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No. 1 of 2024

RODRIGUES

FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 06 FEBRUARY 2024

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The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr Johnson Roussety, G.O.S.K.)

Mr Johnson Roussety, G.O.S.K.	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Central Administration, Civil Aviation (Administration), Education (Administration), Legal Services, Marine Services (Administration), Registration, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues, State Lands, Town and Country Planning, Cooperatives, Handicraft, Industrial Development, Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Vocational Training, Civil Status, Customs and Excise (Administration), Judicial (Administration), Postal Services (Administration), Marine Parks, Water Resources
Mr Franceau Aubret Grandcourt	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Public Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Transport, Environment, Community Development, Housing
Mr Louis Ange Perrine	Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Production, Forestry, Plant & Animal Quarantine
Mr Jean Nicolas Volbert	Commissioner responsible for Health (Administration), Social Security (Administration), Fire Services, Prisons & Reforms Institutions (Administration)
Miss Marie Christiane Agathe	Commissioner responsible for Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare, Consumer Protection/Price Fixing
Mr Jean Alain Wong So	Commissioner responsible for Tourism, Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations, Information Technology & Telecommunications
Mr Joseph Varok Ravina	Commissioner responsible for Youth & Sports, Arts and Culture, Museums, Archives, Historical Sites and Buildings, Library Services

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PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS

Mr Chairperson - Leopold, Mr Joseph Christian, GOSK

Deputy Chairperson - Tolbize, Mr Justar

Clerk - Legentil, Miss Marie Lyndia Yannick

Deputy Clerk - Clair, Miss Marie Chrismélanie

Serjeant-at-Arms - Perrine, Mr Joseph Laval

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RODRIGUES

Fifth Regional Assembly

Debate No. 1 of 2024

Sitting of Tuesday 06 February 2024

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

The National Anthem was played

(Mr Chairperson in the Chair)

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ADJOURNMENT

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr Chairperson: Respected Members, I have an announcement this morning. So, respected Members, good morning and welcome back to this August Assembly after the end of year break. I wish to inform the House that following a mishap which occurred within the Assembly premises. At the very end of 2023, urgent building works have had to be carried in the Chamber of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as in some other common areas of the Regional Assembly for the whole of January until date.

Respected Members, officers have been working tirelessly to restore the Chamber into proper operational mode for today. I wish to place on record my heartfelt gratitude as well as those of this Regional Assembly to all those staff of my office, officers from a different department of the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office as well as those public officers and outside contractors who have risen to the challenge that was bestowed upon them. We are, however, holding this sitting on testing mode.

As such, glitches may happen during this day's sitting. As regard the Committee Room and the whole of the second floor, same remain inaccessible until now. The Office of the Clerk has initiated necessary process for the temporary relocation thereof outside the passenger terminal building. Members will therefore be advised in due course once matters have been settled. I therefore call upon the indulgence and patience of all respected Members, especially for the conduct of today's proceedings.

I thank you for your attention and kind collaboration.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, Minority Leader.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

PREVALENCE OF FEVER – RODRIGUES

(No. B/1) **The Minority Leader (Mrs R.M.F Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K.)** asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the prevalence of fever in Rodrigues, he will state and table the number of reported case for the months of October, November and December for the year 2022 and 2023?

Mr Chairperson: Yes, Minority Leader.

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by the Health Director that only medical diagnosis is compiled in statistical data. As figures are classified as symptoms and not a medical diagnosis therefore, there is no data available

The Minority Leader: M. le président, même si le Commissaire a mentionné que *fever*, ce n'est pas comptabilisé comme une maladie, mais c'est comme des symptômes. Est-ce que le corps médical a pris note, a remarqué qu'il y a eu une augmentation dans la prévalence de ces symptômes qu'est la fièvre ?

Mr Volbert: Je ne peux pas répondre à cette question. Si la *Minority Leader* veut avoir des éclaircissements, qu'elle vienne avec une autre question la prochaine fois parce que je n'ai pas les réponses avec moi.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, already...

Mr Chairperson: Please, use your mic.

Mr Lisette: Sorry, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Already in his answer to question B/169 of December 2023, as regards to the question relating to resurgence of COVID-19, it is clear that there was an increase in the number of COVID which linked, I think, with the number of increase in the number of fever. Can the Commissioner confirm same as regards to his answer of B/169?

Mr Volbert: Comme je disais dans ma réponse, M. le président, la fièvre n'est pas classifiée comme un *medical diagnosis*. Donc, pour moi, c'est tout ce que le respecté Membre Lisette vient de nous dire. Ça, je pense que c'est classé dans *Upper Respiratory Track*. Mais je n'ai pas les informations requises. Si vous voulez avoir plus d'éclaircissements, venez avec une autre question la prochaine fois.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

RESURGENCE OF DENGUE FEVER – RODRIGUES

(No. B/2) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, there has been a resurgence of dengue fever in Rodrigues and, if so, to state to the House:

- (a) on when the first case was detected, the total number of tests performed and cases detected, and the number of active cases as at date;

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- (b) the number of patients currently isolated, specifying the different locations where isolation is being carried out and
- (c) the measures implemented by his Commission to control the vectors responsible for the propagation thereof?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed by the Health Director that the first local case of dengue fever was confirmed in Rodrigues on 08 June 2023 and the last positive case was reported on 27 August 2023. From 08 June to 27 August 2023, there was a total of 59 positive cases dengue cases in Rodrigues.

I am also informed that for the year 2024, the first case of Dengue Fever was confirmed on 19 January 2024. As at Monday 05 February 2024, the total number of dengue fever cases detected is 138, number of active cases is 94 and the number of recovered cases is 42. Number of tests done from 14 January 2024 to date are as follows:

- Rapid tests for Dengue is 281
- Blots test is 403
- Blood sample for PCR is 370

The number of fever survey is 4008 and the number of contact tracing is 423.

Mr Chairperson Sir, as for part (b) of the question, no patient is currently isolated in public health institutions whereas 79 patients are on home isolation according to new Dengue Protocol reviewed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness on the 31 January 2024.

Mr Chairperson Sir, for part (c) of the question, the measures implemented by my Commission to control the vectors are as follows:

- Larviciding of the environment within a radius of 300 metres from suspected/confirmed case on D₁D₄D₈ & D₁₁.
- House to house inspection within a radius of 300 metres from suspected case to detect any nuisance liable to favour mosquito breeding/harbourage.
- Cleaning campaign involving members of the Mauritius Police Force, SMF, Fire and Rescue Services and the employees of ROD CLEAN in connection with cleaning of rivers, drains and bushy areas to eliminate breeding/harbourage of mosquitoes.
- Sensitization and awareness programmes via media and Roadshow on elimination of conditions favourable for breeding of mosquitoes.

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- Indoor Residual Spraying at Port and Airport buildings (Border Control) every three months to destroy any insects that may have access.
- Extension of contract of employment of two STM Doctors posted at the DMU.
- Recruitment on a contractual basis of three months of four Public Health Inspectors with effect from this Thursday 08 February 2024.
- Sensitisation campaign carried out:
 - on Monday 05 February 2024 with all heads of educational institutions in Rodrigues and Religious bodies; and
 - today with all the community health agents and environment representative of all villages.
- Mass fogging and larviciding campaign around the island.
- Issuing of mosquito coils, mosquito repellent and medication for patients on home isolation.

Mr Ramdally: *Mr Chairperson, Sir*, comme l'a mentionné le Commissaire dans sa réponse, il y avait une équipe de Maurice, des officiers de la Vector Biology and Control Division (VBCD) et de la Communicable Disease Control Unit (CDCU) qui étaient à Rodrigues suite à la première vague. Donc, est-ce que je peux demander au Commissaire s'il y avait un rapport par rapport à cette mission des officiers de Maurice ?

Mr Volbert: Non, M. le président, il n'y avait pas de rapport des officiers de la CDCU de juin 2003 à ce jour mais par contre, il y a un rapport datant de décembre 2019 qui a été fait et envoyé commandité par la *Vector Biology and Control Division* du Ministère de *Health and Wellness* et ça a été envoyé à Rodrigues depuis mais le gouvernement sortant n'a rien fait, M. le président. Il y a tout dans ce rapport que je vais déposer à l'Assemblée qu'il aurait dû faire quelque chose. Il y avait un nombre de moustiques incroyables mais moi, j'ai eu ça il y a quelques jours via *soft copy* de quelqu'un. Moi-même, je n'étais pas au courant mais eux, ce rapport, a été déposé en 2020. Voilà, M. le président.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je suis étonnée que le Commissaire vient nous dire que ce n'est que maintenant qu'il a connaissance de ce rapport parce que dans la question du 13 juin 2023, il avait mentionné ce rapport. Donc, est-ce que depuis juin 2023 quand il a mentionné ce rapport, il y a quelque chose qui a été fait ? Parce que nous savons qu'en 2019, tout le monde sait que 2019, c'était COVID qui dominait et on n'avait pas eu de cas de dengue.

Maintenant que vous avez eu des cas de dengue, le 13 juin 2023, vous avez parlé de ça. A ce jour, qu'est-ce que vous avez fait de ces recommandations ?

Mr Volbert: Pour être franc, je n'avais pas la copie du rapport en main. Comme je viens d'annoncer, c'est maintenant il y a trois ou quatre jours que j'ai eu ça sur *soft copy*. Donc, on a déjà mis un comité sur pieds pour travailler là-dessus avec le *Health Director*, le *Principal Public Health Officer*, les ONGs. Nous allons travailler. Je suis sûr que nous allons implémenter ce que vous n'avez pas fait depuis.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the virus as regards to dengue fever is on the Island as from June 2023 and there was a team from Mauritius from the Ministry of Health who came for a survey. Does the Commissioner mean that since the end of the first resurgence in August, there has been no information that has been received from the team which carried out the survey in Rodrigues since August 2023?

Mr Volbert: Je ne peux pas dire que nous n'avons rien eu. Mais verbalement, on a parlé mais le fait que c'était sous contrôle, la maladie était sous control. On avait que 59 cas l'année dernière et le dernier cas remontait à août je pense, août 2023 et depuis, on n'a pas eu de cas. Donc, on a fait des campagnes de sensibilisation. On a fait à travers les médias, dix minutes pour la dengue, nettoyage. On a beaucoup fait. Mais donc, comme je vous ai dit, je viens d'avoir le rapport il y a quelques jours. Moi-même, j'étais souffrant. Mais je suis sûr, je donne la garanti à la Chambre que je vais implémenter ce qui ont été dit dans ce rapport pour un meilleur contrôle des moustiques.

Mr Ramdally: Si je comprends bien, M. le président, le Commissaire nous dit que rien depuis août 2023, rien n'a été fait en ce qui concerne *larvisiding*, *fumigation* pour contrôler le vecteur?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas dit ça, M. le président.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, we know from information, that the egg of the vector remained dormant for six months, meaning that by the time that the last case of dengue fever was observed in august 2023, there should have been continuous *larvisiding* for at least six months to complete, to eradicate whatever eggs were in any stagnant water. Was there any follow-up made by the Commission for Health on that particular matter?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, *larvisiding*, on fait *larvisiding* quand il y a un cas suspect ou un cas détecté. C'est ça quand on fait *larvisiding*. C'est ça le protocole. Comment peut-on

faire *larvisiding* s'il n'y a pas de cas ? Mais quand même, il y a toujours des programmes de sensibilisation, il y a des nettoyages à travers Rodclean, à travers les officiers de l'environnement. Donc, le travail est fait.

Mr Lisette: Yes, as regard to the question of testing, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether, there has been any directives to limit the number of testing cases at the hospitals as regard to dengue?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas cette réponse. Peut-être s'il a la réponse, il peut déposer.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, nous savons que dans ce genre de problème de santé, la sensibilisation et la responsabilisation de chacun est la clé pour pouvoir arriver à éradiquer ce virus. On a compris que depuis le 27 août, pas grand-chose a été faite. Même si le Commissaire le dit qu'il n'a pas dit ça. Maintenant que le 19 janvier, il y a l'apparition une fois de plus du virus, comment le Commissaire explique-t-il que ce n'est que le 05 qu'il commence à faire le *sensitisation*? Trois semaines après la résurgence alors que nous savons qu'une deuxième édition de dengue n'est pas une bonne chose pour la population. On connaît le danger. Tout le monde connaît le danger. Pourquoi est-ce qu'on a attendu trois semaines, 19 janvier pour 05 février, pour commencer la sensibilisation?

Mr Volbert: Ça, c'est que la *Minority Leader* veut faire croire, M. le président. Le 16 précisément, dès que j'ai appris qu'il y a un cas suspecté admis à l'hôpital, je me suis rendu là-bas, aller voir la patiente et puis, j'ai donné un point de presse tout de suite après à la MBC. J'ai demandé à la population de faire le nécessaire, de prendre des précautions. Et puis avec le cas qu'on a eu et deux/trois jours après, on a eu des cas suspects encore et les officiers du sanitaire étaient sur le qui-vive. Ils faisaient de *larvisiding*, de *fogging* et cetera. Je ne sais pas d'où la *Minority Leader* sort cette affaire d'après pratiquement trois semaines qu'on a commencé avec la sensibilisation.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, M le Commissaire a parlé de la présence du vecteur à Rodrigues. Mais la maladie, elle va se développer quand il y a le virus. Donc, le virus était là en juin. Donc, même s'il y avait le vecteur bien avant juin, il n'y avait pas la maladie de dengue ici. Donc, M. le président, est-ce que le Commissaire... Depuis juin, il y a la présence du virus à Rodrigues. Donc, si ça fait un an comme a dit le membre Lisette, la maladie va être déclaré endémique à Rodrigues. Donc, qu'est-ce qui est fait par la Commission justement pour que cette maladie ne soit pas déclarée endémique à Rodrigues ?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, il faut que tout le monde prenne sa responsabilité. La plus grande décision qu'on peut prendre, c'est que tout le monde nettoie chez lui: sa maison, sa cour, arrière-cour et cetera. Donc, en sus de ça, on peut passer des informations, sensibiliser des gens. Eux, ils ont une radio. Ils auraient pu servir de leur radio pour sensibiliser les gens et non pas critiquer, que critiquer. Vous avez une radio. Passez le message. Vous dites que vous avez 50% de la population. Servez de cette radio pour sensibiliser votre 50% de la population, M. le président.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regard to the figures given by the Commissioner, he mentioned even though he did not state it in the first question, that the fever survey is 4008. Does he consider it as disproportional when we are having 4008 *cas de fièvre* and the number of testing, of tests carried out if I am not mistaken, is only 281? Does he consider it as disproportionate?

Mr Volbert: Quand je dis 4008 *cas fever survey*, ce n'est pas 4008 cas de fièvre; c'est le *survey*. On est allé tester avec les gens dans les villages. C'est différent que ce que vous voulez faire croire.

Mr Lisette: Yes, can he give an indication as such as regard to these 4008 cases, how many case of fever was in fact detected?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas les réponses précises mais dans ma réponse, je crois que j'ai dit le nombre de... Le *blood test* – 403, *rapid test* – 231, *blood sample for PCR* – 370. Mais je n'ai pas les... Il faudra comptabiliser. Il faudra demander les statistiques avec la DMU et puis, je vais déposer à la table de l'Assemblée.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, est-ce que je pourrais demander au Commissaire de la santé s'il y a eu des personnes décédées suite à des complications de la dengue?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas cette réponse jusqu'à maintenant, M. le président.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, dans la littérature, on peut voir qu'il y a des méthodes de stérilisation par exemple des moustiques mâles. Donc, on peut même utiliser des bactéries comme pour un contrôle biologique des vecteurs. Est-ce que la Commission de la sante va contempler, va implémenter des mesures pareilles ?

Mr Volbert: Sans mettre en doute ce que font mes *counterparts* à Maurice, mais je pense cette mesure a été lancée à Maurice mais je ne dis pas que ça n'a pas marché. Mais je

doute bien que parce qu'il y a pas mal de cas à Maurice actuellement. Donc, si ça marche, ça pose aucun problème. Nous allons l'amener ici, nous allons faire ça ici. C'est *okay*. Pas de problème.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is clear that there is a fear among the population as regard to the number of cases because not all cases are being reported to the hospital because some people choose to remain at home and use what is known as *remède grand-mère*. I would like to ask the Commissioner why is it that there are cases of death which are not necessarily directly linked with dengue but which are indirectly linked due to complications. Why is it that these cases are not being communicated to the public in a way to provide more sensitisation so that the public are more aware of the matter that is going on?

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry. The Commissioner has already answered that he is not aware whether there is a link between death and the case of dengue. Now, you are repeating the same question. Next question.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je reviens sur la prise en charge des patients. Donc, beaucoup ne vont pas à l'hôpital comme le dit mon collègue, le membre Lisette. Mais est-il au courant qu'il y a beaucoup de personnes? Moi-même, j'étais témoin. Les membres de ma famille, les membres, les villageois qui ont été à l'hôpital avec tous les signes à plusieurs reprises, deux fois, trois fois, quatre fois et n'ont pas été testés. Comment est-ce que vous expliquez ça?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, ce sont les médecins et puis, il y a un protocole établis pour tous ces tests-là. Si la respecté membre, la respecté *Minority Leader* a ces informations, qu'elle communique les informations. On ne peut pas dire si ou si ou choisir l'Assemblée pour venir communiquer ces informations erronées. Parce qu'il y a des médecins, ce sont des professionnels. Ce sont eux qui font les tests, ce sont eux qui consultent les patients. Ce n'est pas moi. Donc, si ces médecins-là n'ont pas cru bon de faire les tests, c'est-à-dire les patients ne tombent pas dans ce *range* de protocole établis, donc, c'est à eux de décider.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce qu'on peut donc savoir du Commissaire quelle est la capacité de faire ces tests, combien de tests on a actuellement à Rodrigues?

Mr Volbert: On a suffisamment de test et la capacité de faire des tests, on fait que le *rapid test*, *rapid antigen test* ici. Et puis, le test PCR se fait à Maurice dans le laboratoire spécifique.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, le follow-up des cas à la maison, donc, en isolation se fait par l'équipe de la DNU. Est-ce que je pourrais demander au Commissaire combien d'équipe il y a et combien d'officiers y sont attaché à ces équipes ou cette équipe?

Mr Volbert: Il y a quatre équipes qui sont composées d'un médecin, d'un infirmier/infirmière et un Healthcare Assistant.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Commissioner for Health whether he has made a request to know what is the type, the serotype of dengue that is prevailing in Rodrigues?

Mr Volbert: Je ne peux pas répondre à cette question. *I need notice of this question.*

Mr Chairperson: Okay, last question.

Mr Baptiste: I think, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that it is a very serious issue and even the Commissioner has said that this situation is alarming. And, we know that people all around the island, they are trying their best to try to take necessary actions and precautions at their level. But I would like to know what concretely is the Commissioner envisaging to take so that we can feel that it is really a very serious issue for the island, for its economy and what concrete actions you are envisaging to take. For example, I have seen in Mauritius, there is mass fumigation in regions where these have been detected even though for the time being, there was this protocol of 3000 metres. And, I just can confirm that...

Mr Chairperson: Put your question. You are giving part of the answer.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, what is the Commissioner envisaging to take as a nationwide action in order to mitigate this problem, to eradicate?

Mr Volbert: Je viens d'annoncer dans ma réponse tout à l'heure. On va recruter quatre inspecteurs sanitaires et on va commencer avec le masse campagne de... fumigation en masse. C'est-à-dire, on va prendre village par village parce que chaque équipe doit y avoir un inspecteur pour superviser. Donc, pour que les gens ne soient pas effrayés avec l'ampleur de la maladie, je demanderais à mes amis de l'autre côté de servir de leur radio et de passer de bons messages au lieu de critiquer, de faire peur aux gens.

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

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Mr Lisette: One determinant factor for the dengue disease, it is the Breteau index (BI), meaning the concentration of larvae within a particular premise. Can the Commissioner at this stage, give us an indication as regard to that index in Rodrigues?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas les réponses.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, this is not in the main question. Next question, please!

