more prone to get complications in case they are contaminated.

Over and above the 30,032 adults, government has already taken the decision to vaccinate adolescent aged between 12 and 17 years old with Pfizer. In Rodrigues, there are about 5,032 persons who fall in this category. My Commission has already made the necessary arrangement with colleges in collaboration with the Commission for Education to secure consent from parents. A request has also been transmitted to the Ministry of Health and Wellness for the supply of Pfizer vaccines which we are expected to receive shortly.

Our fourth strategy is the consolidation of the Health Services. In this context, several actions have already been initiated:

- (i) Setting up of a COVID–Management and Monitoring Unit under the responsibility of the Community Physician who will be entrusted higher responsibilities at the level of Regional Public Health Superintendent against payment of the appropriate allowance. The Unit will comprise Medical Officers, Nursing Officers and Public Health Officers to man the Preventive Section, Contact Tracing, Domiciliary Medical Unit, the Training and Communication Section, the Hotline Section (86099), the

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Rapid Response Team as well as the Curative Team. There will be a daily reporting.

(ii) Consolidation of the Isolation Centre at Mont Lubin

Under this action, my Commission has awarded several contracts to successful suppliers for the procurement of several medical equipment to better equipped the centre to cater for maternity and for dialysis for positive COVID-19 patients.

(iii) Setting up of Flu Clinics at La Ferme Area Health Centre, CRAC Centre at Mont Lubin and Queen Elizabeth Hospital respectively. As from 01 November 2021, all persons suffering from fever and flu will have to attend these flu clinics in their respective regions instead of going directly to the hospital. The objective is to avoid any risk of contamination of COVID-19 to other patients.

(iv) Setting up of Isolation Wards in Hospitals

Under this action, an Isolation Ward is being set up at the ex-Chemotherapy building at Queen Elizabeth Hospital to cater for suspected cases of COVID-19 where they will be isolated from other patients, pending confirmation through PCR Test and their subsequent transfer to the Treatment Centre at Mont Lubin.

Likewise, an Isolation room is also set up in the Nursery and Paediatric Ward respectively to cater for positive COVID-19 children pending their transfer to the treatment centre at Mont Lubin.

(v) Setting up of a dedicated Operating Theatre for positive COVID-19 patient

This is being accommodated in the existing Operating Theatre building. A new Operating Theatre in the Maternity Block will be operational by the end of current week for normal cases who need surgical interventions.

(vi) Consolidation of the Laboratory Services at Queen Elizabeth Hospital with additional PCR apparatus, cartridges and rapid antigen test.

(vii) Additional Human Resources

My Commission has already transmitted a request to the Ministry of Health and Wellness for one additional Anaesthetist, 10 Medical Health Officers and Specialists. We expect a favourable reply from the Ministry shortly.

(viii) Procurement of Protective Personal Equipment

Over and above existing stocks of P.P.E., my Commission has awarded contracts for personal protective equipment such as face masks, PPE, face shield among others and whose delivery will be effected during the forthcoming weeks.

Madam Chairperson, our last strategy, but not least, is the control of the public gathering in open and closed spaces to avoid transmission of the virus and contamination.

In this context...

(Interruptions)

Mr Roussety: *La caravane aboie, le chien passe.* In this context, my Commission...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Roussety: In this context, my Commission with the concurrence...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order! Respected Members from a sitting position are reminded that the Chair should be able to hear the answer of the Commissioner without any interruption. Thank you. Yes, please proceed, Commissioner.

Mr Roussety: Toi, tu aboies; moi, je passe.

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner, you please address the Chair.

Mr Roussety: Yes. Sorry, Madam Chairperson. I continue. My Commission with the concurrence of my colleagues of the Executive Council has already submitted a request to the Ministry of Health and Wellness to amend Section 15 of the Consolidated COVID-19 Regulations 2021 under the Quarantine Act to make it applicable to Rodrigues possibly as from 01 November 2021.

Madame la présidente, pour conclure, permettez-moi de dire qu'au niveau de ma commission et toutes les commissions de l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues, je suis fier de

constater que les préparations sont bien avancées et que nous sommes prêts pour la réouverture des vols commerciaux le 1^{er} novembre prochain. Certes, le risque zéro n'existe pas. Pour empêcher les conséquences de la pandémie COVID-19 à Rodrigues, il y a deux choses qui sont essentielles et qui reposent sur la responsabilité de chaque citoyen.

Premièrement, c'est la vaccination. Il faut que tous les adultes surtout ceux avec des maladies soient vaccinés.

Deuxièmement, il faut que tout le monde adopte les gestes barrières, c'est-à-dire, de porter son masque, se laver les mains aussi souvent que possible...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order! This is unparliamentary, Minority Leader! Please! Yes, Commissioner, you please proceed. You address the Chair.

Mr Roussety: Yes, sorry, Madam. C'est-à-dire, de porter son masque, se laver les mains aussi souvent que possible et adopter la distanciation physique.

Nous, au niveau du gouvernement régional, nous avons fait ce qu'il faut faire. Maintenant, je fais un appel au sens de responsabilité de chaque personne dans la société civile et surtout ceux de l'opposition pour gagner cette bataille contre COVID-19.

Madam Chairperson, as regards to part (b) of the question, there is no written report/recommendations by any professional/expert regarding the forthcoming resumption of flights scheduled on 01 November 2021. However, as I said earlier, we have had a discussion with the team from the Ministry of Health and Wellness which was in Rodrigues from 14 to 18 October last. We are awaiting their report which has not yet been submitted as at date.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, permettez-moi de faire référence à une réponse du commissaire lors de la dernière session qu'il allait certainement nous donner une copie du Rodrigues *Response and Contingency Plan*. Donc, j'aimerais lui demander où est-ce qu'il en est avec ce *Contingency Plan* et pourquoi ça n'a pas été déposé sur la table ?

Mr Roussety: Cela n'a pas encore été approuvé par le ministère de la Santé à Maurice, Madam Chairperson. Mais dès que cela sera approuvé, on le fera avoir au librairie de l'Assemblée.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, ça veut dire que ce n'est pas entre les mains des officiers de la santé et des autorités concernés, tous les *stakeholders*. Donc, pourquoi est-ce qu'il se presse à ouvrir la frontière le premier ? Est-ce qu'il ne faut pas... Je comprends aussi

qu'on n'est pas encore arrivé au *herd immunity*. Pourquoi est-ce qu'il se presse à ouvrir la frontière le premier ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, le *herd immunity*, ça va arriver. C'est évolutif.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

Mr Roussety: C'est évolutif et on changera les données au fur et à mesure.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Volbert, yes.

Mr Volbert: Merci, Madame la présidente. Dans une réponse de la question B/75 de l'année dernière posée par le membre Augustin, le commissaire a donné une réponse. Je vais citer en partie de la réponse. *I quote:*

"Madam Chairperson, a High Powered Commission was set up under the chairmanship of the Chief Commissioner to look at all issues affecting Rodrigues as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and to take rapid decisions for the security of Rodriguan's population.", unquote.

Madam Chairperson, *est-ce que je peux demander*, can I ask the respected Commissioner what are the rapid decisions taken so far for the security of Rodriguan population as there are cases present in Rodrigues actually?

Mr Roussety: En cas de contamination, ce n'est pas locale. C'est importé de Maurice et nous avons fait tout notre nécessaire avec le protocole que je viens de lire. Tout a été fait dans la transparence pour soulager la population, pour prendre des actions nécessaires s'il y a contaminations à Rodrigues. Mais ceux qui sont entrés avec le COVID-19, c'est importé de Maurice.

Mr Volbert: *Madam Chairperson*, en cas d'une détérioration de la situation, est-ce que la commission de la Santé envisage de mettre sur pieds une unité de ENT comme ça se fait à Maurice ? Parce qu'il y aura des cas graves. Et si oui, où est-ce que cette unité sera basée et est-ce qu'il y a suffisamment de personnels qualifiés pour travailler et donner des soins aux malades ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, pour mettre sur pieds un 'ENT Section', il faut que nous ayons un spécialiste qui travaillera dedans, dans cette unité. Mais pour le moment, la question ne se pose pas et je ne dis pas qu'on n'aura pas besoin de 'ENT Section' mais si le besoin se fait...

(Interruptions)

Mr Roussety: Il a dit ENT. *Line demane ENT.* Si le besoin se fait sentir, on aura le spécialiste pour venir à Rodrigues.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, à Maurice, il y a beaucoup de problèmes et on nous dit qu'il y aura un spécialiste pour venir à Rodrigues. Est-ce que le spécialiste, anesthésiste et autre spécialiste, quand est-ce qu'ils vont arriver à Rodrigues, Madame la présidente ?

Mr Roussety: Bon, selon le protocole, dès que la frontière s'ouvrira. Si on a des cas nécessaires, le ministère de la Santé nous a promis d'envoyer des personnels nécessaires.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente.... Promis. On ne peut pas... Comment on appelle ça ? *Après la mort, la tisane*, Madame la présidente. Alors, qui c'est qui a pris la décision d'ouvrir la frontière le premier ? Est-ce qu'il y a l'approbation de l'Assemblée régionale, du Conseil exécutif ?

