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No. 8 of 2024

RODRIGUES

FIFTH REGIONAL ASSEMBLY

PARLIAMENTARY

DEBATES

(HANSARD)

(UNREVISED)

TUESDAY 04 JUNE 2024

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The Executive Council

(Formed by Mr Franceau Aubret Grandcourt)

Mr Franceau Aubret Grandcourt	Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Central Administration, Civil Aviation (Administration), Civil Status, Community Development, Customs and Excise (Administration), Environment, Judicial (Administration), Legal Services, Marine Services (Administration), Meteorological Services (Administration), Postal Services (Administration), Registration, Statistics in respect of Rodrigues, State Lands, Town and Country Planning
Mr Johnson Roussety, G.O.S.K.	Deputy Chief Commissioner, Commissioner responsible for Education (Administration), Industrial Development, Public Infrastructure including Highways and Roads and Public Buildings and Utilities, Trade, Commerce and Licensing, Transport, Vocational Training, Water Resources
Mr Louis Ange Perrine	Commissioner responsible for Agriculture, Cooperatives, Fisheries, Food Production, Forestry, Marine Parks, Plant and Animal Quarantine
Mr Jean Nicolas Volbert	Commissioner responsible for Health (Administration), Housing, Social Security (Administration), Fire Services, Prisons & Reforms Institutions (Administration)
Miss Marie Christiane Agathe	Commissioner responsible for Women's Affairs, Child Development, Family Welfare, Handicraft, Consumer Protection/Price Fixing
Mr Jean Alain Wong So	Commissioner responsible for Tourism, Employment, Labour and Industrial Relations, Information Technology and Telecommunications
Mr Joseph Varok Ravina	Commissioner responsible for Youth and 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. 8 of 2024

Sitting of Tuesday 04 June 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

MATTERS RAISED

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QUESTIONS (*Written*)

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ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Mr Chairperson: Yes, Mr Tolbize.

**ENSURING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS – MATERNAL HEALTH
SERVICES/RODRIGUES**

(No. B/33) Mr J. Tolbize (Third Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to ensuring continuous improvements in maternal health services in Rodrigues, he will provide the House with data or statistics on the current coverage and utilization of antenatal care services in hospital/area health centres across the island, indicating the way his Commission is addressing any challenges or barriers pregnant women face in receiving quality and timely antenatal services thereat?

Mr Volbert: Mr. Chairperson Sir, Antenatal Care (ANC) Services is one of the major components of Maternal and Child Health Services in Rodrigues.

The House is informed of the attendances in ANC for year 2023 as follows:

- Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH): 2,531
- Marie Jacqueline Félicité Area Health Centre: 2,434
- Dr. Christopher Prudence Area Health Centre (La Ferme): 1,760.

Such services are dispensed by Midwives, Medical and Health Officers/Senior Medical and Health Officers, and Obstetrician and Gynaecologist (OBG) ensuring follow-ups of normal pregnancies, counselling, identification of conditions that might complicate pregnancies, and referral for higher level care if need be.

ANC is available in all Local Health centres (LCHs) and Area Health centres (AHCs) as well as at QEH on a regular basis.

Specialist conducted ANC's are available in the two AHCs and QEH where ultrasonography facilities are available.

Most of the near 1,000 deliveries are done in QEH, but some are also conducted in Marie Jacqueline Félicité Area Health Centre, Mont Lubin and Dr. Christopher Prudence Area Health Centre, La Ferme.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, allow me, I wish to inform the House how the Tour of ANC services is being organised:

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- As soon as a woman misses her menses, she will attend a health institution to confirm if she is pregnant by doing a urine pregnancy test ordered by a medical officer.

This can be as early as from six weeks of pregnancy.

- If the urine Pregnancy Test (PT) comes out to be positive, the woman is put on appropriate vitamin/s complement according to her calculated period of gestation and referred to the closest ANC unit in her locality for booking.
- Booking, Mr Chairperson, Sir, is done by midwives in local and Area health centres as well as in QEH. At this stage, patients are counselled about pregnancy and its different phases and associated ailments, change in lifestyle including change in bad habits example, smoking, drinking, drugs, need for breast feeding, maintaining good hygiene.
- Baseline tests, Mr Chairperson, Sir, like blood grouping, full blood count, sexually transmitted infection profile, blood sugar level is carried out. Other specific tests are ordered if there are associated medical conditions; recommended vaccines are dispensed as per protocol.
- The women are then given regular visit to ANC clinics. Concerning uncomplicated pregnancies, those are seen early 6th to 8th weeks, monthly, by medical officers and midwives and those are referred to the Gynaecologist for her first ultrasonography (USG) to confirm the period of gestation and good development of the foetus. In such a case whereby all blood results and USG are within normal limits, the patient is referred back to MHO clinic at primary health care level for further monthly follow ups.

Mr Chairperson, Sir,

- A close monitoring of weight gain, urine sugar albumin, blood sugar and haemoglobin levels, blood pressure, fundal height and foetal movement and foetal heart rate is done during follow ups and in case any abnormality, patient is referred back to specialist ANC clinic.
- At 18 to 24 weeks', oral glucose tolerance test is done. Any abnormality is referred to nutritionist or physician.

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- At 38 weeks of pregnancy, patients are referred back to specialist ANC clinic to be followed every two weeks till 36 weeks and weekly till term.
- Normal term vaginal delivery sessions are carried out between 37 to 40 weeks assisted by midwives and MHO in QEH, Marie Jacqueline Félicité Area Health Centre and Dr. Christopher Prudence Area Health Centre.
- Complicated deliveries and those needed to deliver by caesarean section are catered for by the gynaecologist.
- Following delivery, the women enter their postpartum period where they are observed in hospital for early complications and followed in post-natal clinic for late complications.
- Those delivered by LSCS (caesarean) are conveyed for regular dressing and stitch removal.
- Babies are referred for vaccination and Well Baby Clinic (WBC) for follow up.

Women are then referred at six weeks of postpartum period for contraception and birth control in Family Planning Unit.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am hereby informing the House of the different actions and measures being undertaken by my Commission in view of enhancing the antenatal care services:

1. A Gynaecologist on tour of service is posted in Rodrigues covering the whole island on a 24/7 basis.

The gynaecologist is responsible to carry out daily ward rounds to see antenatal and postnatal patients, conduct ANC and gynaecology OPD in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Crève-Cœur, Marie Jacqueline Félicité Area Health Centre, Mont Lubin and Dr Christopher Prudence Area Health Centre, La Ferme, complete 1 full day session and a second half day session of operation list per week and has to attend any emergency cases at any time of the day.

I wish to highlight that previously, the tour of service of the gynaecologist was on a monthly basis where it raised concern among pregnant women as they

were to be followed by so many different gynaecologists during their pregnancies.

This has been addressed by extending the tour of service to a two monthly rotation where the maximum number of gynaecologists seeing a patient has brought down from nine to ten to four to five.

My Commission is already working on procedures in view of the recruitment of an additional gynaecologist in view of ensuring better services to all population.

I wish also to kindly recall that scholarship facilities for Rodriguan candidates to be able to specialise in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and other fields of scarcity have been made in the coming financial year.

2. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to bring to the attention of the House that there has been a substantial change in the lifestyle among the reproductive age group despite our efforts and actions being done in terms of information, education and communication as regards those social issues and their impacts on health and on the lifestyle of a person. In fact, an increase in social issues impacting on maternal health in terms of drug misuse including alcohol, cigarettes, poverty, lack of health education.

Early start of sexual activities among teenagers, inappropriate sexual behaviour and practices, causing an increase in STIs are all undoubtedly contributing to negative pregnancy outcomes both for the mother and the baby due to associated maternal health issues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is to be noted that these bad lifestyles also contribute to many pregnant women not attending ANC's.

Consequently, as a matter of addressing these problems, the following actions are being undertaken by my Commission:

- Strong delivery of counselling is done in ANC's by all midwives;
- Special attention has always been given in view of decreasing teenage pregnancy;
- Several sensitisation and screening campaigns are being done to this effect on media and at the community level, schools;

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- Multisectoral approach to social problem including other concerned Commissions and NGOs is being done in view of empowering community health agents, NGOs, peer educators.
3. Mr Chairperson, Sir, in terms of staffing, I wish to highlight that midwifery is a field of scarcity worldwide and Rodrigues is not spared.

Provision is made almost each year for the recruitment of student midwives in view of palliating to the scarcity of staff. Furthermore, in service midwives often benefit of capacity building programmes through top up diploma and other training locally, in Mauritius and abroad like in China.

4. Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission is relentlessly putting effort in order to encourage the population in general, particularly pregnant women to attend ANC in the primary health facility of their locality.

This is done during bookings by Midwives' counselling, and during their interventions over different media.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, une petite question, je pense très importante. Le commissaire de la Santé a parlé des services qui sont offerts dans les différents centres de santé. Est-il au courant qu'actuellement, et ce depuis plusieurs semaines, il y a ce qu'on appelle le *clinistix* qui n'est pas *available*? C'est un test très, très important pour les femmes qui vont pour les cliniques anténatales pour tester leur taux de diabète. Et pour avoir été une mère qui a fait des suivis anténatals, je connais l'importance et la pertinence de cet équipement pour ce test. Est-il au courant de ça, que ça perdure depuis semaines, peut-être des mois. Et qu'en est-il par rapport à ça ?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, je ne suis pas au courant. Mais étant donné que la respecté *Minority Leader* a emmené ce problème ici, on va voir. On va enquêter. Je vais demander aux officiers concernés de nous expliquer pourquoi il y a ce manque. Et je demanderais aussi à la *Minority Leader* de venir de l'avant et de nous aider si vous êtes une compatriote, de nous informer.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I thank the Commissioner for the lengthy answer given as regards to what are being done by his Commission in the fields under question. But nevertheless, I would like to ask him one of the indicators that we can measure as regards to

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antenatal programme given to pregnant women is about the amount of stillbirths or the number of early termination of pregnancy. Can he give us an indication of the trend for the last two years as regards to that?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, j'ai une question. Tout à l'heure, je vais répondre à cette partie.

Mr Ramdally: Est-ce que je pourrais demander au Commissaire quel est le pourcentage de femme sur le nombre de naissance à Rodrigues ? Quel est le pourcentage de femme qui ne suivent pas les *follow-up* qu'on donne à l'hôpital ?

Mr Volbert: Je n'ai pas la réponse mais je vais déposer *at a later stage*. Mais je ne suis pas médecin ; je ne peux pas répondre à cette question directement.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I have listened carefully to the answer of the Commissioner for Health. But there is one aspect that I have not heard at all. It is the involvement of the *agent de santé communautaire*. As regards to sensitisation, I would like to know how far is this being done at that level?

Mr Volbert: Cette question, la réponse est mentionnée dans la partie que je vais répondre tout à l'heure et vous allez avoir la réponse tout à l'heure dans l'autre partie de question.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

**DELIVERY OF GOODS – ARRIVAL/MV MAURITIUS TROCHETIA &
MV PEROS BANHOS**

(No. B/34) **Mrs R.M.F Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader)** asked the Chief Commissioner whether, he will apprise the House of the great difficulties faced by the local importers/business community to access the container park for prompt delivery of goods at the arrival of the two ships MV Mauritius Trochetia and MV Peros Banhos from Mauritius and state the impact thereof on the population together with the remedial solutions he is envisaging therefor, if any?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, at the outset, let me draw the attention of the House that the operation of two cargo vessels in Port Mathurin harbour have always existed since the time of the Mauritius Pride/Mauritius Trochetia, Mauritius Trochetia/Black Rhino and now, Mauritius Trochetia/Peros Banhos. The latter cargo vessel

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Peros Banhos started its operation to Rodrigues on 03 March 2024. Since then, the vessel has effected eight voyages from Mauritius to Rodrigues.

I am informed that in general, there has never been any issue concerning access to container park and delivery of consignment, except in March 2024, when an unusual situation occurred with two back-to-back course, namely Voyage MV Peros Banhos which arrived on the 24 March 2024 and left on the 28 March 2024 and MV Mauritius Trochetia which arrived on the 29 2024 and departed on the 30 March 2024 with the following number of containers.

SN	CARGO VESSEL	CONTAINERS LOADED	CONTAINERS UNLOADED
1.	MV Peros Banhos	215	239
2.	Mauritius Trochetia	9	76

Consequently, the ACS/PAPOL had to handle 315 containers at the container park simultaneously. This has resulted to a bunching of the local importers at the gate to take delivery of their consignments.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to inform the House that as per established protocol and for security reasons, no delivery of containers is effected whenever vessels are operating alongside the quay, due to the continuous movement of trucks and trailers between the quay and the storage yard. Delivery of containers are therefore effected after the departure of the cargo vessel.

I am also informed that it is a common practice that for the first two days following the departure of the cargo vessel, ACS/PAPOL operate up to 17 hours instead of 15 hours, in order to enable the local importers to take delivery of their goods. This arrangement was provided after the departure of the MV Mauritius Trochetia on the 30 March 2024. I am further informed that the local importers did not take advantage of the extension of time in spite ACS/PAPOL personnel were on site up to 17 hours to provide the required service.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is to be noted that since the last back-to-back calls in march, no issues regarding delivery of consignment have been noted.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am aware that actually, Port Mathurin Harbour has permissible draft of 6.5 metres at high tide along the quay. In this circumstance, the capacity of the quay is limited to vessel coming with a maximum draft of 6.5 metres at high tide. Consequently,

existing vessel, mainly Peros Banhos cannot operate at full load, leading to disruption in the supply of goods and commodities in Rodrigues to the dissatisfaction of the consumers.

This is a serious impediment to infrastructural development projects as there is frequent shortage of construction materials. There is therefore an urgent need, not only to increase the space for the handling of increased number of containers, but also to increase the water depth in the Port Mathurin harbour through urgent dredging works to remedy the situation pending the full implementation of the Port Master Plan.

Moreover, the need for construction of a new commercial quay has emerged following the entry into operation of the Peros Banhos cargo vessel. Consequently, in February 2024, this Regional Government decided to adopt a holistic approach for the implementation of the Port Mathurin Master Plan by integrating the construction of a new commercial quay under Phase 1 together with dredging works and the removal of the two outcrops at the entry of Port Mathurin channel.

This new approach requires new consultancy services to undertake a series of studies including the socioeconomic feasibility of the revised option in view of a specialised nature of the project component such as dredging and land reclamation works.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would also like to inform the House that in the context of the problem encountered by the MV Peros Banhos at Port Mathurin, a Committee chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet and a Technical Committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office have been set up to finalise a Port Development Strategy for the Port Mathurin harbour including its funding and implementation modalities.

A proposed paper is presently being finalised at the level of the Prime Minister's Office and will be submitted to Cabinet for a decision.

In the meantime, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Executive Council is contemplating for the creation of a new company to be known as the Rodrigues Port Services Ltd. which will operate as or among the main service company to load and unload any ship that calls at the Port Mathurin harbour. Certainly, this will imply prior discussion and agreement between the key stakeholders in the sector including the Prime Minister's Office. Thank you.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Chef commissaire a justement mentionné le fait que cette situation est nouvelle depuis le début de l'année avec l'arrivée de Peros Banhos. Je souhaiterais demander au Chef commissaire étant donné que c'est un problème, on va dire, qui a touché la vie de nos commerçants, de la population de Rodrigues,

ne pense-t-il pas que c'est un gros manquement dans le cadre de l'autonomie que le Chef commissaire attend que le Premier ministre met en place un comité à Maurice au lieu que lui, au niveau de l'Assemblée Régionale, il rencontre les opérateurs, les partenaires pour discuter de ce problème et trouver des solutions. Ne pense-t-il pas que ce comité devrait être mis en place à Rodrigues et comment il fait pour assurer que nos propositions... D'ailleurs, c'était nous qui devrions avoir préparé des propositions et envoyer et ne pas attendre que le Premier ministre donne, met en place un comité à la suite de l'intervention de Membre, de l'Honorable Buisson Léopold à l'Assemblée.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, la *Minority Leader* veut marquer des points politiques dans cette Assemblée. Je la comprends. Mais toujours est-il, M. le président, la question de problème de bateau, bien sûr, Peros Banhos depuis à l'époque, depuis sa construction, on était toujours en discussion avec le bureau du Premier ministre qui est aussi le Ministre de Rodrigues. Il faut comprendre. Donc, bien sûr. Il y a eu le *Technical Committee* mais ça émane des discussions qu'on a eues avec le Premier ministre ainsi que les autres commissaires concernés. Nous avons parlé à la Mauritius Shipping Company et d'autres partenaires et c'est la raison pour laquelle nous aussi, nous allons venir de l'avant, bien sûr avec l'accord du Premier ministre, avec cette compagnie : Rodrigues Port Services Ltd. Parce que, M. le président, il y a un monopole sur Rodrigues. Je dois le dire, ils font la pluie et le beau temps comme ils veulent avec des vieux appareils etcetera, etcetera, qui fait qu'aujourd'hui, on a un impact sur le bon déroulement du port à Rodrigues. Donc, nous sommes toujours en discussion. Bien sûr, on a nos inputs. Il y a le Departmental Head responsable de Marine Services qui est sur le *Technical Committee*. Nous avons aussi envoyé des propositions à travers le Departmental Head. Et bien sûr, cela doit être comme le port n'est pas sous notre responsabilité, bien sûr, ça doit aller au Cabinet pour être avalisé et bien sûr, donner des recommandations.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, donc, nous savons combien de temps ça peut prendre pour mettre en place une compagnie. Il y a une question d'investissement ainsi de suite. Alors que nous savons qu'aujourd'hui, le problème pressant, c'est l'espace, bien sûr prenant en compte la sécurité, pour déposer les conteneurs de manière à ce qu'on n'a pas besoin d'attendre que le bateau part pour pouvoir donner accès à ces importateurs. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire concrètement dans l'immédiat, quelles sont les mesures qu'il préconise pour assurer que ce problème soit résolu dans l'immédiat ? Bien sûr en attendant que sa compagnie vienne, qu'il y a l'investissement, ça va prendre... on connaît le

système, ça va prendre des mois peut-être même beaucoup d'année parce que ça coute quand même, ça va demander beaucoup d'investissement.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je dois rappeler au *Minority Leader* et toute son équipe qu'ils étaient là pendant 10 ans. Qu'est-ce que vous avez fait ? Qu'est-ce que vous avez fait pendant 10 ans ? Mais par contre, ce que je peux dire pour répondre à la question, nous, après deux ans, nous sommes venus et nous sommes en train d'attraper le taureau par les cornes pour résoudre le problème. Alors, parmi les recommandations du *Technical Committee*, ça veut dire *short-term*, justement, il y a à peu près deux lots de terrain qui se trouvent tout près de l'enceinte du *container park* qui fait à peu près 5,500 m² et on va justement, on parle, on est en pourparlers avec la Mauritius Port Authority pour pouvoir avoir à notre disposition, ce morceau de terrain pour justement résoudre le problème de stockage de container dans le *container park*.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, il est clair aussi, donc, le Chef commissaire a parlé, a dit qu'une seule fois, il y a eu ce problème d'accès au container ainsi de suite alors que nous savons dans la population, il y a eu la fête de pâques, il y a eu beaucoup de problèmes avec les commerçants et la fête des mères aussi. Donc, il y a eu des commerçants qui ont eu leurs produits pour la fête des mères quatre jours après la fête des mères. Donc, ce qui fait que le problème est là et nous savons aussi. Je viens de regarder un peu le planning des arrivées des bateaux, Peros Banhos et Mauritius Trochetia. A un rythme presque chaque semaine, il y aura un bateau. Ce qui fait que ce problème va arriver. Il sera récurrent. Donc, ça va persister et nous savons l'impact sur les produits de base comme gaz ménager ainsi de suite.