The Minority Leader: B/3, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

**OPENING/CLOSING OF SCHOOLS – HEAVY RAIN WATCH/WARNING
– MAURITIUS METEOROLOGICAL SERVICES**

(No. B/3) The Minority Leader (Mrs R.M.F Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K.) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the opening/closing of schools during Heavy Rain Watch/Warning by the Mauritius Meteorological Services, he will inform the House on if there exists any established protocol/practice(s) therefor and, in the affirmative, to give details thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that prior to the coming into Office of my Regional Government, there was no established protocol/practices for the opening/closing of schools during Heavy Rain Warning issued by the Mauritius Meteorological Services for schools in Rodrigues. There is only an established protocol that schools are closed during a cyclone Warning Class 2.

Thus, the decision to close schools during Heavy Rain is a decision of the Commissioner for Education together with other stakeholders.

Since the Regional Government took Office in 2022, it has been noted that the issue of closing of schools on days either on a Heavy Rain Watch or Heavy Rain Warning was issued by the Mauritius Meteorological Services (MMS) has caused conflicting situations and is a subject of concern for the parents and the population at large.

It is a common practice that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research closes schools whenever a Heavy Rain Warning is issued by the MMS for Mauritius and it is expected that the same practice should be adopted for Rodrigues.

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As a matter of fact, it has been observed that there has been growing concern among the public regarding the need to close schools in Rodrigues on Tuesday 16 January 2024 upon the issue of a Heavy Rain Watch early in the morning at 04.30 hours followed by the issue of Heavy Rain Warning at 10.45 hours on the same day. This can be explained by the recent occurrence which has proved to be life threatening on Monday 15 January 2024 in Mauritius.

I would like to point out that my Commission decided to close schools on 30 January last following the issue of a Heavy Rain warning by the MMS at 5.00 a.m. on that day. However, it was observed during the day that the weather was bright and sunny.

Mr. Chairperson, Sir, Rodrigues by virtue of its topography is not majorly affected whenever there is heavy rain as is the case in Mauritius. The coastal regions in Rodrigues are more likely to be prone to flooding whereas the other regions of the island may experience water accumulations.

As such, the decision of closing schools is a complex one and entails consideration of various factors such as students' safety, potential disruption in school calendar, impact on parents' work commitments, other weather forecasts and the need to balance caution with minimising unnecessary closures. It involves weighing potential risks against the overall wellbeing and educational needs of students.

Being given that the security and safety of the students are paramount to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, the Commission for Education has understood the necessity to come up with an appropriate protocol for closing of schools in Rodrigues given its specificity as compared to Mauritius and so as to provide a systematic approach to decision making and ensure that closures are based on clear criteria rather than arbitrary choices.

As such, a protocol on heavy rain and torrential rain has been worked out and approved by the Executive Council at its meeting held on 26 January 2024. The protocol which is yet to be communicated to all stakeholders seeks to provide advice and practical guidelines regarding closing of schools in times of heavy rain and is applicable for all Pre-primary, Primary, Secondary, Specialised Education Needs (SEN) schools as well as other training institutions in Rodrigues.

For the proper implementation of the Protocol, the Departmental Head, Commission for Education in consultation with the Commissioner responsible for the matter should issue

an official communiqué for the closing of schools, if need be. Schools should imperatively await instructions from the Commission for Education prior to closing down.

I am tabling a copy of the protocol which is not a fixed document and which is subject to improvement and adaptation in the light of future occurrences. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, c'est bien que le Chef commissaire, lui-même dit que la sécurité des enfants est la grande priorité dans ce genre de situation. En effet, c'est vrai qu'il n'y avait pas de protocole avant parce que le nouveau protocole émane de la loi de *Mauritius Meteorological Services Act 2019* qui a pris effet qu'en 2023. C'est pour ça qu'il n'y avait pas eu de protocole avant. Ceci dit, le Chef commissaire a mentionné qu'il développe un protocole au niveau de Rodrigues. Donc, ça a été avalisé par le Conseil le 26 janvier 2024. Est-ce que ce protocole prend en compte les recommandations, les avis que donne la météo parce qu'on a vu que dans le passé, practices, *common practices in Mauritius*, il y a eu pas moins de deux cas à Maurice, deux fois l'année dernière en janvier 2023 et février 2023 où quand la météo a émis des avis de veilles de fortes pluies, le ministère a décidé que les écoles restent fermées. Est-ce que pour Rodrigues, on a eu un avis de veilles le 16 janvier, l'école est restée ouverte, est-ce que le Chef commissaire va s'assurer que ces pratiques dans l'intérêt des enfants soient mises en application à Rodrigues et surtout reconnaître que ça a été une erreur de sa part de ne pas fermer l'école ce 16 janvier malgré les avis devaient.

The Chief Commissioner: No, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I do not accept the accusation that it was an error. This is a cheap and gratuitous accusation as usual from the part of the majority side. We are not Mauritius. The context of Mauritius is not the same as in Rodrigues. Even in Mauritius, region wise, the context is not the same. The Mauritius Meteorological Act does not provide anything, telling education leaders, decision makers in the educational field when they issue such and such bulletin, you should close the school. Tomorrow, we may decide to close the school, for example, Mr Chairperson, Sir, because of excess heat. If the temperature is reaching 50 degrees in Rodrigues, 45 degrees, we may decide to close schools because of high temperature.

If there is any other thing, issue, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I do not know what, we may decide to close schools. It is a case-to-case basis. But in our protocol that we have adopted, as I have said, we are not Mauritius; we are Rodrigues and we know Rodrigues and we know the risks in Rodrigues. The risk for a *veille de fortes pluies* in Mauritius and a *veille de fortes pluies*

in Rodrigues are not the same. And, statistically speaking, when there has been *veille de fortes pluies*, when you observe the weather in Rodrigues, you will see that there has been no risk at all.

Therefore, whenever there is a *veille de fortes pluies* unless the rain falls during night, the situation of the rivers, the situation of flooding in Rodrigues warrants a closure, we will close. But if there is a *veille* and there is no other danger observed, heavy rain ongoing in the morning, we will not close the school. We are in consultation with the REHOC, with the meteorological services, with all stakeholders and we decide whenever there is need, not only if there is a *veille de fortes pluies*. It may be that there is an omission or I do not know what. There is no warning, there is indication from the Mauritius Meteorological Services but we observe that there is flooding, there is heavy rain ongoing. We will even on this....schools but not automatically when there is a *veille de fortes pluies*.

However, when there is an *avis de heavy rain*, *avis de fortes pluies*, before 06 a.m. we will close the schools, before schools start, we will close the school. It is case-to-case basis, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and this is what the protocol reflects. And, even if we allow schools during a *veille de fortes pluies*, when there is no flooding, there is no ongoing heavy rain, it is a decision of parents, Mr Chairperson, Sir, who may decide to send or not to send their kids, depending of the kid, the condition of the kid himself/herself. And, the protocol also encourages schools to develop school safe policies, every headmaster, rector know their schools, know their students and it is up to them even though there is no warning, there is no indication from the Commission for Education. A headmaster may decide to take certain decisions at the level of his school to protect the students. So, there is no need to dramatize things because we all remember that we have been school to school in heavy rain, in *pardessus*, '*en bas parasol*', we have been wet and we are still here.

Mr Lisette: We are not dramatizing, Mr Chairperson, Sir. It is a question of student's safety and security. And, I would like to come back to that fateful 16 January 2024 when the...

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has been nothing fateful. So, please, if you could use the correct words. Nobody has died, nobody has been hurt. So, a Point of Order. Using the correct words not misleading this House would be a great thing.

Mr Lisette: Everybody can interpret it as it feels like. Yes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lisette: Yes, words mean words.

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Lisette: Interpretation also depends on each and every person.

Mr Chairperson: Put your question, please.

Mr Lisette: Yes, I am putting my question. My question is as regard to that Tuesday, 16 January 2024 where there was a communiqué drawn at 10:45 a.m. meaning that there is an *avis de fortes pluies*. I would like to know why is it that the Commission for Education awaits up to 2.30 a.m. or even more for primary students at 3:30 a.m. to allow them to leave school, why is it that there is no deployment within two hours as such to allow parents to collect their kids and at the same time, get the NLTA prepared to collect the student as from 12:30 p.m. Why do we have to wait up to late in the afternoon to allow the student to go home?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am again saying that we know what we are doing. And, I take the full responsibility of anything what might happen following my decisions and decisions of the Commission. So, at 10:45 when there is a heavy rain watch, there is nothing which tells us in law that we should release the schools. There is nothing in law which says release the schools like it is for a cyclone warning class two. At 10:45 a.m., at 11:00 a.m. What was happening? There was bad weather for about 30 minutes. Do you want us to release the schools in bad weather and create a panic and as such expose the students? Please, listen. You have talked; let me talk.

What would have happened? Parents are not home. Okay? Most of them are at work. Everybody would have rushed to pick their students and if the rain went more, this is where we would have people on the roads, students on the roads, students leaving school and exposing them. This is why we said keep the kids because if you read our protocol, schools are safe places for kids. And, nothing prevents a parent. We do not have to tell people what they have to do. We are not a nanny government, nanny state. You are at home, you see that the weather is bad, there is thunder, your kid is afraid when there is thunder, do we close the school if there is thunder? But you know that your kid is afraid, is anxious, has ADHD, will not cope well, so

what do you do? You go and pick up your kid. Just like when you have a marriage, you want your kid to go for half day, in the afternoon, you go and pick up your kid.

If you have a birthday, any event you want to pick up your kid, it is your right to go and pick up your kid. But we choose not to close schools to protect the children, so that they remain in safety and when school closes, their parents come and collect them. And, there is in the new protocol, headmasters responsible of schools should not allow kids to leave schools. If on a certain day, they feel that there is danger for these kids, they should stay with these kids and alert the REHOC or the Commission. So, this is the right thing we did. I am not criticising anything which has been done in Mauritius. However, I believe personally that had the Civil Service for example, the offices in Port Louis, not been closed at 11 a.m. on the fateful day in Mauritius, this would not have caused a rush in the streets and we would not have had so much cars in the street. So, this is the right decision, we think. Whenever there is a danger, there is something in Rodrigues, we need to keep kids at school before rushing to make a decision to close schools. Parents can go and collect their kids. If we release schools in a big rain, they will go out of school, they may go out of school and this is the danger. So, we know what we are doing and I repeat, we are not Mauritius; we are Rodrigues.

The Minority Leader: *M. le président*, yes we know we are Rodrigues and we know our schools are not done with '*feuille lataniers*' but still, la sécurité de nos enfants reste la grande priorité. J'allais demander. Mon collègue a parlé qu'il y a eu l'avis de fortes pluies à 10h45, il y a la pluie dans les 30 minutes qui suivent. Mon collègue parlait de release the students after two hours et donner le temps aux parents de venir prendre leurs enfants pour une question de sécurité parce que nous connaissons la situation à Rodrigues. Pas tous les parents ont des voitures, pas tous les parents ont des possibilités de venir récupérer les enfants. Certains habitent très, très loin. Et surtout, le Chef commissaire, il a parlé des 30 minutes suivant l'avis. Est-il au courant, a-t-il remarqué que dans l'après-midi, à partir de 2h00, il y avait une pluie abondante et cela mettaient les enfants en danger, d'où justement, on parlait de cet acte criminel parce que nos enfants étaient exposés au danger.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have put a defamation case against the Minority Leader.

Mr Chairperson: I am sorry. I would like the Minority Leader to remove this word, please.

/UNREVISED/

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: No, I would like you to remove this word, please.

The Minority Leader: I remove, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a case in Court on this also. I will not comment on this. She will have the occasion to explain herself. So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, what is their problem with rain? We like rain, I love rain. Where is the problem? Everytime we have some rain; you will get afraid.

‘Galoper ale sers zenfan lekol. Fer crêpe. Oui, lekol pane fer ek lataniers Rodrigues. Longtemps ine fini sa. Lekol fer en béton. Missier Serge Clair mem ine ranz bocou lekol Rodrigues. Ene bon contribution line amener. Nou mem, nou pe ranzer. Pas tout. Non.’

L'école primaire Baie aux Huitres a été construite en 1950-58. Monsieur Clair n'est pas là. Non, arrêtez avec cette affaire; out ce qui a été fait à Rodrigues, c'est Monsieur Serge Clair, c'est Monsieur... Arrêtez avec ça. Arrêtez cette affaire de paternaliste. Il a fait sa contribution, oui, une grande contribution mais pas tout à Rodrigues a été fait par Monsieur Serge Clair. Non, c'est faux, ça. Nous avons construit le collège de Terre Rouge.

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: Arrêtez cette mentalité de paternaliste!

Mr Chairperson: Allow the Chief Commissioner to answer the question, please.

The Chief Commissioner: *C'est typique de vous, ça. Arrêtez ça.* Stop this. The man made a big contribution but not everything is the man, here. The airport is not that man; the port is not that man. What do you want to say? *‘Ey ou la!’* So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is nothing to be afraid about the rain, even heavy rain. We have good infrastructure today in the schools and I repeat, it is the choice of a parent if you think that you need to go and collect your kid, you can go and collect your kid but we have to relativize, we must teach our kids that even if there is heavy rain, you have to keep working, concentrate on your studies unless there is a particular problem in the schools. We know, for example, that many school which have been constructed, the have leakage problems because they have flat roofs and there is water penetration. We need to change this as a policy.

Either we put tin roof (*tôle*) or other types of constructions. But as I say, schools are safe places and no parent is prevented from going and collect his kid. They are encouraged to go and collect their kids if they think that there is heavy rain or wait for their kid. But on that day, we felt that if we release schools, many people called me and when I explained to them, if we release schools now, this is the risk, that the kids be exposed without parental supervision, when they reach home, there may not be parents at home. Parents are still at work. And, this is why we instructed that let us wait, each parent collects his kids and if there is no collection of a kid, the Headmaster will call him, call all the parents, call the police or call REHOC and we will have dealt. There was a management. Everything was being managed and we will not do it.

If there is a danger, anything threatening in Rodrigues, even for a tsunami, we may not release all schools in Rodrigues. Because at Citron Donis, there is no tsunami for example. We need to do things case-to-case. And, there are people at the head of Rodrigues, at the Chief Commissioner himself, the Departmental Head, all the people involved, they know what decisions they are taking and they are taking it in the best interest of the people. And, we should not be guided what has been done in the past. We deal on a case-to-case basis with individual situations.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, il y a quand même une loi pour le *disaster* qui existe dans la République. Est-ce que ces décisions que le Chef commissaire prend ou a pris a été pris en consultation avec les membres du *Rodrigues Crisis Committee* qui fait partie intégrante de cette loi sur le disaster?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the decision to close schools does not concern the Rodrigues Crisis Committee directly. Okay? I will not call the Rodrigues Crisis Committee at 4 a.m. everyday there is need.

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: Who told you we do not talk virtual? I told her. She did not listen. We speak, Departmental Head, myself, the REHOC, the meteorological services before taking a decision. Okay? So, we cannot call the Rodrigues Crisis Committee, which is a big committee, to meet every morning to make decisions. I am afraid the Minority Leader will not score points on this issue. The issue is clear. Students, parents should not be afraid of rain. We know when to be afraid of rain. We do not have to follow everything which is being said/done

in Mauritius because we are not the same topography, we are not the same risk in public and we are safer than Mauritius, we can say, on these issues.

The Minority Leader: The Chief Commissioner should go into his files. The Rodrigues Crisis Committee is a very small committee of four members, I think. So, Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the past also, there have been cases also where the *météo* did not emit any *avis* but still, we were in power et sur le terrain, *on voyait qu'il y avait un danger pour les enfants, pour la sécurité de la population*. Et justement, on avait décidé qu'il y aura fermeture des écoles mais toujours en consultation avec la météo et avoir leur avis. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire compte justement dans ses décisions qu'il va prendre, lui, quand il décide pour fermer les écoles, à s'assurer que c'est la météo qui donne son avis, donc, bien sûr prenant en compte la situation du terrain.

The Chief Commissioner: I have already explained this, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I have said even if we do not have any *avis*, but we have reports from people, from parents that there are heavy rains, from headmasters, that some schools are inundated, we will make the decisions as per what we observed. And, of course, after consulting everybody and with priority, the meteo. Okay?

Mr Baptiste: The Chief Commissioner has tabled a draft protocol of the heavy rain. I would like to know whether any consultation was made. There were consultations with different stakeholders prior to the drafting of same and if so, when and who are the concerned parties, the stakeholders?

The Chief Commissioner: As I have said, Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is a preliminary document which has been adapted by the Commission for Education. It is a document which has been approved first by the Executive Council up to one and all to have a look at it and then, if there are proposals to be included, we will gladly include those proposals.

Mr Baptiste: In his reply also, the Chief commissioner mentioned that in case of heavy rain warning, prior to 6 a.m. there will be no school but what will happen then? The protocol, I do not see anything about it, what will happen if there is heavy rain warning after 6 o'clock?

The Chief Commissioner: I just said indicatively. This is not the rule of thumb as we would say because the meteo bulletin is issued at 4.30 a.m. I do not know any bulletin after 6.00 a.m. and I am surprised. I can tell my opinion, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I am surprised last

time, there was one bulletin at 4.30 a.m. and another one at 5.30 a.m. So, I do not know whether it is what is the prevision time gap in meteorological science but I am a bit surprise that a bulletin at 4.30 a.m. does not predict what is going on in the next, maybe six hours and we need another bulletin to be issued. This is a bit tricky from the part of the meteorological services. If we have before the start of schools, clear bulletin that there would be heavy rain, of course, we will close but not in the case of *veille*. In the case of *veille*, we will look at the rainfall during the night, we will ask the REHOC whether there are flooding, police et cetera, whether there is report of flooding, and if we deem necessary, we will close. But even that, on any occasion, we may decide to close for any specific reason.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, let us move to next question.

ISSUE – PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLE LICENCE – BUSES ROUTE 212 (PORT MATHURIN/MTE MALGACHE VIA LATANIERS)

(No. B/4) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, there has been the issue of any Public Service Vehicle Licence for buses along Route 212 (Port Mathurin-Montagne Malgache via Lataniers) since the start of the 2024 and, if so, to state:

- (a) the name/s of the beneficiary/ies;
- (b) if public notice was given for application thereof and, if so, to state the date, and
- (c) when the Rodrigues Transport Committee met to consider and approve the application/s?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the answer to this question is unfortunately, yes. The Road Transport Commissioner of the National Land Transport Authority in Mauritius has again issued a Road Service Licence by way of letter dated 05 January 2024 to one Mr J.D.I residing at Pointe Coton to operate along Route 212 (Port Mathurin-Mt. Malgache).

As regards to part (b), we are not aware as to whether a public notice was issued concerning this licence. I must inform the House, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that as indicated in my previous reply to PQ B/163 on 19 December last, this is the third Road Service Licence which the National Land Transport Authority in Mauritius has issued without following the proper

procedure at the level of the Rodrigues Transport Committee as per provision of Section 16 of the National Land Transport Authority Act 2019.

Moreover, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Land Transport is one of the areas of responsibility of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and we have been by-passed in the process of issuing these Road Service Licences. We consider this as a matter of great concern and as much as the situation has recurred in spite of our previous correspondences addressed to the concerned ministry with respect to the previous cases.