Mr Roussety: C'est normal, Madame la présidente. Et concernant le problème de santé, nous avons neuf cas jusqu'à maintenant mais tous ces cas sont dans un état stable, ils n'ont pas eu besoin des *ventilators* pour faire intubation. Si le besoin est, on va le faire mais pour le moment, tous sont asymptomatiques.

Mr Grandcourt: Il y a beaucoup de gens. La plupart des gens de Rodrigues, même ceux... Il y en a même ceux dehors là, qui sont dehors qui manifestent.

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, please, put your question.

Mr Grandcourt: Yes. Donc, les gens ne sont pas d'accord. Pourquoi est-ce qu'ils sont entêtés à ouvrir la frontière le premier alors que la plupart des Rodriguais ne sont pas d'accord ? Et nous-mêmes de ce côté-ci de la Chambre, Madame la présidente, on n'est pas d'accord d'ouvrir la frontière le premier parce que d'après sa réponse, on a vu qu'il y a beaucoup de manquements, il y a beaucoup de lacunes, on n'a pas de rapport de... Comment s'appelle ? De plan. Le plan n'a pas été approuvé. Il y a, manque de staff, manque d'eau en ce moment. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on va ouvrir la frontière ? Nous, de ce côté-ci de cette Chambre, nous ne sommes pas d'accord. Enfin, du moins, nous cinq ici nous ne sommes pas d'accord pour ouvrir la frontière.

Mr Roussety: Les deux derrières-là pas d'accord aussi ? Bon, Madame la présidente, pour le manque de staff, pour le moment, la question ne se pose pas mais avec l'évolution de

la maladie, s'il y en a, définitivement, on trouvera la solution avec le ministère de la Santé. Ils ont le droit de n'être pas d'accord mais nous, on ne peut pas rester fermer, cloîtré en attendant que je ne sais quoi va venir mais nous, on est d'accord pour continuer pour ouvrir. L'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé a bien précisé qu'on doit vivre avec le virus et c'est ce que nous sommes en train de faire et nous allons contrôler la situation et pour pouvoir aider la population s'il y a des cas et on verra après.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr. Volbert: *Thank you, Madam Chairperson.* Dans sa réponse à la session dernière, c'est-à-dire, du 14 septembre 2021, le commissaire a mentionné, je cite :

“Additional manpower in terms of one anesthetist and at least 10 medical health officers will be required from the Ministry of Health and Wellness as from 01 October 2021 to face the increase risk of exposure. Request has already been sent to the ministry in that respect.”

Mais tout juste là, il a donné une réponse qu'il attend toujours à ce que *the ministry replies*. Et ça a été fait, la requête a été faite depuis septembre 2021. Est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire si c'est vrai que la requête a été envoyé au ministère depuis septembre ou si c'est maintenant avec le renvoi de l'ouverture des frontières pour le 1^{er} novembre, si c'est maintenant que la requête a été envoyée au ministère ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, la requête, a été envoyée bien avant le 1^{er} octobre. En principe, l'ouverture c'était pour le 1^{er} octobre mais avec l'évolution qu'on a eue, on a demandé à renvoyer pour le 1^{er} novembre et définitivement, la requête a été envoyée au ministère de la Santé avec tout le personnel qu'on a demandé d'après la lettre.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Augustin.

Mr Augustin: Merci, Madame la présidente. Le commissaire a parlé des équipements qui seront achetés ou qui sont déjà là. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du commissaire combien de Gene Expert System pour les tests de COVID on a actuellement et combien de tests ça peut faire par jour ?

Mr Roussety: Nous avons quatre *Gene Expert* et on peut faire plus de 100 tests par jour, Madame la présidente.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Perrine.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, merci de me donner l'occasion de participer à cette question. J'aimerais savoir du commissaire de la santé par rapport à ce terme de démocratie participative que le Chef commissaire a souvent fait mention dans son discours de budget ainsi lors de ses nombreux discours. La démocratie participative. Actuellement, il y a des personnes qui manifestent en dehors du Parlement, dans la rue pour dire non...

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Perrine, this is question time. Supplementary question is meant for elucidation and not for debate. Yes, thank you.

Mr Perrine: I am not debating, Madam; I am putting my question.

Madam Chairperson: You put your question now. Yes.

Mr Perrine: Yes, please. Thank you. Yes. *Actuellement c'est vrai, il y a des personnes qui manifestent dehors.*

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member Perrine! You put your question. No debate is allowed.

Mr Perrine: J'aimerais savoir du respecté commissaire est-ce qu'il y a eu consultation avec la société civile, avec tous les gens concernés de Rodrigues avant l'ouverture de la frontière prévue pour ce 1^{er} novembre 2021 ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, cette réponse a été dite dans... Cette question, la réponse a été dite dans ma réponse. Toutes les participantes, toute la société civile, toutes les commissions, la police etc. tous ont été avertis. C'est pourquoi nous avons mis un *communication...*

(Interruptions)

Mr Roussety: Mais non mais ça ce ne sont pas des experts qui sont dehors.

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner, please, address the Chair.

Mr Roussety: Sorry, Madam Chairperson. Nous avons contacté tous les *stakeholders* concernés, les écoles, les collègues, toutes les sections. C'est pourquoi nous avons mis un *Communication Committee* et aussi un *Sensitisation Committee* pour avertir toute la population du danger de COVID-19.

Mr Perrine: Le commissaire a mentionné dans sa réponse 5,032 personnes qui doivent être vaccinées du Pfizer. Est-ce que je peux savoir du commissaire quand est-ce que ces

vaccins-là seront disponibles pour vacciner ces 5,032 personnes qui attendent actuellement à Rodrigues ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, même à Maurice, ils n'ont pas la quantité pour vacciner tous les élèves de 12 à 17 ans. Mais le ministère de la Santé a ordonné, a commandé 1,000,200 dose de vaccins Pfizer qui vont arriver à Maurice dans le premier jour de novembre ou la mi-novembre et là, nous auront les 5,000 vaccins pour les élèves.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, le fait que nos jeunes, nos étudiants ne seront pas vaccinés avant le 1^{er} novembre, est-ce que je peux demander officiellement et solennellement au commissaire de la Santé ainsi qu'au Conseil exécutif de reporter cette ouverture jusqu'à ce que nos enfants et nos jeunes soient vaccinés et puis, on verra par la suite ?

Mr Roussety: Au niveau de la commission de l'Education, des dispositions ont été prises pour revoir les heures...

(Interruptions)

Mr Roussety: Les vaccins, ce n'est pas... *pas dir pas nécessaire* mais le port du masque, le geste barrière, ça aussi agit comme un vaccin. Mais les élèves ont été bien...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order! Order, respected Members!

(Interruptions)

Mr Roussety: *Eta, ale dehors to ale guette bane la...*

Madam Chairperson: Order! Commissioner, please, resume your seat! Order!

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order!

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Order! Minority Leader, please! I understand that you may have different opinions but respected Members are reminded that this House is regulated by the provisions from the Standard Orders and Rules of the Regional Assembly and it is sad to notice that at this point in time of the mandate of Fourth Regional Assembly, respected Members do not know about Standing Orders. Respected Members are still...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: ...acting in an unparliamentary manner.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: This is the last time. The Chair will not tolerate any further affront to the solemnity of this House. Both sides of the House are called to order. Yes, please, Commissioner, proceed with your answer.

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, comme j'avais dit, la commission de l'Éducation est en train de faire tous les nécessaires pour aider les élèves pendant cette saison qui arrive avec la pandémie. Le protocole, si besoin est comme je dis, ça va évoluer. On ne va pas rester stagnant sur ce protocole-là mais s'il faut évoluer, on va évoluer. Mais les élèves ont très bien compris comment est la situation et je suis sûr qu'ils vont faire face à la pandémie.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Agathe.

Mrs Agathe: Merci, *Madam Chairperson*. Dans tous les protocoles mentionnés, le commissaire a fait mention de *self-isolation*. Je voudrais savoir du commissaire qu'est-ce qui a été prévu au cas où il y ait des *self-isolations* dans des petites maisonnettes à deux chambres ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, on a pris ça tout en compte. Il y a un numéro de hotline 86099 que la personne qui se sent malade ou la famille téléphone à cette hotline. Il y aura le *Rapid Response Team* qui arrivera, qui prendra le patient pour aller à l'hôpital.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, est-ce que le commissaire est prêt à accepter, à prendre toutes les responsabilités de ce qui va se passer après si jamais, il continue, il maintient l'ouverture de la frontière le 1^{er} ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, tous les gouvernements au monde prennent leurs responsabilités, excepté ce de l'opposition.

(Interruptions)

Mrs Agathe: Madam Chairperson, a point of order from what the Commissioner for Health has just said that we are not responsible. How does he explain responsibility, please?