Donc, le Chef commissaire a parlé de pourparlers pour l'acquisition de 5,500 m² et je voudrais savoir du Chef commissaire quel est son *timeline*. Est-ce que le pourparlers, est-ce qu'il pense que ça va être une réalité là, éminemment ou bien combien de temps ? Parce que je pense qu'il a dit un peu le contraire. Le fait que c'est vrai il y a eu 10 ans, on était là mais le problème est arrivé en 2024. Donc, c'est à lui maintenant de résoudre ce problème et je veux savoir de lui, quand est-ce que... Donc, le pourparlers, où est-ce qu'on en est et quand est-ce qu'on va pouvoir justement régler ce problème ? Parce que ça va perdurer quand on regarde le planning des bateaux.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je prends note de ce qu'a dit la *Minority Leader*. Mais on fait tout justement. J'aimerais la rassurer qu'on fait tout pour avoir ce

morceau de terrain au plus vite. Parce que sachant que c'est vrai, ça peut arriver dans le futur mais il faut rappeler aussi que dans le passé, il y a eu le problème de gaz, non ? Le problème de gaz, ça ne date pas de deux ans, là. Diesel. Elections, '*pa ti dōnn nou diezel, inn blie*'. Alors, diesel, gaz et de l'huile et les autres commodités. Donc, ça existait toujours. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous, on veut venir de l'avant une bonne fois pour toute. On a une compagnie qui gère ou bien qui sera actionnaire dans une autre compagnie qu'on est en train de voir qu'on va faire sur Maurice. Et à ce moment-là, on règle le problème et ce seront les Rodriguais qui vont bien sûr prendre tous les décisions au sein de la compagnie. Bien sûr, il y a aussi le master plan. Tout le master plan concernant comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse, concernant le quai. Il faut une bonne fois pour toute. J'en ai parlé au Premier ministre. Après l'aéroport, ça va être le port. Il faut attraper ce problème-là et bien sûr résoudre une bonne fois pour toute. Donc, nous faisons de notre mieux et je pense que dans un avenir pas très lointain, on aura certainement ce morceau de terrain pour pouvoir avoir plus de facilité pour stopper les containers.

The Minority Leader: Quant à ce morceau de terrain, puis-je savoir du Chef commissaire s'il y a eu une demande formelle déjà faite et quand est-ce que cette demande a été faite par rapport à l'acquisition de ce morceau de terrain ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, il y a eu un *Technical Committee* le 17 mai. Donc, là, après ça, il y a eu des correspondances et pour justement demander ça. Si je peux me permettre de lire, M. le président.

"With a view to increasing the storage capacity at the container yard, the Mauritius Ports Authority will consider favourably a request of the Mauritius Shipping Corporation."

This means that the request has already been made for allocation of two plots of land covering a total area of 5,500 m² adjacent to the existing container yard. A third plot of an extent of 2,693 m² can be allocated subject to negotiation with the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. We are already looking into this - into the matter.

The Minority Leader: Puis-je savoir du Chef commissaire par rapport à cette compagnie qu'ils vont créer, quelle sera la mission de cette compagnie et comment est-ce que ça va fonctionner ? Parce que vous avez parlé de monopole, est-ce que c'est l'Assemblée Régionale qui va investir ? Est-ce qu'on peut une idée de ça ?

The Minority Leader: Je trouve que la *Minority Leader* est très intéressée avec la compagnie, emballée avec l'idée de nous, avoir créer cette compagnie. C'est très bien. Donc, bien sûr, M. le président. La compagnie aura comme mission de voir tout ce qui est *loading* et *unloading*, ce que fait actuellement les autres compagnies qui travaillent dans le port, tout ce qui est manutention etcetera. Donc, tout ce qui est *services related to port*. Donc, c'est bien défini et en gros, ça va justement voir tous les activités dans le port.

Mr Ramdally: M. le président, j'aimerais avoir une petite précision du Chef commissaire. Donc, à un moment donné dans sa réponse, il a parlé d'extension des heures de service. Donc, si je comprends bien, il y a une volonté de la compagnie. Donc, pourquoi après, donc, il dit qu'il y a monopole, il y a comme si '*pe fer dominer*' ? Je n'arrive pas à comprendre, à concilier les deux, là.

The Chief Commissioner: Oui, M. le président, il y a ça. Mais *extend* pour deux heures seulement, ça ne résout pas tout le problème. Donc, le problème est plus... Si on regarde le problème dans une approche plus holistique, donc, on trouve que c'est justifiable que nous, dans un avenir, on pense, on songe à prendre les activités qui se passent sur le port. Et c'est ça, l'autonomie, M. le président. Est-ce qu'il est contre l'autonomie de Rodrigues ? C'est ça, l'autonomie de Rodrigues. C'est de prendre les décisions et de faire les choses nous-mêmes. Là où il y a un problème, on essaye de régler le problème. Un des problèmes, on trouve qu'il y a un monopole dans tout ce qui est manutention des appareils au *container park* etcetera, etcetera, et tous les services. Mais nous, on trouve que c'est justifiable. Et d'ailleurs, j'en ai parlé au Premier ministre de venir de l'avant si c'est possible, bien sûr, si c'est possible avec... il faut voir toutes les conditions avec cette compagnie et de prendre ça.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Chief Commissioner has mentioned the issue of outcrops. Can we know whether, any study has been carried out so far and what are the steps to be taken in order to reduce them and whether, there is a timeframe already set for that?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes. M. le président, il y a déjà des études qu'on a fait sur l'*outcrop*. Donc, il y a déjà ça. Mais on attend. Dans le master plan, on va refaire le master plan et là, on aura toutes les recommandations concernant aussi l'*outcrop*.

Mr Lisette: One of the major problems that is observed at the quay is that many of the *quincailleries au niveau de Rodrigues*, instead of taking the cement or iron bars and store

them in their warehouse, they keep them on the dock and delivery is done there to retailers. Has he at least discussed the issue with the port authority?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We have discussed this issue with the authorities. Even in the Executive Council, we have discussed about this issue. This is an issue that they are looking into and we will have decisions taken in the near future.

Mr Lisette: What are the proposals made by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly as regard to this? Because in the law, *les différents quincailleries* were supposed to have their cement stored in their warehouse. Why is it being kept there instead of being taken to their warehouse?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, le membre-là, il commence à m'agacer un peu. Excusez-moi. Non parce que le problème, comme s'il n'était pas là, lui, pendant 10 ans. Il n'était pas là, lui. Là, il vient me dire pourquoi est-ce que je laisse ça là-bas. Mais où est-ce que vous étiez, vous, pendant tout ce temps, M. le président ? Qu'est-ce que vous avez fait, vous ? Nous, on a dit justement. Nous, on a dit que bon, il faut voir qu'est-ce qu'il faut faire avec ces containers. On attend les arrangements. Si on prenait une décision brusque, on dit on retire tous les ciments, ils vont venir avec une question pour me dire pourquoi est-ce qu'on a retiré les containers là-bas.

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: *'Me samem.'* Okay, M. le président. Donc, on va prendre une décision bientôt. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

(No. B/35) Mrs R.M.F Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (The Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the Airport Development Project, he will inform the House on:

- (a) where matters stand as at date, and
- (b) the major remaining milestones together with the calendar of implementation thereof?

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson Sir, in view of the implementation of Component 1 of the Airport Development Project, which comprises all the different

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infrastructures, tender procedures for consultancy services for the detailed design and supervision of the new runway was launched in September 2020 by the Airport of Rodrigues Ltd (ARL).

The scope of services for the consultancy makes provision for the successful consultant to undertake the project management, detailed design, supervision and commissioning of the runway, taxiways, aprons and associated facilities such as nav aids and airfield ground light as well as new buildings.

Following the tendering exercise, a contract was awarded to GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd in association with Pell Frischmann (UK) and Systems Interface (UK) on 09 September 2021, with the commencement date of 25 October 2021. The total contract value for the consultancy services approximates to Rs92.7 million.

Mr Chairperson Sir, I am informed that as at date, GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd has already submitted the final detailed report (with a cost estimate of Rs8.6 billion, excluding VAT) with an expected construction period of 42 months.

The report has already been shared with all parties concerned and is presently under consideration. Thereafter, GIBB (Mauritius) Ltd will be instructed by the ARL to update any final detail design report once same has been endorsed by the ARL Board of Directors.

The next step will be the finalisation of the Bid documents. The project milestones as submitted by the consultant (GIBB) are as follows: -

- Preparation of final tender document scheduled to approximately June 2024;
- Floating of tender for works: June 2024;
- Closing of bids: mid-August 2024;
- Bid Evaluation: September 2024;
- Approval of Bid Evaluation Report and Award of Contract by ARL: October 2024;
- Construction Works will start approximately by 2025 for a period of 42 months, *c'est-à-dire, janvier.*

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must inform the House that with a view to enable the start of the construction works of the new runway, my Commission is implementing the following two activities in parallel: -

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- (i) The relocation of the villagers of Ste Marie;
- (ii) the relocation of five endangered and 110 endemic plants, with the collaboration of the Commission for Forestry Services and the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. To this effect, a Memorandum of Understanding has already been signed with the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation. The Rodrigues Regional Assembly is funding this action to a tune of Rs3.4 million.

The relocation of the residential units and fishing posts of the Ste Marie villagers is almost completed except for the residential units which are presently under construction and expected to be completed by the beginning of August 2024.

Most of the livestock rearing activities have also been relocated to Les Salines and other regions except five cases, out of which three have expressed their wish to be compensated in cash and which is presently under consideration. Tender procedure for the construction of the animal sheds for the two cases are under preparation and will be launched shortly.

As far as the relocation of crop production activities are concerned, tender has already been prepared and will be launched shortly for fencing works, construction of store and water tank at Laboucherie, where most of the farmers will be accommodated. Mechanisation works are presently ongoing by the Commission for Agriculture. It is expected that all the relocation programmes will be finalised and completed by December this year.

As regards to the relocation of the endemic plants, I am informed that two Horticulture Specialists from the Naples Botanical Garden were recently in Rodrigues from the 24 to 31 May 2024 to provide technical support to the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation for the relocation operations. As at date, four endangered endemic plants have been relocated to the Anse Quitor Nature Reserve. The fifth one will be relocated shortly. Thereafter, the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation will focus on the relocation of the 110 endemic plants to the Anse Quitor Nature Reserve and in the vicinity as recommended by the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment Report of the Airport Development Project, for which the Ministry of Environment has already issued an EIA License.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, Component 2 of the project concerns Technical Assistance to provide support to the implementation of the Airport Development Project for which a provision of approximately US\$10 million. has been made. The activities under this component comprises the following: -

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- (i) support to project implementation for the Terms of Reference is being finalised at the level of the World Bank to recruit the appropriate personnel to set up a Project Implementation Unit (PIU);
- (ii) Support to sector development and air transport liberalisation which essentially include technical assistance and study for the development of a national air and maritime transport strategy, support to open sky policies to include the Plaine Corail Airport for select regional carriers in order to allow more direct international flights to Rodrigues.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the other two Components 3 and 4 of the Airport Development Project deal mainly to provide support to the water, food, security and tourism sector in order to cope with the expected significant increase in tourist arrivals in Rodrigues following the New Runway Project.

Component 3 deals with the water and food security issue while the Component 4 will be dedicated to the sustainable tourism sector in Rodrigues. An appropriate sum of US\$10 million has been provided for each component.

I am informed that as at date, the Terms of Reference for the recruitment of the respective consultant for each component are also under preparation and finalisation at the level of the World Bank to develop the appropriate Strategy and Action Plan.

That is all, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Chef commissaire avait récemment fait une annonce publique le 01 mai qu'on devrait avoir une signature dans deux semaines pour une étape très importante par rapport à la réalisation de ce projet. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir de quoi s'agit-il en termes de cette signature ? Et on est maintenant le 04 juin, journée de l'émancipation de l'esclavage à Rodrigues. Plus d'un mois. On attend cette signature. Pourquoi est-ce que cela n'a pas été fait et quand est-ce que cela va se faire ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, nous aussi, nous attendons cette signature avec beaucoup d'impatience, c'est vrai. On avait annoncé qu'on devait signer l'accord. Ça veut dire *loan* entre la World Bank et le gouvernement mauricien. Mais il y a eu bien sûr des changements dans les estimations en termes de coût du projet et la durée aussi du projet comme j'ai expliqué dans ma réponse. Donc, c'est la raison pour laquelle on a dû revoir. Bien sûr, c'était prévu pour... C'était un lundi. C'était pour un lundi. J'ai oublié quelle date. Et on

devait signer. C'est lundi 13 mai, bien sûr. Et justement, deux semaines après le 01 mai, il y a eu ce soucis-là. On est en train de voir et on va faire les signatures très bientôt.

The Minority Leader: Dans ce cadre-là, le Chef commissaire peut nous dire quel est le montant du *loan agreed*. Parce qu'il parlait d'une signature de *loan*. Et maintenant, il nous a parlé de variation dans le coût qui est à Rs8.6 milliard. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire quelle est la différence entre *amount of the loan agreed and the estimated cost* ? Parce qu'on parlait ici de *deal done*. Donc, *how far the deal is done*? Puis-je savoir ?

The Chief Commissioner: Le coût, juste pour donner une idée de l'augmentation. Ça tourne autour d'à peu près Rs1 milliard. *Yes*.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire comment est-ce qu'il contemple d'avoir ce montant additionnel qui est quand même assez conséquent pour Rodrigues. Est-ce que, ce montant donc le *World Bank*, va justement étendre le montant de l'emprunt ?

The Chief Commissioner: Justement, on est en train de... Nous sommes en discussion avec bien sûr, le bureau du Premier ministre et *World Bank* ainsi que les consultants pour pouvoir... Parce qu'ils trouvent que c'est *above* le *prescribed variation amount* et il faudra revoir. Donc, ils sont en train de revoir et bien sûr, on aura le montant final avant la signature de l'accord.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Chef commissaire qu'est-ce qui fait cette grande différence dans le montant estimé ? Parce que pour avoir annoncé le 01 mai que dans deux semaines, il y a une signature et puis après, on nous dit qu'il y a eu Rs1 milliard de plus, qu'est-ce qui fait qu'il y a cette grande augmentation dans le coût estimé du projet ?

The Chief Commissioner: *Yes*, M. le président, oui, le coût additionnel, c'est dû à l'extension de la durée des travaux. Et plus particulièrement, le *cut and fill*. Vous savez, les petites montagnes, les petites collines de Ste Marie. Donc, ils ont dit qu'avec la mobilisation ainsi que la durée des travaux, ça va aller au-delà de 27 mois qui était prévu avant. Donc, 27, c'est allé maintenant jusqu'à 42 mois. Donc, ce qui fait qu'il y a eu des coûts additionnels sur le projet entre autres, M. le président. Donc, ce qui fait que bien sûr, il y a les autres composants qui devaient être inclus dans le projet, La Ferme Solaire et cetera. Donc, nous sommes en train de revoir tout ça.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, for the port development, the Chief Commissioner blamed the previous government. But I would like to ask him being given that the previous Chief Commissioner announced in the budget speech 2023/2024 *que le démarrage des travaux est prévu avant fin 2023. Ensuite*, during a statement on 22 August 2023, he mentioned that works at Plaine Corail Airport are expected if all goes as planned about mid-2024 for construction of the runway. So, can we know why you have not been able to go ahead? What went wrong with your plans? You blamed the previous government. Now, it is you announced this. What went wrong with the plans that now, we are not able to start, to kick-off the work now?

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, c'est un très gros projet. Bien sûr, lorsqu'on construit une maison, quand nous construisons une maison, des fois, il y a des problèmes. *We call this unforeseen circumstances.* Il y a eu des *unforeseen circumstances* qui fait que ça, la durée du début des travaux, a été étendue un peu plus long. C'est un peu normal. Comme vous, à l'époque, vous négociez avec l'Agence Française de Développement (AFD). Et puis, AFD est parti. Je ne sais pas pourquoi. Ils sont partis. Et puis, heureusement, nous, ce gouvernement, nous avons pu négocier avec la *World Bank* à travers le Premier ministre pour justement faire ce projet devenir une réalité. Donc, bien sûr, M. le président, en ce qu'il s'agit même de la construction du projet après, on va voir comment ça va progresser.

Mr Chairperson: Yes, we move to next question.

Mr Lisette: Thank you for your indulgent. I observed, Mr Chairperson, Sir, one of the project that is being delayed and which remained essential for the whole project to go ahead is the settlement as regards to agricultural activities. I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner why is this taking so long that this has started, I think, since 2021. We have been able to relocate the housing unit. You were left to relocate the agricultural activities. Why after two years, this has not been completed so far?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a continuous process. The time they move from their previous village, construction of the pens and so on. So, now, we are finalising everything. By the end of this year, every outstanding works will be completed. And, they will move to their previous activities, that is, agriculture, rearing of animals etc., etc. So, we are doing it. If we were not doing anything, this would have been a problem. But

it is not a problem. The D6 is there. We are launching the tender for the fencing works etc., etc. So, it is an ongoing process.

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

Mr Lisette: I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner whether, there is any conflict between where the relocation is being proposed and to existing farmers who are already using this land. Whether there is any conflict on this issue.

The Chief Commissioner: No. I am not being informed of any conflict, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I will look into it.

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I would like to know from the Chief Commissioner with regard to the project of the Airport Development Project, whether there is a committee in Rodrigues and whether RRA is represented on this committee?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is a committee. And, at times, they meet to have the views of the RRA etc.

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, of course.

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question. Dr Agathe.

MANAGEMENT – FISHERIES PROTECTION SERVICE

(No. B/36) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Fisheries and Others whether, in regard to the management of the Fisheries Protection Service, he will inform the House if the post of Officer in Charge and any other higher cadre are currently vacant and, in the affirmative, to state since when, the reasons therefor together with actions taken to fill in the post(s)?