My Commission has already had discussion with the Legal Adviser of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly concerning this matter. I have submitted a memorandum to the Executive Council which has approved for my Commission to initiate procedures for judicial review.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c), as I have explained earlier, the application was addressed directly to the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail in Mauritius and has never been referred to be treated at the level of the Rodrigues Transport Committee. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: Thank you, Mr Chairperson, I see that the answer of the Deputy Chief Commissioner is clear but I would like to hear from him just like for the case of the two previous Bus Service Licence I want to hear from him, like he said, that this particular licence will not be implemented also in Rodrigues?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, this is the wish of this government not to allow this licence to operate in Rodrigues. That is why we are going for a judicial review. I have talked to the minister, now I will take the matter with the Prime Minister when I will have a meeting with him so that there is no recurrence of same, Mr Chairperson, Sir. This is a very serious matter because under Section 16 of the NLTA, it provides, I quote:

“(1) There shall be a Road Transport Committee which shall, for the purposes of Rodrigues, have the same functions and powers of NLTA under the Road Traffic Act in relation to –

(a) the issue of a motor vehicle dealer’s licence, public service vehicle licence, road service licence, taxi licence, contract licence and carrier’s licence;

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, I think that the Deputy Chief Commissioner has got, how to say ‘stuff’, not stuff but *un outil dans sa main*. Because any such licence which is

issued in Mauritius which has not been approved by his Commission would ultimately require an import permit from his office. I think he will use his good office to block the way that the ministry or the NLTA is doing with respect his Commission. Nevertheless, I would like to ask him as regards to the route 212, Port Mathurin – Mte. Malgache via Lataniers has there been any complaint whatsoever or any proposal as regards to whether there is any inadequate service that is being provided on that particular route?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has been no complaint to my knowledge but what we know we usually transfer some buses, for example when we feel it is necessary. This is a usual arrangement made by my Commission, we transfer some buses to offer their service on this route. So, to my knowledge there has been no complaints.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, because if the minister, the ministry or the NLTA has so acted, I believe that he has acted on a particular report because he cannot just decide for Mauritius and say, yes I am going to provide a bus service along a particular route. I would like to know just like in the case of the two previous bus service that was discussed formerly in this House, whether there has been any report emanating from Rodrigues to Mauritius without informing his office?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, he may be right. That is why I asked last time the Officer in Charge of the National Transport Authority in Rodrigues, I asked him whether there has been any report he has sent to Mauritius without informing us. Usually we do reports on all the routes around the island but in that respect we asked the question and I have doubts, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that he has sent a report to the minister, to the NLTA in Mauritius regarding this route. My Departmental Head has talked to him and we are still awaiting for his answer regarding this report. There has been reports on this route. There are many reports on various routes around the island but what the respected Member, according to this question, what he is asking I can say that I have doubts on this whether there has been a report or not.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, the licence was issued on 05 January and today we are on the 06 February, one month later and the Deputy Chief Commissioner cannot tell this House whether there has been any report submitted bypassing his office, sent to the ministry or to the NLTA. We consider that this is the crux of the matter as regards the functioning of that officer who is from Mauritius NLTA. Based on that what proposal will

the Commissioner come in order to solve that particular issue? What is he proposing in fact?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has been previously an MOU between the Commission and the NLTA. And, with the coming into force of the NLTA Act in 2019, the MOU was terminated. Okay? So, I will talk to the Prime Minister and then we will see whether we will go for a new MOU with the NLTA. Okay. Because the licence has been issued under section 71 of the NLTA in Mauritius, which gives the minister the power to give a temporarily licence to an applicant. As far as Rodrigues is concerned we should be the body who deals with this type of licence. So, we will talk to them and if need be we will go through an MOU with the NLTA, a new one.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, the Deputy Chief Commissioner may be right on the matter but we have to focus on where the problem is...

(Interruptions)

Yes, I know that the problem is not here, this is what I am discussing. Please allow me to speak.

Mr Chairperson: Order!

Mr Lisette: The question here is that there is a servant who is serving two masters. The Principal Inspector from NLTA, he is serving the Regional Assembly and he is serving the ministry and the NLTA and at this time he is serving the ministry more than the RRA. Is it not time based on what is happening that we should have our Principal Inspector in Rodrigues instead of having one coming from Mauritius?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the request has been made... I personally talked to the Minister telling him...

(Interruptions)

Mr Lisette: Why should you speak to the minister? This is in the budget. You placed it in the budget...

Mr Chairperson: Allow the Commissioner to answer the question.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, le respecté Membre fait comme-ci il n'était pas le Commissaire de Infrastructure Publique, responsable des transports à cette époque-là. C'est vrai...

Mr Chairperson: Order please!

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: C'est vrai, M. le président, par exemple, nous avons de quoi rouler ce bureau à Rodrigues. Nous pouvons avoir un Principal Inspector. Nous avons tous les staffs requissent. Mais justement à chaque ils envoient quelqu'un ici. Moi je ne suis pas d'accord. J'en ai parlé au ministre et je vais aussi en parler au Premier ministre lorsque je vais le rencontrer entre autre, M. le président. C'est vrai, il y a aussi cette histoire des officiers qui viennent faire des *cracks down* à Rodrigues. Ils viennent à Rodrigues, ils font des *cracks down* sans avertir la Commission, sans correspondance, ils arrivent ils font tous ce qu'ils veulent. Donc, ça c'est inacceptable. Je suis content que le respecté Membre pose la question et aussi sur certains points il est d'accord avec moi. Il faut que ça s'arrête. Donc, nous bien sûre on va voir comment le faire mais c'est vrai que de dire qu'il y a un *servant*, quelqu'un qui sert deux chefs, c'est vrai moi aussi j'ai ce sentiment là mais il faut que ça s'arrête.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

**PROMOTION EXERCISE – POSTS OF DEPUTY RECTOR & RECTOR –
2022/23/REDCO**

(No. B/5) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the promotion exercise for the posts of Deputy Rector and Rector, respectively, conducted in 2022/23 for Rodrigues Educational Development Company Ltd (REDCO) colleges, he will obtain information and state:

- (a) the eligibility criteria for each post;
- (b) the total number of applicants and the number of eligible applicants for both;
- (c) the composition of the board of selection for the interview exercises, and
- (d) if all approvals have been obtained for the appointment of the selected candidates from the relevant bodies?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that call for application for the post of Rector and Deputy Rector were issued by the REDCO on 08 July 2022 with closing date set for 29 July 2022.

/UNREVISED/

The qualifications as per changes brought to the scheme of service for the posts of Rector and Deputy Rector as provided in Circular No. 25 of 2022 dated 29 April 2022 issued by the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA) are as follows:

Rector

By selection from among officers of Private Secondary Schools from the grades of – Deputy Rector who possess the Post Graduate Certificate or Diploma in Education from a recognized institution with at least three years' experience in the grade.

Or

Senior Educator/Educator who –

Possess a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from a recognized institution or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the Authority and reckon at least 18 years' teaching experience in Private Secondary Schools after obtention of the relevant qualifications to cross QB in their salary scale.

Or

Reckon at least 21 years' teaching experience in Private Secondary Schools acquired after obtention of the relevant qualifications required to cross QB in their salary scale.

Deputy Rector

By selection from among officers in the grades of Senior Educator/Educator who –

Possess a Post Graduate Certificate in Education from a recognised institution or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the Authority and reckon at least 15 years' teaching experience in Private Secondary Schools acquired after obtention of the relevant qualifications required to cross QB in their salary scale.

Or

Reckon at least 18 years' teaching experience in private secondary schools acquired after obtention of the relevant qualifications required to cross QB in their salary scale.

As regards part (b), I am informed by the Management of REDCO Ltd that the profiles of all the applicants for the two abovementioned posts were submitted to the PSEA on 08 September 2022 to confirm the eligibility of applicants for both the post of Rector and Deputy Rector.

/UNREVISED/

I am further informed that as per eligibility confirmation from the PSEA on 26 September 2022, the total number of applicants and the number of eligible applicants for the post of Rector and Deputy Rector are as follows:

Rector

Three applicants applied for the post of Rector and all three were found to be eligible.

Deputy Rector

Eight applicants submitted their application for the post of Deputy Rector and out of the eight, six applicants were found to be eligible.

With regard to part (c), I am informed that the Board of Selection comprising of the Board of REDCO:

- i) Mr Locknathsing, representative of the Ministry of Education, Director
- ii) The Departmental Head, as Director of the Board

Regarding part (d), I am informed that all selected candidates have been registered by the PSEA, which is the Authority for private aided secondary schools, to the post for which they have been selected. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner is confirming that all those who have been offered the post of Deputy Rector has received their approval from the PSEA? This is what you are saying?

The Chief Commissioner: This was the last part of my reply, Mr Chairperson, Sir – “I am informed that all selected candidates have been registered by the PSEA, which is the Authority for private...”

The Minority Leader: Can then the Chief Commissioner inform the House whether there has been any query in April 2023 regarding some candidates for the post of Rector?

The Chief Commissioner: I am not aware of any query, Mr Chairperson, Sir. From whom? I am not aware of any query. There is no query from the PSEA. They submitted the names of the people they wanted to nominate, to interview and I was said there was three for Rector, eight for Deputy Rector and among these eight, six were deemed to have the necessary qualification and experience and those people who have been appointed as Deputy Rector were among those six. So, I do not know what query she is dreaming about.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, can we know from the Chief Commissioner whether all those in the post of Deputy Rector are enjoying their privileges since their appointment?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, you know how it works with the PSEA. You can be appointment and then you receive your salary after some time. They take some administrative time to do this. It is the same for teachers. As at date, all those who have been nominated they are being paid and, enjoying as she said, their benefits as per the Scheme of Service.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

(Interruptions)

Order please!

CONSTRUCTION – FAMILY TRAINING CENTRE

(No. B/6) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Family Welfare and Others whether, in regard to the construction of a Family Training Centre as announced in the 2023/2024 budget speech (item vote 31112815), she will inform the House on where matters stand as at date?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that there is no project consisting of the construction of a Family Training Centre as such at the level of the Commission for Family Welfare and Others.

Item Vote 31.112.815 – Family Training Centre is a vote item under sub-head 6-102: Women's Affairs, Family Welfare and Child Development of the budget of my Commission which regroups the different capital projects of the Commission for Family Welfare and Others.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would invite the respected Member Raffaut next time to be more specific regarding her question, indicating for which project of my Commission she wishes to obtain information. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this item vote as per mentioned in the question falls under the responsibility of the Commissioner for Women. Can we know from the Commissioner for Women where does matter stand regarding the project she announced to do with this item budget?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I rightly said, within the question it is mentioned in regard to the construction of a training centre. This is why I explained that the Member should be more specific with her question. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Lisette: In this case, Mr Chairperson, Sir, can the Commissioner for Women's Affairs enlighten the House as regards to this item vote which has been mentioned in the question - "Family Training Centre", what she intended to do with that?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, within the 'Family Training Centre', the item vote, there are many projects, namely:

- (i) Upgrading works at Foyer Marie Madeleine de la Croix;
- (ii) Renovation of Family Integrated Centre at Malabar;
- (iii) Setting up of a Family Nature Park;
- (iv) Upgrading of existing children's playground into family recreational areas;
- (v) Conversion of ex-restaurant Mont Limon into a market fair;
- (vi) Setting up of a market fair for women entrepreneurs;
- (vii) Setting up of a Family Resource and Wellness Centre, and
- (viii) Renovation of quarters at Marechal to house an emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: So, that is where the question lies, Mr Chairperson, Sir, where matter stands regarding the implementation of all the list of projects she just announced.

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, once again the question is about the construction of a Family Training Centre. Please look at the question first then I will answer it. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

'HOT MEAL PROJECT' – SCHOOLS

(No. B/7) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the 'Hot Meal Project' for schools, as announced in the 2023/2024 budget speech, he will inform the House on:

- (a) the number of days per week that the students are being served a hot meal as at date, and

(b) if continuous evaluation is being carried out therefor?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the House would recall as per my reply to Question B/7 at the Rodrigues Regional Assembly sitting of 04 March 2023 that the 'Hot Meal Project' is high on the agenda of my regional government as announced in the 'Discours Programme 2023-2027' in March 2022. The project aims to provide a balanced diet to children particularly those from the most disadvantaged background so as to improve their school attendance and extra-curricular achievement as well as educate them from a young age to embrace the 'Healthy Food for Life' guidelines in order to grow and develop into healthy adults and maintain a healthy life style.

This project goes beyond a social initiative and it also provides economic opportunities for local entrepreneurs, farmers and caterers to earn a living through the provision of hot meals to pupils. This reflects our commitment to both social empowerment and economic development.

With regard to part (a) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, I announced in my Budget Speech for financial year 2023/2024 that as part of the ongoing commitment of my government, the 'Hot Meal Project' would be maintained during this financial year and meals would be provided twice per week as from July 2023.

However, to date, owing to budgetary constraints, meals are being served once per week to all pupils of pre-primary and primary schools as was the case since its launching on 27 February 2023. The project is being implemented in collaboration with the Association des Ecoles Maternelles de Rodrigues (AEMR), Parent Teacher's Associations of government primary schools and the Roman Catholic Education Authority (RCEA).

With regard to part (b) of the question, I would like to inform the House that to ensure the smooth implementation of the project, a Hot Meal Project Committee comprising senior officials of the Commission for Education, officers of the Commission for Health in particular Public Health Inspectors, Nutritionist and Advisers has been set up at the level of my Commission. The committee meets regularly to monitor and evaluate the project's progress and address reported complaints.

Moreover, continuous evaluation and monitoring of the project are also carried out through various channels as follows:

- i) Firstly, a Canteen Committee comprising the Head of school, Educators and Representatives of PTA has been set up at the level of every school to assist in the

monitoring of the implementation and supervision of the project at the level of school.

- ii) Secondly, daily reports on the food served on the day are submitted by Heads of Schools by 15.00 hours to the Commission for Education. The reports are duly scrutinised by the Inspectorate cadre on a daily basis who has the responsibility to draw the attention of the Hot Meal Project Committee in case of any issue/complaint received.
- iii) Thirdly, Officers of the Public Health Office and Nutritionists regularly visit and inspect the meals being served to ensure that same complies with hygienic and quality standards.
- iv) Fourthly, a protocol has been devised for reporting complaints at the level of schools. As such, the Head of school is required to immediately contact the Principal Health Inspector or the Nutritionist whenever the food served is unfit for consumption. Subsequently, the Officers concerned promptly attend to the request and carry out appropriate testing. A report is thereafter submitted to the Project Committee for any decision deemed appropriate. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je voudrais savoir du Chef commissaire, je voulais bien comprendre la première mesure budgétaire du Chef commissaire annonçait l'année dernière lors de son allocution – de passer de un jour à deux jour par semaine le 'Hot Meal Project', cela ne va pas se faire durant cette année budgétaire ? C'est ce que j'ai bien compris, M. le président ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said we have lack of funds to implement this project. When we budget something there are other parameters, such as, the price at which we pay. We will meet with the Minister for Finance this week. We do have shortcomings, lack of budgetary provision in a number of items, for example, in Bad Weather Allowance. We have lack of provision in other items. We do have some reallocation that we have made. We are not saying that we will not implement the 'two-day per week' in the schools, supplying foods two days per week but for the time being our budget does not allow it. We may have announced it in the Budget Speech but it is a question of having the provision for it. Okay? We did provide for it but in the light of expenses which have cropped up, the funds may not be necessary. So, we are careful so that we do not over budget. We will speak to the officers of the Ministry of Finance and we will try to convince them to make the funds available for a

second day per week. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce-qu'on peut savoir du Chef commissaire quel est le montant que ça va coûter à l'Assemblée Régionale pour ce deuxième jour de repas et dont justement le montant n'est pas disponible ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the cost per meal are as follows:

Grade 1 to 3 - Rs 60 per head

Grade 4 to 6 - Rs 100 per head

Delivery cost - Rs 1,250 per day

We have also a serving cost which is about Rs 1,250 for above 50 pupils. We had a voted provision of Rs 30 m. and, I do not have information specifically how much it is costing per day. Of course, it depends on the number of pupils and where we are supplying the food. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, en parlant d'évaluation continue de ce projet, le Chef commissaire est-il au courant qu'il y a eu plusieurs cas où les enfants ont fait des plaintes auprès des directions des écoles concernant la qualité des repas servis et qu'est-ce qui a été fait pour remédier à cela ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, providing a hot meal to each student per day in schools is a challenging job. So, it is not an easy job. And, of course, we thank all those people who are making efforts to comply and they have to learn, modernise their equipment, for example, food storage and food transportation equipment. All these are specialists' equipment. But as you know Rodrigues is a very poor, small country and we are trying to do thing with the means that we have. We had recently a case that food served to people was not fit for consumption and we have had unfortunately, to debar/remove that supplier from the list of caterers.

The Minority Leader: Can we have an idea of the number of drop outs in the project? How many students who started to take the meal and then how many students drop outs recently?

The Chief Commissioner: I am not aware of any drop outs. We did not drop out any student, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I am not aware that there has been drop outs.

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Mr Lisette: I would like to ask the Chief Commissioner in this case, whether there is any report emanating from the schools – to state whether there is any student who are not interested in the taking of the hot meal?

The Chief Commissioner: I am not aware again, Mr Chairperson, Sir. What I am aware is that the kids they like very much the food which is being served. This, I am aware.

Mr Lisette: I consider, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the Commission for Education should have made a follow-up to know the trend as regards to the number started in every school and whether this is on the increase or on the decrease. Has there been a follow-up on that matter?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is nobody who has said they do not want the food officially. So, we will not have any trend. If there is zero which trend will you have? I do not know how to think. If I tell you that there is no complaint, there is nobody who has dropped out. I am not aware; the Commission is not aware of any parent who has said to their kid – do not eat these foods. There may be some people for religious faith or other issues, their kids have allergies, they do not eat. But we are not aware, we do not have figures on this, Mr Chairperson, Sir. So, there is no trend. What trend do you want?

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

**INCREASE – ALLOCATION MONTHLY STIPEND/STUDENTS – TERTIARY
LEVEL**

(No. B/8) **Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the increase of allocation of monthly stipend for students at tertiary level, as mentioned in his 2023/2024 budget speech at paragraph 78, he will enlighten the House as to where matters stand as at to date?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, again as the House is aware, the Commission for Training has for mission to act as facilitator for the promotion of capacity building in view of ensuring the development of high calibre professionals in Rodrigues and at the same time reduce the mismatch between job opportunities and job offered. As such, several financial schemes are available at the level of my Commission with a view to encourage the learning process of post-secondary students whilst alleviating the financial burden of their parents and ensure that financial difficulty is not deterrent to post-secondary schools.

As I have said the following five measures in my budget speech for the Financial Year:

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- i) To increase the monthly assistance from Rs 4,000 to Rs 6,000 for students with a monthly family income of less than Rs 50,000 instead of Rs 15,000 (this we are still working on it);
- ii) To increase the one-off grant setting up fees at the start of studies from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 for students with a monthly income not exceeding Rs 25,000 and from Rs 2,000 to Rs 4,000 for students with a monthly income (this we have realised);
- iii) To double the grant for lodging (we have realised);
- iv) To maintain a payment of registration fees for all year one students and to extend payment of same until the completion of their studies (we are implementing), and
- v) To provide return air ticket to each student whose family income does not exceed Rs 50,000 on an annual basis (we have implemented this).

However, I would like to inform the House that out of the five measures announced, four have been implemented to date with effect from November 2023 and January 2024 as per the Executive Council's decision.

The remaining measure, that is, the increase in the monthly stipend has not been implemented to date as consultations are still ongoing with the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development regarding provision of additional funds. As I have said we will have meeting this year, this week with the Ministry of Finance to seek additional funding for implementation of these budgetary announcements. Thank you.

Ms Raffaut: Yes, Mr Chairperson, given that it is a measure, budget measures announced which starts from July 2023 to 2024, can the Chief Commissioner inform the House if there is going to be back pay for the students last year?