Madam Chairperson: You have to withdraw, Commissioner, please.

Mr Roussety: J'ai parlé de tous les gouvernements du monde et tous les...

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner, you withdraw unconditionally.

Mr Roussety: Je *withdraw* mais seulement...

Madam Chairperson: No, unconditionally!

(Interruptions)

Mr Roussety: I withdraw.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

COVID-19 POSITIVE CASES IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/138) Mr F. A. Grandcourt (Minority Leader) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the COVID-19 positive cases in Rodrigues, he will state the number thereof to date, indicating the treatment and other facilities being made available to the patients?

Mr Roussety: Madam Chairperson, as at date we have nine patients (seven males and two females including one minor) who have been detected COVID-19 POSITIVE. The female, 27 years old is a Down syndrome patient, mentally challenged and not yet vaccinated. She is completely dependent on her mother. Upon advice from expert at the Ministry of Health and Wellness, both daughter and mother remained isolated at Les Cocotiers Hotel. The mother, already vaccinated, has been tested negative for COVID-19 at Day 7. The patient is actually asymptomatic and under close observation and monitoring.

At the Isolation Centre of Zita Jean-Louis at Mont. Lubin, a fully dedicated medical staff is posted on a rotation basis of seven days consisting of:

1. One Medical Officer/Senior Medical Officer
2. One Charge Nurse
3. Four Nursing Officers Male and 2 Nursing Officers Female
4. One Pharmacy technician
5. One Medical Imaging Technician
6. Two Female Attendants (Hospital Services)
7. One Male attendant (Hospital Services)

The security provided on a 24-hour basis by Police Officers. As at date, all patients are doing well. No one required oxygen support up to now.

Those who have co-morbidities (diabetes and hypertension) are receiving their routine treatment. The Physician on tour of service attends to patients regularly in the Treatment Centre as and when required.

Mr Grandcourt: Madame la présidente, les patients se plaignent des traitements en termes de nourriture etc., l'hygiène. Qu'est-ce que le commissaire peut nous dire là-dessus ?

Mr Roussety: Bon, Madame la présidente, ceux en quarantaine à l'hôtel et ceux en isolation à Mont Lubin, je ne sais pas s'ils reçoivent des traitements différents. Mais moi dommage que j'ai des amis là-bas à Mont Lubin, ils ne se plaignent pas de la nourriture. Je ne sais pas d'où le *Minority Leader* a pu sortir ça.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr Volbert: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Peut-on demander au commissaire si toutes les mesures de sécurité ont été prises dans les centres de quarantaines et si oui, est-ce qu'il est au courant qu'il y avait un cas où quelqu'un qui est en quarantaine, il est testé positif au COVID-19 et la veille, ils ont eu un *party* avec tout le monde et une déclaration a été faite à Port Mathurin le 22 par le docteur en charge de la quarantaine ?

Mr Roussety: Oui, c'est vrai qu'il y avait 10 personnes, les officiers de la SMF qui sont venus à Rodrigues et c'est vrai qu'ils ont fait la fête au Cocotiers et d'après le rapport du docteur qui est en charge, c'est vrai qu'il y a une déposition qui a été faite à la police. Mais en principe, c'est la police qui s'en charge de la sécurité des quarantaines.

Mr Volbert: D'après le 'COVID-19 Protocol', il y a des amendes allant jusqu'à Rs 500,000. Est-ce qu'il y aura des actions qui seront prises contre ces officiers qui n'ont pas respecté les protocoles ?

Mr Roussety: Le respecté membre était un policier et c'est la police qui doit prendre des décisions dessus.

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, concernant le centre d'isolation de Mont Lubin, nous avons vu - moi-même, j'ai été témoin depuis lundi dernier et tous les jours, j'avais fait un rappel sur Facebook pendant une semaine, cinq jours consécutifs que des déchets émanant de ce centre d'isolement de Mont Lubin étaient stagnés dans la cour, stockés dans la cour dans une soi-disant poubelle sans barrières, sans rien et... Voilà, mon ami dit que les chiens dansaient dedans et il y avait aussi des étudiants qui passaient juste à côté...

Madam Chairperson: Please, address respected Members of this House in an orderly manner.

Mr Perrine: What can I...

Madam Chairperson: He can be your friend but in this House, he is a respected Member. You please address him in an orderly manner. Please.

Mr Perrine: *I remove what I said before. Respected Member Nicolas Volbert, for the House. So, nous avons vu, j'ai été témoin des scènes où les poubelles étaient éparpillées dans la cour, dans l'entrée de l'hôpital à l'arrière où il y avait juste à côté, le centre Mary Gontran et l'entrée du collège de Mont Lubin. Nous avons fait plusieurs appels pour attirer l'attention mais malheureusement, ça n'a pas été le cas et nous avons vu les chauffeurs sans PPE retirant ces poubelles à main nue à l'arrière de l'hôpital. Qu'est-ce que le commissaire de la Santé peut nous dire là-dessus et quel est le protocole qui a été établis justement pour retirer ces déchets et où vont ces déchets ?*

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, il y a beaucoup d'insinuations en ce temps où nous vivons. Effectivement, la poubelle peut-être n'a pas été retirée pendant deux jours mais il n'y avait pas de *medical waste* dans ces poubelles. Il n'y avait pas de *medical waste* dans ces poubelles et aussi, c'est très loin de la route et je ne sais pas si quelque... très loin de la route. Est-ce que les étudiants qui passaient par là sont allés voir quelque chose dans la poubelle ?

Mr Perrine: Madame la présidente, c'est de l'irresponsabilité pour dire que la poubelle est très loin de la route. Je mets en doute ce que le commissaire vient de dire. La poubelle qui se trouve dans l'enceinte de l'hôpital, derrière l'hôpital est à peine cinq mètres de l'entrée du collège juste entre le Mary Gontran et le collège. Donc, il ne faut pas venir dire ici. C'est pour ça qu'on...

Madam Chairperson: Your question, please!

Mr Perrine: *My question is that* - Madame la présidente, nous sommes dans un état d'urgence, avec les réponses que nous sommes en train d'avoir aujourd'hui, nous sentons et nous comprenons très bien qu'il n'y a pas de sérieux dans la maîtrise de cette affaire de COVID-19 à Rodrigues et c'est pour cette raison que je redemande encore une deuxième fois et je demande au commissaire de confirmer est-ce qu'il compte renvoyer l'ouverture de leur frontière ?

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Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, là où se trouve la poubelle, la poubelle est bien fermée avec une barrière mais le problème comme je vous dis, il y a beaucoup d'insinuation. C'est leur opinion mais seulement pour la question...

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Perrine, this is not an appropriate manner of putting your question!

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner, please, resume your seat. Respected Member, Perrine! You please abide to Standing Orders.

(Interruptions)

Madam Chairperson: Minority Leader, please! Yes, Commissioner, please proceed.

Mr Roussety: J'ai fini de répondre, Madame la présidente.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Volbert.

Mr. Volbert: Dans sa réponse, le respecté commissaire a dit que des travaux d'améliorations si jamais, il y a l'augmentation dans des cas dans la communauté et le centre de *Area Health Centre* de La Ferme sera utilisé. Est-ce que je peux demander au commissaire si les travaux ont déjà débuté ou si nous attendions à la dernière minute quand il y a beaucoup de cas à ce moment-là que les travaux, comme ça se faisait à Mont Lubin pour les *track roads* à l'arrière de l'hôpital, que les travaux vont se faire ?

Mr Roussety: Madame la présidente, il ne faut pas être pessimiste dans la vie. Il faut être optimiste. Est-ce que tous les 44,000 Rodriguais seront contaminés ? Je ne crois pas. Le temps pour améliorer le centre communautaire où nous allons transférer les services de la santé à La Ferme, on aura le temps de le faire en bonne et due forme.

Madam Chairperson: Next question!

MAKING RODRIGUES A GREEN/ECOLOGICAL ISLAND

– SOLAR & WIND ENERGY

(No. B/139) Mr L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Environment and Others whether, in regard to the vision of making Rodrigues a green/ecological island, he will state the progress to date concerning the use of

solar and wind energy on the island, highlighting the status with respect to road lighting and the Grenade Wind Farm?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, the vision of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is to make Rodrigues an ecological island in line with its vision of 100% renewal energy by 2030.

My Commission has embarked in the extensive use of solar energy as a renewable energy source. As per the Model Eco Village Project at Rivière Coco, project funded by the European Union and Rodrigues Regional Assembly, same has launched very good initiative in this endeavour.

A Photovoltaic (P.V) farm of 100 kilowatt peak (kWp) has been installed at Rivière Coco together with a charging station of capacity 7 kilowatt peak at the cost of Rs 8 m. and Rs 476,000, respectively. Both Photovoltaic systems are grid connected and energy is sold to the CEB as per the CEB SSDG Scheme; the revenue thereto then goes to the community.