Mr Perrine: We have just landed. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is with a great pleasure I am replying to question PQ B/36.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in response to Question B/36, I have to inform the House that there are actually 12 vacant posts in the Fisheries Protection Service which stand as follows: -

- The post of Head, Fisheries;
- Three posts of Assistant Controller, Fisheries Protection Service (Rodrigues);

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- Seven posts of Principal Fisheries Protection Officer, and
- One post of Senior Fisheries Protection Officer.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the post of Head, Fisheries was created following the Recommendation at paragraph 7.3.4A of the Errors, Omissions and Anomalies Committee (EOAC) Report 2013 and established in the Civil Establishment (RRA) Order 2013. The scheme of service was prescribed on 27 December 2017. The post was advertised on 08 November 2018 and there was no qualified candidate who applied for the post. Consequently, since its creation, the post has not been filled. However, the vacancy has been reported to the Public Service Commission on 01 April 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to the three posts of Assistant Controller, Fisheries Protection Service (Rodrigues), the vacancies in the grade occurred consequent upon the retirement of three substantive holders of the post from 2023 to 2024. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have to point out that the grade of Assistant Controller, Fisheries Protection Service (Rodrigues) is filled among officers in the grade of Principal Fisheries Protection Officer.

It is to be noted that the scheme of service for the post of Assistant Controller, Fisheries Protection Service (Rodrigues) is at revision stage.

Actually, there are seven vacancies in the post of Principal Fisheries Protection Officer. It arisen subsequent to retirement of four officers and three additional posts were approved in Budget 2021-2022 and established in Civil Establishment (RRA) Order 2022. The House is informed that the seven vacancies have already been reported to the Public Service Commission on 18 April 2024.

As soon as Principal Fisheries Protection Officer are nominated, my Commission will be able to consider assignment at the level of Assistant Controller, Fisheries Protection Service (Rodrigues) pending the filling of the vacancies.

Lastly, Mr Chairperson Sir, one vacancy occurred in the grade of Senior Fisheries Protection Officer consequently to the retirement of one substantive holder of the post on 19 February 2024. Action is being taken for the filling of the vacancy, accordingly.

Dr. Agathe: M. le président, j'ai écouté la réponse du Commissaire. Donc, il y a 12 postes à pourvoir parmi les hauts cadres donc du Fisheries Protections Service (FPS). C'est quand même beaucoup. Si on comprend que pour le poste of Head il y a eu un appel à candidature et qu'il n'y a pas eu de candidature. Donc, ça reste un problème. Par contre, pour

Assistant Controller, pour Principal Fisheries Protection Officers, il y a sept Principal, il y en a sept. Les causes de ces vacances sont parce qu'il y a des officiers qui sont partis à la retraite et il n'y a pas eu de remplissage de leurs postes. Pourquoi cette situation ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je dois dire franchement que moi-même, *I am not very happy* avec tous les *establishments*. Ce n'est pas seulement le Fisheries, les autres secteurs aussi. Il y a beaucoup, beaucoup de *vacancies* qui ne sont pas remplis et c'est des *funded posts*. A tel point que j'ai soulevé la question quand j'étais à Maurice avec le Chef du Service Civil, le Secrétaire au Cabinet pour lui dire que c'est impossible de travailler avec un *vacancy* de 40% dans le secteur. Si vous voyez l'agriculture c'est pire. Alors, vous savez sur 105 *enrol*, il y a 46 *vacancies*. On ne peut plus fonctionner.

(Interruptions)

On ne peut pas *deliver*. Le problème c'est que j'ai parlé au Chef commissaire et je crois qu'il faut revoir toutes l'administration pour savoir pourquoi ces postes ne sont pas remplis surtout c'est *funded*. Et pour Fisheries, le Head, la tête depuis six ans c'est vacant, depuis 2018. Et je ne sais pas. Mais on a fait comprendre à Maurice que peut-être on peut *assign higher responsibility*. Mais je pense qu'il faut regarder ça de plus près et je suis d'accord avec vous que ne peut pas *deliver* si vous n'avez pas de staff. Comment vous allez exécuté un projet, la mise en place, c'est dommage. Mais moi, je soulève, je dis à l'Assemblée et je soulevais la question au Chef de la Fonction Public à Maurice pour lui dire que de faire de sorte que ces postes puissent être rempli au plus vite pour que Rodrigues, la population attend de nous qu'on *deliver*. Et ça tombe sur les politiciens mais nous ne pouvons pas tous faire nous-même. Je vous remercie pour la question et Fisheries c'est un secteur important, *a pillar of the rodriguan economy*. Mais partout vous voyez X qui est en train de remplacer Y. On prend quelqu'un *very low level*. Etant responsable, je ne blâme personne mais il faut remplir les postes. Et ce qui me désole un petit peu, *these are funded posts*, je ne comprends pas pourquoi ce n'est pas rempli. Merci.

Dr. Agathe: Les postes existent quand même donc ce n'est pas pourvu. Je voudrais demander au...

(Interruptions)

Je voudrais justement demander est-ce qu'en ce moment il y a un Officer-in-Charge à la FPS ?

Mr Perrine: Il faut comprendre, M. le président, c'est-à-dire que la commission de la Pêche vous savez section commission et puis vous avez protection. Protection nous avons quelqu'un qui est en train de faire *acting Assistant Controller of Fisheries*, qui fait l'intérima. Lui aussi il est en partance. Et à ce moment-là on attend pour pouvoir agir comme Assistant Fisheries Controller. Il faudrait être du grade de Principal. Mais ils sont en train d'*acting as Senior*, comment ils vont faire Principal et puis venir Assistant Controller of Fisheries. C'est très, très difficile. Alors, peut-être on va faire appel à Maurice pour avoir quelqu'un pour mettre un peu d'ordre. Mais je ne sais pas peut-être vous étiez là - depuis longtemps ça. Il y a eu beaucoup d'officiers qui sont partis en retraite. Il faut le dire. Mais ils étaient là comme Assistant Controller of Fisheries mais quand ils sont partis les autres n'ont pas été promu pour faire le suivi. Mais je pense que l'Establishment, Central Administration à Rodrigues va faire le nécessaire pour pouvoir recruter. D'ailleurs, on attend recrutement de sept Fisheries Protection Officer. L'interview a été fait, on attend le résultat depuis janvier. Je pense que très bientôt nous aurons assez d'officiers pour pouvoir faire le travail sur le terrain. Merci.

Mr Lisette: Yes, Mr Chairperson, I understand that it is an administrative issue but which is going to impact on your policy decisions. Being given that, I understand that there are specific grades which are required for specific duties. And, here I am referring to prosecutions of cases before the Court which I think is done principally by the Principal Protection Officers. Now you are telling us that you have seven vacant post and I think nobody is in post. How are you dealing with such cases as regards to prosecution of cases before the Court right now?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, il faut faire fonctionner la Commission, il y a des fonctionnaires de bonne volonté qui est en train de *keep going, keep the service going on*. Mais c'est que je dois vous dire, côté *prosecution* il y a un officier qui a été *trained* à Maurice, il est en train de faire son travail. Mais je vous dis à la tête, Head, Principal, Acting Controller of Fisheries, il n'y a personne. A ce moment-là on doit *deal* avec n'importe qui. Je suis d'accord avec vous. Le problème c'est que si nous n'avons pas l'appui de staff pour *deliver*, c'est-à-dire, on essaye de faire mais pas à *hundred percent*. Nous voulons aller plus vite. Si vous voyez vous-mêmes vous posez des questions qu'est-ce qui se passe ? Qu'est-ce qui se passe ?

(Interruptions)

Heureusement, vous avez bien...

(Interruptions)

The Minority Leader: M. le président, c'est la première fois qu'on arrive à un département où il y a autant de – *very high cadres*. Quelque part vous êtes sans tête au niveau de Fisheries. Sans cou et sans tête. Je me souviens, mon bureau à l'époque on avait collaboré avec la commission de la Pêche pour organiser des formations diplômantes, un Diploma in Fisheries Management et je voudrais savoir si ces officiers qui doivent monter, est-ce qu'ils sont qualifiés valeur du jour et, si oui, je ne sais pas, vous avez parlé des procédures que vous avez faites. Nous on avait posé la question au Chef commissaire, c'est plus establishment que Fisheries. Donc, qu'est-ce que vous faites là dans l'urgence parce que *enforcement* – et en même temps aussi il y a le bien-être et la motivation des officiers. S'ils sont qualifiés pourquoi les faire attendre autant et en même temps vous amputer de votre cou et de votre tête et au détriment de la population ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, vous savez il faut bien faire la différence entre section protection et conservation, surveillance et puis la commission de la Pêche, *the Head*. Mais pour section conservation et protection, c'est-à-dire, il y a l'establishment. On ne peut pas prendre n'importe qui et mettre à la tête. Il y a les grades qu'il faut suivre. Et ça, c'est l'establishment. Nous comme politicien, nous n'avons rien à faire dedans. Il faut suivre les procédures. Mais dans la commission, nous avons déjà trois officiers super qualifiés, trois dames qui viennent d'être nommées. Ça nous sommes en train de *deliver*, planning, organisation, etcetera, en particulier. Mais la surveillance, côté surveillance et contrôle, ça je dois dire franchement il y a un gros problème parce que nous sommes *under staff* et nous n'avons les personnes pour le planning/contrôle à la tête. C'est-à-dire, on est en train de *rely*, demander à des officiers qui peut-être n'est pas responsable de faire un travail qu'ils ne sont pas supposés de faire. Mais quand même je dois dire on est en train de faire le minimum. Et je pense que très bientôt avec la nomination, avec le recrutement de sept officiers nous allons pouvoir *deliver*. Mais je vous dis pour les autres secteurs aussi, ce n'est pas un blâme mais c'est une constatation, dans les autres départements, je vous dis l'agriculture s'est pire. Mais la question n'est pas dessus, je vais vous dire plus tard. Merci.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, one of the policy that was very dear to the Commissioner when he came into office and which he announced in this very Assembly was the creation of the Marine Academy where there will be, I think, the fusion...

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The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have been listening to the Member since I have entered this House earlier and most of their supplementary questions are out of bound of the original questions.

(Interruptions)

No, if you wanted something on the Fisheries Academy, you should have specified on the Fisheries Academy. The question here is the management of Fisheries Protection Service; Fisheries Academy is the training of fishers. It is clear that this is out of bound. Okay? So, if you want something specific, I think it should have been asked. Because we are one hour and we have only done less than 10 questions.

(Interruptions)

Yes, it is not my problem but you will go and say it is a problem.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the point of order is that questions are out of bound. The supplementary questions are not related and the subject matter is out of subject related to the main question. And, the Minority Leader likes it or not, I am raising the point of order, if she is pleased or displeased it is your problem.

Mr Chairperson: I am on my feet. Right.

(Interruptions)

Order please!

(Interruptions)

Order please!

(Interruptions)

Order please!

(Interruptions)

I said order. Now relate your question with the main question, please.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lisette: The question, Mr Chairperson, it is related to the question of management of the Fisheries Service and as per the policy of the Commissioner when he came in office he wanted to make a fusion as regards to, I think, management and the

Fisheries Research and Training Unit (FRTU), if I am not mistaken. I would like to know from him where matters stand as regards to that for a better management of this service? Is it not related, Mr Chairperson?

Mr Perrine: Je vais peut-être donner quelque information peut-être si le Membre va venir avec une question additionnelle...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Members please, allow the Commissioner to answer the question.

Mr Perrine: C'est-à-dire que la question *staffing*, n'affecte pas la question d'académie. Parce que comme je vous ai dit on vient de recruter trois dames très qualifiées qui vont être en charge de la gestion de l'académie marine qu'on voulait mettre en place. Merci.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, étant donné l'urgence de la situation par rapport à ce que le Commissaire a expliqué, tous les *higher cadres*, donc on n'a pas de poste, et sûre qu'ils ont une bonne relation avec les autorités qui font qu'on peut assurer que ce problème soit résolu. Est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire quand est-ce qu'il pense que on va une fois pour toute résoudre ce problème dans l'intérêt de la population ?

Mr Perrine: Mais, M. le président, on m'a dit que le problème est avec *finalisation of scheme of services*. Je vais essayer de voir ça, de régler ça au plus vite.

(Interruptions)

Pour la majorité de poste qu'il y a. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Next question. Minority Leader next question.

LAST RECRUITMENT EXERCISE – POST OF DEPARTMENTAL HEAD

(No. B/37) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the last recruitment exercise for the post of Departmental Head, he will obtain information from the relevant authority and state the:

- (a) date of the advertisement, interview and appointment therefor;
- (b) number of vacancies for the grade, the total number of applicants, the selection criteria applicable and the number of eligible applicants, and
- (c) outcome of the exercise?

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The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that vacancies for the post of Departmental Head were advertised by the Public Service Commission by way of Public Advertisement dated 27 January 2023 with closing date 16 February 2023.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the power to appoint persons to hold any office in the Public Service is vested in the Public Service Commission under section 89 of the Constitution and as such the requested information pertaining to the selection process rest solely with the Public Service Commission and cannot be disclosed.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, I am informed that at the time the post was advertised in January 2023, there were three permanent vacancies in the grade of Departmental Head. Information of the total number of applicants and the number of eligible applicants are not available at my office.

The criteria applicable are the qualification requirements prescribed in the Scheme of Service for the grade of Departmental Head, including mainly a degree from a recognised institution and at least five-year experience at middle management level. I am tabling a copy of the Scheme of Service.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c) of the question, following the selection exercise, the Public Service Commission provided the names of three candidates to be appointed as Departmental Head in the Rodrigues Regional Assembly. Two of the selected candidates assumed duty on 14 July 2023 while the third one declined the offer of employment.

I am informed that in a letter dated 07 September 2023, the Public Service Commission requested that the assignment of duties of Departmental Head made to Miss C. P. be terminated. Miss C. P. was accordingly reverted on the 08 September 2023.

I am further informed, that the Island Chief Executive wrote to the Public Service Commission on 12 September 2023 requesting that the names of two other candidates be submitted from the merit list for appointment as Departmental Head. However, Mr Chairperson, Sir, instead of submitting the two names, I repeat, instead of submitting the names, the Public Service Commission requested the Island Chief Executive to initiate action to amend the Scheme of Service for the post of Departmental Head and to subsequently, report the vacancies to the Commission.

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The proposed draft revised Scheme of Service has been sent to trade unions for consultation in line with existing procedures. Thereafter, the proposed Scheme of Service will be referred to the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms for prescription. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je n'ai pas trop bien compris la réponse du Chef commissaire par rapport à *appointment*. Donc, il y a eu un entretien, un exercice d'*interview*. *Among the list some have been offered the post and then instead of giving the next on the list as if quashing the... and proposing another scheme. Is this normal, Mr Chairperson, Sir?*

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, that is why I was reading the answer a bit slower when I reached that part. Let me repeat it - I further informed that the Island Chief Executive wrote, the Island Chief Executive, he wrote to the Public Service Commission on 12 September 2023 requesting that the names of two of the candidates be submitted from the merit list for appointment as Departmental Head since there were two posts vacant - one was terminated and the other one refused. There was only one in post out of the three. However, instead of submitting the two names, the Public Service Commission requested the Island Chief Executive to initiate action to amend the Scheme of Service for the post of Departmental Head and to subsequently report the vacancies to the Commission.

So, these are the powers of the Public Service Commission, Mr Chairperson, Sir. On ne peut rien faire. Donc, c'est eux qui prennent leurs décisions, c'est eux qui... Nous avons fait de notre mieux, nous avons demandé à ce qu'on remplace les deux autres candidats mais malheureusement, ils ont demandé autre chose au lieu de nous soumettre deux noms.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, c'est ahurissant et sans précédent. C'est-à-dire qu'il y a un exercice de recrutement, deux personnes assument le poste, *one* destitué dans le même exercice et puis on dit que l'exercice est caduc, ceux qui sont après on ne peut pas... C'est ça que le Chef commissaire nous a... c'est ça le procès-là qu'on a fait par rapport à ce...

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, j'ai été assez généreux et transparent de vous donner les réponses.

(Interruptions)

Non, non, non. Il faut comprendre une chose. J'avais le choix de ne pas répondre à cette question mais je l'ai fait pour éclairer votre antenne, je dirais, je l'ai fait. Mais il y a des

choses que je ne peux pas répondre. Je ne peux pas répondre parce qu'on n'a pas les informations. Moi, ce que je peux vous dire ici, c'est les *sequence of events*, ce qui s'est vraiment passé. C'est tout. Mais je ne peux pas... et croyez-moi, M. le président,...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please.

The Chief Commissioner: J'étais là-bas, j'étais... Bon, c'est bon.

The Minority Leader: Donc, entretemps il y a des *vacancies*. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir comment ça se fait maintenant, il y a des postes, donc, comment ça s'organise après qu'on n'a pas pu *fill in the post*, comment cela s'organise ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, oui, ça c'est la prérogative de l'Island Chief Executive. C'est vrai que dans tous les commissions, je peux dire qu'il y a des Departmental Heads, *full-fledged* et il y a aussi des *acting*. Pour le moment nous avons trois *acting* Departmental Heads, qui assurent le poste de Departmental Head au sein des différentes commissions. Mais aussi, je tiens à le dire, M. le président, nous de ce côté-ci de la Chambre on aurait bien aimé avoir des *full-fledged* Departmental Head pour justement assurer le bon déroulement des activités, déroulement dans les commissions. Donc, malheureusement, c'est le cas on n'a pas pu avoir les deux postes remplis à ce jour.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, le Chef commissaire dans sa réponse a parlé de *amendment of Scheme of Service* dans sa réponse. On sait bien que le processus doit commencer chez nous, c'est-à-dire, au niveau de HR, de l'Administration, je suppose il enclenche des procédures. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir *what is the gist about* – il y a des pistes sûrement donner, donc, comment ça va... donc, le Scheme of Service, quel est le problème, quels sont les reproches et comment est-ce que vous envisagez de faire ça ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, c'est le *amendment* de *Scheme of Service*...

(Interruptions)

Mais ils ont demandé, c'est la Public Service Commission (PSC) qui demande au Island Chief Executive (ICE) de revoir le Scheme of Service. C'est surtout en ce qu'il s'agit d'un des *requirements* dans le...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please!

The Chief Commissioner: Un des *requirements* dans ce que je viens de vous donner là – *le middle management*. Ça concerne le *middle management*. Ce que moi je peux vous dire.

Mr Baptiste: Can we know the reason why C. P. was reverted after being appointed initially by the PSC itself?

Mr Chairperson: Can you repeat the question?

Mr Baptiste: Why C. P... I think the answer of the Chief Commissioner - was reverted back to Administrative Officer (AO) being given that at a certain point in time that by the same PSC she was appointed as Departmental Head (DH)? Can we have the reason?