The Chief Commissioner: These payments, Mr Chairperson, Sir, are paid according to your present situation. The decision will be taken subject to the availability of the funds to back pay, maybe up to a certain date, because it is true today Rs 4,000, of course, it is a stipend, it is not intended to meet all the expenditure of the students. Some students may work part-time, they are encouraged to, some students may be assisted by their parents, by their relatives. We know how it is, but it is deemed that Rs 4,000 is not sufficient even for those who are below Rs 50,000. I know some people who have revenue above Rs 50,000, for example, they are not

getting their ticket, okay. But we have criteria and of course it is not easy at times for some parents, both are working and they have just above Rs 50,000, Rs 60,000, Rs 80,000 but if you have two kids studying, today one return ticket is about Rs 7,000, it is already Rs 14,000 and you have all your other expenses, it is quite difficult. Yes, I hope the Ministry of Finance will open their mind to our request because as you are aware in the national budget they always have supplementary expenditure. We do not have this procedure of supplementary expenditure in Rodrigues but of course, we will try our best to implement this last budgetary measure and increase it to Rs 8,000. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, there is one point that has been mentioned by the Chief Commissioner, I would like to have his views on the matter. Being given that the criteria for air ticket it is not greater than Rs 50,000, now say that a family has two students who are studying abroad, I think that it will be fair if for the first Rs 50,000 this is taken into consideration for one student but if it is for the second Rs 50,000 there is no second Rs 50,000 with the family, I consider that it should be fair that the second kid be given the possibility of having their air tickets so that it is at par with any other family. What is his views about this?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Member is right, it should be Rs 50,000 for one and then if it is two, we double it. So, I take good notice of this remark and we will ensure that we do modify in the case of people having more than one student. But as I have said even for one, you know people have debts, everybody has their house loan, car loan, I-phone loan, so you know it is hard but one thing is we should also encourage parents from an early age to save for their kids so that when their kids they go to the university they do have some money and, of course, their parents also should save and invest and work hard so that your wards could be better off. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, en écoutant le Chef commissaire on a bien compris que beaucoup de mesure annonçait l'année dernière c'était que des effets d'annonces. On annonce en fanfare le deuxième jour *hot meal*, on annonce en fanfare l'augmentation des *stipends* et maintenant qu'on va discuter pour avoir ces augmentations du budget.

M. le président, le Chef commissaire est-il au courant que quand on a les annonces de budget comme ça il y a beaucoup de parent, il y a plusieurs enfants aussi, plusieurs jeunes qui peut-être n'auraient pas pu s'embarquer dans cette aventure d'étude en dehors de Rodrigues mais que *based on these announcements* ils sentent qu'ils peuvent prendre la route pour les études à Maurice ou ailleurs. Le Chef commissaire peut-il nous dire quand pense-t-il

implémenter cette augmentation, cette mesure, est-ce que, ce sera pour très bientôt, est-ce que dans cette année financière avant juin 2024, il compte justement implémenter cette mesure pour que ces jeunes puissent justement, comme il dit à Maurice Rs 4,000 ce n'est rien du tout pour que les parents soient soulagés ?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, out of five measures we have implemented four. The fifth one...

(Interruptions)

I do not want to be sexiest but we know women want things immediately. But I am telling her out of five, we have worked on four and the fifth one I am taking my *baton de pèlerin*, I am going to Mauritius this week together with the next Commissioner for Finance to ask them to provide for the funds so that we can help our students. It is not my fault if the budget which was provided at the time and, we thought according to the data at the time that it would be sufficient but then there has been more applications, more students going to university, more expenditure but we will do our best in the coming weeks even if we have to reallocate money maybe from item of expenditure which are not going to be spent, we are going to allocate money for these students. For example, Mr Chairperson, Sir, if we have to review the monthly financial assistance from Rs 4,000 to Rs 6,000, this will entail an amount of Rs 14,691,500 m. So, it is a lot of money. Okay? But as I have said we have been under provided with funds. Okay? We have been under provided with funds just like the Bad Weather Allowance. And, we are proud, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that 80% of our measures announced in education have already been implemented. There is only one and we think before the end of the financial year we will manage to either reallocate funds or seek additional funds for this, example this item and also for all other items, the school feeding project also so that we can please one and all. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, maybe the Chief Commissioner can inform the House about the number of students who are eligible for this increase?

The Chief Commissioner: There is 300 students, Mr Chairperson, Sir. So, 300 times increase of Rs 4,000. Rs 4,000 x 300, *combien ca fait*? So, it is a big figure for even for one month. Rs 1.2 m per month. Yes, Rs 1.2 m. My belief, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we will look at the figures Rs 1.2 m which is Rs 14 m. for a year. My colleague the next... will look into that.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question. Member Baptiste?

SOCIAL HOUSING SCHEME – SINCE MARCH 2022

(No. B/9) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Social Housing Scheme implemented since he assumed office in March 2022, he will provide information to the House as to the number of beneficiaries who have signed their contracts/agreements with the commission to date and to state the number of housing units completed, if any?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson Sir, with your permission, I would like to provide the reply to question B/9 and B/10 together as both questions relate to the same subject matter.

Since I assumed office in 2022 as Commissioner responsible for Housing, a new policy was adopted in order to implement a more effective social housing policy in Rodrigues. The beneficiaries had henceforward been granted construction materials phase-wise for the construction of their housing units.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that a special attention is being given to the vulnerable and low income families who were facing much difficulties to have a decent housing under the previous scheme where they had to secure a loan to finance the cost of their social houses.

As mentioned, it is a social house, meant for individuals with low income and we do not believe that a beneficiary has to indebt himself/herself with a loan to be granted with such a social house. Indeed, Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I assumed office in 2022, there were more than 300 vulnerable families who were unable to secure such a loan, meaning that, they were not eligible to benefit from the previous housing scheme.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of beneficiaries who have signed their agreements and have completed the construction of their housing units is being compiled by officers of my Commission.

With regard to question B/10 the number of beneficiaries who have contracted a loan from an approved financial institution to finance their housing unit is also being compiled.

I wish to inform the House, that all approved institutions have reported several defaulters to my Commission, which has subsequently contacted the defaulters to urge them to repay their loans. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Baptiste: Anyway we have no figures it means that this issue is not being taken seriously because you mentioned that 400 were not eligible. At least I wanted to know how

many now have been able to benefit from when he assumed office? Can I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner with regard to the distribution of materials whether he is aware of the hardship being faced by many beneficiaries of the actual ongoing schemes for example, I will take the case of one lady who has casted the slabs since August and she is still waiting for materials to continue the next phase? Is he aware that there are many problems in relation to this issue?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as far as housing is concerned even we talk about the Bela houses, this has always been an issue. The issue is it is simple, in fact, the suppliers they delay the delivery of these materials. Okay? So, I know this is an issue and I agree with the respected Member. We have made some rearrangement in terms of staffing in the Housing Unit so that so that we can cater for this problem. Okay?

Donc, M. le président, il y a aussi des soucis comme j'ai dit avec ceux qui *supply* les matériaux. Mais il y a une chose que j'aimerais dire, M. le président, c'est que c'est vrai que on a hérité de ce plan de 'Housing Scheme' mais toujours est-il qu'on reçoit beaucoup de lettre de la part des institutions qui nous disent qu'il faut payer. J'ai là comme exemple une lettre émanant d'une institution bancaire, par exemple qui dit – je vais lire quelques phrases. Et, on adresse la lettre, M. le président – '*Dear Rodrigues Regional Assembly*' – on adresse à l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues. On aurait peut-être dû s'adresser au Departmental Head, M. le président. '*The*' – je ne vais pas citer le nom de l'institution – '*is hereby claiming from you as joint and in solido, guarantor of Miss ..., payment of a sum of Rs 230,003.43 being the amount due by Miss in the capital and interest as at 27.10.2023*', M. le président. On reçoit plusieurs lettres comme ça.

(Interruptions)

The information is still being compiled but you have to wait. It is being compiled. There are so many letters amounting to millions of rupees. C'est ça votre plan de logement! C'est ça le problème, M. le président. Lorsqu'on parle de '*social housing*', comme j'ai dit, j'ai mentionné dans la réponse, on donne ça aux gens qui sont un peu démunis. Ils prennent leurs temps. Et je suis content qu'au moins le respecté Membre Baptiste a dit il y a une dame qui a pu couler sa dalle. C'est arrivé a au moins à la dalle. *Inn komans koul dal tou*. Ça veut dire que ça marche, M. le président. Donc, pour vous dire qu'on a hérité d'un projet, on doit continuer ce projet mais avec beaucoup de difficulté.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner mentioned about the problem that are being faced with suppliers, I consider that there is a contract agreement

between the Commission and the suppliers and as he has said the suppliers are at fault as regards to delivery on time of the materials. I would like to know whether there has been action taken against these defaulters as per the contract document?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, all that I know, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is that letter has been sent to them as notice regarding their contracts.

Mr Lisette: May I ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner how many of these defaulters have been enlisted because they are not providing satisfaction to the Commission.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is not something which is easy. I do not have the information. If the Member wants to come with a substantive question, I will answer. Thank you.

Mr Baptiste: While talking about defaulters, I know the Commissioner has not been able to give an answer maybe because there are no defaulters as per the Memorandum of Understanding whenever there are defaulters notices have to be sent by registered post to the Commission by the respective financial institutions. I think that these information are not difficult to compile. Can the Deputy Chief Commissioner be more serious and when is he willing to table the information here so that we can have the exact picture of what he is saying?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as I have said the information is still being compiled and after compilation of these information it will be made available to you and it will be made soon, very soon.

Mr Baptiste: Anyway, I do know it means also that maybe the Deputy Chief Commissioner is not following the file as it should be. No housing unit has been completed so far. So, in light of this, two years now, we know that there is a very long waiting list. He mentioned 400 potential beneficiaries were not eligible under the previous regime scheme. So, when is he contemplating to give these 400 beneficiaries who were not eligible - because you are talking about vulnerable - is there a time frame for you to give all these beneficiaries their agreement and also to give them the necessary facilities so that they can complete their housing units in the earliest delay?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, soon very soon.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that with the answers that we have received we have not obtained rather, whether he intends to review the schemes so that to ensure that there is quick execution of the project so that the beneficiaries could really get not only a

contract, signed a contract and get part of their construction materials but a housing unit as it should be so that they can live decently with their families?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, peut-être je vais répondre en français. J'ai déjà répondu à cette question, j'ai dit qu'on fait des réorganisations au niveau de la Commission dans le Housing Unit. J'ai déjà répondu. Bien sûr, au cours d'un projet, si jamais, il y a des soucis, on va revoir. Mais on a déjà commencé à revoir la structure et comment donner des matériaux parce que c'est vrai il y aura plus de bénéficiaires à partir de très bientôt. Donc, on va certainement revoir et dans le but d'améliorer ce service, c'est-à-dire, aider ces gens à avoir leurs maisons.

Mr Lisette: Yes, the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned about several defaulters as regards to payment, which is now known to him, I would like to ask him what has he been doing since he has been made aware of these defaulters? Has he called these defaulters? Has there been any meeting with these defaulters to know exactly why they are not able to pay for their debts?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, *je n'arrête pas de me répéter concernant les réponses. Je l'ai dit d'ailleurs. So, "I wish to inform the House, that all approved institutions have reported several defaulters to my Commission, which has subsequently contacted the defaulters to urge them to repay their loans."* So, we have already contacted these defaulters via my officers. I do not know if they have had meeting with them but they have been contacted to urge them to pay their loans.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, last question.

Mr Ramdally: Est-ce-que je pourrais demander au Deputy Chief Commissioner si dans le nouveau plan il est inclus la peinture, les facilités et carreaux, tout ça ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, oui, bien sûr, c'est inclus dans le *scheme*. Mais un *scheme* peut être revu à n'importe quel moment. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: A last question, Minority Leader.

The Minority Leader: Can I know from the Deputy Chief Commissioner what is the implementing body for the construction of these social houses? Anybody apart from the Commission for Housing implementing these projects?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: M. le président, comme nous avons dit c'est un projet social sur le '*self-help basis*', c'est-à-dire, c'est la personne qui reçoit les matériaux et

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construit sa maison *'phasewise'*, c'est-à-dire, en arrivant il faut couler la base de fondation, 'bime' et puis, dalle et bien sûr le *'finishing'* après. Okay ?

(Interruptions)

Rodpro ça va venir plus tard pour implémenter le projet. Vous savez très bien ce que vous avez été faire à Maurice justement pour bloquer Rodpro. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Next question. Mr Ramdally.

BENEFICIARIES – NEW SOCIAL HOUSING SCHEME

(No. B/10) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to beneficiaries of New Social Housing Scheme introduced in 2016/2017, he will state the number thereof who contracted a loan from an approved financial institution to finance their housing unit, indicating the:

- (a) number of defaulters reported to his commission by the respective institution, as per the Memorandum of Understanding, and since when;
- (b) total amount due to date, and
- (c) remedial measures/actions taken or to be taken by the commission in regard thereto?

(Vide Reply to PQ B/9)

FISHERIES ACT 2023

(No. B/11) The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the Fisheries Act 2023, he will inform the House on if consultations were made with his commission prior to the adoption thereof by the National Assembly and, if so, to state the recommendations/proposals made in relation thereto?

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Others (Mr Perrine): Mr Chairperson, Sir, allow me to make a quotation before I will answer this question. Somebody in Mauritius sent me this quotation this morning... Yes, I was saying, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that this morning, a friend from Mauritius sent me this quotation which I would like to share to everybody here because I think this is very interesting for Rodrigues. We live in a world where the truth has to be explained again and again while a lie is believed blindly. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am asking

myself why this questioned is being asked when it has been introduced in Parliament in Mauritius, approved by the Government and proclaimed by the President. When I looked and there has been a lengthy debate in Mauritius, when I looked about contribution of our two Members in Mauritius on this bill, it means that they have... it has been accepted and appreciated but I am sad to see that the Opposition here is asking question about consultation and whether to submit our submission to the Ministry. So, when I looked at the contribution I have said of the two Members and qualifications they have used for this bill, I am *perplexed comme on dit*. May I give some qualifications being used?

- (1) I certainly subscribe to the mindset that this Bill set consistently;
- (2) This Bill is absolutely fantastic; this Fisheries Bill is really a good Bill, this Bill requires our full support

And I have been shocked to read that and at the end:

“Mr Speaker Sir, I command the Bill to the House.”

But after ten years in Parliament, we should learn the lesson and know that it is the mover of the Bill who command it to the House; not a Member...

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, Point of Order, please. I consider that the respected Commissioner is losing the time of the House because there is a question which is set directly. I know that you do not have control over the answer of the Commissioner but I would rather call upon your indulgence so that he goes directly to the question at hand. Yes.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: There has been a Point of Order, Mr Commissioner. Go straight to the answer, please.

Mr Perrine: This, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I agree, forms part of my answer. I cannot say yes or no and sit down. Those who have ears should listen. So, we should... Maybe they are going to rewrite what Erskine May has submitted. So, and also, they are blowing their trumpet everywhere that they are the defender of autonomy but in their speech where there is a law being discussed, going and asking the Minister to help to have *bottes* and *bottines*, to have *cartes pêcheurs*, this is disgusting. We have to defend the interest of Rodrigues and the interest of the Rodriguan people; not going and begging Ministers to give me something et cetera. This is unacceptable. You know, and one Member even thanked the Minister for being given 500

lifejackets to the fishermen in Rodrigues. It is the Commission that... I am answering. Please listen. If you cannot, you know what to do. This is the Commission who paid for the lifejacket; not the Minister. We were honoured to receive the Minister...

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, on a Point of Order. We have got only three hours question time and we see the Commissioner is departing from the very question that he has to answer. So, we are losing the time of the House, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: Mr Commissioner, please, I know that I have no control over your answer but as far as possible, respect the question.

Mr Perrine: They asked question; they should be ready to listen. You asked question and you do not want to listen to the answer? No. No.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: You have to listen to what I have to say.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Please, order!

Mr Perrine: So, in Mauritius, that has been the policy of OPR all the time. In Mauritius, they say okay, it is okay for Rodrigues. But when they come to Rodrigues, they say no, no, no. It is not me; it is in Mauritius; not us.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please! Let the Commissioner answer!

Mr Perrine: ...the autonomy of Rodrigues. As per Section 26 of the Regional Assembly Act, Fisheries has full autonomy for this sector, policy and administration. So, everything that will be done in Rodrigues concerning fisheries must have the approval of the Commission first and not decided in Mauritius and then applied in Rodrigues. I request Members to respect the law of the RRA Act and do not go to Mauritius asking Ministers to block something, to give something. This is not the duty of the Representatives of Rodrigues. And, you know, there is a creole diction which says that, "*Crasse en ler tombe dan figuir*". You know, there was a PQ in the Assembly and where the Honourable Barbier was asking a question of a project, farming project to be introduced in Rodrigues. The Rodriguan

Administration at that time was against and the Minister was Mr Von-Mally. He had a lot of projects to Rodrigues and the administration here...

Listen! ...writes letters asking not to implement in Rodrigues to respect autonomy. So, now they are asking for discussion, consultation and report. What discussion, consultation? I discussed with the Minister. I had consultations with the Minister every week but we discussed project concerning the interest of Rodriguan and their section; not what I am going to do. And, I will tell you that this project, Fisheries Bill was initiated 10 years ago. There has been discussion, workshop and people of your Government has been invited to attend workshop in Mauritius and the Ministry. And, now, you are asking me if I had consultation. What consultation? The Minister... I was at the airport in August to see off the Minister going to Mauritius. He informed me that there is a Bill which has passed the SLO agreement as I received and will introduce the Bill shortly in the Parliament. He asked me about my opinion.

I told him that according to the law, you can pass whatever Bill you want but we, we will see, we will have to decide on it adaptability in Rodrigues and even if there is something in the law which is against the interest in Rodrigues, according to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly Act, we can introduce a Bill in Parliament to address this issue. But I told him two things I want you to take into consideration before having this bill. First about the interest of Rodrigues, two things that is the Territorial Sea Act: that Rodrigues have control of the Islands, the banks within Rodrigues quarters territory. That should rest with Commission of Fisheries in Rodrigues. Also, I talked about the zoning which your government, when you were in power here, you accepted blindly and this, according to me, is against RRA Act. So, this Government will fight so that this is removed completely or partly removed.

Because in the Fisheries Bill, there is no mention of this zoning despite one Member just mentioned ask the Minister to have it to remove. It is not the Minister who will remove it. I am sorry. We have to introduce in our regulation to have control of the lagoon. The lagoon is within the confine, under the responsibility of Rodrigues, RRA. And, I also told the Minister to define what is said in Section 2 (b), the Confine of Rodrigues. We control what? So, these are issues, I am sorry to say it, that our two Representatives should have raised there and asked questions. So, what I am doing now, is that... And, I would like also to table these papers. For instance, you know, what are the objectives of the Bill and what contribution Rodrigues could have brought to this Bill. You know the object of the Bill is to...

Mr Chairperson: Sorry. Are you tabling the objectives? So, just table it and finish the answer, please.

Mr Perrine: I have to focus on point. Yes, I have a copy. I table this but I have to mention the object of the Bill. Two things I want to mention.

- (1) This Bill has been worked out following recommendation made by EU; and also
- (2) EU funded a project for Consultant to be in Mauritius for one year to discuss this Bill.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, please, on a Point of Order once again, I refer to your indulgence. The Commissioner for Fisheries is providing us with nothing new. Everything that he is saying with reflect to objectives and all, it is available on the website. We do not want to hear it here. What we want to hear is the question that has been asked, whether there has been consultation from the Ministry to his Commission and what has he done on the matter. I think he is going too far. He has been speaking for 15 minutes without answering to the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: You will agree with me, respected Member, that I have no control on the answer of a Commissioner, Nevertheless, I will ask the Commissioner to finish the first part of his answer so that we can have the supplementary questions.

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am just focusing on the objective of the Bill and how Rodrigues will contribute in the debate. One thing on this paper, last thing, is that the Bill caters for recommendation of the Commission of Inquiry on Drugs Trafficking 2018 where it is mandatory to notify relevant authorities when going out fishing expedition. So, I am just telling the Members what Rodrigues have to contribute when this is mandatory. And, this makes reference to inquiry on drug trafficking. So, that is why I told the Minister regarding administration that you are going to do in Mauritius, you can put it in the law but when it comes to being applied in Rodrigues, we will come up with regulation and if need be, we will have to introduce a Bill in Parliament to address problem that Rodriguans will have to face following the application of this Bill in Rodrigues.