(Interruptions)

At this stage, at 12.24 p.m. all Members of L'Union du Peuple de Rodrigues (l'UPR) left the Chamber

Mr Payendee: It is worth to note that for period July 2020, commissioning date and to July 2021, the P.V farm has brought a revenue of Rs 350,000 to the community which will be used for social and economic developmental projects for the benefit of the villagers. The charging station with its capacity of 7 kilowatt peak is used to charge the electric car. My Commission is also making the charging station available to the public as an incentive for Rodriguans to purchase and use more electric vehicle. The cost payable to CEB for grid connected street lightings amount to Rs 525,000 monthly.

Forty solar street lightings have also been installed at Rivière Coco of which 13 have been replacing the grid connected lamps that contribute to the reduction on dependency on heavy fuel.

In regard to the use of wind energy, same contributes 10% of total electric production:

- (i) Grenade Wind Farm – 4 Units of capacity 275 kilowatt (9%)
- (ii) Trèfles – 1 Unit of capacity 60 kilowatt (which contributes to 1%).

My Commission is subsidising the acquisition of Solar Water Heater through the Solar Water Heater Scheme which was first implemented in the financial 2017/2018. As at date some 90 families have been issued with a Solar Water Heater. Initially, the Commission was

subsidising the beneficiaries to the level of Rs 10,000, but with the outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic leading to the soaring of prices, including freight costs on the world market, the ceiling has been increased to Rs 15,000. Madam Chairperson, for the current financial year, we have received 150 applications for the scheme and same is under consideration.

Madam Chairperson, as part of the budgetary measures for financial year 2021/22, two villages will be transformed into eco village whereby many activities will be implemented in various sectors. One of the activities is to provide solar lightings to the households of the two villages; namely Grand Baie and Port Sud Est. This project is in line with the promotion of renewable energy across the island.

My Commission, Madam Chairperson, awarded a contract for supply, installation and commissioning of 200 solar street lightings with poles to be installed across the island and also to replace the grid connected lamps. Unfortunately, Madam Chairperson, however, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19, some difficulties have been met regarding the delivery of same. My Commission is exploring new funding avenues to launch back this activity.

Mr Von-Mally: Madam Chairperson, the respected Commissioner has been talking of Rivière Coco mostly concerning the solar lightings. Well, we have come to know that since 12 December 2019, 150 street lightings should have been installed in Rodrigues. You have said there are some problems. Can I know, being given that, the easiest thing to do is to install street lightings, solar street lightings everywhere in Rodrigues, can I know whether your Commission is contemplating the possibility to go fast with this project, especially that we can install it on track roads and in different places?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, this is what the plan is all about. This is the vision 2030 if you want to achieve this 100% in 2030, this section is very important. That is why as I said in my answer, we ordered 200 to start with and together with the Commission for Infrastructure, we are working together on this issue. Unfortunately, because of COVID, because normally, the lights were supposed to come from South Africa but we could not get them on time and we have to retender, Madam Chairperson. Yes, definitely, this is what we want to do.

Mr Von-Mally: Concerning the wind turbines, the windfarms at Grenade, initially, the project was to install at least 10 wind turbines. But since 10 years, almost 10 years, we are still with four wind turbines. Can I know what has been become of this project?

Mr Payendee: Again, Madam Chairperson, if we go there and we see the area that has been given by the Regional Assembly to fix these turbines, it is quite big. We have made provision for enough space for such projects but again, this comes from the prerogative of the CEB. So, we keep talking to them and definitely, this is one of the very important aspects to take into consideration when we talk of 2030 vision.

Mr Von-Mally: Etant donné que Maurice est signataire de l'accord de Paris, donc, Maurice a eu des fonds pour réduire notre empreinte carbone, puis-je savoir quelle somme a été allouée/octroyée à Rodrigues pour cela ?

Mr Payendee: *Madam Chairperson*, je n'ai pas le chiffre en tête mais normalement, oui, définitivement, on discute beaucoup avec Maurice. Moi, personnellement, d'ailleurs, le membre Von-Mally aussi avant quand il était *Minority Leader*, il formait partie, moi je forme partie toujours du Marina. Si, Marina, ils se rencontrent encore mais malheureusement, on ne peut pas faire le déplacement pour Maurice mais on se rencontre à travers vidéo conférence. Définitivement, il y a une grande considération pour Rodrigues. On n'est pas seulement aidé par Maurice, il y a la COI, il y a l'AFD. D'ailleurs, cet après-midi, à 05h00, j'ai une vidéo conférence avec l'AFD. Ce sera un des sujets de discussions, *Madam Chairperson*.

CONSTRUCTION OF TRACK ROADS – CITRON DONIS

(No. B/140) Mr L. J. Von-Mally, GOSK (First Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of track roads in the region of Citron Donis, he will state when same will be completed, especially the one near Mr. P.G.'s residence, giving details?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, the construction of track roads in the region of Citron Donis was carried out by the contractor the Laxmanbhai & Co. (Mtius) Ltd. As regards to Citron Donis village, a total length of 457 m of track roads including footpaths were enlisted. All works listed under the works order have been completed among which 200 m of track road was provided for access towards Mr P. G. However, the track road has to be extended by 350 m to reach the residence of Mr P. G. and to fully complete the access.

Madam Chairperson, following tenders launched on 02 August 2021 and closed on 07 September 2021, another 5 km of track roads are to be built in Region No. 2. The evaluation of bids is underway at the level of the Central Procurement Board. It is envisaged that the access road towards Mr P. G. will definitely be completed in the upcoming contract once same is awarded to the successful bidder.

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Mr Von-Mally: I thank the respected Commissioner for this. Maybe Mr P. G. now will like this. By the way, can I make an appeal to the Deputy Chief Commissioner? Being given that this poor guy whose daughter was cold-bloodedly and viciously murdered, a new house has been built for him, can I make an appeal so that the track road going to his house can be built correctly?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: You mean the main one or the one leading to his house? I do not know actually the topography of this but if ever there is the need and I learning from the Commissioner for Women's Affairs that there is a bedridden daughter. So, we are going to take it into consideration, of course. Yes.

ONGOING WORKS – POINTE DIABLE/DISCOVERY RODRIGUES LTD

(No. B/141) Mr J. N. Volbert (Second Local Region member for La Ferme) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to ongoing works at Pointe Diable by the Discovery Rodrigues Ltd, he will obtain information therefrom and state, for the benefit of the House, the sum earmarked therefor and the time frame for the completion thereof?

(Vide reply to PQ B/131)

OPEN DE RODRIGUES – OLYMPICS SPORTS

(No. B/142) Mr J. N. Volbert (Second Local Region member for La Ferme) asked the Commissioner for Sports and Others whether, she will state to the House on the number of sports discipline in the recent Open de Rodrigues which forms part of the Olympics Sports list?

(Withdrawn)

**REOPENING – PLAINE CORAIL AIRPORT/COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS –
MEASURES/SCHOOLS**

(No. B/146) Mr Z. Félicité (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Education and Others whether, in regard to the reopening of Plaine Corail Airport for commercial flights as from 01 November 2021, she will, for the benefit of the House, state the measures which have been taken or will be taken by her Commission to prevent the spread of COVID-19 at schools?

(Withdrawn)

**SMALL PROJECTS/VILLAGES – BOX CULVERT/BUS SHELTER/STREET
LIGHTING**

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(No. B/147) Mr Z. Félicité (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to small projects in villages, as announced in the budget speech 2021/2022 and including the construction of box culvert, bus shelter and street lighting, he will inform the House on where matters stand as at date indicating:

- (a) if contract has already been awarded therefor, the successful bidder, the start and completion dates; and
- (b) the scope of works together with a breakdown of costs of each of project?

(Withdrawn)

Madam Chairperson: Respected Members, the Table has been advised that PQs B/142, B/146 and B/147 have been withdrawn. Thank you.

I suspend the House for one hour for lunch.

At 12.33 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 1.35 p.m. with the Madam Chairperson in the Chair.

Madam Chairperson: The Second Island Region Member is not here. Deputy Chairperson.

FACILITIES & SCHEMES – COMMISSION FOR HOUSING

(No. B/148) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Housing and Others whether, he will inform the House of the different facilities and schemes available at the level of his Commission and table a copy thereof?

Mr Baptiste: Madam Chairperson, there are currently seven housing schemes provided by my commission in view of providing decent housing conditions to eligible beneficiaries in line with our vision ‘*enn fami enn bon lacaz*’ as compared to three when the OPR government took office in 2012. The different schemes and facilities are as follows:

SN	Scheme	Details	Beneficiary
1	New Social Housing Scheme	A concrete house of up to 60 m ² . Costing Rs 900,000	Can benefit from a government grant of up to Rs 720.