(Interruptions)

The Chief Commissioner: I think that you should come with a substantiate question to this.

(Interruptions)

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire... le fait qu'actuellement et depuis 22 ans de l'autonomie nous savons que le *post of Departmental Head (DH), the Scheme of Service* c'était beaucoup plus les Administrative Officers qui pouvait être... c'est l'exercice... on a vu dans la fonction publique ceux qui sont *in post*...

(Interruptions)

This has been the practice – est-ce qu'on peut savoir si cela va changer quelque chose par rapport au *amendment of the scheme* ?

The Chief Commissioner: Encore une fois, M. le président, je ne peux pas répondre pour la PSC si ça va changer quelque chose. Non, je ne sais pas, parce que lorsqu'on lance les *advertisements* tout le monde peut participer, tout le monde peut prendre part à l'exercice. Donc, ce n'est pas spécifique à un grade seulement.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, puis-je savoir du Chef commissaire par rapport au *assignment*, il a parlé de *the ICE writes to the PSC* normalement *for actingship*. Est-ce que dans tous les cas où on a eu des *assignments of DH whether the concurrent of the PSC has been sought and whether same has been obtained?*

The Chief Commissioner: The answer is yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. But we have also to be... I have to remind the respected Minority Leader that the PSC also delegates powers to the ICE to perform his function.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Okay, next question.

MEASURES IMPLEMENTED/COMPLETED/COSTS

– BUDGET SPEECH 2022-2023

(No. B/38) Mrs R.M.F. Gaspard Pierre Louis, C.S.K. (Minority Leader) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the measures announced in the Budget Speech 2022-2023, he will state and table the list of the different measures implemented/completed together with their respective costs, the budget earmarked and the amount paid, indicating the amount reallocated and/unspent and the different item votes?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the status of implementation of the different measures with their respective cost, the budget earmarked and the amount paid for the information of the House. All amount unspent have been reallocated to other recurrent items. The remaining details will be compiled and will be tabled in due course. The remaining.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, donc le Chef commissaire doit être au courant que cette question figurait sur le Order Paper du *sitting* du 22 août 2023 où le Chef commissaire d'alors avait répondu dans un mois on allait déposer des informations à l'Assemblée. Et on est aujourd'hui - août 2023 - on est en juin 2024, presque une année ; un mois, je ne sais pas s'ils ne savent compter mais je pense qu'un mois et là c'est presque une année et on n'a pas eu encore. Donc, et là on nous dit qu'on va *compile* encore. Donc, c'est une question de transparence sérieuse. Est-ce que le Chef commissaire peut nous dire quant à son appréciation par rapport au pourcentage de projet réalisait par rapport au projet annonçait ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, cette question est très subjective. Appréciation ou pas nous faisons de notre mieux pour comme eux à l'époque ils faisaient de leurs mieux pour implémenter les différents projets. Mais nous ce qu'on a fait on a dû faire des réallocations. Bien sûr, si jamais on trouve qu'il y a un projet qui tarde *due to unforeseen circumstances*, encore une fois on fait des réallocations pour justement faire le projet. Donc, les politiques changent bien sûr mais on a fait de notre mieux bien sûr.

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The Minority Leader: M. le président, par rapport au budget 2022-2023, il y avait un montant de Rs30 millions alloués pour le dépotoir de Roche Bon Dieu. Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Chef commissaire qu'est-ce qu'on a fait par rapport à ce projet-là pour ce moment de Rs30 millions ?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je sais que la question est très large. On me pose des questions 2022-2023, comme-ci là on rentre le Committee Stage, c'est la raison pour laquelle il y a des officiers qui sont ici. Donc, nous sommes au Committee Stage. Allez, s'il faut prendre le temps du parlement pour faire encore un Committee Stage, il n'y a pas de soucis.

Mr Chairperson: You will not have it.

The Chief Commissioner: Donc, il n'y a pas de soucis.

Mr Chairperson: No, you will not have it.

The Chief Commissioner: Donc, il n'y a pas de soucis, on peut le faire jusqu'à – je ne sais pas combien de temps encore. On a une heure temps et demi. Il n'y a pas de soucis, M. le président. Donc, comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse, si jamais... *"All amount unspent have been reallocated to other recurrent items."*

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

OVERTIME ALLOWANCE

– AMBULANCE DRIVERS & AMBULANCE ATTENDANTS

(No. B/39) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to overtime allowance for Ambulance Drivers and Ambulance Attendants, he will state the:

- (a) amount earmarked for the financial year 2023-2024;
- (b) total amount incurred therefor from June 2023 to April 2024 together with the amount paid and still due, and
- (c) reasons for the delay in the payment thereof, the expected payment date and the remedial measures taken to avoid the occurrence of same in the future?

Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the number of funded positions in the grade of Ambulance Driver (on shift) as per budget for financial year 2023-2024 is 28 and 32 for the post of Ambulance Care Attendant (on shift).

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I am further informed that presently there are 27 Drivers for 11 ambulances which are in good running condition amongst whom there are 26 Ambulance Drivers (on shift) and one assigned Driver (on roster) who has been assigned the duties of Ambulance Driver (on roster). The ambulances are posted at the airport premises, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Marie Jacqueline Félicité Area Health Centre, Mont Lubin and Dr Christopher Prudence Area Health Centre, La Ferme. The number of Ambulance Care Attendant (on shift) in post stands at 32.

With regard to part (a) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that a sum of Rs8 million has been earmarked under the financial year 2023-2024 for the whole Commission.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that for the month of June 2023, an amount of Rs1,969,259.06 had been paid as overtime in favour of Ambulance Care Attendants (on shift) and Ambulance Drivers (on shift).

As per our records, the amount submitted to my Commission for payment of overtime for the Ambulance Care Attendants (on shift) and Ambulance Drivers (on shift) and still due is Rs5,613,838.42. This amount represents overtime due for the period from July 2023 to February 2024. No return of overtime for the month of March and April 2024 has been submitted so far.

Mr Chairperson. Sir, for part (c) of the question, I wish to inform the House that there is a high suspicion of forgery and excessive claims for payment of overtime, thereby explaining the reasons for the delay in the payment of the overtime.

I wish to further inform the House that enquiry has already been initiated by the Manager of Internal Control in this respect. Consequently, any payment will be considered only after the outcome of the enquiry. Thank you.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that it is a very serious issue if there is a suspicion of forgery because all this information – I think that this information should be confirmed by higher level officers when submitted by the respective Ambulance Drivers. So, if there is this suspicion of forgery, can I know whether there will be an independent body who will go through this enquiry instead of people within the department of... in service and whether the case has been or will be reported to the Police?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, ce n'est pas l'Internal Control de ce que nous avons ici, c'est le Manager Internal Control de Maurice qui est venu faire une enquête et le rapport

finaliser sera soumis sous peu pour les enquête. A ce moment-là si ça s'est confirmé donc il y aura des actions.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, as regards to that issue of forgery in overtime, the procedure in the Public Service demands that overtime is approved beforehand by a higher officer. Does the Commissioner mean that this has not been the case that there has been no approval given by higher officers to the Ambulance Drivers for their overtime?

Mr Volbert: M. le président, comme je viens d'annoncer il y a une enquête en Cour, je ne peux pas me prononcer. Nous savons qu'il y a des maldonnes mais on laisse la conclusion de l'enquête nous dire ce qu'il y a et puis il y aura des actions.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order please!

The Minority Leader: M. le président, si je ne me trompe ces ambulances sont occupées de GPS. C'était un des projets que nous avons faits. S'il y a *high suspicion of forgery* - you are saying that there is *high suspicion of tampering with the GPS*?

Mr Volbert: Ça je ne sais pas où la minorité a eu cette réponse.

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, can we know when these suspicion of forgery was – when were these being brought to the notice of the concerned officer, was it just recently or whether it was right before?

Mr Volbert: C'est d'après le montant des *overtime* qu'on a reçu au bureau. Quelqu'un ne peut pas avoir 148,000, 158,000, 200,000 par mois. Donc, c'est ça qui a attiré l'attention et on a demandé à ce qu'une enquête soit faite. A la lumière de la conclusion de l'enquête nous allons voir ce qu'il faut faire et prendre des actions nécessaires.

Mr Chairperson: Last question. Go on.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, est-ce que le Commissaire peut nous dire quel est le montant global jusqu'ici sur la table de la commission bien sûr *pending the inquiry*. Quel est le montant total ? Parce qu'on sait que depuis juin 2023 ces personnes n'ont pas été payées. Donc, quel est le montant total aujourd'hui qu'ils demandent ?

Mr Volbert: Comme j'ai dit dans ma réponse. La respectée Minorité n'a pas écouté. Je pense qu'elle était, peut-être, la tête ailleurs. Il y a un montant de Rs5,613,838.42.
Pending.

Mr Chairperson: Now we moved to next question.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE

(No. B/40) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the Foot and Mouth Disease, he will state to the House the:

- (a) reasons for the recent adoption of new bio-security measures in relation thereto;
- (b) status of the last vaccination campaign to curb the disease in Rodrigues;
- (c) current prevalence of the disease in the island, and
- (d) prospects for lifting the partial ban on the sale of animals from Rodrigues to Mauritius?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, on 21 May 2024, my Commission was informed by the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security that following the detection of Foot and Mouth Disease in one farm located in a province in South Africa from which they import animals, they have decided to reinforce their biosecurity measures to ensure that Mauritius is fully protected from Foot and Mouth Disease.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the occurrence of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) in Rodrigues in 2016 and again in 2021, resulted in Mauritius applying restrictions on the trade in livestock between Rodrigues and Mauritius.

This has impacted and continues to impact severely on the livelihoods of livestock breeders in Rodrigues. And being given that up to now, it has not been able to definitively identify the origins of the two outbreaks (2016 and 2021), it is rational to understand the decision of my Commission to request the approval of the Executive Council for the issue of a protocol for the export of livestock and the reinforcement of bio-security measures to protect the island from future incursion of FMD.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (b) of the question, the strategy of the vaccination programme was initially based on establishment of primary immune responses.

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The last vaccination campaign was conducted in July 2023. The total livestock vaccinated was 19,964 which comprised: -

- (i) Sheep – 7,722;
- (ii) Goats – 6,165, and
- (iii) Cattle – 6,077.

The figures given represent a vaccination coverage of 77% and in terms of physical coverage a 100% coverage was obtained on a region wise basis.

I wish to point out that according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the acceptable vaccination coverage is greater than/should be greater than or equal to 70%, which is acceptable.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c), the current prevalence of the disease is monitored regularly at each shipment of livestock to Mauritius. The export protocol issued by the Ministry of Agro-Industry compels that all animals to be exported be bled and tested for FMD Negative. On the last shipment on 27 May, the seroprevalence was 2.69%.

To note, the seroprevalence is for Type O. The Foot and Mouth Disease, the virus detected in Rodrigues since first outbreak revealed to be Type O.

With regard to part (d), Mr Chairperson, Sir, I must say that to reinstate normal trade in livestock (this is very important, I would like the Members to listen), Rodrigues requires to be internationally recognised as free from FMD by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH). Having lost its international status free from FMD without vaccination (the highest status) in 2016 after the first outbreak, it had been hoped that the free status could be regained relatively easily. However, recurrence of the FMD in 2021 dealt a severe blow to the aspiration of being able to fully resume the cattle trade to Mauritius island.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my Commission will require assistance from overseas for finalising a pathway to achieving restauration of the FMD-free status of the WOAH of international freedom from FMD without vaccination in accordance with provisions of Chapter 8.8 of the WOAH Terrestrial Animal Health Code³.

This process required submission to the organisation of series of conditions, we have to comply: -

- Initially a description of the poultry and livestock systems together with information about Veterinary Services.

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- A detailed account of FMD events that have taken place and intentions with respect to control together with presentation of a control surveillance plan.
- Finally, a dossier detailing the results of surveillance, providing the evidence that FMD has been eliminated and requesting that Rodrigues is again to be considered as free from FMD without vaccination.

My Commission is working on and it will take time but we have a commitment with the breeders in Rodrigues, our alliance, we have promised them that we will eliminate FMD in Rodrigues during our mandate. It will take a long time but we are committed and we will do it. First, we will have to introduce new Regulations in the Assembly regarding the movement of livestock in Rodrigues. If we want to eliminate FMD, it is not by vaccination. As I have said, vaccination is initially for private elimination and not to the elimination of MFD. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Dr. Agathe: M. le président, le Commissaire a annoncé que le taux de vaccination à l'issue de la troisième campagne est de l'ordre de 77 et que les taux requis par les autorités internationales c'est de l'ordre de 70 et que c'est bon. Par contre, on voudrait savoir pourquoi cette série de mesures annonçaient par le Conseil récemment à la suite de cette information que vous avez reçu du ministère de l'Agriculture de Maurice. Parce que si le taux de vaccination est bon, on comprend bien qu'on est dans la bonne direction et il faut essayer de maintenir ces acquis. Et donc aussi, pourquoi ces mesures, et est-ce que toutes ces mesures sont – est-ce qu'il y a des dispositifs qui sont mises en place pour appliquer les différentes mesures annonçaient ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, la communication qu'on a fait, c'est communication préventive. Vous savez, Maurice le ministère nous a informé qu'ils sont importés beaucoup d'animaux de l'Afrique du Sud, 5,000 et cette région est contaminé par la FMD. Alors, tous les animaux sont bloqués à Maurice en quarantaine. Et Maurice, en mesure de précaution ils sont renforcis les mesures de sécurité à Maurice. Et comme vous savez il y a beaucoup de contacts entre Rodrigues et Maurice, nous nous ne pouvons pas, comme on dit *foolhardy*, attendre qu'on a le premier cas à Rodrigues et puis on va agir. Ce que nous aussi parce qu'il y a tellement de communication entre Rodrigues et Maurice, nous avons pris le devant. Bien sûr c'est temporaire aussitôt que ça va être enlever – nous sommes en train de prendre les précautions, renforcer – qui existait déjà mais qui était un petit peu *dormant* – de renforcer, par exemple, l'aéroport ..., les importations de viande dériver à base de porc, bœuf, etcetera,

sont interdits pendant quelque temps. Parce qu'à Maurice comme je vous dis, il y a cette cargaison qui serait en circulation très bientôt, à ce moment-là nous ne savons pas comment ça va terminer. Il ne faut pas oublier comment la population était traumatisée avec ce qu'on eut, 2016 et 2021, et le manque à gagner de la population. Les séquelles sont encore là parmi les éleveurs. Alors, nous sommes en train de tous faire pour qu'on empêche la propagation de cette maladie à Rodrigues à nouveau. Alors, je voudrais que les Membres de l'Opposition, tout le monde, ils arrivent à comprendre, à s'entendre que ce n'est pas le moment de les relâcher mais c'est le moment de renforcer. D'ailleurs, bientôt nous aurons un expert international qui va venir pour voir un petit peu où nous sommes arrivés, pour nous aider et mettre en place un *Animal Health Division* à Rodrigues pour revoir... D'ailleurs, le Fonds Européen de Développement (FED) avait parlé de ça. Les mouvements des animaux, pas simplement à Maurice même à Rodrigues. Et je dois dire que, je ne suis pas en train de blâmer personne mais la façon qu'on a traité au commencement la Fièvre Aphteuse, comme les experts ont dit, peut-être c'était mal-*advice*, parce qu'il fallait savoir qu'est-ce qu'on veut faire, éliminer la maladie, vacciner pour temporiser ou bien vivre avec FMD à Rodrigues continuellement année après année ou bien éliminer. Nous nous voulions éliminer, Rodrigues devient FMD-free. Parce que vous savez la vaccination ça coûte beaucoup d'argent et il faudrait une surveillance accrue, une section simplement pour surveiller. Il faut comprendre qu'il y a deux façons, soit vous êtes FMD-free, soit vous êtes FMD-free *with vaccination*. C'est-à-dire, tous les temps il faut vaccination, tous les ans. Ça coûte Rs5 millions les vaccins. Mais il faut l'administrer sous surveillance. Si c'est sur surveillance, il faudrait une équipe de dix personnes qui soumet les rapports continuellement à l'organisation mondiale de la santé des animaux. Alors nous, la commission, le gouvernement, nous voulons éliminer que Rodrigues retrouve son statut de FMD-free, sans vaccination. Et ces 2% donc vous parlez, c'est ça qu'il reste pour l'instant au pays. Et c'est facile d'éliminer ces 2%, ce qu'on est en train de faire. Identifier où se trouve ces 2%, diviser Rodrigues en zone et éliminer ces 2% ou soit *cull* pour que Rodrigues, prévalence zéro, à ce moment-là nous allons être FMD-free. Merci.

Dr. Agathe: Plus précisément, M. le président, je voudrais savoir puisque vous avez annoncé des mesures, par exemple, mesure d'interdiction de l'importation de viande et des dérivés, où est-ce que vous en êtes, est-ce que c'est applicable, c'est appliqué, la vaccination même, la quatrième campagne, vous l'avez annoncé, et vous-même vous dites que ça coûte

de l'argent, il y a énormément d'implication pour ces deux mesures-là, est-ce que vous êtes en train d'appliquer ces deux mesures ?

Mr Perrine: vous savez, comme je vous dit, il faudrait arriver prévalence zéro, à ce moment-là on va faire l'application FMD-free, c'est-à-dire, il n'y aura plus d'interdiction d'exportation, nous pourrions le faire. Mais aussi longtemps nous ne sommes pas à 0%, on ne peut pas faire. Maintenant on peut faire une application mais avec vaccination. Mais comme je vous dit, vaccination parce que nous avons une prévalence de 2%, c'est-à-dire, le virus est encore là, ça peut circuler. C'est pourquoi on vaccine. S'il n'y a pas de vaccination ça va augmenter ça va plus de 2%. Parce que les animaux voyagent à Rodrigues, ce n'est pas une ferme on reste comme en Europe, etcetera, les troupeaux vont broutés ailleurs n'importe où, à Montagne Plate ou à Grande Montagne. A ce moment-là, ils transportent le virus. C'est pourquoi on garde la vaccination. Pourquoi ? Pour maintenir la prévalence et essayer de les identifier pour éliminer les animaux séropositifs.

Deuxième question que vous avez pose. Peut-être je vais vous lire. C'est-à-dire qu'avec les instructions qu'on a essayé de mettre en place à Rodrigues, on va voir comment palier à ça surtout l'effet d'importation, les personnes engager dans la transformation. La commission va venir avec une série d'activité : proposition, *scheme*, la semaine qui arrive-là, pour aider les businessmen de Rodrigues.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, in line with the prevalence of the disease as mentioned in the question. In his answer of 31 May 2022, the Commissioner came up with a lengthy list of proposals to in fact, eliminate that question of FMD. And at that time, he was speaking about working with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Now I hear that he has not even mentioned FAO in his answer and he has shifted to AWHO. I would like to know specifically as regards to the two veterinaries that he requested from the FAO, why this has not worked out?