So, that is why my question. Why now it has been approved/proclaimed, and now, they are asking whether discussion has been held, what the Commission has submit recommendation. There has been no recommendation. I have told the Minister we will have, introduced a regulation here in Parliament, I suppose, will have full support when defending

the interest of Rodrigues. And, if need be, we will ask a Bill in the Parliament in Mauritius. Coming to the question now, I just told the respected Member that I have... I know that he will be asking but he has according to my information, received some officers of Fisheries who have given him a lot of information. I would like just to tell him to remind these officers they can meet whoever they want but their work is of surveillance to consolidate the regulation that we have so that we fight illegal fishing in Rodrigues. That is their first duty. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, on a bien écouté le Commissaire de la pêche, longue réponse, il a fait le tour de Rodrigues pour pouvoir nous dire apparemment qu'il n'a donné aucune contribution. Et justement, on parlait de l'autonomie. Dans le cadre de l'autonomie, c'est l'Assemblée régionale, c'est la Commission de la pêche qui doit dire au Ministère quoi mettre dans la loi parce que peu importe des règlements qu'on va faire, ça doit être en lien avec ce qui se fait à Maurice. Je veux demander au Commissaire de la pêche aujourd'hui le fait qu'il n'a rien donné comme contribution, malheureux pour les pêcheurs, dommage pour l'autonomie, le fait que le *Fisheries Act 2007 has been repealed*, donc, il n'y a pas de loi qui gouverne la protection de la mer ainsi de suite en ce moment. Et je veux savoir du Commissaire de la pêche, actuellement quelle est la loi qui est en vigueur pour la protection de la mer à Rodrigues si pour lui, j'ai l'impression, cette loi ne nous concerne pas? C'est ce que j'ai compris.

Mr Perrine: M. le président, malgré litanie, on n'a rien compris. Mais vous autres, c'est-à-dire, qu'on n'a pas... Je pense que mêmes les membres qui sont dans l'Assemblée n'ont pas lu la loi. Il y a 210 sections. Il faut lire. Mais il n'a rien qui a changé. C'est simplement access to the sea. Nous, nous parlons tout le temps il ne faudrait pas que tout le monde, il y a festival en mer, quand il y a l'ouverture de la pêche à la seine ou bien... C'est ça qu'il dit dedans. Pour avoir accès à la mer, il faut une permission. Maintenant, même les pêcheurs, ils doivent avoir leur carte professionnelle et aussi leur *identity card*. Tout ça, c'est pour contrôler, avoir beaucoup plus de control sur le lagon et les bateaux qui opèrent autour de Rodrigues et cetera. Mais seulement, je suis d'accord avec vous qu'il y a des arrangements à faire pour que ça soit applicable. C'est qu'on est en train de faire. Et puis, il faut se mettre à l'évidence. Rodrigues ne peut pas dire au Ministre, ça, il ne faut pas mettre, ça, il ne faut pas mettre. C'est l'Assemblée nationale qui décide. On ne peut pas dire au Ministre : Non, vous savez à cause de Rodrigues, il ne faut pas mettre ça. Non, il ne faut pas rêver. Je discute avec lui.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Oui, on est en train de se bagarrer mais seulement, ils vont trouver un arrangement. Il parle d'un MoU pour appliquer à Rodrigues. Ce qu'on est en train de faire. D'ailleurs, je dois partir en mission moi aussi la semaine prochaine. On aura beaucoup de discussions avec le ministère. D'ailleurs, c'est déjà programmé pour lundi. Plus, avec le Ministre Gobin, l'Attorney General, et le State Law Office, comment pour appliquer tout ça à Rodrigues. Vous pouvez rire, vous pouvez faire ce que vous voulez mais nous, je vous dis vous n'avez pas défendu l'autonomie. Vous êtes en train de brader Rodrigues pour avoir des bottes, pour avoir cartes de pêcheurs, et cetera, pour des besoins politiques démagogiques. Moi, I stand, toutes décisions que je peux prendre et non pas *shy*... se cacher derrière X/Y.

Je ne vais pas dire untel est responsable. Je fais mon travail et comme je vous dis, *it is truth, plain truth, crystal clear* comme on dit. Et je ne vais pas dire non, ce n'est pas moi, c'est lui, ce n'est pas moi. Ça, ce n'est pas moi. Je prends la responsabilité et je dis que je mène une croisade contre les fraudeurs et devant eux, je vais les appeler, leur dire. Mais je ne vais pas dire: «*Non, ou koné, ou kav fer, fer ene tiguit. Après nou geter.* Ça, non. C'est à cause de ça que Rodrigues est en train d'aller dans le précipice pour le gain politique. Avec moi, politique, pas politique, la loi, l'honnêteté, discipline, c'est ça qui compte. Et je voudrais que de l'autre côté, il faut donner l'exemple. Mais malheureusement, on est en train de voir les petits problèmes, venir poser une question pour avoir un petit peu de crédibilité ou bien une gain politique.

Ça, je vais vous dire avec l'expérience que j'ai. C'est short-term, ça. Pour quelques jours. Après? Non, non, non, non. Alors, ce sont de jeunes membres. Je leur conseille. Quand ils rencontrent les officiers qui viennent raconteur des bobards simplement pour avoir une promotion à l'avenir, c'est éphémère aussi mais c'est probable que ça va revenir, il faut leur rappeler leur travail. Qu'est-ce qu'ils sont supposés faire? Faire palabre? Il y a des gens qui pratiquent la pêche illégale autour de Rodrigues, vous, vous êtes en train de raconter des histoires? Et ce n'est pas votre travail de faire ça. Votre travail, c'est surveiller la mer. Et avec moi, tant que je suis Commissaire de la pêche, *I will take them to task.* Merci.

Mr Lisette: I would like to have a clear answer from the Commissioner for Fisheries whether there has been an official correspondence from the Ministry of Fisheries in Mauritius to his Commission to give his views before the passing of Fisheries Bill. I would like to know if there is an official correspondence on that.

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am the Commissioner for Fisheries and according to the RRA Act 38 Section (2), consultation, it is the Commissioner who did. I told you that I have discussed and consultation can be a phone call, a meeting. No, according to me, me, myself... I do not know. If they have risen, it is their responsibility. Me, I have talked to the Minister. This is my stand. In August, when the Minister was in Rodrigues, I see him off at the airport. He informed me that the Bill will soon be introduced in Parliament and I told him you can go ahead with your Bill but anything in the Bill which is unacceptable to Rodrigues, we will deal with it in our regulation or we will even if need be, introduce a Rodrigues Regional Assembly Bill in Parliament to address issues.

And the Minister told me... You know, the Minister respects the autonomy. He knows that... You know. We know. But somebody, there are persons that ignore it. That is why he talked to me. And, according to me, I have not seen any correspondence and in meeting with stakeholders, I have told them that for this issue, we will come up with regulation and bill if need be. On Friday, I will meet all stakeholders in Rodrigues. They have been given a copy and they will contribute what they think, amendment we should bring to this Bill and we will discuss this with the Ministry in Mauritius on Monday and the Attorney General the same day and also the SMEs. Thank you.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, based on what the Commissioner has said, that there has been no official letter which has emanates from... *Enfin*, he is not aware, whatever. But is he aware that in a correspondence dated 07 September 2023, his Departmental Head has written to the Minister for Fisheries and allow me to cite what is said in that correspondence. It is said, Mr Chairperson, Sir:

“Refer to your email of 05 September on the above and kindly note that the Commissioner is actually working on a proposal to be included in the Fisheries Bill.”

Is he aware of that correspondence from his Commission?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is very serious. I do not know where this Honourable respected Member has this copy. We will have to ask the Police to inquire. As for me, either you accept it or you do not accept it, I have talked to the Minister and I do not talk to junior officers doing what they want to do. I am not responsible for that. But for me, officially, officially with the position of the Commission, I have discussed with the Minister to thank him. He has understood our position and he has respected the autonomy of Rodrigues. Thank you.

Dr Agathe: Je voudrais savoir puisque le Commissaire vient de nous dire qu'en fait, cette loi concerne Maurice et que si elle ne concerne pas Rodrigues puisqu'à Rodrigues, le domaine de la pêche nous revient à l'Assemblée Régionale de Rodrigues. Est-ce qu'il est en train de dire que puisque cette responsabilité nous revient ici, quand à Maurice, on est en train de passer une loi au niveau de l'Assemblée, laissez-les passer leur loi. Nous, on travaille en l'isolation quitte à ce que par la suite, on doit emmener des mesures correctives qu'on aurait pu adresser dès l'élaboration de la loi. Est-ce que donc, vous êtes en train de dire puisque Rodrigues est autonome, on doit travailler en isolation et on ne va pas contribuer au processus d'élaboration d'une loi qui quand même nous concerne ici?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, les deux députés de Rodrigues n'ont pas été élus dans l'Assemblée pour parler que de Rodrigues; ils peuvent contribuer au niveau national. Mais non, ils peuvent intervenir. Non, le membre demande si c'est simplement attendre. Non. Le responsable, ceux qui sont élus dans l'Assemblée nationale, par exemple, nous prenons Westminster.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order, please!

Mr Perrine: Vous savez, peut-être vous pensez que quand un Commissaire parle avec un Ministre, il donne des directives, il a le pouvoir de lui dire '*pa fer sa, pa fer sa*'. Non. Non, ce n'est pas ça du tout. Croyez-moi. Il y a des gens qui croient que le Ministre, '*tou pouvoir li enan*'. Non, lui aussi, il a la loi à respecter. Mais il faut utiliser la loi pour le faire, pour avoir, pour protéger nos intérêts. Vous savez, j'ai demandé au Ministre *to define confine*. Regardez notre loi section 2. *Within the confine of Rodrigues*, qu'est-ce que ça veut dire confine? Enfin, je ne vais pas... '*Mo pa pou....* Vous savez, il y a beaucoup de choses sur cette loi qui enquête sur notre souveraineté, je peux dire ça. Et ça, je vais soulever avec le Ministre et le faire. Mais seulement, parce que la loi, quand il parle the confinement of Rodrigues, qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ? Quand il parle de territorial area de Rodrigues, qu'est-ce cela veut dire? Maintenant, il n'y a plus de *territorial area*; il parle de *Mauritius Maritime Zone Act*.

Alors, qu'est-ce qui arrive ? Vous savez, je vais vous donner un petit hic. Il y a des bancs qui étaient sous le contrôle de Rodrigues. Maintenant, c'est dans E, Z. C'est-à-dire, eux-mêmes ils vont donner le permis le bateau, *extract* ces zones. Tout ça qu'il faut voir. Quand je discute avec le Ministre pour terminer dessus, je ne dis pas au Ministre de donner telle affaire, telle affaire. Le Ministère ne peut rien nous donner. Il faut que dans notre budget, nous faisons

provision pour ça mais on ne peut pas aller demander au Ministre. Et puis, il n'y a pas seulement demander; bloquer. Pas donner ça. Gillet...

Non, vous savez, on vous doit l'information mais seulement cette information doit être toujours, pas de promesse sans fondement et on vous dit ce qu'on peut faire et qu'un Commissaire RRA peut faire aussi. Pas n'importe quoi, on présente monde et merveille, on va vous donner 200 cartes pêcheurs. Où trouver ça ? Le ministre peut donner ça? Non. Vous savez, ce que je demande, pour terminer, M. le président, c'est que tout le monde, nous sommes élus ici dans cette Assemblée pour défendre l'intérêt de Rodrigues et l'intérêt de la population de Rodrigues et non pas pour défendre l'intérêt du parti que vous appartenez ou bien (comment je vais dire ça), the *legacy* de quelqu'un qui a fait l'histoire de Rodrigues. Merci.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, donc, on a vu clairement que rien n'a été donné de Rodrigues justement au respect de cette autonomie. Cependant, je voudrais savoir par rapport à l'application de la loi et le Commissaire a parlé de *access to the sea*. Cette loi recommande que les pêcheurs *in lagoon/off lagoon* doivent avoir leur *registration card*. Est-ce que le Commissaire fait provision au plus vite pour mettre en règle, pour s'assurer que ces personnes, ces *in lagoon fishermen, off lagoon*, même les pêcheurs d'ourites, pour avoir leur *registration card* au plus vite là pour qu'ils soient *as per defined by the law* pour qu'ils ne soient pas pénalisés?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, c'est-à-dire, je suis d'accord mais ça ne dépend pas seulement de... Ça a un coût financier. On ne peut pas lui dire oui mais nous avons trouvé les moyens pour que ça soit appliqué à Rodrigues. Parce qu'il y a dans la loi, c'est prévu *trainee fishermen*. Et *trainee fishermen*, on donne la carte, il a accès à la mer. Mais ça prend du temps pour qu'on lui donne la carte définitive. Il y a d'autres moyens aussi. Il y a ce que vous avez fait vous-mêmes, *provisional card* qu'on donne et à ce moment-là, après quelques temps, permission, à ce moment-là, c'est ça qu'on veut inclure.

Vous allez voir, je vais porter les règlements ici. Vous allez voir qu'est-ce qu'on va introduire. Vous aurez le temps de débattre, de donner vos idées; pas seulement de critiquer mais de donner des suggestions aussi. A ce moment-là, qu'on peut inclure dans ce règlement qui va être appliqué à Rodrigues. En attendant, j'ai demandé au Commissaire de Police, par exemple, *fixed penalty*. Maurice aussi, on me dit qu'on n'a pas encore commencé. Quelques règlements dedans, ne pas appliquer en attendant *further information*. Merci.

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The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire est vague. Il demande le *fix penalty*. Le *fixed penalty* sera pour ceux qui sont en faute mais si vous ne leur donnez pas leur *registration card* au plus vite, le *fixed penalty* ne peut pas venir avant. Quel est le *timeline* pour donner ces *registration card* a ces pêcheurs avant de parler *fixed penalty*?

Mr Perrine: Vous savez, M. le président, je ne pourrais pas me prononcer dessus mais ça va être discuté avec l'Attorney General et le SLO et le Ministère. Mais je pense qu'ils ont parlé de six mois. On va voir mais ce n'est pas garanti. On va voir. Ça prend du temps. Il faut former même les... Je dois féliciter le député a parlé aussi de la formation des officiers et ne pas faire des abus concernant ce *fixed penalty*.

Mr Chairperson: I think it is high time to break for lunch.

At 13.03 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 14.14 p.m. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr Chairperson: Mr Agathe.

SHORTAGE IN SUPPLY OF PORK

(No. B/12) The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr H. Agathe) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the local meat market, he will inform the House on if he is aware of the shortage in the supply of pork and, if so, to state the reasons thereof together with the measures that his commission is implementing or envisaging to address this shortage and its consequences?

The Commissioner for Agriculture and Others (Mr Perrine): Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission I would like to reply to Question B/12 and B/13 together as both questions relate to pig breeding in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson Sir, I wish to bring to the attention of the House that as regards to the Slaughter Statistics for Rodrigues for pigs from 2013 to 2022, there has been an increase in the number of pigs slaughtered.

Year	No of pigs slaughtered
2013	1,488
2014	1,786

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2015	1,921
2016	1,087
2017	3,128
2018	1,392
2019	1,373
2020	1,508
2021	2,037
2022	2,253

The reasons for the drop in production of pigs for 2023 are as follows: -

- (a) Rodrigues used to have 70,000 tourists but with flight reduction by the the COVID pandemic in 2020-2021, the pork market in Rodrigues crashed due to low demand, during this same period, the price of commercial feed increased steadily. Therefore, production of pigs was not economically viable.
- (b) The above crash in this sector has forced several pig farmers to lower their productions and others to pull out completely from the business.
- (c) Heavy investment in production of black pigs do not produce expected result. This, Mr Chairperson, Sir, has been failure, complete failure and heavy investment of Rs 40 m. has been put in this project to this scheme for the production of black pigs. If you work around Rodrigues, you will see several pen which been abandoned in Montagne Du Sable, in Montagne Charpentier where a lot of money was given to invest in these schemes and beneficiaries of this scheme even left for Mauritius and Canada. This has been a very bad decision of previous Government to invest whole this big sum in the production of black pig which has not been accepted by local producers.
- (d) The feed price increased further in 2022 due to war in Europe. The geopolitical conflicts directly impacted the pig sector and the farm gate price of porkers almost doubled during the year 2022, which was beyond our control, the national control.

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The present price of the different pig feeds on the market is as follows per bag of 25kg:-

- Pig weaner : Rs 686
- Pig grower : Rs 630
- Lactating sow : Rs 610
- Sow and Boar mash bags : Rs 552

Mr Chairperson, Sir, furthermore, demand for pork increased significantly with the resumption of flight connection with Mauritius and Reunion Island in 2022. Pig production is now a high viable activity and pig farmers are trying to increase their production. However, given that the fattening pig industry is based exclusively on piglets produced in Rodrigues, a chain gap of at least 18 months is required to reach the pre-COVID-19 production capacity.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has been no decrease in production. The statistics presented earlier clearly shows that there has been an increase in production since 2013 from 1488 heads to reach 2253 heads slaughtered in 2022.

The artificial decrease in pig production is also due to the fact that some pig butchers and pork processors are not agreeable to work with the actual price of pig (more than Rs 160 per kg live weight) on the local market as this has reduce their profits. This reduction in profit is insignificant as the prices of pork and pork processed products have considerably increased in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the remedial measures undertaken by my Commission to alleviate the shortfall in pig production are as follows:-

- (i) Training session was carried out in collaboration with Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute (FAREI) earlier this year with a view to increase the capacity of local pig breeders to produce more piglets for fattening purposes;
- (ii) Two officers of my Commission attended training in pork production course in China in September 2023.
- (iii) The production capacity of Bay Topaze Livestock Production Unit has been increased from 430 heads to 600 heads per year in view to cope with demand for breeding pig weaners;

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- (iv) The list of sow breeders is being updated so that piglets for breeding purposes from Bay Topaze LPU are being sold in priority to them to maximize the chain reaction (*l'effet domino*). Up to now, 241 sow breeders have been registered with the Commission;
- (v) The Animal Feed Scheme (this is very important) for cattle and small ruminants already been implemented by my Commission will be extended to pig breeders during the first semester of 2024;
- (vi) My Commission is contemplating to import new blood from South Africa in collaboration with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security as from the first semester of the year 2024 to curtail in breeding in local herd and to improve livestock production as follows:-
 - o Duroc breed: 100 heads
 - o Landrace breed: 100 heads
 - o Large white breed: 100 heads

So, we are importing about 300 heads from South Africa to improve livestock production in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, pork production remains a cultural and economic activity for Rodrigues. My Commission is fully committed to provide long term measures with a view to increase pig production in Rodrigues. Subsequently, we are envisaging to construct a modern pig maternity complex for 50 sows, to increase the capacity of production. With this new project, it is expected to have an additional minimum number of at least 1,200 quality pigs for breeding purposes per year, which will be put at the disposal of sow breeders. Proposals have already been made in the Capital Projects Intention for Financial Year 2024/2025.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, additionally, my Commission is planning to develop a new scheme in Budget 2024/2025 with a view to professionalise some 25 sow breeders with a production capacity of at least three in production so as to convert same into multiplier farms.

It is expected that these new farms will back the Baie Topaze Livestock Production Unit to produce quality pigs mainly for breeding purposes.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to piglet's production by my Commission from March 2022 to date, I wish to inform the House that upon tenure of my office, when I took office, the

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stock programmes being implemented by my Commission for Agriculture which include sales of pigs for breeders.

In this endeavor, I noticed that the existing criteria for the sale of pigs contains some loopholes for the allocation of animals for breeding as some of them were being used for fattening and slaughtering by the beneficiaries. Hence, it defeats the main purpose of pig breeding station.