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SN	Scheme	Details	Beneficiary
2	Elderly Housing Scheme	Repairs of old damaged house or the provision of a new house (CIS or concrete wall/CIS roof)	• Beneficiary should be above 60 years • Household income less than Rs 20, 000
3	Elderly Slab Scheme	Recasting of old damaged slab by reinforced concrete slab	Basic invalidity pension and the household income should be less than Rs 30,000 per month
4	Infrastructure Development for needy families	Repair of old damaged house or the provision of new CIS housing unit	Low income households who do not possess a land lease or who are living in precarious conditions
5	Grant for Casting of Roof Slab	Grant for the casting of new slab or recasting of damaged slab	Household income less than Rs 20,000
6	Basic Sanitary Scheme	Provision of a toilet and bathroom facilities.	Household income less than Rs 15,000 monthly. Initially, it was meant mainly for beneficiaries suffering from a permanent illness or disability but now it has been extended to all families who do not have such facilities and the surface area of the housing unit should not be more than 60 m²
7	Extension Scheme - Upgrading of Trust Fund houses	Removal of pitched CIS roof for casting of reinforced concrete slab and extension of 16 m ² or 36 m ² (which comprises a kitchen, basic sanitary or bedroom depending on the dimension of the extension)	

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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Mr Ramdally: Yes, Madam Chairperson. Can I know from the Commissioner concerning the seven schemes that he has mentioned, how many persons have benefited from these different schemes since 2017?

Mr Baptiste: Since March 2017 to date, 1,640 families have benefited from the seven schemes, Madam Chairperson.

Madam Chairperson: Respected Member, Augustin.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we know from the Commissioner concerning people living in Trust Fund houses which has no land lease, can we know from the Commissioner what sort of criteria is needed for them to have their roof slab?

Mr Baptiste: So, for the time being, we are mainly considering those who already possessed a land lease but the scheme may also extend to those who do not have provided that they have a proof that the housing unit really belong to them. For example, if they have their contract which at that time they obtained from ex-Trust Fund and also they have electricity bill on their names but in some cases also on a case to case basis, we can consider but it will also be extended to those persons.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

CONSTRUCTION - BOX CULVERTS

(No. B/149) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the construction of box culverts around Rodrigues, he will state the different villages identified therefor, highlighting the successful bidders, the cost and the scope of works in each case?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, the Regional Government remains committed to upgrade the conditions of living of our citizen. This is why my Commission has embarked on many small projects in villages which include street lightings, construction of box culverts and construction of bus shelters.

As regards, to box culverts, Madam Chairperson, eight box culverts have already been built which include the following villages: -

- Lataniers;
- Rivière Coco;
- Mangues;
- Vanguard;

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- Baie Lascars;
- L'Union;
- Source Tigome; and
- Ile Michel.

As regards, to forthcoming projects, there are 11 Works Order which have been issued for the following villages, some are already under construction, namely, box culverts at: -

- Graviers;
- Source Tigome;
- Batatran;
- Nassola;
- Grand Baie;
- Champs;
- Vaingueur;
- Rivière Banane;
- Eau Vannée;
- Anse Raffin; and
- Papayes.

The total value for these Works Order amount to Rs 43,220,332. I would like to further add that one box culvert leading to Le Chou College has already been completed for the sum of Rs 537,746 and another one at Rivière Coco is under design stage. Another two box culverts will be considered at Graviers leading to Mourouk. All the box culverts will be constructed under Road Maintenance – the Road Construction and Maintenance Contract which has been awarded to Transinvest Co Ltd.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

FACILITIES & SCHEMES – COMMISSION FOR EDUCATION

(No. B/150) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Education and Others whether, she will inform the House of the different facilities and schemes available at the level of her Commission and table a copy thereof?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madam Chairperson, in view to achieve their mission and objective, the Commissions for Education and for Training are continuously putting up much

effort to develop new project facilities and schemes for the pre-primary, the primary, the secondary sectors, for the SEN schools as well as the vocational training institutions and for those who embark on post-secondary studies. I will hereby outline the main ongoing existing facilities and schemes at the service of the population.

We first have the three pre-primary schools, instead of taking monthly payment from parents, all the staffs serving the pre-primary schools are now being paid a decent salary through a grant to the 'Association des Ecoles Maternelles'. You would note that the 'Miss' and the Helpers had an increase in their salaries as from July 2021 in line with the announcement of the Chief Commissioner in his budget speech 2021-2022.

Secondly, we have the provision of an annual grant to the RCEA for the operation of the five RCEA schools.

Thirdly, we have the provision of grant to the three SEN schools in Rodrigues. And, this year the grant of the SEN schools has been increased to cater for one hot meal per student per day as from the second school term under the Supplementary School Project.

Fourthly, we have the transfer of fund to the PSEA for payment of salaries in favour of all employees of the secondary sector and for school grant to all colleges.

We also have the provision of School Feeding Project to all the pre-primary, primary and SEN schools and Centre Frère Remy. And, the project has been re-invent as from this academic year and new items, such as, buns, triangular cheese portion and local cakes have been introduced.

The provision of grant to RCEA for the weekly hot meals and daily fruits to pupils under the ZEP (Zones Education Prioritaire). The provision of a hot meal to needy students of the primary, secondary schools, Le Chou MITD, Centre Agricole Frère Remy through a grant to the Caritas Rodrigues.

The provision of an educational and sports kit to students of Grade 1 and all students of SEN schools and a sports kit to students of Grade 2 and 3 as from this academic year.

Provision of three text books to students of Grade 10 to 13 and additional text books for students of Grade 7 to 9.

Sponsoring of coaching sessions for private candidates of SC, HSC, GCE 'O' and GCE 'A' Levels, the sponsoring of training programmes for educators, such as, the proficiency and certificate courses in Early Childhood for pre-primary and B Ed for the secondary

educators as from this year for educators not possessing the required qualifications in the field they are teaching so that they can be recognised and employed by the PSEA. And, we also have the organisation of coaching and remedial classes for the primary and secondary sector for better preparation for the examination.

Madam Chairperson, this government has always put the interest of students as a priority and to mitigate the risk of contamination and transmission during COVID-19 pandemic and with the forthcoming resumption of flight in addition to the provision of reusable washable mask which were sold at subsidise price to students last year, the Commission for Education will be providing three disposable face mask to all students of the primary, secondary, SEN schools, Le Chou Training Centre and Centre Agricole Frère Remy for period 03 November to 03 December.

The following ten schemes aim at targeting students embarking on post-secondary programme. Firstly, we have the monthly Financial Assistance Scheme of Rs 3,000 which was introduced in 2008, which has been increased to Rs 4,000 in 2015. The specific criteria applied for the scheme is that the monthly family income should not exceed Rs 15,000.

We have accommodation facilities at the Government Quarters of Floreal awarded to post-secondary students for the duration of their studies. 20 rooms which are available are allocated on a first-come-first-serve basis depending on the availability of vacant rooms. The Government Quarters of Floreal is under the management of the Ministry for Rodrigues and both the Ministry for Rodrigues and the Commission for Vocational Training work in close collaboration in the allocation exercise for a room in the quarters. All costs related to furniture and equipment are taken care of by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and all civil works with repairs are being catered by the Ministry for Rodrigues.

We have also the Registration Fees Scheme first implemented in year 2015 with established condition to the family income. Hence, as from 2017, the Registration Fees Scheme extended to all year one post-secondary students up to a maximum of Rs 55,400. then, for the remaining years of the studies, that is, for the year two, specific criteria applied with regard to the monthly income of the family.

We have another facility for those undergoing post-secondary studies, it is the one-off grant of Rs 20,000 for the purchase of laptop. Same scheme started in 2016 and was awarded to post-secondary students whose family income did not exceed Rs 6,200 per month. The

scheme was then reviewed in 2017, where it is applied to all year one post-secondary students to be awarded the grant of Rs 20,000 for the purchase of a laptop.

We have another grant for those students who cannot seek a room in quarters of Floreal or at Vacoas, we have the grant of Rs 1,000 to meet partly the cost for lodging in Mauritius and same was first awarded in 2015. And, actually we have 25 students benefitting of this scheme.

We have a one-off grant at start of studies for those students whose family income is not more than Rs 12,500 and they are awarded a sum of Rs 5,000 or Rs 2,000 and this grant is used to assist the students to meet partly the setting up cost in Mauritius for their studies. Same has been implemented for the first time in 2016.

We also have an assistance for parents with more than one child studying at post-secondary or tertiary level. This is available in order to assist those parents to cater for their related expenses for the studies of their wards. The scheme was first implemented in 2015 and actually we have some 60 students who are benefitting from same.

In August 2017, a new house was operational for Rodriguan students who undertake their studies in Vacoas, in Mauritius. 55 additional rooms added to the 22 available at the Government Quarters of Floreal were available so as to remove the burden of cost of lodging of students enrolled in universities or in post-secondary institutions. Specific rules and conditions have to be abide by the occupants of the Rodrigues Student House. Each tenant has to pay a deposit fee of Rs 3,000 and a monthly rent of Rs 2,000. The monthly rent payable include electricity, internet connection, water supply and cooking gas. Since 2019, a monthly internet pack worth Rs 3,000 was paid to all Rodriguan students who opted to study in Mauritius. And, we finally have some scholarship awarded by the RRA. We have: -

- the RRA Medical Scholarship, which aims at giving the opportunity to students to study in the medical fields;
- the RRA Para-Medical Scholarships, we have the RRA Scholarships for Veterinary Services;
- the RRA Technical Scholarships;
- the RRA Scholarships to best performing boys and girls of REDCO colleges;
- the RRA Scholarships for Distance Learning;
- the RRA Top-Up Scholarships; and

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- the grant for a monthly allowance to HSC students ranked among the ten best girls or boys not in receipt of any scholarship.