Mr Perrine: *First of all*, M. le président, FAO s'est fond des Nations Unies pour l'agriculture. Mais ils ont des réalisations spécifiques, par exemple pour les animaux. C'est World Organisation of the Animal Health mais qui dépend des Nations Unies. Mais comme je vous dis ils travaillent en collaboration. Dès fois, des vaccins, par exemple à Rodrigues ont été financés par la FAO mais c'était sous la supervision de la World Organisation of the Animal Health. C'est même terme mais peut-être simplement section spécifique, spécialiser dedans.

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Bon, maintenant pour les vétérinaires, il faudra dire, il y a un problème de recrutement, je ne vais pas retourner dessus.

(Interruptions)

Même ça. Vous savez même Maurice aussi avait voulu recruter les vétérinaires. Jusqu'à maintenant ils n'ont pas pu. On leur a dit aussi recruter pour Rodrigues. Je dois vous dire que j'ai fait l'initiative, peut-être secrètement je vous dis, j'ai même approché les autorités Sud-Africaine pour faire avoir un vétérinaire urgent à Rodrigues pour aider parce que depuis le *fact finding committee* dans la recommandation, ils ont bien expliqué que deux vétérinaires ce n'est pas suffisant pour Rodrigues, il faut renforcer, il faut mettre les laboratoires et il faut recruter les personnels. Mais quand il s'agit de recrutement on tourne en rond. Bon, je vais essayer de voir comment passer outre pour aller de l'avant.

Mr Lisette: I do not want to argue with the Commissioner but as far as his answer is concerned, this is what he mentioned: "*Nous avons soulevé la question avec un représentant de la FAO et je pense que d'ici très bientôt...*", on parle là c'était en 31 mai 2022. Nous sommes en 2024, M. le président. « *Je pense que d'ici très bientôt Rodrigues va avoir deux vétérinaires additionnels.* » Et les vétérinaires ils ne sont toujours pas là.

Anyway, Mr Chairperson, Sir, we will set this aside, we go on another proposal made by the Commissioner as regards to the setting up of a contingency plan for the FMD. I would like to know from him where matter stands as regards to that?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, le comité existe. Par exemple, le High Powered Committee, va se rencontrer cette semaine-ci. Mais c'était dormant parce qu'il y avait de *clinical case* à Rodrigues. C'est-à-dire, on ne peut pas se rencontrer pour rien dire. Mais là le High Powered Committee va se rencontre cette semaine-ci mais au niveau de la commission, nous avons une section spécifique qui travaille dessus. Par exemple, tous les prélèvements de sang qu'on effectue sur les animaux sont analysés et discuter et les actions qui va être prise toute de suite. Et aussi s'est envoyé un à Maurice et ailleurs. Nous sommes connectés à un réseau SEGA Océan Indien. Ce n'est pas simplement comme je vous dis interne. Mais c'est un petit peu régional et international. Parce que nous avons aussi à soumettre des *returns* à l'organisation mondiale pour dire quel est la situation de FMD à Rodrigues. Alors, je peux rassurer le Membre que le comité existe, fonctionne et sous contrôle mais quand il y a urgence, quand il faut relever le niveau d'urgence, à ce moment-là, il y a le High Powered Committee et puis on alerte la population, etcetera.

(Interruptions)

Non, mais déjà ça existe. Par exemple, je vous dis, première chose qu'on a fait, les ... à l'aéroport, le National Plant Protection Office (NPPO) à l'aéroport vous allez voir, l'annonce sur l'avion. On a commencé. C'est-à-dire, Phase 1 là. Maintenant quand il y a *clinical* preuve, c'est-à-dire, les cas à Rodrigues, à ce moment-là, c'est niveau 2.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Last question.

The Minority Leader: *The question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, very important one.* On a vu que le Conseil Exécutif a élaboré toute une série de mesure. Et nous savons aussi que la commission de l'Agriculture a signé un MOU avec une association de boucher pour l'achat des porcs à Rodrigues. Mais après on voit aussi que le Conseil des Ministres a annoncé d'autres mesures et au lieu de parler que d'association de boucher, on voit qu'ils parlent d'entreprise privé dans la transformation, des importateurs de bovin, ainsi de suite. Est-ce qu'aujourd'hui... parce que la décision du Conseil des Ministres devrait être en vigueur à partir du 1 juin. Aujourd'hui on est le 4. Qui aujourd'hui a la possibilité, pour ne pas dire le droit, d'acheter des animaux de Rodrigues pour emmener à Maurice ? Est-ce que seul les associations de boucher avec lequel la commission de l'Agriculture a signé le MOU ou bien comme la proposer/décider le Conseil des Ministres, est-ce que des entreprises privés et d'autres importateurs peuvent le faire aussi aujourd'hui ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, je pense que la Minority Leader est en train de parler d'un communiqué du ministère de l'Agriculture pas le Conseil des Ministres. Conseil des Ministres, j'ai eu, ils ont décidé de reconsidérer le protocole pour l'importation des animaux à Rodrigues. La commission de l'Agriculture est autonome en ce qu'il s'agit de *policy* et décision. Donc, le communiqué concerne Maurice. Et nous ?

(Interruptions)

C'est parti concernant Rodrigues, c'est ce qui a été discuté, c'était pareil, il n'a rien changé. On tire le sang, etcetera, etcetera. Et c'est pour Maurice, on ne peut pas le contester. Mais quand il s'agit de Rodrigues, c'est la commission de l'Agriculture qui prend la décision. La commission qui décide. Merci.

The Minority Leader: Le Commissaire de l'Agriculture a aussi parlé dans sa réponse là qu'il va faire venir des experts internationaux pour la question de FMD. Je me souviens ici, d'ailleurs il y a le Conseil Exécutif aussi qui avait décidé en 2022 qu'il y a le Professeur Roeder qui était venu qui allait faire un rapport et à cette époque il disait qu'avec le

Professeur Roeder immédiatement ils vont faire disparaître la FMD. Donc, aujourd'hui, il vient nous dire qu'il va faire encore venir des experts internationaux. Où en est-on avec ce rapport du Professeur Roeder pour lequel on a payé beaucoup je suis sûre, et est-ce que ce rapport a été implémenté ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, tout comme le Professeur Roeder, il y a aussi M. Thomson qui est venu, le rapport aussi était resté *dormant* un petit peu. Bon, vous savez il faut arriver à faire comprendre que le problème de Rodrigues c'est la commission de Rodrigues qui doit gérer. Ça ne peut pas être géré ailleurs. Vous savez je dois dire que parti de rapport du Professeur Roeder a été *implemented* par nous à Rodrigues. Mais seulement quand il s'agit de relation avec international, ça il faudrait avoir *l'approval*. Je suis d'accord et on est en train de faire le nécessaire pour ça. C'est-à-dire, au moins 60% ce que le Professeur Roeder nous a recommandé on est en train de faire. Mais lui aussi il est en train de mener un autre batail au niveau international pour qu'on puisse avoir un *good network* avec l'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé pour les Animaux pour qu'on puisse avoir contact, etcetera, sans - par Rodrigues même directement. Et aussi je dois dire qu'il y a les autres pays qui sont disposés, dans l'Océan Indien et aussi en Afrique pour aider Rodrigues et nous allons voir que cette assistance puisse venir à Rodrigues et que Rodrigues va pouvoir opérer comme il se doit étant autonome. Merci.

Mr Chairperson: Next question, Dr Agathe.

SALE OF MEAT – SUBSIDIZE PRICES – LOCAL MARKET

(No. B/41) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the sale of meat at subsidised prices on the local market, he will:

- (a) table the list of butchers who participated therein in March 2024, and
- (b) inform the House of any set timeframe for the payment of participating farmers following the sale of animals?

Mr Perrine: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the list of butchers who participated in the last meat subsidy campaign on 30 March 2024.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, subject all related documents are in order, on average, a period of one month is set for administrative processing of claims to farmers participating in the sale of animals for the meat subsidy campaign which comprise: -

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- (i) Return on slaughter and weighing and certification by officers of the Agricultural Commission, and
- (ii) Administrative and payment procedures.

Dr. Agathe: Je n'ai pas eu la possibilité encore de jeter un œil sur la liste des participants mais on est au courant que lors de la dernière campagne de la viande bon marcher, il y a un boucher qui était exclu auparavant de l'opération qui a pu participer. Est-ce que cela voudrait dire que l'enquête qui était mené donc a été complété et la blanchie ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, vous savez peut-être les Membres vont être étonner mais je ne sais même pas qui ont participé. Je ne sais même pas qui ont participé. Parce que je ne suis pas intéressé.

(Interruptions)

Vous savez, j'ai le même problème avec... Attendez ! Ecoutez ! J'ai les mêmes problèmes avec... Je dis ça, je vais dire ça devant les Membres là. Même les personnes qui ont des permis agricoles, je ne sais pas. Ils m'ont dit, il faut voir. Je ne regarde pas. Pourquoi je dois regarder. Il y a les procédures, vous suivez les procédures vous gagner. Non.

(Interruptions)

Bluffing? Voilà, ils sont devant moi. Ils sont là. Il y a d'autres activités qui vont venir et je ne vais même pas regarder. Pourquoi je dois regarder ? Un commissaire ce n'est pas son travail.

(Interruptions)

Non. Il y a les critères, vous suivez les critères.

(Interruptions)

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

Mr Perrine: Il y a les critères, vous suivez les critère, méritocraties vous gagner. Si vous ne suivez pas les critères – out.

Dr. Agathe: Donc, les éleveurs qui ont vendus leurs animaux en mars, jusqu'ici ils n'ont pas été payé. Alors ça a beaucoup d'implication. Pour la campagne de vente de viande bon marcher en mars, les éleveurs qui ont vendus ils n'ont pas encore été payé. Donc, je n'ai pas bien entendu votre réponse sur les délais de paiement ?

Mr Perrine: Il y a des procédures. C'est-à-dire, ça prend à peu près un mois mais s'il y a des *queries* à ce moment-là ça retarde. Mais on a fini de payer d'après ce qu'on me dit.

Depuis le 28 mai on a tout payé. C'est-à-dire, on paye, pas aux bouchers, on paye les éleveurs. Il faut bien comprendre s'il y a un problème avec un éleveur avec un boucher, ce n'est pas la commission, on paye directement au éleveur.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Next question.

Dr Agathe: M. le président, je n'ai pas eu la possibilité encore de jeter un œil sur la liste des participants. Mais on est au courant que lors de la dernière campagne de la viande bon marché, il y a un boucher qui était exclus auparavant de l'opération qui a pu participer. Est-ce que cela voudrait dire que l'enquête qui était mené, donc, a été complété et l'a blanchi ?

Mr Perrine: M. le président, vous savez, peut-être des membres vont être étonnés mais je ne sais même pas qui ont participé parce que je ne suis pas intéressé.

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Vous savez, j'ai le même problème avec...

(Interruptions)

Mr Perrine: Attendez. Écoutez. Je vais dire ça devant les Membres, là. Même les personnes qui ont des permis agricoles, je ne sais pas. Ils m'ont dit il faut voir. Je ne regarde pas. Pourquoi je dois regarder ? Il y a les procédures. Vous suivez les procédures pour gagner. Non. *Bluffing*? Voilà, ils sont devant moi. Ils sont là et il y a d'autres d'activités qui vont venir et je ne vais même pas regarder. Pourquoi je dois regarder ? Un Commissaire, ce n'est pas son travail. Non. Il y a les critères. Vous suivez les critères.

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Allow the Commissioner to answer the question, please!

Mr Perrine: Il y a les critères. Vous suivez les critères. Méritocratie, vous gagnez. Si vous ne suivez pas les critères, out!

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

Dr Agathe: Donc, les éleveurs qui ont vendu leurs animaux en mars, jusqu'ici n'ont pas été payés. Alors, ça a beaucoup d'implications pour la campagne de vente de viande bon marché en mars. Les éleveurs qui ont vendu, ils n'ont pas encore été payés. Donc, je n'ai pas bien entendu votre réponse sur les délais de paiement.

Mr Perrine: Il y a les procédures. C'est-à-dire, ça prend à peu près un mois. Mais s'il y a des *queries*, à ce moment-là, ça retarde. Mais on a fini de payer d'après ce qu'on me dit. Depuis le 28 mai, on a tout payé. C'est-à-dire, on paye, pas au bouché, on paye aux éleveurs. Il faut bien comprendre. S'il y a un problème avec un éleveur, avec un bouché, ce n'est pas la commission. On paye directement, nous.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Next question!

**ACCOMMODATION OF PATIENTS SENT TO MAURITIUS
– FURTHER TREATMENT AND/OR ACCOMPANIER**

(No. B/42) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the selected hotel for accommodation of patients sent to Mauritius for further treatment and/or accompaniers, he will enlighten the House on:

- (a) the actual trend of monthly expenditure since January 2024, and
- (b) any outstanding claim due as at date

Mr Volbert: Mr. Chairperson. Sir, I would like to inform the House that since I took office in March 2022, it was already an ongoing practice that patients transferred to Mauritius for further treatment or other medical purpose, along with the accompaniers were provided with accommodation at Sykamifer Hotel.

I wish to highlight that this practice started since the outbreak of COVID-19 during which period no case of COVID-19 had been reported in Rodrigues and in view of keeping Rodrigues COVID-19 free, all patients during their whole treatment in Mauritius were housed at Sykamifer Hotel so as to protect from being infected. I wish to point out, that there is no record of procedures taken at that time to enlist those services. We have been advised by the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development, that for such a practice to be in order, we need to launch an expression of interest.

My Commission is already working on the corresponding documents in view of this exercise, I wish to inform the House that for the financial years 2023-2024, the amount of funds disbursed in favour of accommodation for patients amounts to Rs8,677,152.50. The monthly expenditure trend since January 2024 to May 2024 is about Rs1.3 million.

Part (b) of the question, outstanding claims are being compiled and will be tabled in due course.

Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce que le commissaire de la Santé peut nous dire si actuellement, les patients qui partent pour leur traitement ont la possibilité toujours d'avoir recours à ce logement à Sykamifer?

Mr Volbert: La réponse au question est oui, M. le président, jusqu'à ce que nous finalisons l'*expression of interest* qui a été demandé par le ministère des Finances.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du commissaire de la Santé par rapport au *expression of interest*, s'il y a un *timeline* déjà défini ? Quand est-ce que d'après vous, cette partie-là va être finalisée de manière à ce qu'on peut une fois pour toute savoir comment va se passer le problème par rapport aux patients qui vont à Maurice ?

Mr Volbert: De toute façon, M. le président, il y a aucun problème avec ces patients-là qui logent à l'hôtel Sykamifer. Donc, comme disait mon ami, le commissaire de l'Agriculture tout à l'heure, ce parti de travail dans la commission, ça ne concerne pas les commissaires ; ça, ce sont les officiers qui s'occupent de ça. Donc, si les patients peuvent être logés au Sykamifer, il n'y a aucun problème. Donc, on attend à ce que l'*expression of interest* soit lancé et complété.

The Minority Leader: Est-ce qu'on peut savoir du Commissaire par rapport à ce montant qu'il a mentionné ? Rs8 millions quelque chose, quand est-ce qu'il compte effectuer ce paiement ? Est-ce qu'on va attendre pour la prochaine année budgétaire ou bien il y a un budget déjà là pour ce paiement ?

Mr Volbert: Je ne sais pas mais il faudra demander aux officiers. La prochaine fois vous aurez votre réponse. Il aurait dû inclure dedans.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Next question.

Mr Chairperson: Deputy Chief Commissioner.

WATER CRISIS PREVAILING IN RODRIGUES

(No. B/43) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres)) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the water crisis prevailing in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table:

- (a) the average weekly production from desalination, surface and underground sources, respectively, since January 2024 to date;
- (b) a brief description of the production trend of these sources for the specified period, and
- (c) details as to any factor which has hindered/is hindering the maximum exploitation thereof?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir. With regard to part (a) of the question, the average weekly production of water per source is being tabled. So, we are about average daily production oscillating between 5,000 and 6,000 m³ per day.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the figures show that water production from surface sources has improved due to good rainfall in January 2024. The rise in production of groundwater from January to April was due to replacement following rainfall. Readjustment of flows of some boreholes and also the returning back in operation of Mont Lubin borehole. It was also observed that the recent enlisting in various boreholes carried out by the Rodrigues Public Utilities Corporation (RPUC) has shown positive results in the overall groundwater production. The installation of a new 500 m³ train at Songes desalination plant and the return to operation of the second train at Pointe Coton desalination plant has led to an increase in the production of desalinated water. However, sometimes, the issues such as breakdown of critical parts, such as for example, in March, there has been breakdown of the borehole pump at Songes plant which means the production of desalinated water has not been constant but fluctuated from one week to another.

With regard to part (c), various factors prevent an optimum exploitation of the different sources of water production. Desalination plants are affected by critical equipment breakdown such as variable speed drive and isobaric or pump breakdown. These are the main factors disrupting water production of desalination plants. To address this issue, the RPUC has established a policy of proper stock of critical parts because procurements of such parts can take up to four months. Maximum exploitation of groundwater is restricted due to insufficient amount of rainfall, leading to not enough recharge in the water table. The lack of rainfall and the effects of climate change mean that groundwater production is not constant in

Rodrigues. It also happens that there are breakdown of water pumps and have to be replaced. Replacement takes months. Thus, the need to standardise equipment and keep at least a minimum stock level with regular maintenance, servicing and checks. Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling the requested information.

I believe there is a part (c) to the question. The answer of which I cannot see in my file but I am going to reply it from my memory.

Details as to any factor which has hindered and hindering the maximum exploitation thereof, we must come back, Mr Chairperson, Sir, to what has happened in 2012 when the then OPR Government came back into government. The first thing they did was to dismantle the Rodrigues Water Company which had been set up and had they not dismantled the Rodrigues Water Company; we would have reached far more positive results in the water sector in Rodrigues. They dismantled the Rodrigues Water Company in 2012, only in 2019 when they came back to be advised by the Minister for Finance to re-put in place. So, various factors prevent an optimum exploitation of the different sources of water production. Desalination plants are affected by critical equipment breakdown.

And, I come back to that part (c), sorry. Maximum exploitation of groundwater is restricted due to insufficient... Part (c), it is also to be noted that the water problem would have been solved for good had the reforms undertaken in the 2006-2011 mandate not been killed and buried over the period 2011-2022 by the OPR Regional Government. Such irresponsible and antipatriotic acts based solely on political vendetta goes to the liability of the much oddly celebrated Louis Serge Clair, who made everything together with his acolytes including the Member here, to dismantle the then Rodrigues Water Company (RWC), and lay off cruelly its workers. This is a crime recognised by many analysts. Only around 2021, they were advised by Mr Padayachy, an Economist and Minister of Finance, that they have to create a company to manage water.