- (a) In order to address the above weaknesses, there are established procedures being followed by my Commission in order to be fair and rational in the allocation of piglets to genuine breeders. I will give under the procedures:-
 - (i) Pig breeders and potential pig breeders submit their application through the Public Relation Unit and Extension Officers of my Commission. Requests for piglets from Reform Institutions and other Government services have special approval and no farm visits are carried out.
 - (ii) All requests are compiled and sent to the respective Extension Offices to report on the farm status.
 - (iii) The farm status reports are put before the Livestock Sales Committee by my Commission for evaluation and consideration.
 - (iv) The eligible list of pig breeders/potential pig breeders with recommendations of the Livestock Sales Committee is sent to management for approval.
 - (v) List of approved beneficiaries are sent to Baie Topaze Livestock Production Unit for allocation.

In the same vein, a new set of criteria has been worked out to ensure pig production for breeding purposes is being allocated to genuine pig breeders and are used only for production of piglets.

The new criteria to benefit from the facility prioritise genuine farmers and reduce poor farmers provided they have required infrastructure and are:-

- (i) Weaners for breeding purposes;

- (ii) Weaners for fattening purposes;
 - (iii) Runt pig weaners; and
 - (iv) Pig for culling.
- (b) The number of applications received in 2022 is 177
- (c) The number of piglets sold from March to date is 229. I think it is unethical to disclose the name of beneficiaries and the number of piglets given to each of them.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Dr Agathe: Je voudrais d'abord demander au Commissaire depuis quand date la pénurie puisque vous avez reconnu dans votre réponse *there is a shortfall in the production of pigs*. D'après vous, depuis quand date la pénurie?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, nous avons travaillé sur les données et nous sommes arrivés à comprendre qu'il y a... Il y a eu mauvaise planification. C'est-à-dire le nombre de porc qui arrive sur le marché pour être vendu. C'est-à-dire, il faut suivre. Il faut prévoir que chaque mois, chaque semaine, il y a tant porc qu'on envoie à l'abattoir et qu'on voit *process*. Par exemple, maintenant, vous savez il y a des grillades un peu partout sur Rodrigues. Il faudrait planifier tout ça. Mais malheureusement, c'est-à-dire, on n'avait pas les statistiques, bases de données et d'un coup, avec le nombre de grillades qu'il y a autour de Rodrigues, avec le nombre de touristes qui arrive, nombre de porc qu'on abat toutes les semaines, c'est-à-dire ce que je vais comprendre, c'est que la demande ne peut pas satisfaire... l'offre ne peut pas satisfaire la demande.

C'est la demande qui a beaucoup augmenté. C'est-à-dire que nous, il nous faut à peu près 18 mois pour pouvoir régler ce problème. Dans ce sens, nous avons introduit deux *schemes*, c'est-à-dire donner les aliments pour les truies, c'est-à-dire le *sow's feed* comme on dit et aussi, les projets pour trois ou quatre truies et puis, deux ou trois mâles. Il y a à peu près 25 projets qui sont en chantier. Moi-même, j'ai visité et je pense que d'ici quelques mois, nous allons voir que cette gap, baisse va être absorbée. Vous savez, c'était quelques temps, je sais vous-mêmes, vous avez introduit le *sales of meat*, la viande bon marché. Parce qu'il y avait trop de porc, il n'y avait pas l'exportation. Mais maintenant, il y a. C'est le contraire. Maintenant, il y a trop de demandes et l'offre est restée statique. Et nous, nous pensons que pour

renverser la tendance, c'est que nous, nous allons donner priorité aux gens qui achètent les *piglets* à Baie Topaze, à ceux qui vont produire, comment dire, faire la source et non pas pour être *fattened and then to sell*. Parce que sinon, c'est ce qui arrive, ils achètent les *piglets* à un bon prix. Qu'est-ce qu'ils font? Pour le *fattening* et pour vendre. Et après, quelques temps, ils n'ont plus de *piglets* encore.

Il y a une forte demande pour les *piglets* qui est je pense à peu près Rs 2,000 ou bien Rs 2,500 l'unité. Ce qu'on va faire, c'est qu'on va encourager les gens à produire les *piglets* pour pouvoir satisfaire la demande.

Dr. Agathe: Je vais poser cette question sur la durée puisque vous-même vous avez dit qu'il faut 18 mois pour qu'une production soit rétablie. Et vous dites qu'il y a une augmentation de la demande. Le marché du porc c'est le marché type même où l'offre suit la demande. S'il y a une demande naturellement les gens vont produire pour répondre à cette demande qui est forte et les prix sont plus forts. Donc, on a une pénurie depuis 2022, ce qui veut dire qu'il y a une interférence avec le marché si le marché n'a pas pu réagir. Et, c'est justement la viande 'bon marché'. A un moment donné vous ne deviez pas faire ça, vous avez fait ça. Et les gens ils ont déstockés, ils ont vendu leurs truies tout ça. Ce qui fait qu'il y a un manque de production de petit cochon, de porcelet depuis plus d'un an, deux ans. Donc, la question c'est donc la rareté date de plus d'un an et demi, est-ce que ce n'est pas provoqué par la façon donc vous-même vous avez agi sur le marché du porc ?

Mr Perrine: Viande bon marché – ce n'était pas pour les bouchers, c'était pour aider les éleveurs qui n'arrivaient à pouvoir vendre leurs produits. Alors, on a organisé deux, vous aussi avant vous avez organisé plusieurs, c'est parce que les éleveurs n'arrivaient pas à écouler leurs marchés. Et moi je voudrais exporter même sur Maurice mais à Maurice aussi il y a une saturation, au contraire ils veulent envoyer à Rodrigues. Alors, ce qu'on a fait maintenant il y a tellement il y a eu de demande, tellement il y a des griefs aussi la prochaine fois je vais venir pour dire les statistiques combien ils utilisent, combien de porc ils ont besoin. Ce n'est pas chaque semaine c'est chaque jour. Tous les jours c'est ouvert. Ça c'est un phénomène nouveau qu'on doit prendre en considération. Comme je vous dis, excusez-moi de vous dire ça, si on avait investi les Rs 40 millions sur les '*large white*' à Rodrigues, les résultats auraient été autrement. Mais '*black pig*' rien zéro. On ne peut pas vendre même ça. Il y a trop de graisse, ça prend trop de temps à grossir, à grandir, croissance retarder. C'est bon la culture, oui *koson Rodrig* mais le problème de coût. C'est, il faut faire, peut-être *koson* pour touristes, je ne sais

pas, son vol est fermé. Notre priorité, honorable *respected Members*, je dois vous dire, que ces les éleveurs. Mais je dois aussi venir plus tard parce qu'il y a les intermédiaires aussi qui joue un rôle dedans comme on est en train de voir avec les légumes. C'est pourquoi je suis venu avec le marché de Terre Rouge. Pourquoi ? Parce que ces les planteurs mêmes qui vont. Vous savez qu'est-ce qui se passe à Port Mathurin les samedis ? Les planteurs viennent avec leurs légumes, il y a des intermédiaires qui achètent tous et puis revend à Rs 70, les giraumons, Calebasses, etcetera. Les intermédiaires doivent être remise à leurs places peut être. Je ne sais pas par quel moyen mais moi je pense tant qu'il y a les intermédiaires c'est ça qui fait monter les prix et aussi découragent les gens à produire. Parce que l'éleveur il produit mais c'est l'intermédiaire qui a beaucoup plus gros profit qu'il tire plus dedans. Pareil comme le planteur qui plante, s'est étendu comme on dit sur un *karo*, je vous dis comme giraumon, calebasse c'est à Rs 30 mais aller dans le marché samedi ou à Port Mathurin c'est à Rs 70 qu'ils sont en train de vendre ça. Mais c'est ça qu'il faudrait voir. Je suis d'accord avec vous, il y a l'offre et la demande mais seulement il faut regarder aussi que les producteurs, les planteurs eux aussi ils gagnent leurs vies.

Mr Baptiste: In his reply at a certain point in time the Commissioner mentioned that there has been bad decision by the previous government in relation to the schemes but at the same time he mentioned that from 2013 to 2022, there has been an increase in the pig production which mean that the schemes have worked. Why is that it is only after 2022-2023 that this shortage is being felt? Is it not your policy which is not correct?

Mr Perrine: Je ne sais pas, on dit que vous êtes un expert en économie, je ne doute pas mais je ne vois pas un projet, pour commencer un an de cela, vous avez les résultats tout de suite surtout avec l'élevage de porc. Il faut bien réfléchi avant de poser *intelligent* question. Moi, je pense que l'effet ce n'est pas immédiat, on ne peut pas fabriquer porc tout de suite. Ça prend du temps à grandir, c'est pourquoi je parle de 18 mois. Il faut faire votre *head working a bit before asking question*. Thank you very much.

Dr. Agathe: Non, mais il faut reconnaître qu'il y a un déséquilibre structurel sur le marché et que le marché a été déséquilibré. Moi, je pense que la raison principale de cela c'est que en 2022 il y a eu des opérations de vente de viande bon marché où vous devriez accès ça sur d'autres viandes que sur le porc. Vous avez fait ça pour le porc et pas pour le bœuf par exemple, alors que c'était sur le bœuf qu'on ne pouvait pas exporter. Et à ce moment-là il y a eu un déstockage qu'on a du mal à rattraper jusqu'ici. Ça c'est une des raisons parce que normalement le marché du porc il est capable de se réguler lui-même. Et, plus de 18 mois se

sont écoulés depuis 2022. Depuis mi 2022 au moment où vous avez fait ces campagnes de vente de viande bon marché. Ce serait donc vos politiques plutôt qui sont à l'origine de ce déséquilibre.

Mr Perrine: Excusez-moi Docteur, vous êtes spécialisé en économie mais moi je ne suis pas tellement d'accord avec ce que vous dites. La réalité sur le terrain c'est que premièrement, je m'explique encore, ce n'est pas à cause qu'on ne peut pas trouver cette viande-là qui a augmenté, c'est quand on parle d'augmentation comment *slaughtered*, c'est-à-dire, les porcs qu'on a abattu à Rodrigues. C'est-à-dire, il y avait une production, c'est-à-dire, c'était sorti 1448, je vous dis, à 2253, il y a eu une augmentation. Ces statistiques viennent du service de la santé, le sanitaire qui nous a dit le *slaughter fee*. Mais ce que je suis en train de vous dire, c'est que, excusez-moi de dire ça, à partir des statistiques, il y a des porcs qui sont abattus et vendus sans contrôle dessus. On doit voir avec les vétérinaires par exemple, il y a les hôtels, il y a des *slaughter unit* un peu partout à Rodrigues qui n'est pas enregistrer et qui abattent les animaux tous les samedis, qui n'est pas inclus dedans. Mais il y aussi les autres produits comme est en train de dire mon ami Deputy Chief Commissioner, dont les prix augmentent et les gens préfèrent acheter de la viande pour compenser parce que c'était à bon marché à l'époque mais c'est à ce moment que ça augmente pour arriver à Rs 160. Le poisson qui étant à Rs 75/Rs 50 est arrivé à presque Rs 200. Alors, peut-être il faudra faire une étude, on ne peut pas généraliser pour dire mais le fait est que l'offre ne satisfait pas la demande. La demande qui a augmenté et qui fait que la production je vais vous dire que c'est stable. Maintenant l'offre, comme je vous dis cette affaire de grillade, tous les jours je vais venir avec statistique pour vous dire combien de porc ils abattent tous les jours. Et ce n'est pas seulement pour Rodrigues, les touristes qui arrivent qui achètent, qui font la queue et qui achètent pour exporter à Maurice. Et voilà, nous nous sommes en train revoir la production complètement, investir, lancer des nouveaux *schemes*, importer nouvelles races de l'Afrique du Sud, envoyer des gens en formation en Chine pour la croissance, revoir tout la stratégie, revoir le fonctionnement de Baie Topaze pour que les gens n'achètent pas des porcelets à Baie Topaze pour *fattening*, pour engraisser et vendre, non. On doit acheter, comme on dit, pour produire, la production et avoir leur propre porcelet à l'avenir. C'est comme ça. D'après notre calcul avec une cinquantaine de Schemes qu'on va mettre en place avec l'aide de la Commission, on va leur donner *animal feed free of charge*. En ce moment-là ils vont pouvoir. Donnez-nous 18 mois et puis vous pouvez votre question à l'avenir.

Mr Baptiste: Merci, M. le président, merci pour le discours mais je pense qu'il est temps d'agir plutôt que de continuer à parler qu'est-ce qu'on va faire. *I would like to ask the Commissioner what has happened to the measure for the budget speech 2022-2023, paragraph 118, where you talked about* une mesure exceptionnel dans ce présent budget, c'est à dire, 2022-2023, en mettant en place une aide aux éleveurs afin de prendre en charge une partie du surcoût alimentaire. Étant donné que vous avez mentionné aussi une des causes est une *high cost of increase in the cost of animal feed. What has been done concretely with the budget that you had for 2022-2023 budget to help these pig breeders.*

Mr Perrine: M. le président, dans le budget ce n'était pas spécifiquement pour les *pig breeders*, c'était pour 'livestock sector'. Mais je dois rappeler au Membre qu'on a donné presque 18 tonnes d'aliments gratuitement aux éleveurs. Maintenant, à partir de ce trimestre on va commencer pour l'éleveur de porc qui auront eux aussi les aliments gratuitement peut-être pour au moins six mois. Mais je dois vous dire que cette argent près de Rs 16 millions a été utilisé, je crois qu'on a dépensé Rs 10 millions, pour les aliments. Je peux venir si vous posez une question de vous dire combien d'éleveurs ont bénéficiés, des aliments gratuitement. C'est exceptionnel, dans le sens que c'est la première fois à Rodrigues.

(Interruptions)

Attendez ils vont recevoir, on ne peut pas donner comme-ci les gens non organiser, on ne sait pas à qui donner mais ce n'est pas ça. Il faut les organiser. On donne sur quelle base ? Ils ne sont pas organisés, on donne à tout le monde ! *zot enan en koson atase a enn pier donn zot aliman ?* Ça peut être vous vous allez faire !

The Minority Leader: M. le président, on connaît le Commissaire pour sa capacité de blâmer toujours les autres. Est-ce qu'il peut nous dire par rapport à ce projet d'insémination artificiel que nous avons commencé avec le Dr Orlando Félicité, un Rodriguais attacher au ministère de l'Agro-Industrie à Maurice pour justement nous permettre de booster la production de porc, on a déjà démarré ce beau projet ? Qu'est-ce que vous en pensez et est-ce que vous continuez avec ce projet d'insémination artificiel ?

Mr Perrine: Non, on va commencer mais ce n'est pas encore commencé. Je dois vous dire qu'il y a une priorité, on doit établir les priorités et notre priorité c'est organiser le secteur 'livestock'.

Premièrement, en mettant, ce qu'on est en train de faire *livestock information management* pour pouvoir planifier, organiser et suivre depuis la naissance, traçabilité – un

terme que vous devez peut-être commencer à comprendre, la traçabilité des animaux. Vous savez - *ban kabri galoup kot ale rant dan legliz partou* - ça ce n'est pas ça du tout. Il faudrait professionnaliser la production, informatiser, traçabilité pour contrôler et les maladies et savoir... A Rodrigues en ces moment-ci les animaux sont partout, avec des *tags* qu'on enlève quand on veut et qu'on remet. On ne peut pas. Vous savez professionnellement si je voulais des gains politiques donner... Non, il faut organiser, traçabilité, on sait M. Baptiste à combien de porc, c'est sur notre système, qu'est-ce qu'il a fait, il a vendu, il a transféré, on va savoir. C'est à ce moment-là qu'on intervient. Mais commencer quelque chose tout de suite et puis on abandonne, ce n'est pas ça. Pour répondre à la Minority Leader, combien de bâtiments sont fermés, des projets qu'on a commencés en vitesse. En vitesse ! Je l'invite à venir à Montagne Croupier pour voir le nombre d'enclos qu'on a abandonné derrière le centre communautaire pour *poul likou touni*. Mais non, de bonne guerre, je vous dis il faut commencer quelque chose qu'on est sûre de terminer. *Never start something that you cannot end*. Merci.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Commissaire répondait aussi à la question des *piglets*. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir la procédure pour qu'un éleveur puisse avoir un porcelet à la Commission de l'Agriculture ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, j'ai passé au moins 15 minutes à seulement lire les procédures. *Bizin met ear helping !* Non, c'est-à-dire, rapidement, la personne doit faire l'application par téléphone etcetera, au Public Relation Unit (PRU). Mais ce qui est important les Extension Officers vont aller visiter si vous avez l'infrastructure nécessaire pour faire l'élevage, oui. A ce moment-là on met la recommandation. Mais si vous n'avez pas, *si pou atas avek enn pie mang ou met derier lakaz*, on ne va pas recommander. Et c'est pourquoi la clé dedans, maintenant il fait ça recommandation ça passe par un Sales Committee. Le Commissaire n'est pas dedans pour savoir *dir don sa pa don sa*. Le Sales Committee recommande qu'est-ce qu'on va donner. A ce moment-là ça passe devant le Managing Board pour allouer. Et la personne reçoit une lettre, il se rend à Baie Topaze pour collectionner/prendre en charge, le piglet qu'il a eu, son produit.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Commissaire s'il y a des cas où il y a des gens qui ne font pas leurs applications, qui ne passent pas par le Sales Committee mais qui ont aussi des porcelets, donc c'est-à-dire que les procédures établies ne sont pas respectés ? Est-ce qu'il y a eu des cas comme ça ?

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Mr Perrine: Je n'ai pas eu de plainte. Mais seulement ce que je peux dire c'est qu'il y a plus de demande que ce qu'on peut offrir. Ça je peux vous dire. Mais quelqu'un sans passer par les procédures et qui puisse avoir un porcelet mais ça c'est grave, c'est une offense et peut être rapporter à la Police. Parce que ce que je doute un petit peu parce que vous savez ces porcs qui sont à Baie Topaze il y a un *tag number* et s'est enregistré, je ne sais pas comment ils peuvent avoir ça et effacer le *tag number* parce qu'il y a toute l'équipe des vétérinaires, les Stockworkman, le responsable du centre, je ne sais pas comment ils font pour passer entre tous ces mailles ? Et ça c'est un exploit extraordinaire. Mais vous savez à Rodrigues je n'ai rien vu d'impossible.

(Interruptions)

The Minority Leader: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir quel est le nombre maximal qu'un éleveur peut avoir ou a pu avoir récemment ?

Mr Perrine: Ça dépend, il n'y a pas de *fix fast criteria*. Ça dépend de ce que la personne demande et après visite de l'Extension Officers et puis ils font des recommandations. A ce moment-là ils envoient au comité qui est responsable, ils sont les officiers du gouvernement et qui décident.

Mr Lisette: I think it is outcomes overcomes the number of piglets that are available at Baie Topaze. Will it not be wiser and equitable if the piglets are sold for the maximum of farmers instead of leaving a whole lot to a particular farmer?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it depends on the project of the pig breeder. If the pig breeder applied for four, five, six and he has structure for his project then why should the Extension Officer reject his application? I have said at the beginning, it depends on your infrastructure and your capacity to run the project. This is the most important element. It is not who he is, if he is poor, he is rich or he is related to politician, etc., this is not the question. The question is the Technician has been there, this man he has the infrastructure for ten piglets then why should we not give him ten? I do not know on what ground?

Mr Chairperson: The Table has been advised that PQs B/17, B/30 and B/32 have been withdrawn. Next question.

PIGLETS PRODUCED

(No. B/13) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to piglets

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produced by his commission since March 2022 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the number thereof and indicate the:

- (a) established procedures and eligibility criteria for potential breeders to benefit therefrom;
- (b) number of applications received therefor, and
- (c) number of piglets sold, specifying the number of pig breeders who have benefited therefrom and the number of piglets given in each case?

(Vide Reply to PQ B/12)

**MAURITIUS FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION (MFA) CUP 2024
TOURNAMENT/MAURITIUS**

(No. B/14) Mr J. P. SPEVILLE (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth and Sports and Others whether, in regard to the Mauritius Football Association (MFA) Cup 2024 tournament in Mauritius, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if any team from Rodrigues will participate therein and, if so, to specify:

- (a) the details as to their departure to Mauritius;
- (b) the facilities to be provided thereto; and
- (c) if any participating team has been provided with its grant for the ongoing season and, if so, the *quantum thereof and when the payment effected?*

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the winning team of the 2022/2023 First Division Football League namely, Rodrigues Rising Sports Club will participate in the Mauritius Football Association (MFA) Cup 2024 in Mauritius.