And, you will note also, Madam Chairperson, that we have other scholarships offered by Central Government or other donor countries. We have: -

- the Rodrigues Open Scholarships for two girls and two boys ranked as Laureates;
- the scholarships based on merit and social criteria to all HSC students ranked among the best 25 students on scholarships rank order by the Central Government through the Ministry of Education;
- the President Award and Science related scholarships by the government of Mauritius to study at the University of Mauritius;
- scholarships for post-graduate study by People Republic of China;
- Africa Scholarships Scheme by Indian Embassy to study in India; and finally
- scholarships for students from vulnerable families on social register of Mauritius. The candidate should come from families enlisted on the social register of Mauritius and are holders of at least three C at 'A' Level.

I am tabling the services and facilities available at the level of the Commission for Education and the Commission for Training. And, Madam Chairperson, you will note that all these measure and incentives have produced positive outcomes over the years and have among others contributed to increase enrolment rate in schools, reduces the rate of absenteeism and improve school performance and boost the enrolment of Rodriguans at post-secondary level, at local level, national level as well as international level in view of preparing for qualified workforce for the years to come and at the same time consolidating our human capital.

Madam Chairperson: Yes, Respected Member, Augustin.

Mr Augustin: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Can we know from the Commissioner for Education, she has talked about disposable face mask for children at school; can we know until when these will be available for them?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: As I mentioned in the main answer, it is for this term. So, we are making provision for same from 01 November to 03 December.

Mr Augustin: Concerning students studying in Mauritius having a monthly stipend; can the Commissioner look into the matter because there are too many students in Mauritius, they have their stipend very late; can you look into the matter for this?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madam Chairperson, I am proud to say that this is a problem of the past. Since, the announcement of the measures by the Chief Commissioner to pay the stipend on the pay day, since July 2021, this has become into effect and as date we have got no complaints. So, this is a problem of the past.

Mr Ramdally: Yes, Madam Chairperson. Can I ask the Commissioner if she has in her possession the average cost of all these schemes to the RRA, please?

Mrs Gaspard Pierre-Louis: Madam Chairperson, from memory I can recall that in 2012 when we took office, we had a budget for training, a budget of around Rs 4 m., today it is more than Rs 20 m. for the different provisions and for the Commission for Education it is a very high budget and I do not have it in mind now.

Madam Chairperson: Next question.

FACILITIES & SCHEMES – COMMISSION FOR AGRICULTURE

(No. B/151) Mr J. R. Ramdally (Second Local Region Member for St Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether he will inform the House of the different facilities and schemes available at the level of his Commission and table a copy thereof?

Mr Payendee: Madam Chairperson, let me thank the Member for this question because I think it is very important. The last time in the Assembly itself, the Minority Leader himself was talking about – what is the Commissioner doing in agriculture? So, this give me the opportunity to show what we are doing. Yes, thank you, respected Member.

So, I wish to inform the House that the following facilities are currently being provided by my Commission on a daily basis: -

- Free extension visits and advisory service in the field of agriculture;
- Free veterinary services and free distribution of drugs;
- Free mechanical land preparation services including derocking;
- Milling services at a nominal cost;
- Sale of quality seeds and seedlings at a nominal cost;

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- Issue of farmers' certificate free of charge;
- Issue of agricultural permits;
- Provision of Phytosanitary Clearance Certificate at a nominal fee;
- Sale of animals of superior breed for reproduction (pigs, goat, sheep and cattle);
- Provision of males on loan at a nominal fee to breeders;
- Free provision of fodder cuttings and seedlings;
- Free provision of fruit fly baits and traps;
- Sale of queen bees and transformation of crude bee wax and letting of honey extractor at a nominal fee to beekeepers;
- Farmers training free of charge;
- Setting-up and maintenance of irrigation networks free of charge.

Madam Chairperson, I will now inform the House about the different schemes available at my Commission: -

- Local Chilli production scheme;
- Power Tiller scheme;
- Black Pig Production Scheme;
- Local Poultry Model Farm;
- Goat Integrated Farm Scheme;
- Sheep Integrated Farm Scheme;
- Cattle Integrated Farm Scheme;
- Individual Rain Water Harvesting Scheme;
- Bean Mechanisation Scheme;
- Fencing Scheme;
- Bird Net Scheme;
- Sprayer Scheme for maize producers against fall army worm;

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- Free Spraying Scheme against fall army worm.

And, now we have other schemes for the BPA Holders: -

- Model Orchard Farm Scheme;
- Onion Seed Production Farm Scheme;
- Garlic Seed Production Farm Scheme;
- Black Pig Production Scheme;
- Local Poultry Model Farm Scheme;
- Sheep Integrated Farm Scheme; and
- Goat Integrated Farm Scheme.

So, as you can see, Madam Chairperson, there is a lot of things going on at this Commission for Agriculture. Thank you.

Madam Chairperson: Thank you, Commissioner. That will do for questions.

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONER

Madam Chairperson: Commissioner for Youth and Others.

ACTIVITES - 19^{EME} ANNIVERSAIRE/L'AUTONOMIE DE RODRIGUES

The Commissioner for Youth and Others (Mrs M.R.L. Edouard-Ravina): Madame la présidente, merci de me donner la chance aujourd'hui d'informer la Chambre sur les activités ayant marqué les 19^{eme} anniversaire de l'autonomie de Rodrigues parce que c'était la dernière célébration pour cette mandature.

Madame la présidente, depuis 12 octobre 2012, les cérémonies officielles et les spectacles qui ont ponctué les anniversaires de l'autonomie jusqu'au 12 octobre 2021 participe au rayonnement culturelle de Rodrigues dans la République de Maurice, dans les îles sœurs de l'archipel et au-delà.

Madame la présidente, un grand nombre de personne a pu voir sur internet les images, les cérémonies officielles et des spectacles qu'a organisé l'Assemblée régionale à travers ma commission, crée au stade de Camp du Roi et de Grande Montagne. Tous ces spectacles sont encore présents et ces évènements sont encore présents dans la mémoire des Rodriguais. Chacun est conscient de l'importance qu'accorde l'Assemblée régionale à l'image de Rodrigues dans la République de Maurice et dans le monde.

Madame la présidente, l'île est consciente de l'importance de ces choix en matière d'écologie, d'environnement, d'éducation qu'elle offre gratuitement à ces enfants et adolescents et des formations qu'elle propose aux acteurs de la vie économique du pays.

Madame la présidente, l'île autonome, son ambition de devenir une île écologique est aujourd'hui plus qu'un repère, elle est un signe d'espoir pour le monde entier dans une époque marquée par un réchauffement climatique préoccupant et la résurgence d'une pandémie mondiale.

Madame la présidente, le matin du 12 octobre 2021, la cérémonie officielle est très solennelle s'est tenue au Monument de l'autonomie. Dans son discours, le Chef commissaire, aussi l'invité d'honneur et le père de l'autonomie a dit ceci à la population – que Rodrigues devait s'adapter et apprendre à bien gérer cette situation nouvelle. Pour cela Rodrigues doit respecter les règles sanitaires qui permettent d'éviter une propagation exceptionnelle du COVID-19, comme ce fut les cas dans des nombreux pays. Ce jour-là, Madame la présidente, on a dû, parce que c'était un cas de force majeure, inclure les trois cérémonies en une cérémonie. On a eu 14 médaillés pour la Médaille de la Reconnaissance et une personne a été décorée Citoyenneté d'Honneur. Et, ce jour-là on a senti que les bâtisseurs de Rodrigues ont vécu un moment très solennel et très important dans leurs vies comme bâtisseurs de cette île Rodrigues autonome.

Le dépôt de gerbe au pied du Monument de l'Autonomie à Malabar, Madame la présidente, a été un moment important parce que cela démontre la reconnaissance de ce gouvernement, des participants et du peuple de Rodrigues pour la participation des bâtisseurs et des autres Rodriguais à faire en sorte que Rodrigues soit une région autonome. Bien sur cette esprit de l'autonomie n'est restée simplement au niveau de la cérémonie officielle mais l'esprit de l'autonomie a été véhiculé, partagé dans nos écoles à travers la lecture du message de notre Chef commissaire.

Madame la présidente, revenons au 12 octobre, situation de cas force majeure a obligé que la cérémonie se termine très simplement mais qu'un spectacle soit enregistré et diffuser à la télévision. Le thème de ce spectacle c'était -*'Zenes to lavenir dan to lamain'*. Voilà un moteur de l'autonomie, la jeunesse qui porte bien haut l'autonomie, l'île Rodrigues autonome et ces valeurs, ces principes et son avenir.