Ten years lost wandering in the desert. Fortunately, the reforms are back on track with the following.

- (1) The relaunching of the RPUC and its constant reinforcement since 2022 with the recruitment of its staff and the constitution a solid board under the chairmanship of Mr Claude Emmanuel Wong So, OSK, an able Rodriguan Engineer and Administrator who set up inter alia the Airport of Rodrigues Ltd. (ARL).

- (2) The holding of the “Assise de l’Eau” in 2023 with the result that major donors have agreed and are advancing money to invest in our Water Sector Infrastructural Development Plan.
- (3) The approval by Central Government of the Rs1 billion loan for investment. Furthermore, funding to the tune of €13 million have been obtained from AFD and a further US\$10 million. will be available under the Airport World Bank Loan Agreement.
- (4) The conceptualisation of the CBE, (*Colonne Vertébrale de l’Eau*) already pre-finalised and works starting soon for the pipeline Cotton Bay to Montagne Piquant and the construction of a new 2000 m³ reservoir, the first of its type at Manique. Had they not aborted with malice the reforms started in 2010, the situation would have been much better and we would surely be having water - *dilo enn fwa par semenn*.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the question related as regards to punctual situation as it is now, I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner that as he stated in his answers, the production is vacillating between 5,000 and 6,000 m³ per week and with this volume, the Commission for Water used to be able to distribute water all through Rodrigues within 25 to 45 days. Now, it is almost, in his own region at Baladirou, it is 152 days. Can he account for this as regards to this production of water?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: I will not account for anything, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I will not account for how many days, how many hours, water is being given. Because if there is somebody who must account for him, it is him, Mr Chairperson, Sir. It is not me! Because for 10 years, they dismantled the RPUC, they did all the wrong things, Mr Chairperson, Sir. There was a report. He is aware of the report. The Chéné report. Listen! Please, listen! We are here to cover your faults! Listen! You have to listen!

(Interruptions)

Because we are doing what you have not done! We are giving you lessons and we are going to succeed by the end of our mandate. We are on the right track. The Chéné report, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Mr Jean Michel Chéné came to Rodrigues in 2010 and he produced a report, “*Optimisation des Ressources en Eau de Rodrigues*”. And, he recommended that we build a 4,000 m³ desalination plant coupled with wind energy at Grenade. What did they do when they come? They put Chéné report under their feet. I will tell you *deux ans ‘kot ete’*.

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What they did, Mr Chairperson, Sir, they decided to go for four or five desalination plants – one at Anse aux Anglais, one at Anse Goéland, one at Caverne Bouteille and the other at Songes. Look what has happened to the one at Anse Goéland. When we look for the borehole, there is no borehole, Mr Chairperson, Sir! No study, no technical study!

(Interruptions)

This is my style. This is my style. You want to listen; you do not want to listen, switch off the mic. He is speaking not enough loud. I am speaking too much loud while he is going on. Listen! The Anse Goéland, he is speaking about structural. Where is the report for the technical? You did that project. He did the project and today, he is blaming us? The consultant worked for...

Mr Chairperson: I have no control on the.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: ...the borehole. When they came, Mr Chairperson, Sir...

Mr Chairperson: You have the control on the mic.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, you want to switch off the mic, that is okay but it is my voice! Okay, it is a teacher's voice. If you do not like the voice, it is your problem.

(Interruptions)

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: No, I will not sit down! Let me finish to reply to you first. I am not failing. You failed! You failed, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

(Interruptions)

No I will not sit down, let me finish to reply to you first. I am not failing. You failed, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

(Interruptions)

For desalination plants, we had to close down Anse Goéland, Mr Chairperson, Sir, because they did not...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order! Order!

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The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Because they did not undertake the geological studies so that they get the water from the underground borehole. And, today, Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is a shame. If you go at Anse Goéland, it is a shame what has been done there. We are going to remove all the blocks, all the concrete blocks he has put there, Mr Chairperson, Sir. The shame is themselves, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Giving instructions to people, some people at Water Unit, telling them not to give the water, not to work out the system. The RPUC now is taking over, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Look at the region, the western region, the RPUC is taking over. People are already congratulating us, saying the situation has improved.

(Interruptions)

Yes, the situation has improved and the situation is going to improve more, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and I am proud with this team. It is us who are going to bring water to the people of Rodrigues, Mr Chairperson, Sir. In July, they are having by 350 m³ containerised desalination coming. We are launching the tender for three times 1,000 m³. Go and look at Pointe Coton. The works have started. We are building a warehouse, a building of 1,000 m² to house the new desalination unit.

We have a strategy, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We have moved from local supply of water to integrated global supply of water in Rodrigues. And, this is where they have failed. They have failed because they have failed to think and it is him, the Member asking this question, who said: “*We will give water, delo enn fwa par semenn*”. Where is your ‘*delo enn fwa par semenn*’? Where is your ‘*delo enn fwa par semenn*’? We are going to do it with the help of people like Mr Wong So, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We are building this water...

(Interruptions)

‘*Les zot riye bos, zot gengn drwa riye.*’ We are building that water transfer network. And, it is me, Johnson Roussety, and this team who are going to bring the solution...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Order! Order! Order, please.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: They like it; they do not like it; this is the truth.

Mr Chairperson: Okay.

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Mr Lisette: His excitement is well-known. Yes, we can define why he is acting like this, Mr Chairperson, Sir. But his position is not going in a way to distract us. We remain focus.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Ask the question, please.

Mr Lisette: We remain focus, Mr Chairperson, Sir. My question to him, he has been speaking of strategy, I want to remind him that the Rs1 billion is our Government who negotiated that. Yes.

(Applause)

Mr Lisette: Who are the one who negotiated that, Mr Chairperson, Sir? We negotiated that.

(Interruptions)

Sans la honte. *'Li penan la ont li.'*

Mr Chairperson: Now, put the question.

Mr Lisette: *'To pa pou servi desalman. Zordi, to pe fer desalman.'*

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Now, put the question!

Mr Lisette: Yes, I am coming...

Mr Chairperson: Okay, put the question now!

Mr Lisette: I am coming. I am coming to the question of...

(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Okay, I am on my feet. I am on my feet!

(Interruptions)

Respected Members, I am on my feet. Order, please! Order, please!

(Interruptions)

I said order! So, come with your question.

Mr Lisette: My question is straightforward, Mr Chairperson, Sir. He has been speaking of efficiency under his commissionship.

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(Interruptions)

Mr Chairperson: Listen to the question, please!

Mr Lisette: Yes, he has been speaking about efficiency under his commissionership. I would like to know from him if it is efficient when the RPUC or his Commission is taking six months to buy a pump, immersible pump to replace at Mont Lubin, the one that he mentioned in his answer.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there has been two pumps which we have had problems and recently... It is not our problem. It is not caused by us. It has been caused by fluctuations in...

(Interruptions)

It has been caused... These people are... They do not want to accept that there is progress. I know what it is, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I know what it is when you are in the opposition and you watch a Commissioner, you watch a Government Commissioner, a Minister or a government team present a project that people accept and people abide to. It makes you want to cry when you are in the opposition.

(Interruptions)

This is what they are feeling. I understand your qualms, Mr Chairperson, Sir. So, I was saying, the issue we had with pumps. At Cotton Bay, the pump burned because CEB, the fluctuation in electric current, *fluctuation de courant. Ce n'est pas nous, M. le président. Et le Conseil exécutif... Ce n'est pas moi ! 'Mo penan kouran dan mwan! Mo penan kouran. Laparey brile kot dimounn aköz kouran.'* *Fluctuation kouran.* We have already purchased the pump. The pump is coming. The same thing happened at Songes. We have already purchased the pump. We have got on the market, a fresh water pump. We have purchased it. It is working. We are having the pump for seawater. It is coming, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

I must say I am very proud just as we are proud of Rodclean Ltd. doing a fantastic job, we are proud of the job that the RPUC is doing, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and this is the progress, Mr Chairperson, Sir. And we have already phased out, replaced the operation works with the Water Unit and we have had very fruitful meetings with the workers of the Water Unit of the South Western Region and we are redeploying them, Mr Chairperson, Sir. And, we are working on that Cv and I implore all Members to believe in this. This is the future of water in Rodrigues, Mr Chairperson, Sir. We do not have enough water. With climate

change, we have less than 25% of our water that can be met from natural sources. During the drought period, we have been to the Seychelles, they used the desalination water up to 10,000/23,000 m³ per day. Mr Chairperson, Sir, they are talking about the Rs1 million loan. As explained to you. Had they not close the RPUC, had they not close the Rodrigues Water Company cruelly, *avec hargne, avec une colère envers ces travailleurs... Ils ont fermé*. They have closed the Rodrigues Water Company in 2012 and then, in 2019, Padayachy tells them, “We will give you money!” This is the story, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

The Minority Leader: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have got a Point of Order. In spite of crying and crying, he is repeating himself and he is using the time of the House.

(Interruptions)

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the Deputy Chief Commissioner used to say in this House, ‘*desalman pouri*’, very often. And, we managed the *dessalement* even during the COVID period where there was closure of borders between the Rodrigues and Mauritius and abroad also. Now, does he find it normal that as we are speaking right now, *dessalement* Pointe Coton is out of service because there has been the overloading that he has mentioned? Why is it that it is taking so much time and with so much expertise in his Commission with so many Engineers, Electrical Engineers, he has not been able to manage, to prevent an overloading of such a *dessalement*, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, when I became Commissioner in 2022, I went to Cotton Bay and we saw a catastrophic technical situation at Cotton Bay. I put pictures of the metal, of the electric compartment. People will remember the photographs. Okay? So, we have a pump breakdown; it is not working. It is going to work in the coming days, in the coming weeks because we have already ordered/paid for the pump which is available on the market and of course, now, the RPUC will have, I have said it, critical stock of pumps, critical parts, stock of parts that when they break down, we have the parts and we can use them in the *ça*.

Look what we are doing, Mr Chairperson, Sir. A water network for the whole island, this is new. What they did was separated water networks. Cotton Bay desalination was for the East, the Anse aux Anglais desalination for the North, the Anse Goéland for that part there, etc. There was no integrated water network. Today, we are creating a primary water network. We are bringing the desalination capacity in the next five/ten years maybe to 15,000 m³ at Pointe Coton. And, then, all these water, we are going to pump it to Montagne Piquant, to

Petit Brûlé and then, it will go all the way down by gravity to the western part, to the North etc.

This is a vision, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and I urge them and everybody in Rodrigues to support these visions. They are telling they had the money, they negotiated for the Rs1 billion. How did they come with the Rs1 billion? It is because they made the error, the big error to close down the Rodrigues Water Company in 2012. Let me finish, please! And, then Mr Padayachy who is a policymaker, in 2019 when they came back, they go to see Padayachy and Padayachy told them, “*I am going to finance if you put in place the company.*” And, this is when they came back. They have to eat it!

Ravaler. Ils devaient ravaler, M. le président. Le ministre des Finances, le Gouvernement Central leur dit il faut mettre en place la compagnie et c’est ça, pour faire *cost recovery* pour qu’il y a un meilleur control et la condition, le gouvernement va donner l’emprunt de Rs1 milliard. S’ils n’avaient pas perdu leurs temps à fermer la RPUC, nous serions aujourd’hui à plus de plusieurs... l’eau serait en bonne *supply* à Rodrigues. Malheureusement, ces gens ne veulent pas reconnaître que la population épouse même leur propre partisan qui s’érode en masse parce qu’ils ont été incapables et que nous, nous avons démontré que nous sommes capables, que le projet a été pensé et que maintenant, on va passer maintenant par exemple, au réservoir de 2,000 m³, M. le président.

Le tender a été alloué, je peux vous dire. Le coût autour de Rs36 millions pour un réservoir de 2,000 m³. On va faire cinq réservoirs de 2,000 m³. On va faire un à Petit Brûlé. Ce sont des réservoirs de transfert. On va faire un sur Malartic. On va faire un sur Quatre Vent. On est en train de commencer un à Manique et peut-être on va faire un autre dépendant de la densité de la population du côté de Terre Rouge et tous les tuyaux, des tuyaux de 60 x 60 mm avec les stations de pompage. Et on va produire 5,000 à 6,000 m³ d’eau dessalement par jour et avec les sources qu’on a, ça va être mélangé, ce qu’on appelle le *blending* de l’eau et on va transférer cela vers les régions où cette eau est demandée. Et c’est ça que la RPUC fait aujourd’hui.

Je ne blâme pas les travailleurs de la *Water Unit*. On les remercie. Mais aujourd’hui, on a besoin de techniciens spécialisés on a *24-hour basis* pour gérer la situation de l’eau à Rodrigues. C’est pour ça qu’on a dit modernisation de Rodrigues, M. le président, et c’est cette équipe, je crois, qui est en rupture avec le conservatisme et le manque de vision, l’amateurisme de l’ancienne équipe, qui va régler une bonne fois pour toute ce problème de

l'eau ensemble avec le Gouvernement Central, ensemble avec l'AFD, ensemble avec la *World Bank* qui veut aussi nous aider dans le domaine de l'eau. Ne soyez pas jaloux. On va réussir.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, Sir, just to remind the Deputy Chief Commissioner that the RPUC was to be used as a public service... as a... *Comment on appelle ça?* The RPUC was to be used as a rapid... Special purpose vehicle, yes. A special purpose vehicle. But I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner, listen to these figures, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and I want the Chief Commissioner to account for this for as regards to rainfall that he has mentioned in his answers. *Janvier 2023* – rainfall in mm 117.5. *En 2024* – 190.6 mm, Mr Chairperson, Sir, an improvement by at least, I think, more than 60%. In February 2023 – 49.1 mm '*lapli tonbe*'. In 2024 – 191.8 mm '*lapli tonbe*', an increase of almost... How many? I would say almost 300%. More than 300%. Yet, the distribution is not improving since January up to date. How does he account for that with such a good rainfall that has occurred over Rodrigues, Mr Chairperson, Sir?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards the rainfall, I believe it is God's blessings since this Government is in place.

(Interruptions)

As regards the distribution, Mr Chairperson, Sir, there is no correlation between plentiful of rainfall with distribution. I have explained. We have institutional issues, technical issues with the distribution. Look what they have done. It is a pity what he has done, Mr Chairperson, Sir. In Economics, we have the cost benefit analysis. Look what he has done. I am not against the road, a road to deserve the people who are at Pavé La Bonté. Okay? What has he done with this road? On the eve of the elections, big mechanical machinery come down and break the mountain, Mr Chairperson, Sir. Breaks the mountain without plan, without mitigation factors and all the mud is filling Pavé La Bonté reservoir. And, what has happened a few months ago? Pavé La Bonté reservoir was full with mud because of his irresponsibility! Let me speak!

(Interruptions)

Let me speak! Let me speak, please! You have spoken. You '*koze, les mo koze.*' '*Korek?*' What he did on the eve of the elections to please his people, maybe his electors in Local Region No. 4. He sends all the big machines to dig an earth road without mitigation and without finishing it. And, all this mud after the rain has clogged deposited into the

Pavé La Bonté Reservoir and when you have rain, what happens? It will overflow and then, all the pipes are filled. All the pipes are clogged with mud and we had to have our workers to clean all this. So, you can have a lot of rainfall but if the technicality, if the dams are not there to take this rainfall, if you do not have a proper distribution plan to distribute the water, it is not going to work.

This is why we do not have this to date, Mr Chairperson, Sir, all around Rodrigues. We are putting this in place with the RPUC. RPUC is recruiting, I think, 52 new workers. Okay? Even this, you do not agree. We have recruited a lot of people in government, in RPUC, everywhere and they do not agree with this. I think they have not to agree because it is an erosion of their votes and we know the elections are coming. So, this is how it is. You can put as much water; rain you want but there is no efficient distribution. It is not transferred. It is not filtered. It is not clean, stored. This is why the distribution will still be erratic.

Mr Chairperson: One last question before we break for lunch.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, donc, moi, je suis contente que le *Deputy Chief Commissioner* ait enfin compris qu'il faut accepter ces Rs1 milliard. Un moment, il disait que Rodrigues allait être saisi et avec ce même montant aujourd'hui, il parle beaucoup. Moi, je voudrais savoir en lien avec cette question de *water crisis*, c'est bizarre aussi que la pluviométrie n'a rien à voir avec la distribution. Je ne crois pas. Donc, je ne comprends pas cette logique. Est-ce que le *Deputy Chief Commissioner* peut nous dire quelles sont les mesures qu'il va entreprendre ou bien qu'il entreprend - parce qu'on sait qu'il y a beaucoup de familles aujourd'hui dont leur robinet coule deux fois l'an ou trois fois l'an. Quelles sont les mesures qu'il a entreprises pour assurer que ces familles soient alimentées en eau ?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I form part of those people at Baie du Nord. All these people in the Local Region No. 1, we have water. We do not know when we have water. What does these people do? They collect rainwater. All these people collect rainwater. We have put in place our water tank assistance. Tomorrow, we are giving, I think, 50 something, 60 new water tanks...79 people are receiving water tanks. We are putting in place the reforms, Mr Chairperson, Sir, and we believe in what we are doing. And, of course, I always say there are three components, four components to the water reforms. The first component is desalination. The second component is underground water. We have airlifted many, most of the major boreholes in Rodrigues. They are giving better yield today.

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We are digging new boreholes – it does not mean we are going to use them. The third component is ground water and the fourth component is rainwater harvesting. Some small islands in the Pacific, they do not have rivers, they do not have any groundwater. They only have rainwater harvesting. So, people must take this part in their responsibility. We know historically, they do it well but we want to encourage it. Now that I am at the Commission for Public Infrastructure, we are going to bring in regulations or maybe administrative procedures so that new buildings, for example, mandatorily, they have rainwater and water tanks storage depending on the surface area of the building. These are examples where we are heading.

Mr Chairperson: Next question!

(Interruptions)

RECRUITMENT EXERCISE – RODCLEAN LTD

(No. B/44) Mr. L.D. Baptiste (Second Local Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the recruitment exercise carried out by Rodclean Ltd recently, he will obtain information for the benefit of the House, and state:

- (a) on the recruitment procedures;
- (b) the number of recruits initially approved by the Executive Council and the actual number recruited;
- (c) If a certificate of character was a requirement, and if in the negative, why not, and
- (d) table a copy of the terms and conditions of the contract of employment?

The Chief Commissioner: Mr. Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that with regard to the recruitment of additional workers by Rodclean Ltd, the following procedures have been followed: -

- Communiqué was broadcasted on the MBC Radio from the 09 to 11 June 2022 inviting all interested candidates to collect application forms at the Centre de Jeunesse Anse aux Anglais and Rodclean Sub Office at La Ferme.
- The closing date for submission of applications was 17 June 2022 and 3,563 applications were received out of which 24 applications were rejected due to overage.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, interview exercises were carried out from 11 to 23 July 2022 excluding Sunday at the English Bay Youth Centre and English Bay Community Centre for applicants from Regions 4 and 5, the Cultural and Leisure Centre, Mont Plaisir for Regions 3 and 6 and La Ferme Youth Centre for Regions 1 and 2.