I am informed by the Rodrigues Football Association that the competition will start around the end of March 2024 and the exact date of the competition will be confirmed by the Mauritius Football Association in due course.

Mr Chairperson, with regard to part (a) of the question, the schedule departure to Mauritius will be finalized once the date is confirmed by the MFA.

As regards, to part (b), Mr Chairperson, Sir, as per previous editions, my Commission will provide assistance in terms of air tickets and accommodation for the following: -

- (1) 20 players from Rodrigues Rising Sports Club;

- (2) 5 officials from the winning team;
- (3) 1 Referee;
- (4) 1 representative from Rodrigues Football Association, and
- (5) 1 Representative of my Commission

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that payment of grant to football clubs is under process and each First Division team will obtain Rs 60,000 upon application and submission of relevant documents. Thank you Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to know from the Commissioner as regards to the quantum... the amount as compared to the previous season?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, this is due to an unforeseen increase in the number of teams in the first division by the Rodrigues Football Association from 08 to 11. The available budget has been shared equally among the teams.

Mr Spéville: Mr Chairperson, football is a 'sports des contacts', there is a high risk of injury, is the Commissioner contemplating to provide any insurance cover for the players playing in the tournament in Mauritius?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, Sir, for the time being the Rodrigues Football Association is not in a position to furnish insurance for the team football due to the constraint of budget.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire quel montant on a donné à ces 11 équipes et quel montant ont a donné avant ? Il a parlé d'un *decrease because of the increase in number of teams. How much we gave and how much we are giving now?*

Mr Ravina: Last year we have given Rs 75,000 to First Division and this year as I have said in my answer Rs 60,000 due to budget constraint.

Mr Baptiste: Since the past few months, we have received many complaints from athletes relating to last minute booking with Air Mauritius in relation to air tickets. Could the Commissioner inform the House what measures he intends to take so that these recurring problems do not come again because it is coming so often these days?

Mr Ravina: Mr Chairperson, since the last issue concerning air ticket up to now we have not received any complaint and any issue concerning air tickets to any athletes or any team or any group who proceeded to Mauritius.

The Minority Leader: With regard to the rising team, it seems the *tournoi* will start as from end of March, can you inform the House when are they leaving Rodrigues?

Mr Ravina: As I have said in my answer, Mr Chairperson, I have been informed by the Rodrigues Football Association that the competition will start around end of March and as soon as we receive the exact date on which the competition will be held, then we will inform the House.

**‘FÉDÉRATION DES ASSOCIATIONS COOPÉRATIVE DES ELEVEURS DE
RODRIGUES LTÉE’ (FACER) & RODRIGUES AGRICULTURAL MARKETING
COOPERATIVE FEDERATION LTD (RAMCF)**

(No. B/30) Mrs M.A.L. Allas (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to ‘Fédération des Associations Coopérative des Eleveurs de Rodrigues Ltée’ (FACER) and Rodrigues Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Federation Ltd (RAMCF), he will, for the information of the House, state if he has been made aware that the continued failure to operate the two federations is causing much difficulties to planters and breeders in Rodrigues and, in the affirmative, to indicate: -

- (a) the reason of the non-appointment of the different Caretaker Boards, and
- (b) remedial measures he is proposing to take in the meantime to alleviate the problems?

(Withdrawn)

TERRE ROUGE FARMER’S SERVICE CENTER

(No. B/32) Mrs M.A.L. Allas (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the Terre Rouge Farmer’s Service Center, he will, for the benefit of the House, state if: -

- (a) the center is operational and, if so, to indicate the date of same became operational together with services being offered thereat to planters and breeders of the region, and
- (b) this project will be replicated in other regions of the island?

(Withdrawn)

Mr Chairperson: Time is over.

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STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

ORTHODONTIST UNIT - RODRIGUES

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to make a statement of the setting up of an Orthodontist Unit in Rodrigues. I wish to inform the House of the opening of a new specialised treatment in the field of Dentistry in Rodrigues, the Endodontic. The Hon. Dr. Kailesh Kumar Singh Jagutpal, the Minister for Health and Wellness expecting in Rodrigues in mid of February 2024 for the official launching of the new service. The unit will start its operation by the beginning of March 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the orthodontic treatment is according to the ... specialist in root canal treatment the Endodontist only. I quote: *“Endodontic is the specialty of dentistry that deals with the inside of a tooth, the dental pulp, root, nerves and surrounding issues. Endodontic therapy is significant because it is designed to save a tooth that otherwise would have to be removed and in terms of functionality there is no real substitute for your natural tooth. The pulp can become damage due to periodontal disease or as a result of traumatic injury. However, the most common reasons for pulp damage are extensive decay or fracture that exposes the pulp to bacteria that stimulates infection. Endodontic infection whilst often painless can present with pain ranging from mild to excruciating. This can be provoked by a host of factors including hot or cold temperatures on consuming food, biting or tapping the tooth or it may be painful without any encouragement. Most endodontic treatment is necessary due to an infection of the pulp or root canal from bacteria normally present in the mouth. However, there are other common causes for the need of endodontic treatment. Tooth decay that has exposed the pulp, blow to the tooth or trauma that exposes the pulp, repeated dental procedures on a tooth that can cause the pulp to die and as an aid in placing a crown on a badly broken down tooth where medical reason makes extracting a tooth impossible. Severe sensitivity to hot or cold element.”*, unquote.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the endodontic services will be available in the three dental clinics at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Marie Jacqueline Félicité Area Health Centre, Mont Lubin and at the Child Friendly Dental Clinic, La Ferme. Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I move that the House be now adjourned to Monday 26 February 2024 at 2.00 p.m. Thank you.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

At 2.57 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising, adjourned to Monday 26 February 2024 at 2.00 p.m

Mr Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 2.58 p.m., the Assembly, was, on its rising, adjourned to Monday 26 February 2024 at 2.00 p.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

LEMON FARMING

(No. B/15) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to lemon farming in Rodrigues since 2023 to date, he will state to the House the:

- (a) number of tons produced;
- (b) number of tons exported, and
- (c) support/facilities provided to the planters to help them in the marketing of their products?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission I would like to reply to question B/15 and B/31 together as both relate to the production of lime in Rodrigues.

Lemon is one of the traditional and typical crops of the island of Rodrigues. The quality is highly appreciated by local people as well as by visitors/tourists. It is mostly produced in the coastal regions under intensive production while there are many trees in the backyards of many houses all around the island. It is the main raw material of the various agro-processed products of the island.

The produce has a great export potential and according to latest report, it can even be sold on the European market, provided it adheres to the strict compliance of the EU regulations.

- (a) The estimated amount of lemon produced since 2023 to date is 230 tons.
- (b) The total amount of lemon exported is 151.7 tons.

As regards part (c), I wish to inform the House that the peak production of lemon in Rodrigues is in the months of June and December. In order to provide assistance to lemon

planters for the sale of their excess products, my Commission has liaised with the Agricultural Marketing Board (AMB) who facilitated the export of fresh lemons to Mauritius and the first consignment left Rodrigues on 12 May 2023.

This exercise has been done at no cost with the collaboration of Ideal Food Company Ltd which is a local company dealing with export and import of products from and to Mauritius. I also wish to point out that my Commission acts as facilitator in this exercise and payment by the Agricultural Marketing Board to the supplier upon delivery of lemons in Mauritius are made between the two parties. This export exercise has continued during peak lemon harvest period.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the same effort of providing support and assistance to our lemon planters, my Commission has proposed a working collaboration with the Phoenix Beverages Ltd to develop and commercialise the lime juice in the form of carbonated soft drinks or Juice/Hot Fill with no preservatives from our local product. It is believed that consumers nowadays have a growing health concerns and the local based products of natural ingredients is highly appreciated.

In addition, the introduction of new and innovative flavours in the market is expected to boost the demand for local juice consumption and add value to the Rodriguan lime. From this partnership, it is expected to have the lime drinks produced and commercialized by the month of June 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in order to boost the lemon production in Rodrigues which is one of our golden local products, my Commission is working towards that target under a project financed by the FAO. Experts from the FAO have carried several missions in Rodrigues in 2023 with the following main outcomes:

- Meeting/discussion with the officials of the Commission for Agriculture
- Meetings/workshops with planters, officers, agro-processors and exporters
- Visiting of lemon orchard/plantation
- Meeting/discussion with NPPO officers
- Drafting of an action plan for the surveillance and implementation of clean orchards

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In line with the project funded by FAO the Commission for Agriculture has hired the service of a consultant to assist in implementation of the report submitted. The aim of this project is to probe the possibilities of tapping existing market segment in Europe.

In addition to the above actions have been taken to the possibility to increase market demand in the Republic through the development of a lemon soft drink by potential investors. The product is being developed and based on recent update same could be marketed by end of 2024.

MITIGATE EFFECTS – CLIMATE CHANGE

(No. B/16) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in view to mitigate the effects of climate change and to ease access to villagers during heavy rainfalls, he will:

- (a) state and table the number of bridges/box culverts/cross drains built in the different villages around Rodrigues year-wise by his commission and the National Development Unit, since 2017 to date, and
- (b) define his policy as to same giving clear indications as to timeframe set?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, during the year 2017, the Commission for Public Infrastructure has constructed seven Box Culverts respectively at Port Sud Est, Ile Michel, L'Union, Mangues, Gravières and Rivière-Coco as well as a cross drain along the road leading to Caverne Bouteille Desalination Plant.

In 2018, the road at Vanguard was realigned and a Box Culvert in the locality was also constructed.

In 2019, the following works were undertaken:

- Construction of Box Culvert and Realignment of Track Road at Lataniers;
- Construction of Cross Drain and Ancillary Works at Montagne Charlot;
- Construction of Lined Drain along Batatran Road.

One Box Culvert was constructed at Creve Coeur in 2020 followed by another one at Papayes in 2021.

The following construction works have also been completed during 2022:

- Road and Box Culvert at Anse Raffin near football Ground;
- Box Culvert along the access Road at Eau Vannee;

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- Box Culvert and access Road at Champs;
- A second Box Culvert and access Road at Gravieres – Source Tigomme;
- Box Culvert at Vainqueur;
- Box Culvert and access Road at Riviere Banane;
- Box Culvert at Grand Baie, Nassola, Gravieres/Batatran (near Ton Vet and near Mrs Jolicoeur), and at Mourouk.

Additionally, I am informed that a list of seven drain projects has been completed by the National Development Unit in Rodrigues since 2017 to date at Grand La Fouche Mangles, Camp du Roi, Rivière Coco, Port Mathurin, Baie Malgache, Port Sud Est and Anse Ally respectively.

The information is being tabled as requested.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b), I must inform the House that my Commission has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Land Drainage Authority (LDA) in April 2023 in order to have an integrated approach in developing infrastructural policies to mitigate the effects of climate change.

One of the main components of the MOU is the elaboration of a Land Drainage Master plan for Rodrigues. The Document will comprise an inventory and mapping of all the existing natural and manmade drainage infrastructures, an identification of vulnerable areas with a description of existing drainage systems and mapping of historical flood prone areas for the whole island as well as the mitigating infrastructures including bridges and box culverts to better manage floods, particularly in flood prone areas throughout Rodrigues.

As at date, the Terms of Reference for the recruitment of a Consultant to develop the master plan has already been finalised by the Land Drainage Authority in collaboration with my Commission. I am informed that the Land Drainage Authority will launch tender shortly for the recruitment of the Consultant. We are expecting that the Master Plan will be ready during the course of the present calendar year and will chart the way forward of my Commission in terms of actions to be taken to better the management of floods and mitigate the impacts of climate change in Rodrigues.

In the meantime, we will shortly proceed with the construction of a box culvert at Grand La Fouche Mangles as a matter of priority under our Community Development Programme for the current financial year.

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List of box culverts/bridges and cross drains constructed by the Commission for Public Infrastructure since the year 2017 to date.

2017

SN	Project
1.	Construction of box culvert and realignment of access road at Port Sud Est
2.	Construction of box culvert at Ile Michel
3.	Construction of box culvert at L'Union
4.	Construction of box culvert at Mangues
5.	Construction of box culvert along Gravieres to Source Tigomme
6.	Cross drain along road leading to Caverne Bouteille desalination plant
7.	Construction of box culvert and associated works along access road at Rivière Coco

2018

Realignment of access road and construction of box culvert at Vangard.

2019

SN	Project
1.	Construction of box culvert and realignment of track road at Lataniers
2.	Construction of cross drain and ancillary works at Montagne Charlot
3.	Construction of lined drain along Batatran Road

2020

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SN	Project
1.	Construction of box culvert at Creve Coeur

2021

SN	Project
1.	Proposed construction of box culvert at Papayes
2.	Proposed drain at Le Chou

2022

SN	Project
1.	Proposed construction of road and box culvert at Anse Raffin near football ground
2.	Construction of box culvert along access road at Eau Vannée
3.	Construction of box culvert and access road at Champs
4.	Construction of box culvert and access road at Gravières – Source Tigomme
5.	Construction of box culvert at Vainqueur
6.	Construction of box culvert and access road at Rivière Banane
7.	Construction of box culvert at Grand Baie
8.	Construction of box culvert at Nassola
9.	Construction of box culvert at Gravières/Batatan (Ton Vet)
10.	Construction of box culvert at Gravières (Mrs Jolicoeur)

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11.	Proposed box culvert at Mourouk
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Drains project completed by the National Development Unit in Rodrigues since 2017 to date

SN	Project Description
1.	Drain projects in Rodrigues – Camp du Roi site
2.	Drain projects in Rodrigues in Rivière Coco
3.	Drain projects in Rodrigues – Grand La Manges site
4.	Drain projects at Port Mathurin – Phase 2 – Rodrigues
5.	Raising of ford at Baie Malgache
6.	Raising of ford at Port Sud Est
7.	Drain projects in Rodrigues Anse Ally Site

DRAINAGE WORKS - NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT/ACCACIA

(No. B/17) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether drainage works have been proposed by the National Development Unit at Accacia and, if so, will he state:

- (a) a brief of the project as sent to his commission for approval;
- (b) the different sites to be covered by the drainage system within the project, and
- (c) if his commission has recommended not to go ahead with the project and, if so, how and when he intends to alleviate the problems of flooding faced by the villagers during heavy rainfalls?

(Withdrawn)

‘ONE VISITOR, ONE TREE’

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(No. B/18) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner for Tourism and Others whether, in regard to the ‘One Visitor, One Tree’ project, he will, for the benefit of the House: -

- (a) give details about the outcome of the project as at date, and
- (b) state and table the total cost incurred therefore together with its breakdown?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to the One Visitor one tree project several visits have been carried out on the selected site.

A proposal to upgrade the existing building onsite is under consideration.

An Information Board which will be fixed onsite is being finalised and should be installed in the coming days.

During the last Octopus Closed Seasons 2023 (February–March 2023 and August–October 2023), the Commission for Tourism made a request for octopus fishers to work on the site. Some 66 fishers were posted on the site at Anse Quitor and the main activities carried out on the site are:

- Clearing of site from of invasive plants, and
- Digging of more than 600 holes.

The site is now ready and planting exercise is expected to start during the month of February 2024 with the rainy season to ensure the survival of the endemic plants.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) I am informed that a total cost of Rs 67,970 has been incurred for this project for payment of Rs 57,000 as Consultancy Services Fee for drawings and scope of work for the construction of office space and shed and Rs 10,970 for purchase of equipment for the fishermen working under the Octopus Closed Season Alternative Programme for the clearing of the site.

I thank you Mr Chairperson, Sir.

RENOVATION WORKS – ILE AUX COCOS

(No. B/19) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Commissioner for Tourism and Others whether, in regard to renovation works at Ile aux Cocos, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the: -

- (a) scope of work of the project;

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- (b) name of the successful bidder together with the date of award, contract value, contract period and the expected completion date, and
- (c) progress of work and the amount already disbursed as at date?

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the scope of work about the upgrading of the Ile aux Cocos Project consists of: -

- Renovation of the visitors centre complete with electrical works, rainwater harvesting, etc.
- Decorative interior design works in visitor's centre.
- Construction of a new watchmen quarter including public toilets made up reinforced concrete foundation, wood cladding and roof truss, aluminium roof sheeting, timber openings complete with electrical works, plumbing works, rainwater harvesting, etc.
- Solar farm to power the visitor's centre and new watchman quarters.

The purpose of the project is to provide suitable buildings for the visitors and boatmen of Ile aux Cocos. The construction of a watchman quarter will provide more comfort to the personnel on site.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b), I am informed that the contract was awarded to the lowest bidder SDR Construction Ltd on 18 April 2023 for a total amount of Rs 9,828,000.00 VAT excluded.

The completion of work is expected to be by the end of February 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c), I am informed that 65% of the works has been completed.

I thank you Mr Chairperson, Sir.

ROAD SAFETY

(No. B/20) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to road safety, he will inform the House on if his Commission has carried out any survey to determine the extent of damages caused by accidents, vandalism and normal wearing out to signposts, road markings and other related public structures in Rodrigues and the measures he is contemplating therefor, giving an indication as to when?

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Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that a delegation led by the Assistant Director of the Traffic Management and Road Safety Unit of the Ministry of Land Transport and Light Rail fielded a mission in Rodrigues last year. The main objective of the visit was to conduct surveys in collaboration with my Commission on newly constructed and resurfaced roads which required marking and installation of traffic signs and also to look at the safety measures, generally along existing roads.

Accordingly, some new measures have been taken, for instance, the marking of newly resurfaced roads from Mangles to Montagne du Sable, Accacia to Pointe La Gueule and Route de L'Autonomie at Petit Gabriel.

A quotation has been sought and obtained from the contractor to the tune of Rs 3,553,008.28 for the markings and installation of roads signs along the following roads:

- (i) Anse Raffin
- (ii) Mt. Malgache to Port Sud Est (partly)
- (iii) La Ferme Parking
- (iv) Mt. Cabris to St Francois (asphalted road)
- (v) Patate Theophile to Anse Ally (asphalted road)
- (vi) Box culvert Port Sud Est
- (vii) Mangles
- (viii) Eau Vannee

A work order shall be issued shortly upon receipt of necessary financial clearance.

A survey has already been conducted on roads around the Island regarding damaged sign posts.

Procurement procedures are ongoing for purchase of the different signposts to be installed by my Commission. The bid shall be launched on the e-procurement system on 08 February 2024 with closing date 13 February 2024. Works shall be completed within 2 months of the award of the contract.

GRANTING – ‘DROITS DE SURELEVATION’/EXISTING STATE LAND LEASES

(No. B/21) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the granting of ‘droits de surélévation’ for existing State land leases, he will state to the House on the

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- (a) number thereof granted by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly (RRA) per year since 2020, and
- (b) policy of the RRA for the promotion thereof as a way of accessing State land lease rights?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, land in Rodrigues is becoming scarce whereas demand for residential leases keeps increasing each year.

As such, granting '*droit de surélévation*' (right of superstructure) for existing land leases is a preferred alternative to the grant of new residential leases by the Regional Government so as to maximize land use and to align with the principles of sustainable urban and rural development. This will also promote vertical growth and efficient use of limited space.

With regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the number of approved requests for '*droit de surélévation*' to lessees per year since 2020 is as follows:

Year	Number
2020	11
2021	05
2022	02
2023	08

With respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed that at present Lessees who wish to be granted a '*droit de surélévation*' to one of their descendants/ascendants should submit a request at the Commission for State land with a set of plans of the proposed addition to existing building together with name of the proposed beneficiary.

At present, the '*droit de surélévation*' is restricted to one unit/level (Ground +1) only. A '*droit de surélévation*' is not granted to a person who is a landowner of a residential plot of land or a person who is the owner of a housing unit.