Madame la présidente, ce spectacle télévisé marque un tournant aussi dans notre parcours culturel parce que cela démontre notre maturité. En 2012, nous sommes venus avec

les spectacles nouvelles, histoire de voir comment nos artistes réagissent par rapport à toute cette organisation, comment ils vivent, comment ils véhiculent, comment ils s'inspirent de notre autonomie. Et, maintenant cette deuxième transition passe à la cinématographie qui est un tournant important aussi pour notre île.

Madame la présidente, si aujourd'hui nous avons célébré les 19 ans de l'autonomie en grande pompe avec tout le sentiment que cela apporte, les changements qu'on a été obligé d'emmenner, cela a fait aussi que chaque Rodriguais, chez lui, a pu célébrer dignement et en toute respect les 19 ans de notre autonomie.

Je tiens aujourd'hui à saluer tous l'efforts et l'enthousiasmes de nos jeunes qui ont participés activement à faire de cette célébration une réussite et tous nos partenaires et collaborateurs qui ont fait que nos activités ont été bien réalisés et bien partagés avec la population.

Pendant 18 mois, l'Assemblée régionale a fait de sorte que Rodrigues autonome reste une région *COVID free*. Cela a demandé beaucoup d'efforts, cela n'est pas rien, c'est une réalité qu'il faut souligner et retenir pour mener la lutte contre le Corona Virus mais aussi pour montrer la volonté de ce gouvernement de toujours protéger son peuple et de toujours faire en sorte que Rodrigues soit toujours une île qui brille. La vie continue, Madame la présidente. Le travail continu, la lutte continue, Madame la présidente, parce que l'île Rodrigues de nos rêves et en construction, la réussite de cette île est en construction et c'est en se protégeant, en protégeant nos familles, nos enfants et nos amis que nous allons pouvoir réaliser le grand rêve Rodriguais.

Madame la présidente, il y avait deux activités qui ont marqués les 19 ans de cette autonomie. On a eu la Grande Dictée, qui a emmené beaucoup de personnes dans leurs enfances, leurs adolescences, qui a vu la participation de plus de 200 jeunes étudiants et membre du public. Surtout, ce qui est intéressant c'est que la littérature Rodriguaise a été mise en avant. On a eu aussi le retour du Festival Relais, qui était organisé auparavant, juste avant l'autonomie et, après 19 ans on a pu remettre le Relais Festival sur le calendrier sportif. Nous allons ce samedi remettre les prix au gagnant du Rodrigues Day Volley-Ball Cup. Mais ce qui était plus important, Madame la présidente, c'est qu'on a fait un gros travail sur la Table Ronde autour de l'autonomie sur la fenêtre ouverte sur l'avenir, vision 2030 et au-delà et nous sommes très fiers de pouvoir publier très bientôt le document, le rapport final de cette Table Ronde.

Le 31 octobre prochain, nous allons procéder au Tour de Rodrigues Cycliste et bien sur l'inauguration du parcours de santé à Baie Lascars.

Madame la présidente, avant de terminer, permettez-moi de dire comment l'autonomie a été un élément qui inspire, un élément qui encourage la créativité innovation pendant ces 12 années et au niveau de la commission, nous n'avons cessé de proposer à la population des nouvelles activités afin que ceci puisse vivre dignement et comme des patriotes les anniversaires de notre autonomie, l'autonomie notre force.

Cette année le thème pour les 18 ans était - '*Pep Rodrigues la Fors Lotonomi*', le peuple de Rodrigues la force de l'autonomie. Pourquoi ce thème ? Parce que nous sommes conscients qu'il demande à un peuple de travailler pour la réussite de l'autonomie. Il demande à un peuple d'être solidaire et de démontrer fièrement, de s'exprimer fièrement pour que cette autonomie soit reconnue dans la république et dans le monde, pour que notre autonomie fasse, comme là si bien dit le Chef commissaire – la bonne réputation de la République de Maurice. Voici quelques activités majeures qu'on a pu proposer, quelques activités innovantes depuis 2012 : -

- Pour les 10 ans de l'autonomie en 2012, nous avons renommé plusieurs écoles, routes et bâtiments. Nous avons fait pour la première fois notre spectacle de nuit. Parce qu'auparavant c'était que plus que des *displays* mais avec cela nous avons vu le secteur culturel se développer et l'économie autour de la culture s'est dessiné et s'est consolidé.
- Pour les 12 ans, nous avons retracer la légende de l'autonomie et aussi la légende du monument de l'autonomie pour que les jeunes aient accès à ces légendes qui leurs permettent de mieux vivre le patriotisme Rodriguais.
- Pour les 14^{eme} anniversaire de l'autonomie en 2015, nous avons organisé pour la première fois le premier Rodrigues Day Cup Volley-Ball.
- Pour les 15 ans de l'autonomie en 2017, nous avons construit et dévoilé la Muraille de la Reconnaissance. Et d'ailleurs, hier on a inscrit feu Richmond Flore sur ce mur, Muraille de la Reconnaissance au niveau du CELPAC.
- On a aussi amélioré le Monument de l'Autonomie lui-même. Parce qu'au sommet de ce monument, il y a une lumière. Et, cette lumière c'est le signe que l'autonomie rayonne au sein de la république et dans le monde. Et, c'est pour ça qu'on a tenu pour les 15 ans d'allumer cette lumière autour de l'autonomie sur le monument. On a fait des travaux autour de ce monument-là, comme j'ai dit.

- Et, ce qui est plus important, on a publié un guide de réflexion sur l'autonomie pour les collèges et les centres de jeunesse. Parce que la formation autour de l'autonomie reste important pour que l'autonomie reste vivante, pour que l'autonomie puisse être transmis de génération en génération et que notre autonomie devienne une valeur sûre.
- On a fait aussi le relais de l'autonomie sur la Route de l'Autonomie pour montrer le symbolisme du cheminement pour que Rodrigues ait ce statut d'île autonomie.
- Pour les 17^{ème} anniversaire de l'autonomie on a lancé le Prix Littéraire Rodriguais, première fois, prix Jean Baptiste Melotte et prix Diego Rodriguez pour encourager la plume Rodriguaise. Je suis fière de dire qu'à ce jour, nous comptons plus de 300 ouvrages sur Rodrigues. Voilà signe que la littérature Rodriguaise se consolide et se confirme.
- Pour les 18 ans, Madame la présidente, c'était un moment fort, un moment de transition, un moment où Rodrigues s'apprêtait à un tournant important de son développement sociale, économique, culturelle et politique. Dans ce cadre-là, on avait pour thème – '*Ansanm nou Al enkor pli lwin*'. Parce qu'on est bien arrivé, on est sorti de 25 ans de lutte pour arriver à l'autonomie de 18 ans et nous voilà qui avons cette envie d'aller encore plus loin dans notre réussite.

Premièrement, nous avons les célébrations des 18 ans sous les signes de la réflexion, de la démocratie participative, le pilier de l'autonomie. On a fait une conversation avec les jeunes, '*zenn batiser zordi ek demin*', la table ronde – donc je viens de vous parler autour du thème 'Travail, solidarité, fierté', des compositions de peinture, de slam et autres. On a lancé notre premier e-book (Rodrigues Naturellement) et bien sûr on a eu plusieurs activités patriotiques.

Voilà, Madame la présidente, les activités qu'on a mises en place pour démontrer au monde la capacité Rodriguaise. Parce que c'est bien sûr cela le moteur de notre autonomie - '*nu capav*', la capacité Rodriguaise et l'invitation à tous pour être '*débout lor nu dé lipié*'. C'est pour cela qu'on a continué cette année – '*Pep Rodrigues la force autonomie*'. Donc, soyons tous une force pour ce pays pour les générations à venir.

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Je tiens à remercier tout le monde, nos collaborateurs et partenaires et sponsors qui ont contribués pour que ces célébrations soient une réussite et bien sur tous les membres du Conseil exécutif et de ce côté de la Chambre et ceux qui ont participé bien sûre à l'évènement. Merci beaucoup, Madame la présidente.

(Applause)

Madam Chairperson: Thank you, Commissioner.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday 17 December 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Madam Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 2.17 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Friday 17 December 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS

TRADE MARK - RODRIGUES NATURELLEMENT

(No. B/143) Mr J. L. R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Industrial Development and Others whether, in regard to the label *Rodrigues Naturellement*, she will state and table, for the benefit of the House, on where matters stand as at date, highlighting the sums disbursed to date therefor and the number of products being commercialised thereunder in Rodrigues and abroad, respectively?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, as the House is aware, over the years Rodriguan agro products have obtained a regional and national recognizance for their taste and uniqueness. To date, Rodriguan products are highly demanded.

With a view to safeguard the core competencies and values of the agro processing and handicraft sectors, it is considered that it is crucial to develop a strong label that communicates trust and the authentic image of Rodrigues.