Part (b), Mr Chairperson, Sir. I would like to inform the House that the Executive Council has initially approved the recruitment of 142 additional Refuse Collectors by the company. However, following a request dated 06 May 2024 from the Chairman/Managing Director of the company to recruit additional workers over and above the amount already approved to cater for the increasing demand for its services and to enable the latter to meet the new challenges in the short, medium and long term, the Executive Council decided to approve the recruitment of 12 additional workers which lead to a total recruitment of 154 additional workers.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (c) of the question, I would like to inform the House that the Executive Council only approved for the recruitment of additional workers. The requirements, qualifications and others are approved by the Board of Directors of the Rodclean Ltd. I am informed that a certificate of character was not a prior condition. However, a Police clearance will be sought on the newly recruited employees prior to confirmation.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am tabling a copy of the terms and conditions of the contract of employment for the information of the House.

Thank you.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, first of all, allow me to congratulate all the new recruits. But, still on a point of concern, as we all know, during the budget speech, the Chief Commissioner announced the recruitment of 100 workers and now, there are 154. And, I would like to ask him whether, the budget which has been allocated for the next financial year, being given that he initially announced 100, whether, this will be sufficient to meet the salaries and other allowances of all the newly recruited workers, knowing that for the time being, there are lots of problems relating to financial issues for payment of overtime and payment of shelters, workers in shelters and...

Mr Chairperson: Time is going. Put the question directly, respected Member.

Mr Baptiste: And the respite care.

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the answer is yes.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je voudrais juste savoir du Chef commissaire en lien avec ce recrutement, donc, d'ailleurs, nous, on est content, on a beaucoup poussé pour ça. On vous a incité à le prendre parce que... Donc, je voulais savoir est-ce que le *gender issue has been taken into consideration in this recruitment?*

The Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I have also been informed that the answer is yes.

Mr Lisette: Can we know from the Chief Commissioner as regards to the budget which has been earmarked in financial year as regards to this item for financial year 2024-2025, can he inform the House what is the additional budget that is going to be required for as regards to that recruitment?

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je viens de répondre à une question me demandant si ça va être suffisant. J'ai dit....

Mr Lisette: What is the additional budget?

The Chief Commissioner: Oui, bien sûr, ça va être suffisant.

Mr Lisette: Yes. The question is what is the additional budget. Tell us what is the additional.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, *out of the budget, it has been earmarked for this year?* On va voir, M. le président.

Mr Baptiste: What is the additional...

The Chief Commissioner: Si jamais il y aura des budgets additionnels, on va voir, M. le président. Oui, on va voir.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. Let us break for one hour.

At 1.16 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

On resuming at 2.26 p.m. with the Chairperson in the Chair.

Mr Chairperson: Yes.

Deputy Chief Commissioner, please.

RECRUITMENT OF EDUCATORS – SECONDARY SCHOOLS/RODRIGUES

(No. B/45) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the recruitment of Educators in secondary schools in Rodrigues for the current academic year, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain information from the relevant authority and state the:

- (a) number of vacancies per college in Rodrigues, if any, indicating the respective subjects to be taught;
- (b) number of Educators who have taken long leaves per college, and
- (c) recruitment method applied therefor, giving details?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr. Chairperson, Sir, as the House will recall in my reply to Questions B/2 and B/3 at the sitting of 14 March 2024, I highlighted the difficulties being faced by the Rodrigues Educational Development Company Ltd (REDCO) and the Rodrigues College to recruit qualified Educators in Rodrigues following the change in criteria for recruitment of Educators brought by amendments to the Education Regulations 1957.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the Rodrigues Educational Development Company (REDCO) Ltd has reported that there are three vacancies for the post of Educator at the level of REDCO schools whereas the Rector of Rodrigues College has reported that there is no vacancy at the level of the school.

I am further informed that the three vacancies in REDCO colleges concern the teaching of the following subjects:

- (i) Art and Design at Grande Montagne College;
- (ii) Communication, Design and Technology (CDT) at La Ferme College, and
- (iii) English at Terre Rouge College.

The management of REDCO Ltd has further informed that the vacancies at La Ferme and Terre Rouge Colleges have arisen following the resignation of Educators employed in a substantive capacity in the respective colleges on 19 February 2024 and 15 April 2024. Moreover, the vacancy at the Grande Montagne College has arisen in May 2024 after the resignation of an Educator who was recruited in January 2024.

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I am further informed that in the absence of suitably qualified candidates, the services of interns have been enlisted to palliate for the shortage of Educators.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed that 33 Educators have taken long leaves during this academic year of which 28 in REDCO schools and 05 at Rodrigues College as per following secondary schools. The information will be tabled.

With respect to part (c) of the question, I am informed that the management of REDCO Ltd has launched several advertisements through the press and radio communiqué to fill vacancies and temporary replacements for Educators as follows: -

- i) A first advertisement for the post of Educator was issued on 12 September 2023 with closing date set for 02 October 2023. 25 applications were received out of which four candidates met the qualification requirements;
- ii) A second advertisement for the post of Educator was issued on 08 November 2023 with closing date fixed for 23 November 2023. 29 applications were received. Five candidates met the qualification requirements of which three new candidates and two candidates from the previous exercise;
- iii) The seven qualified candidates were called for interview on 22 December 2023. However, one candidate did not attend the interview, and
- iv) Out of the six candidates, five have been offered employment as from January 2024 and one on reserve list.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, in the absence of qualified Educators in Rodrigues, my Commission has made a request to the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology on 09 January 2024 for the posting of Supply Teachers to Rodrigues. The Ministry has informed that only two Supply Teachers were interested to provide their services on a full time basis to REDCO colleges in two subjects namely English and Economics. However, both candidates have ultimately declined the offers for academic year 2024.

I am also informed that in view of the shortage of Educators, REDCO Ltd issued a third advertisement for the post of Educator on 28 February 2024. 46 applications were received out of which three candidates complied with the qualification requirements. The three candidates have been recruited.

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Subsequently and being given that there are no other alternatives, the management of REDCO Ltd has had recourse to the enlistment of interns as per past practice so as to ensure the smooth running of colleges and provide students with adequate support in their learning.

An advertisement for an internship programme for 16 subjects in REDCO colleges was issued through radio communiqué on 08 April 2024 with closing date set for 16 April 2024. The qualification requirements for enlistment as Intern were as follows:

- (i) A Cambridge School Certificate with at least credit in five subjects including English Language obtained at not more than two sittings;
- (ii) A Cambridge Higher School Certificate or Passes in at least two subjects obtained on one certificate at the General Certificate of Education “Advanced Level”, and
- (iii) A Diploma or an equivalent qualification.

I am further informed that following the advertisement, the services of 24 Interns have been enlisted. In the absence of candidates possessing a Degree or Diploma, those with five Credits including English Language at School Certificate and a Higher School Certificate with a Pass in the subject to be taught at Principal Level were enlisted.

Spontaneous applications received from candidates during the year were also considered for Internship as long as they met the minimum qualification requirements.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to Rodrigues College, I am informed that advertisement for the recruitment of Educators on short term basis for replacement was issued since December 2023 through the press and in churches. Institutions such as the University of Mauritius (UoM) and the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) have also been contacted for potential candidates. However, to date the college has informed that no potential candidate has applied for the posts.

Thank you.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I think that this is a very complex issue and I remember in the reply to Question B/17 on 06 May 2022, the Deputy Chief Commissioner mentioned that a human resource planning exercise was being carried out by REDCO to avoid the occurrence of such problems of teachers. I would like to ask the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether this has already been completed and if not, where matters stand.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am of the view that if the Member wanted a specific answer to the specific supplementary question which he has put, he would have included this in his question. I am afraid I do not have supplementary information on this. But I believe that the issue is over than any human resource plan. The issue is not really a lack of teachers because we see that there are with regard to the REDCO, three vacancies only. And, at the Rodrigues College, there are no vacancies really. The problem is those who are taking long leaves during the Academic Year and of course, these long leaves, there are criteria for this and at times, we cannot really refuse to approve those long leaves such as for some privilege Members on the others side.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I have heard the polemic but this is where the question lies relating to human resource planning. Because I know that these people who made their request for long leaves did it very long time back and yet, I do not know how they could not find replacements. Is the Chief Commissioner aware that as he mentioned, there is a vacancy for English teacher at Terre Rouge that actually, there is an English teacher fully qualified as per requirements of the PSEA and can be employed and recognised by PSEAs now working as internship at Le Chou?

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir. I have been informed of this by the teacher herself. I had requested the Manager of the REDCO to look into this matter because we see that they are inviting spontaneous applications. I do not know what has happened. I will see what is the problem, why is it that if ever this person is fully qualified. Because you know, to date, to be fully qualified, you need not only your degree but also your PGCE. It seems that this person is still undergoing her PGCE.

(Interruptions)

We will have to see to this, whether she can be employed in a full capacity as a teacher or still, she needs to have her full PGCE. I believe if she had all the requirements, it would be surprising why the REDCO had not recruited her. I do not have the whole detail of her file but there must be, I believe, some requirements that maybe she is not meeting and this is why she is not being offered... But I will request that I have had a conversation with the Rector of Terre Rouge College also. We will look into this matter. The Departmental Head of the Commission for Education is present here. I will invite her to remind me to see to it with the REDCO what is the issue.

Mr Baptiste: Just for the information of the Chief Commissioner, I will leave this last example. I do not know whether we do not have vacancies for Maths but actually also, there is a Maths teacher fully qualified teaching Maths but at Le Chou College and he has got a full workload. He is not replacing any teacher but he is not yet employed by REDCO as a teacher and is acting as internship also. That is why I think that you should look into the matter urgently in relation to this human resource planning because maybe the information that you are obtaining are not necessarily what the actual situation is. And, also, just for your information, if you are not aware, some teachers actually replacees, are HSC holders only, which is completely against the regulations while some degree holders, not many maybe but few degree holders are awaiting to have the possibility to join though they are not fully qualified.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner: Thank you for the information, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I know that she is a teacher in the REDCO. Unfortunately, for the person who is qualified fully in Maths, I do not see we have Maths substantive post. So, I believe... They have said it here. You were a Commissioner. You answer from information supplied to you. It might be bizarre. Maybe there are some need to review the information. I think the information must be clustered. There are only vacancies in Art and Design, Communication CDT and English. So, I believe that Maths, anytime, there can be a seat for a Maths teacher which is a very scarce field as we know. As regards the people who are HSC holders, they are just doing internships. I believe that of course, priority should be given to people who are degree... Here, they have requested diploma. But I believe that the Board, the Chairman, they have to take their responsibility. It can be the case that they had not had enough people to do the internships. And, I would advise those people doing the internships who have a degree, who can be qualified as teachers, to undergo their PGCEs so that they can become fully qualified teachers. I personally, we have made representations last year. Departmental Head, we have made representations. We do not fully conquer with this policy that to teach in a college, you need your full PGCE. I believe that someone with a degree... All degrees today are controlled. A degree which is accepted for registration by the PSEA, if somebody has undergone a degree, I believe that a degree holder has the necessary aptitudes to teach, to start becoming a teacher and should be allowed to teach up to HSC. Because degree holders are - all people who have studied at university here, know that you are trained. You are not trained to teach but you are trained to make presentations. You are trained to make exposés, projects, everything and to present them, even in the technical fields like physics and

chemistry. And, these people should be allowed in a temporary capacity and then they see if they want to undertake a career in teaching go for the opportunities of a PGCE. Unfortunately, this is the case. So, we are forcing people to go for a PGCE to make the choice even before entering a classroom and to see what is the atmosphere. My first experience as a teacher was a 19-year-old HSC student and then we went to our degrees and then we had the opportunity to do the PGCE.

By the way, I would inform the Clerk that on the website of the Regional Assembly, my qualification is a Master in Physics, this is not me, I think there is a confusion with Mr Ramdally, if you would please correct this. My Master is in Economics.

Mr Chairperson: Next question.

DISRUPTION IN SUPPLY/IMPORTED COMMODITIES

(No. B/46) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Consumer Protection and Others whether, in regard to the recurring disruption in the supply of certain imported commodities widely consumed by Rodriguan households since January 2024 to date, she will state the:

- (a) list of concerned products together with the related causes, and
- (b) remedial short-term, medium-term and long-term measures to be taken to remedy the situation?

Ms Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that there is a disruption in the supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinder of 5, 6 and 12 kg for domestic purposes in Rodrigues since April 2024 due to some containers being short shipped by MV Peros Banhos and also delay in shipping schedule of the said vessels to Rodrigues.

I wish to inform that House that in view of improving the supply of LPG to consumer, the supplier of LPG has been advised to increase the buffer stock to cater for the variation in shipment, delivery and seasonal increase in consumption.

I am informed that three additional container of LPG cylinders reached Rodrigues of voyage of MV Peros Banhos on 02 June 2024 apart from the normal order of 14 containers.

The supplier has also been requested to recuperate unused empty cylinders from consumers and reinsert them into the market and to prioritise distribution to gas sellers in villages and control sales at filling station until the situation improves.

The supplier has furthermore informed that supply of 12 kg industrial cylinder for commercial use and valves will be available in Rodrigues by 20 June 2024. The officers of the Consumer Affairs Unit will continue to monitor closely the supply of LPG gas.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to long term remedial measures which mostly concerned disruption in the supply and delivery of goods to Rodrigues as a result of the incapacity of the new vessel Peros Banhos to carry full load. The Executive Council at its meeting held on 24 May 2024 has taken note that a committee chaired by the Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service and a technical committee chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office have been set up to finalise a port development strategy for the Port Mathurin harbour including its funding and implementing modalities for consideration by government. The committee held its first meeting on 17 May 2024. Thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, the Commissioner has talked about the issue of shipping but is she also aware that the retailers in villages are facing major problems in relation to the distribution because Consumer Officers, radio has mentioned that priority will be given to distribution to the retailers but *en pratique ça ne marche pas comme ça*. Is she aware of this? And this is causing much inconveniences to people especially living far away from Port Mathurin or filling stations.

Ms. Agathe: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am aware.

Mr Baptiste: I would like to know what decision, whether any actions will be taken to avoid such issues because this is a very important product especially for people of the low income group who have only one gas cylinder and need to replace immediately after it is over.

Ms. Agathe: I am informed that the supplier has only one truck for delivery of cylinder gas to different villages. And, we have advised that the supplier take private truck to recuperate unused empty cylinders so that to ensure that we reinsert them in the market and to prioritise distribution to gas sellers in villages. But unfortunately, the supplier has only one truck to be able to dispose this product to the different villages and this cause disruption.

Mr Baptiste: The Commissioner has talked only about gas cylinders what about onions and potatoes also. There have been disruptions these past weeks. Can we have additional information about this?

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, there was a shortage of onions and potatoes on the local market. It was found that importers have reduced the volume of import because they complained of poor quality of the goods. Some six complaints were registered at the Consumer Affairs Unit for higher price of onions and potatoes.

In view of ensuring the supply of the products, I am informed that the Rodrigues Trade and Marketing Co. Ltd. collaborated to maintain the supply of these products on the market.

The Minority Leader: M. le président, en écoutant madame la Commissaire par rapport à la distribution des bonbonnes de gaz dans les régions. Donc, à deux reprises elle a mentionné que le fait que la compagnie qui distribue cette commodité a qu'un seul camion. Donc, moi souhaiterais savoir, bon ce n'est pas une excuse, nous on ne doit pas subir le fait que la compagnie à un seul camion. Je veux savoir de la Commissaire est-ce qu'elle a pris l'initiative en tant que Commissaire responsable des consommateurs pour discuter de manière ferme et sérieuse avec cette entreprise pour s'assurer que ce problème soit résolu au plus vite, et si oui, quand est-ce qu'elle a eu cette discussion et quelles sont les retombées de cette discussion ?

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, unfortunately, no. Because the supply of goods to Rodrigues is delegated to the Commissioner for Trade but I am responsible for the protection of the consumer, that is for instance, when there is selling of for example, gas cylinder at higher price or there is no availability. We work together with the Commission for Trade perhaps the question should be addressed to them. Thank you.

Mr Baptiste: Yes, Mr Chairperson, Sir, coming back to onion, I would like to ask the Commissioner whether she is aware that the main reasons why private suppliers are no longer interested to import onions is that of the issue of the price of onion in relation to the profit margin which is very insignificant. Yes, this is the main reason why private producers are no longer interested to import this. Does the Commissioner intend to see to it and to ensure that it becomes at least profitable to the minimum extent to encourage them to bring these?

Ms. Agathe: Yes, my office is aware of the issue. The different importers have already written to the Price Fixing Unit of the Commission. We have already talked with the Ministry for Consumer Protection and also the Ministry for Agro Industry because we have enquired about it and there is no fluctuation or no change in the price that they buy the onions

from Mauritius. So, we have received a correspondence from the Ministry of Commerce that says that the price of onions will remain Rs28 per kilogram.

Mr Lisette: Mr Chairperson, I would like to make a suggestion in the form of a question to the Commissioner with respect to what she mentioned in the House concerning non-responsibility as regards to selling of gas in villages relating that to the Commission for Trade and Commerce. I think she should be aware that the price margin for calculating and given to International Legume Database and Information Service (ILDIS) include also the distribution for transport from the main filling station to the different retailers in the different islands. If they are not doing so, it is profit for them and at the same time you will agree with me that vulnerable people have to Rs50 additional on the Rs240 so that they take a taxi or hire a taxi to come to Port Mathurin to have a cylinder gas. As Commissioner for Consumer Protection Affairs, is she willing to discuss, like my colleague said, with AEL DDS to ensure that there is in fact distribution in villages for the welfare of our vulnerable people?

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, yes.

Mr Baptiste: Mr Chairperson, Sir, still for onion, may be it is a good thing that it remains at such low price but it will be better for the consumers but still you have talked about the RTMC as a player for regulation for this issue of disruption. I would like to know what support are you giving to the RTMC to ensure that they can bring sufficient quantities to meet the requirement, the demand of all the customers because it is coming *un petit peu gouste à gouste*.

Ms. Agathe: Mr Chairperson, Sir, the officer, that is, the Analyst at the level of the Commission is still working on the proposition. Thank you.

Mr Chairperson: Okay. The Table has been advised that PQ B/55, B/56 and B/61 have been withdrawn by the respective Members.

So, time is over.

GYNECOLOGICAL SERVICES

(No. B/55) **Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member)** asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to gynecological services provided in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the monthly number of:

- (a) caesareans sections performed indicating the number thereof made after normal working hours, and

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- (c) infant mortality from January to May 2024, together with the causes thereof?