The grant is subject to the lessee submitting within a period of six months as from date of letter conveying approval, a duly registered notarial deed witnessing the grant of the '*droit de surélévation*'; and within a period of one year as from date of letter conveying approval a duly registered notarial deed witnessing the '*règlement de co-propriété*'.

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To date, it is the policy of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to refund the costs of notary deed for the grant of '*droit de surélévation*' and '*règlement de co-propriété*' to all applicants whose family income does not exceed Rs 10,000.

I am further informed that the then Executive Council on 22 December 2020 has approved the refund of notary fees in favour of 13 applicants for '*droit de surélévation*' who have already incurred the cost of notarial deed before a notary public during Financial Year 2020/2021.

With a view to encourage more applicants to request '*droit de surélévation*' on existing land leases, my Commission is coming up with a new policy shortly.

IMPLEMENTATION – SUSTAINABLE & STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

(No. B/22) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the implementation of the Sustainable and Strategic Development Centre, as announced in the 2023/2024 budget speech, he will state:-

- (a) if the new Geographical Information System (GIS) is operational and is enabling adoption of new procedures for the granting of leases of State Land; and,
- (b) the percentage of leases awarded using the GIS together with the extent of land concerned per category of lease during the last three months?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware as per my reply to Question B/101 at the RRA Sitting of 23 October 2023, a Centre for Integrated and Sustainable Development has been set up at the Ex-John Resto at Bois d'Olive with a view to ensure the successful implementation of the sustainable Integrated Development Plan for Rodrigues (SIDPR) and all the relevant updated plans Rodrigues Physical Development Strategy and Land Use Plan.

The Centre hosts an Integrated System namely the Geographical Integrated System which facilitates better land resource planning and monitoring and helps to identify sustainable areas for specific types of leases. It also assists in evaluating potential environmental impacts whilst ensuring sustainable land use practices.

With respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the GIS at Bois d'Olive is partly operational. Following the setting up of a joint working group comprising Officers of the Commission for State Land, Commission for Agriculture and Commission for Environment, the officers have been requested to update the system so as to provide a

comprehensive view of geographic information and enable the authorities to make informed decisions in lease allocations. This will also enable better synergy and coordination in the allocation and management of agricultural land in Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the procedures for the granting of state land leases have remained the same after the setting up of the GIS as the latter is just a valuable tool which allows for spatial analysis and mapping of relevant data as well as assist to evaluate potential environmental impacts and ensure sustainable land use practices.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed that for the last three months, 183 leases including 172 residential, six commercials, four industrial and one residential cum commercial leases have been allocated.

The extent of land for the residential leases varies from approximately 400 m² to 600 m² per lease whereas for the commercial/industrial lease, the extent allocated depends on the project and availability of land.

It is expected following meeting with officers of the Cadastral Department and Invest Rodrigues on 16 January 2024 at the Centre for Integrated and Sustainable Development that allocation of a plot of land at the reclaimed land at Oyster Bay to applicants for commercial and industrial leases will be finalised by the end of this month.

‘KREOL RODRIGE’ – PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(No. B/23) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the teaching of ‘*Kreol Rodrige*’ in primary schools, he will provide details on:

- (a) the recommended weekly contact hours for same for the different grades;
- (b) if any discrepancy has been noted among the schools and, in the affirmative, to state measures taken to remedy the situation?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, ‘*Kreol Rodrige*’ is an Optional Core Subject of Primary School Curriculum which was introduced in primary schools in Rodrigues in January 2020. *Kreol Rodrige* is now being taught up to Grade 6 in RCA Schools and up to Grade 5 in Government Primary Schools as from Academic Year 2024. The subject is assessed at National level as from Grade 4 and the first cohort of pupils in Rodrigues took *Kreol Rodrige* at Primary School Achievement Certificate (PSAC) Assessment in 2023.

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With respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the recommended weekly contact hours for the teaching of Kreol Rodrige in primary schools as per official time table issued by the Ministry of Education are as follows:

- For Grade 1, 200 minutes, that is three hours thirty minutes per week equivalent to eight periods of 25 minutes each;
- For Grade 2, 250 minutes, that is four hours ten minutes per week equivalent to ten periods of 25 minutes each;
- For Grade 3, 250 minutes, that is four hours ten minutes per week equivalent to ten periods of 25 minutes each;
- For Grade 4, 250 minutes, that is four hours ten minutes per week equivalent to ten periods of 25 minutes each;
- For Grade 5, 250 minutes, that is four hours ten minutes per week equivalent to ten periods of 25 minutes each; and
- For Grade 6, 250 minutes, that is four hours ten minutes per week equivalent to ten periods of 25 minutes each.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed that at present:

- i) In government primary schools, there are six Primary School Educators and six newly enlisted Supply Teachers teaching Kreol Rodrige (KR) up to Grade 5. The weekly contact hours for teaching *Kreol Rodrige* in government primary schools is: 50 minutes per week for Grades 1 to 3 and 125 minutes for Grades 4 and 5, and
- ii) In RCA Schools, 14 Educators and 15 Supply Teachers teach KR up to Grade 6 with an average of 200 minutes per week in upper grades.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with a view to ensure the smooth teaching and learning of the subject and to bridge this gap so that pupils of primary government schools receive more instruction time, the following actions have been taken during this present academic year:

- (i) The collaboration of the Mauritius Institute of Examinations (MIE) has been sought to mount a 7-days intensive training course on a blended mode for Supply Teachers of Primary Government Schools who are teaching KR up to

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Grade 2 at present to that they are able to teach KR up to Grade 3. The possibility that Trainee KR Educators who are following a two-year Training at the MIE be allowed to complete their last year of Training in schools in Rodrigues was not practicable.

The training will be dispensed from 08 to 16 February 2024 by two resource persons from the MIE Kreol Unit. This training will also serve as a refresher course for Educators and thus ensure effective teaching of the subject across primary schools in Rodrigues. The training will target 41 Educators including 21 Supply Teachers (six from government primary schools and 15 from RCA Schools) and 20 full-fledged Educators (six from government primary schools and 14 from RCA Schools).

Upon completion of the training, it is expected that since the Supply Teachers will teach KR up to Grade 3, the six Educators will deliver 150 minutes teaching time to pupils of Grade 4 and Grade 5.

- (ii) A special coaching session for Grade 4 and 5 as was the case last year will be carried out during the forthcoming Easter and winter holidays so as to enable Educators to complete their programme as per existing syllabus and better prepare pupils to take their end of year assessments.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, eight new KR Educators are expected to join the Commission upon completion of their training programme at the Mauritius Institute of Education early 2025. This will ensure that the recommended weekly contact hours for KR instruction in primary schools can be met during the next academic year.

RECENT RECRUITMENT – MANAGERS/RODRIGUES EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LTD (REDCO) COLLEGES

(No. B/24) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the recent recruitment of Managers for the Rodrigues Educational Development Company Ltd (REDCO) colleges, he will obtain information and state to the House on the:

- (a) criteria for the enlistment of candidates together with the composition of the board of selection;
- (b) number of applications received, and the number recruited, and

(c) allowances and privileges of the managers?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that, following amendments brought to the Education Act by way of Act No. 12 of 2023, it has been decided as informed by the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA) that henceforth, a Manager for Private Aided Secondary School shall not be registered for more than one school.

Subsequently, the Rodrigues Educational Development Company Ltd which manages seven secondary schools in Rodrigues has enlisted six new Managers on a part-time basis to manage its schools and comply with directives issued by the PSEA.

With regard to part (a) and (b) of the question, I am informed of the following:

- i) There are no specific criteria governing the enlistment of Managers for a private aided secondary school. As such, the criteria for the selection of potential Managers have been worked out by the Company and are as follows:
 - A qualification acceptable to the Board of Directors; and
 - At least ten years of experience in the field of Education.
- ii) The Company issued a Call for applications for enlistment as Manager in REDCO schools on 13 November 2023 with closing date set for 27 November 2023. Six applications were received.
- iii) Subsequently, the Board of Directors has decided to review the qualifications to attract more potential candidates as follows:
 - A degree in the field of management from a recognized institution or an equivalent qualification acceptable to the Board, and
 - Proven leadership skills.
- iv) A second call for applications was issued on 11 December 2023 and one additional application was received.
- v) Out of the seven applicants who were called for interview on 27 December 2023, six candidates turned up. However, one candidate opted not to proceed with the interview.
- vi) Following the interview exercise, five candidates were offered to be enlisted as School Manager but one candidate has declined the offer.
- vii) Being given that there was the need to register the Managers prior to the start of the Academic Year 2024 and the limited response following the two calls for

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applications, it was decided to carry out an internal recruitment among those Educators who are not recognized by the PSEA but who have worked for the Company on a temporary basis and who reckon at least two years' experience to submit their interest for the position.

As such, three applications were received and the two most experienced former Educators were enlisted.

- viii) To date, REDCO has enlisted six part time Managers in addition to the existing Manager who is responsible for one school.

With respect to part (c), I am informed that the new Managers are paid an all-inclusive salary of Rs 25,000 monthly and are entitled to 21 days' sick leave and 21 days' annual leave for every year.

They are also eligible for an end-of-year bonus as per the Workers' Rights Act 2019.

CONSTRUCTION – ROAD FROM MTE. TONNERRE TO ALLEE TAMARIN

(No. B/25) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether in regard to the construction of road from Mte Tonnerre to Allée Tamarin, as announced in the 2023-2024 budget speech, he will, for the benefit of the House, state where matter stands as at to date?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must inform the House that the road from Dans Samy to Allée Tamarin is of a total length of about 1,625 m and comprise a steep stretch of about 100 m long at Dans Samy which is very hazardous to heavy vehicles and therefore preventing bus services to reach Mt Tonnerre.

At the first instance, we intend to realign this stretch of road and thereafter proceed with the road construction from Mt Tonnerre to Allée Tamarin.

This will allow extension of the bus route to Mt. Tonnerre.

My Commission will soon request the contractor to submit its cost proposal for consideration. If approved, works order will be issued accordingly.

A sum of Rs 15,554,000 has been earmarked during this current fiscal year 2023-2024. We expect that construction works to complete the project will overlap with next financial year 2024-2025.

**TORRENTIAL RAINS – SURVEY/STATE OF ANSE FEMIE/SAPONNAIRE ROAD
TO THE CHURCH**

(No. B/26) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether following the recent torrential rains, his office has carried out any survey with respect to the state of Anse Femie –Saponnaire Road leading to the church and if so to table the report thereof and the subsequent necessary actions to be carried out, if any?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the road from Anse Femie to Saponnaire is of a total length of about 2.3 km out of which 1 km from Saponnaire towards Anse Femie has already been constructed.

During the recent torrential rain, the untarred section has been badly affected, a situation that has been aggravated because of the particularly steep topography and absence of proper drainage network. The design proposal for this stretch of road is being reviewed and finalised.

This project forms part of the list of budget proposal of my Commission for the financial year 2024/2025.

BOOK LOAN SCHEME - SECONDARY SCHOOLS

(No. B/27) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Book Loan Scheme for secondary schools, he will inform the House on the:

- (a) actual situation for the current academic year in the different colleges;
- (b) dates the procurement exercises were carried out, giving details of the successful bidders, and
- (c) expected total cost of the project for 2024, the amount paid and the outstanding payment if any?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commission for Education has been providing free textbooks under the Free Book Loan Scheme to students of Grades 7 to 13 of secondary Schools since 2009. However, following a National Policy of the Government of Mauritius, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology is now providing free textbooks prescribed by the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) for students of Grades 7 to 9 since the Academic Year 2020.

With respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the actual situation with regard to delivery of books in secondary schools is as follows:

i) Free Textbooks for students of Grades 7 to 9 provided through the Private Secondary Education Authority (PSEA)

A first shipment of 17,183 textbooks was received in November 2023 and delivered to Heads of schools in early December 2023. To date, some books are still missing and the PSEA was informed of required books on 22 December 2023. A next shipment of 4,574 textbooks is expected to reach Rodrigues by the next voyage of MV Black Rhino on 07 February 2024.

ii) Free Book Loan Scheme

Delivery of books is ongoing in schools. At present, almost 90% of books have already been delivered.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that pending the delivery of all books in secondary schools, necessary arrangements are being made at the level of schools to provide copies of required chapters are being provided to students so as to ensure the smooth teaching and learning process.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards part (b), my Commission undertakes the annual procurement of textbooks for secondary schools which is a process requiring meticulous advance planning as detailed below:

- i) Heads of secondary schools were notified of the schedule in June 2023 and subsequently requested to submit their textbook requirements for Academic Year 2024 by 23 June 2023;
- ii) Upon receipt of requirements from each school, a master list of all requested books is prepared;
- iii) The master list was referred to Rectors for verification on 16 August 2023.
- iv) A meeting was held with Rectors on 19 September 2023 to review their submissions in line with revised requirements for books for Grades 10 to 13 from the Ministry of Education; and
- v) Final verification was made by Rectors on 02 October 2023.

I am further informed that upon receipt of final list of books, bids were launched through Open National Bidding on the E-Procurement System on 09 October 2023 with the closing date set for 25 October 2023. The Opening of bids was held on 27 October 2023.

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Following the evaluation exercise, the contract for the supply and delivery of textbooks were awarded on 31 October 2023 to the following suppliers for a total sum of Rs 8,452,626 excluding VAT:

- (i) Edition de L'Océan Indien - Rs 3,093,334
- (ii) Edition Le Printemps - Rs 4,673,202
- (iii) B.M. Book Centre - Rs 686,080

With respect to part (c), I am informed that no payment has been effected to date and an amount of Rs 8,452,626 excluding VAT is still outstanding to the three suppliers.

LAND MECHANISATION

(No. B/28) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to land mechanisation around Rodrigues, he will inform the House on if same is being done by his commission and, in the affirmative, to state the number of:

- (a) tractors involved in the process, indicating if any thereof is not operational and, if yes, why, and
- (b) planters, if any, requesting for the service together with the number of demands per type of mechanisation attended to on a weekly basis?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Commission for Agriculture is being involved with mechanization operations all around the island.

Presently, there are two tractors that are involved in mechanization of agricultural land around the island upon request from farmers.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the implements of Tractor 8 RRA 17 are not appropriate and could not operate on rocky soil therefore leading to the low efficiency and work output. Actions have already been initiated to reinforce same in a view to increase efficiency.

Out of 11 tractors acquired by the then Commission for Agriculture in the years 1992 to 2017 (details of purchase are provided as additional information), there are nine tractors for mechanization which are not operational and are at the workshop of the Commission due to default in their mechanics and which according to survey reports four are beyond repairs.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in order to address this major issue, my Commission has submitted request for the acquisition of two tractors for land mechanization and derocking under the

Budget 2023/2024 to be financed under the NECCF and is now awaiting greenlight. In addition, proposals have been made in the Budget 2024/2025 for the purchase of two other tractors. My Commission intends to increase the area of land under cultivation from 175 ha to 350 ha by the year 2025.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of requests received for 2023 was 713 and the number of requests satisfied was 279 for a total area of 238 A. Figures for mechanization are compiled on a monthly and quarterly basis.

SCHOOL CERTIFICATE RESULTS – YEAR 2023

(No. B/29) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the School Certificate results for the year 2023, he will state the:

- (a) overall percentage pass for the past three years;
- (b) total number of students who sat for the examination in 2023 and the number thereof who scored at least five credits per college;
- (c) number of students who acceded to Grade 12 and the number who will repeat Grade 11, and
- (d) measures envisaged by his Commission to improve the success rates per college?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, as per the statistics provided by the Mauritius Examination Syndicate (MES), the percentage passes at the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations for Rodrigues for the last three years are as follows:

- 73.50% for the extended academic year 2020/2021;
- 75.48% for the academic year 2022, and
- 69.24% for the academic year 2023.

As regards to part (b) of the question, I am informed that 777 students comprising 354 boys and 423 girls from Rodrigues sat for the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations in 2023. A total of 538 candidates have passed the examinations representing a pass rate 69.24%.

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I am further informed that out of the 538 candidates who have passed the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations, 220 students have scored at least five credits representing 40.89%. The corresponding number of students who scored at least five credits per college is as follows:

- 53 students of Ananias André Le Chou College;
- 6 students of André Lélío Roussety Songes College;
- 9 students of Grande Montagne College;
- 3 students of La Ferme College;
- 12 students of Mont Lubin College;
- 37 students of Marechal College;
- 98 students of Rodrigues College, and
- 2 students of Terre Rouge College.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the criteria for promotion to Grade 12 as stipulated in a Circular dated 10 January 2024 from the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology are as follows:

- (i) students being admitted in Grade 12 in 2024 should not have reached the age of 20 on 01 January 2024, and

- (ii) students should

Either

- (a) have been awarded the Schools Certificate with a Pass in English Language and have obtained a minimum of five Credits at one and the same sitting.

Or

- (b) Have obtained at least Grade C in a minimum of five subjects at the GCE 'O' Level at one and same sitting with at least a Grade E in English Language.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am thus informed that the total number of students who have been promoted to Grade 12 is 220 representing the total number of students who have scored at least five credits in the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations.

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I am further informed that 309 students will have to repeat Grade 11 in 2024 as they did not satisfy the criteria for promotion to Grade 12 or to improve their results at the Cambridge School Certificate Examinations. On the other hand, 278 students had to leave school.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to point out that prior to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, the pass rate of SC in Rodrigues was 57% in 2019 and 57.94% in 2018.

It is noted that during and post Covid-19, that is, Year 2020 to 2022 Cambridge has changed the standards of their qualifications as the past three years have been challenging for schools, teachers and learners. As such, grades were awarded on more generous standards and the pass rates for SC in Rodrigues was 73.50% in 2020/2021 and 75.48% in 2021/2022.

However, as announced by Cambridge, the standard of examinations in 2023 were returned to the standard of examinations in 2019 and I am pleased to note that there has been a major improvement in the pass rate for Academic Year 2023 compared to Years 2018 and 2019.

Nevertheless, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is always room for improvement.

Since I took Office as the Commissioner for Education in March 2022, I have left no stone unturned to take initiatives in collaboration with Heads of schools to constantly improve the school and students' performance. As such, my Commission is continuously supporting secondary schools to improve students' performance as follows:

- i) Training in Innovative and Differentiated Pedagogy: Secondary Educators have received training in engaging teaching methods for subjects like Mathematics, Science, Sociology, Computer Studies, and Business Studies. This aims to cater to diverse learning styles and improve overall student engagement.
- ii) Assessment and Evaluation Workshops: Mathematics and English teachers participated in workshops designed to enhance their assessment skills, leading to better feedback and improved student performance in these core subjects.
- iii) Introduction of Performance Management Audit System and Quality Assurance Framework since 2022 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology.
- iv) Setting up of Language Clubs: Educators of English and French benefited from

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workshops promoting the use of language clubs in schools, encouraging active language learning and cultural exchange.

- v) Cascaded Training for English Teachers: With the recent syllabus change in English Language O-Level, English teachers received comprehensive training to effectively adapt their teaching approach and equip students for success.
- vi) Provision of textbooks under the Free Book Loan Scheme to students of Grade 10 to Grade 13.
- vii) Provision of tablets to needy students and provision of internet education package to Students of Grade 11, 12 and 13 to enable students to access online resources, explore learning materials to enhance their educational opportunities.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, for the academic year 2024, my Commission is actively planning further capacity-building programmes across various subjects, demonstrating its commitment to providing ongoing support and professional development for Secondary School Educators to ultimately improve students' performance and pass rates for schools.

**MEASURES TO INCREASE PRODUCTION & MARKET VALUE – LIME
(CITRUS AURANTIFOLIA)**

(No. B/31) Mrs M.A.L. Allas (Fifth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, he will inform the House of measures being taken by this Commission to increase the production and the market value of the Rodriguan Lime (*citrus aurantifolia*)?

(Vide Reply to PQ B/15)