The aim thereof is to create a powerful tool to market Rodriguan products whilst at the same time promote Rodrigues as an authentic destination. This will in parallel add value to and

lay emphasis on the specificities of Rodriguan products and in turn ensure revenue maximization for our local entrepreneurs.

However, the process of creating a label is lengthy and requires technical expertise. As such, my Commission on 03 May 2013 solicited the technical support of the Ministry of Business and Cooperative to assist the Rodrigues Regional Assembly in the development of a label for the traditional sectors in Rodrigues.

Upon advice from the said Ministry on 05 June 2013, quotations were sought for the development of a label for Rodrigues.

Following evaluation and upon the approval of the Executive Council at its meeting held on 06 September 2013, the *Fondation Ressources et Nature (FORENA)* represented by Mr Manoj Vaghjee was awarded a contract in November 2013 for consultancy services for the development of the label for Rodrigues. The project was to be implemented in three distinct phases as follows:

- (i) Meeting with stakeholders to define the scope of the label and thereafter identify the products as well as international standards and models that should comply with the label;
- (ii) Preparation of a work plan for the implementation of the various standards/labels within clusters, sectors and/or the country as a whole; and
- (iii) Implementation of the label.

Subsequent to a validation workshop in 2014, the slogan “*Rodrigues Naturellement*” was approved by the main stakeholders as it was considered to embody the Rodriguan culture and the peaceful natural harmony of the island.

On 18 November 2014, same was registered with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Intellectual Property under the Patent Industrial Design and Trademarks Act and on 06 February 2015, the Industrial Property Office approved the registration of the trade mark ‘Rodrigues Naturellement’.

A second contract to the tune of Rs 300,000 was awarded on 16 February 2015 to *Fondation Ressources et Nature (FORENA)* to facilitate the implementation of the five standards/labels tributary to the Rodrigues Label namely:

- (i) Organic Certification;
- (ii) Fair Trade Certification;

- (iii) Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) Certificate;
- (iv) Spécialités traditionnelles garanties; and
- (v) MS 165 - Sustainable Management for operators of the tourism sector.

With a view to coordinate the implementation of the project, a consultative committee comprising staff of the EPMU, Commission for Tourism, Commission for Industrial Development, Commission for Agriculture, Commission for Environment and Commission for Arts and Culture was set up.

From 2015 to 2017, several sensitization campaigns were held with various stakeholders involved in the different economic sectors namely Agriculture, Handicraft, Food Processing/Restaurants, local and traditional Food and Tourism Sector to brainstorm upon the labels and standards that best fit the Rodriguan context. About 13 SMEs/private companies were interested to obtain the label. As such, audits were carried out within these organisations for the application of the abovementioned five standards.

However, the project could not be materialised for the following reasons:

- (i) Some type of approved certification/standards as proposed by the Consultant were not recognised by government and would require the enactment of several regulations; and
- (ii) SMEs have to undertake an in-depth review of their business model and processes which require significant investment for the upgrading of their infrastructures and equipment to be able to obtain the approved certification/standards.

Thereafter, on 19 October 2018, a request for proposal using the Open Advertised National Bidding for recruitment of Consultant for label in Rodrigues was launched to assist the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA), in the planning and implementation of national and international norms, labels and standards as well as act as facilitator for the provision and sourcing of expertise for the implementation of label. The closing date was 16 November 2018.

After the evaluation of the three bids received by a Bid Evaluation Committee, the Departmental Bid Committee on 30 September 2019 decided not to proceed ahead with the bidding exercise as the bid was on the high side.

Madam Chairperson, an amount of Rs 290,000 was paid to the Consultant for the first contract and only an amount of Rs 87,300 has been disbursed for the second contract as same

was not fulfilled as per the agreed scope of works. To date, a total amount of Rs 596,475 including costs of travel and board/lodging in favour of the Consultant for 15 missions in all as well as Registration Fees for the trademark 'Rodrigues Naturellement' has been spent on the project.

Madam Chairperson, it is to be noted that the Rodrigues Regional Assembly has not yet authorised any Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to use the trade mark 'Rodrigues Naturellement' as the modalities thereof are yet to be defined and validated.

However, a special approval has been provided to the Rodrigues Trading and Marketing Company (RTMC) Ltd, the marketing arm of the RRA, to include the trade mark on certain packaging of products that will be destined to the Mauritian market in the near future.

Moreover, since the trade mark 'Rodrigues Naturellement' is a property of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, several Commissions are at present including it in their communication materials or campaigns. For instance, the Commission for Tourism uses the trade mark during their promotions campaigns and in their advertising materials.

Madam Chairperson, to date new Terms of Reference for provision of Consultant or Consultancy Firm to advise and assist the RRA in developing the modalities for the implementation of the Trade Mark "Rodrigues Naturellement" are being finalised. The collaboration of the Economic Development Board has been sought in that respect. It is expected that Request for Proposals for provision of Consultancy services will be launched anew during this Financial Year.

Madam Chairperson, I am tabling a copy of the status of the project implementation for the label 'Rodrigues Naturellement' and the amount disbursed to date.

MANAGEMENT – SOUTH EAST MARINE PROTECTED AREA (SEMPA)

(No. B/144) Mr J. L. R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the management of the South East Marine Protected Area (SEMPA), he will state and table to the House on the working conditions of the staff thereof from 2011 to date?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, I wish to inform you that the South East Marine Protected Area was established under the project "Partnerships for Marine Protected Areas in Mauritius and Rodrigues". The MPA was established under the concept of co-management involving the

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community in the decision-making process. During the project phase the project staff were recruited under contract with the UNDP through the RRA via the National Execution portfolio.

Since 2005 the project was led by a Project Manager seconded by an Administrative Assistant (substantive post of Scientific Officer (Fisheries). In 2008, the Administrative Assistant was promoted to the post of Project Manager to date. Currently, the Acting Project Manager is responsible for the management of SEMPA and is supported by a Management Support Officer, an Office Auxiliary and a General Worker.

For proper education and awareness raising of the fisher community, fishermen were recruited as Field Rangers to enhance the synergies between the community and the MPA objectives. The Field Rangers provide assistance to the Fisheries Protection Officers in enforcement duties in SEMPA.

Madam Chairperson, I am informed that the Field Rangers were initially recruited in February 2010 on a contract basis of one year with a flat salary of Rs 7,800 plus compensation at approved rate. The contract was renewed from 19 February to 30 September 2011 from 01 October 2011 to 26 May 2012 they were on temporary employment on a month-to-month basis.

As from 27 May 2012 and up to date they are employed on a month-to-month basis and they are eligible for the following:

- (i) 21 days' annual leave;
- (ii) 11 days' sick leave;
- (iii) End-of-year bonus;
- (iv) Sick leave not taken are payable at the month of February;
- (v) Travelling allowance.

Their salaries are revised every five years by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms.

Madam Chairperson, as regards to Community Resource Observers, they were recruited in 2010 to assist Field Rangers in enforcement and education duties. They were initially paid a stipend of Rs 470 on a sessional basis and now they are being paid Rs 541 still on a sessional basis. They are eligible for the following:

- (i) 21 days' annual leave;

- (ii) 11 days' sick leave;
- (iii) End-of-year bonus;
- (iv) Sick leave not taken are payable at the month of February;
- (v) Travelling allowance.

Madam Chairperson, as regards to the other staff including Project Manager, Fisheries Officers, Office Auxiliary/Senior Office Auxiliary, General Workers and Security Guards the working conditions are regulated by the Pay Research Bureau.

OFF-LAGOON FISHERMAN CARD

(No. B/145) Mr J. L. R. Perrine (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the Off-lagoon Fisherman Card, he will state and table on the number thereof that have been allocated from 2012 to date, indicating the beneficiaries' respective age and fishing zone?

Reply: Madam Chairperson, I am informed that from 2012 to date 153 off-lagoon fisherman cards have been issued to fishers in the four fishing zones around Rodrigues. Off-lagoon cards are issued according to established criteria with age limit not exceeding 55 years old except for Large Net Fishers relinquishing their activities where the whole group received training before being issued an off-lagoon fisherman card.

Madam Chairperson, the details of the 153 off-lagoon card issued since 2012 to date are as follows: -

- (i) 11 Ex-Large Nets Fishermen of the Rodrigues Fishermen Multi-Purpose Co-operative Society Ltd (Port South East Branch) have been issued with off-lagoon fishermen card in 2012 after they have relinquished their large nets fishing activities;
- (ii) In 2018/2019, 23 fishermen have been issued with an off-lagoon fisherman card;
- (iii) In 2020, 93 fishermen have been issued with an off-lagoon fisherman; and
- (iv) In 2021, 26 fishermen have been issued with an off-lagoon fishermen card.

Madam Chairperson, furthermore, a group of 32 fishermen has already completed theory classes since May 2021 and is completing its practical training at sea for the issue of permanent off-lagoon fisherman card.

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Madam Chairperson, I am also informed that following a call for application to register FAD Fishermen of Rodrigues, 349 applicants responded to the call. A committee has already been set-up to evaluate those applications.