(Withdrawn)

VOTE ITEM 31112815 – BUDGET SPEECH 2023/2024/BREAKDOWN OF ALL PROJECTS

(No. B/56) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Family Welfare and Others whether, in regard to Item Vote 31112815 announced in the 2023-2024 Budget Speech, she will, for the benefit of the House, give a breakdown of all projects carried out in connection thereto?

(Withdrawn)

RODRIGUES COMMITTEE FOR THE ELDERLY

(No. B/61) Mr L. D. Baptiste (Second Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Social Security and Others whether, in regard to the Rodrigues Committee for the Elderly, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the current composition thereof, indicating in each case the date of appointment for the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Members together with their respective capacity;
- (b) the fees/allowances payable thereto and other benefits drawn, and
- (c) table a list of fees/allowances payable to different members thereof to date?

(Withdrawn)

STATEMENT BY COMMISSIONERS

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2024 - WEDNESDAY 05 JUNE

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide my statement on the World Environment Day 2024 which will be held tomorrow Wednesday 05 June.

The theme for year is “Land Restoration Desertification and Drought Resilience”. What a wonderful theme, Mr Chairperson, Sir. A theme that reminds us all on the epic importance of land – Land Management and Land use. It so happens today, Mr Chairperson that environment and land fall under my responsibility as the Chief Commissioner.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, it is known that, a Small Island Developing State (SIDs), is highly vulnerable to its smallness, the scarcity of its natural resources and for Rodrigues specifically its hilly/sloppy topography. The geographic position of the island makes that it is exposed to climatic changes, this is almost bound to occur on a yearly basis.

Land is one of the main natural resources that faces great and continuous challenges in such a small country like Rodrigues. Pressure on land has been accruing through the past decades, that is, demand for state land for construction tends to increase and this represent at least 30 hectares of land for development purposes. Much effort has been nevertheless put forward to carry out long term and sustainable planning through the upgrading of the planning instruments, namely the Rodrigues Development Strategy Plan and as well as, the local plan for Rodrigues. Planning for emerging settlements, tourism development zones and other economic sectors were provided in these instruments for better control of land use and development.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, every decision on land use that is taken today, the more so Rodrigues being a small island, has to be done with much care due to its cascading effects. The future depends on what we do today and the future generation depends on our daily actions. I can reassure the House, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that as Chief Commissioner and with the close collaboration of my colleagues, clear-cut policy decisions will be taken for Rodrigues to be maintained on a sustainable development path. As such Mr Chairperson, Sir, tomorrow's theme reminds us that we are on the right track. It is for this very reason that this Regional Government has made it a top priority to revise the SIDPR. This important document provides us with all the challenges and proposed way forward in a planned way.

In short, we have to diligently decide on where and what to build, where to rear animals, when to do agriculture and what to preserve. It is in this line, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that a watershed map has been designed as well as a village boundary map at my Commission for state land which both constitute base maps for further data updating, as far as, natural resource information is concerned.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, these maps will allow for: -

- Demarcation of nature reserves areas;
- Defined settlement boundaries;
- Tourism development areas;

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- Coastal land management;
- Green spots for plantation and conservation will also be earmarked;
- Future Growth Zone, and
- Special use restricted Zones (port and airport development).

Mr Chairperson, Sir, climate change is a fact and is impacting on the whole world. Rodrigues is not spared by this unprecedented natural phenomenon. It is also a fact, Mr Chairperson, Sir, that the battle against climate change cannot be won without the world's forests. Managing the transition to sustainable, resource-efficient and low-carbon economies will depend on forest resources, as well as the scaling-up of renewable energy. The quality of life of both urban and rural people depends on their ability to enjoy food, clean drinking-water and recreation. In most countries forests can strongly contribute to all of these.

However, Mr Chairperson, Rodrigues has suffered from deforestation and over-exploitation in the past which has resulted in severe soil erosion problems. Our forest cover has been diminishing. But much effort is geared towards reversing this trend. My office is working in close collaboration with the Commission for Forestry Services with the sound policy guidance of the Commissioner for Forestry Services to indulge in Forest Biodiversity restoration programme.

As from 2022, a total of 91,000 native and endemic seedlings have been planted. To curtail this trend, the Environment and Forestry Services have also embarked in the Coastal Forest Restoration to refurbish public beaches. To reverse the effect of desertification, due to many interlinked problems, that is, deforestation and over-exploitation, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the theme also mentions drought resilience. Rodrigues has been under the impact of severe droughts in the past. Our grandparents and parents have developed many resilient to droughts. We have been imbued by these qualities and our young generation has to be inculcated with this mind-set. We are proud to be resilient but we have to be prepared for the future.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the vision of this Government is to make Rodrigues an ecological island. The term 'ecological island' has a broad definition and encompasses many cross cutting actions.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the promotion of composting initiatives is also enhanced by the Environment Division and a massive campaign to sensitise the population and school children on compost making in backyard and garden is a priority.

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Mr Chairperson, desilting of rivers has been a pronounced activity undertaken by my office. The results are amazing and visible. This exercise will be extended to all clogged rivers around the island and water retention techniques will be used for agricultural purposes.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, my statement will be incomplete if mentioned is not made on the Rodrigues Regional Assembly's vision in achieving its goal of having an Energy Mix comprising 100% Renewable Energy by 2050. That is why, my office has already embarked on the project 'FEXTE – Rodrigues Ile Verte' to establish a roadmap for the electricity sector in Rodrigues with a view of achieving 100% electricity dependence on local and renewable sources of energy.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, much can be elaborated further but on this forthcoming special day of the World Environment Day, I inform the House that my office will mark the event by planting endemic trees at Mourouk – Butte de Sable as from 09.30 with the collaboration of NGO's, secondary and primary school children, village communities and other stakeholders.

Let us all protect and save our beloved Rodrigues island by doing the right thing together.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, external donor agencies whose technical and financial support in that field is commended and most welcome. I also wish to have a special consideration for all NGO's working towards a sustainable Rodrigues Island and most importantly to all the people of Rodrigues with particular attention to the young generation whose actions will pave the way to an ecological island.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson, Sir.

Mr Chairperson: Adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Commissioner: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I beg to move that the House be now adjourned to Tuesday 16 July 2024 at 10.30 a.m.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner, rose and seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

MATTERS RAISED

RIISING SPORTS CLUB – MFA CUP PARTICIPATION

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The Fourth Island Region Member (Mr J. P. Spéville): M. le président, je vous remercie de me donner la parole.

M. le président, je voudrais féliciter l'équipe de Rising qui a très bien fait dans la compétition de MFA Cup en avril 2024 et pour leur qualification pour la demie finale. Cependant, on a pu constater des manquements au niveau du support technique pour féliciter la mission de Rising à Maurice. On a aussi noté que certains membres de la délégation ont eus des problèmes de conge qui a ensuite impacte sur leur salaire, M. le président.

Je demanderais au Commissaire des Sports de faire les recommandations nécessaires pour solutionner tous ces problèmes la prochaine fois que Rising ou d'autre équipe participe dans une compétition à Maurice. Merci

REPLY OF COMMISSIONER FOR SPORTS AND OTHERS

Mr Ravina: M. le président, je n'arrive à comprendre *my learned friend*, M. Spéville a dit qu'il y a des problèmes à Maurice. Mais alors comment ils ont remporté tous ces matches s'ils ont des problèmes. C'est un peu drôle, je n'arrive pas à comprendre. Trois victoires mais ils ont des problèmes. Et puis par rapport des problèmes concernant, je ne sais pas moi, la délégation. Mon Adviser était là-bas, il n'a jamais rapporté avec moi qu'il y a des problèmes concernant la délégation à Maurice. Je trouve ça un peu drôle. De toute façon s'il y des problèmes, je vais voir ça pour pouvoir les améliorer. Merci, M. le président.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION – ENTREPRENARIAT JEUNESSE/2023

The Second Island Region Member (Ms M. N. Raffaut): Mr Chairperson, I would like to draw the attention of the Commissioner for Youth on behalf of the youth who participated in 'Entreprenariat Jeunesse' in 2023. So they have duly completed their course and there was a ceremony on 12 April 2024 where they were presented with a cheque of Rs30,000. They have also been informed that there will be a meeting after one week so that needful can be done with regard to the cheque and the purchase. So however, almost two months nothing has been done. So, the Rodrigues Regional Assembly through the Commission for Youth should act as a model by assisting our young people.

I would be grateful if the Commissioner can look into the matter and remedy to same. Thank you.

REPLY OF COMMISSIONER FOR YOUTH AND OTHERS

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Mr Volbert: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am not aware about what my learned friend Miss Raffaut is saying but nevertheless, I will look into the matter.

(Interruptions)

Yes, I will look into the matter, do not worry. I will try my best to help them.

MALADIES AFFECTANT LES PAPAYERS

The First Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Dr H. Agathe): M. le président, je voudrais vous remercier de me donner l'opportunité de faire cette déclaration au Commissaire de l'Agriculture.

Je voudrais attirer son attention sur les résistances d'une maladie qui affecte les papayers depuis au moins deux ans. Les feuilles les plus jeunes commencent par devenir jaune et s'ensuit par la suite les autres feuilles et les plantes meurent assez rapidement. Donc, cette maladie est une cause de mortalité assez importante de papayer et a quand même des implications étant donné l'importance de la papaye en terme économique ou en terme de secréter alimentaire.

Je vous demande d'examiner la question et de voir comment on peut agir par rapport à cette maladie.

REPLY OF COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE AND OTHERS

Mr Perrine: M. le président, j'ai bien pris note et dès demain je vais informer la section *pest control* pour avoir des informations sur cette maladie et puis j'informerai la Chambre sur l'étendu, les traitements, etcetera, qu'il faudrait faire.

L'EXTENSION DU RESEAU ELECTRIQUE – MORCELLEMENT MOUROUK

The First Local Region Member of Saint Gabriel (Mr J. R. Ramdally): M. le président, donc j'aimerais ici relayer le cri de quelques 20 familles qui habitent au morcellement de Mourouk qui ont terminés la construction de leurs maisons depuis début 2022 et a déjà écrit à la commission des Infrastructures Publiques pour faciliter l'extension du réseau électrique à leurs domiciles. Selon notre information, le Chef de Département a déjà demande une cotation pour cette extension depuis mars 2022 mais jusqu'à présent, presque deux ans après rien n'a bougé. Donc, ils en sont au même point. Ces personnes habitent pour la plupart chez leur parent et font face à beaucoup de difficulté.

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Donc, je fais un appel au Deputy Chief Commissioner ou même au Chef commissaire, je fais un appel pressant pour que ce problème sera *look into*.

REPLY OF CHIEF COMMISSIONER

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, permettez-moi de répondre au Membre. C'est vrai qu'on a eu une demande de la part de ces habitants et c'est vrai qu'on a fait une demande auprès du CEB pour justement avoir la cotation mais c'est vrai qu'on attend. Il y avait quelque changement à faire au niveau de la cotation et parce qu'ils ont dit, moi je me rappelle ils ont dit que ça doit être revu à la hausse parce qu'avec le temps ça a changé. Donc, on attend toujours. Bien sûr, j'ai laissé le dossier qui est déjà à la commission des Infrastructures Publiques et on va voir ensemble comment aider ces gens-là. On va voir ça dans les plus brefs délais. Merci.

NOUVEAU BLOC ADMINISTRATIF/MONT LUBIN – BUREAU DE LA SECURITE SOCIALE

The Second Local Region Member of Grande Montagne (Mr L. D. Baptiste): Merci, M. le président. Donc, ma requête s'adresse au Commissaire de la Sécurité Sociale. Moi, je voudrais attirer son attention par rapport aux difficultés auxquels font face les demandeurs de prestation sociale, d'aide sociale et autre pension de base, particulièrement, les habitants de la région centrale et sud-est de l'île. Donc, en effet depuis le transfert du bureau régional de la sécurité sociale de Malabar à Mont Lubin au nouveau bloc administratif, donc nous constatons que ce dernier ne fonctionne pas à plein régime. Donc, de ce fait valeur du jour donc ce bureau n'est pas connecté au reste du système et les applications sont faites manuellement et des fois les bénéficiaires potentielles doivent se rendre à Port Mathurin ou à Grande Montagne pour compléter leurs formalités, les démarches qu'ils ont à faire pour les pensions tout ça.

Donc, je voudrais lancer un appel pressant au Commissaire responsable de trouver une solution rapide et durable à ce problème qui, cause quand même pas mal d'inconvénient au prestataire. Merci.

REPLY OF COMMISSIONER FOR SPORTS AND OTHERS

Mr Volbert: C'est vrai, M. le président, il y a ce problème parce qu'il y a *a leakage* là où on a placé le WIFI, etcetera. Il y a un *leakage* qui est là et on travaille là-dessus pour voir si on peut déplacer et à ce moment-là et mettre en ordre.

ROAD SAFETY/RESURFACING – PETIT GABRIEL

The First Local Region Member of Baie aux Huîtres (Mr N. Lisette): Mr Chairperson, thank you for giving me the floor. My statement is directed towards the Deputy Chief Commissioner and it relates to road safety at Petit Gabriel. So, many road users have noticed the quick tearing/wearing off of the re-asphalting at Petit Gabriel, very quickly. Because this was done I think in March or April of last year and you would have noticed that the road portion which has been resurfaced at Petit Gabriel is wearing off very, very quickly and there is... Petit Gabriel – *sirman, sirtou kote* – near the *fontaine* zone, the *fontaine* area up to 'Timan' and you will also notice that there are lots of gravels which are either on the side of the road or which stay in the middle of the road and as per information gathered they are very often motorcyclist which have accident on this portion of the road. So, I will direct the attention of the Deputy Chief Commissioner to see whether the work has been done as it should be as per the quality, quality wise. Because it is quite strange that road which has been resurfaced in other areas long back has not been damaged as it is at Petit Gabriel. So, for the safety of our motorcyclist principally, I would invite the Chief Commissioner to see to it especially that there is a lack street lighting also in this area which is not helping the road users. Thank you very much.

CHANGEMENT - PROGRAMMATION RADIO/TELEVISION LOCALES

The Minority Leader: M. le président, je voudrais attirer l'attention du Chef commissaire par rapport à une situation donc moi-même j'ai été informé par les dames qui actuellement sont engagées dans la plantation d'oignons. C'est par rapport à la programmation à la radio locale. Je souhaiterais demander l'intervention du Chef commissaire du fait que ces dames qui prennent du plaisir à écouter la radio locale depuis quelques jours et quelques temps apparemment elles ont remarqué qu'il y a un changement dans la programmation de la radio et à un moment de la journée, la radio bascule sur la radio nationale. Il n'y a rien de mal mais je crois que ce n'est pas qu'une radio c'est aussi un projet, un développement par rapport à l'autonomie et c'est l'opportunité pour que les Rodriguais s'écoutent, s'entendent et il y a les artistes, il y a les engager au niveau du sociale. Donc, c'est l'occasion ils sont invités et ils entendent les gens qui agissent au niveau de Rodrigues. Donc, aujourd'hui on n'entend presque plus la voix Rodriguaise à l'antenne de la radio parce qu'il y a eu ce changement de grille. Donc, je pense que c'est un recul parce que depuis l'autonomie on a beaucoup travaillé pour consolider la grille de la radio locale et c'est la seule que nous avons. Donc, je souhaite que vous faites ce qu'il faut et que Rodrigues s'entend dans sa radio.

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On n'a rien contre la radio 'Kool FM' et etcetera, mais on a besoin d'entendre ce que vous faites, ce que les gens font et se sera un recul si on continue dans cette direction.

The Chief Commissioner: M. le président, je prends note de ce qu'a dit la Minority Leader. D'ailleurs, je suis d'accord avec elle. Donc, je vais prendre la question avec ceux concerner concernant la programmation à la radio et aussi à la télévision.

Mr Chairperson: The House stands adjourned.

At 3.15 p.m., the Assembly was, on its rising adjourned to Tuesday 16 July 2024 at 10.30 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

MANAGEMENT – BALADIROU YOUTH RESIDENTIAL & TRAINING CENTRE

(No. B/47) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports and Others whether, in regard to the management of Baladirou Youth Residential and Training Centre, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) how same is managed;
- (b) the procedures for access and use thereof, and
- (c) if there has been any reported case of damage to the building and, in the affirmative, to give the estimated cost incurred therefor?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, as the House is aware, Baladirou Youth Residential and Training Centre is under the aegis of my Commission and is used mainly for residential and non-residential activities such as training, workshops and recreational activities.

The Baladirou Youth Residential and Training Centre comprises of the following blocks: -

- (i) The main hall housing the office, conference room "Le Bois D'Olive", the restaurant 'Le Maïs', mess room, store and toilet.
- (ii) A Leisure Centre – 'Jean Roland Casimir' Leisure Centre.
- (iii) Female dormitories, one official room and toilet block, and
- (iv) Male dormitories 'Le Café Marron' consisting of four dormitories, one official room and toilet block.

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With regard to part (a) of the question, Mr Chairperson, normally the centre is managed by a Principal Youth Officer and is assisted in her task by three Youth Centre Attendants and two Security Guards.

With respect to part (b) of the question, I am informed that the procedures to have access and use of the centre are as follows: -

- (i) Users apply at the level of my Commission;
- (ii) The request is assessed by the Youth Section whether the centre is available on required dates and if it activity fits the purpose of the centre;
- (iii) Once processed and found in order, the application is recommended to the Departmental Head of my Commission for approval, and
- (iv) Once approved, the applicant is informed and made aware of the rules and regulations for the use of the centre.

I am further informed that should the request comes from different Commissions to be use for recreational and team building activities, the applications are channelled through the Island Chief Executive's Office prior to processing at the end of my Commission.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, I am informed that on 22 April 2024, it was found that the main door of the Leisure Centre was broken. The case was reported to the Grande Montagne Police Station and after police visit on site the door was secured on the same day. The estimated cost for the said damage is about Rs25,000.

**RISING SPORT CLUB IN THE MFA CUP/MAURITIUS
– FACILITIES/ASSISTANCE PROVIDED**

(No. B/48) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Youth & Sports and Others whether, in regard to the participation of the Rising Sport Club in the MFA Cup in mainland Mauritius in April 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the facilities/assistance provided by his Commission in relation thereto, indicating the:

- (a) composition of the delegation;
- (b) facilities provided to the delegation, and
- (c) outcome of the completion?

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Reply: Mr Chairperson Sir, I wish to inform the House that the Mauritius Football Association (MFA) Cup is an annual event organised by the Mauritius Football Association. The winner of the Regional Football League in Rodrigues automatically qualifies to participate in the competition. Rising Sports Club having won the league for season 2022/2023 has been designated to participate.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that following the request of the Rodrigues Football Association, my Commission provided assistance for the participation of the Rising Sports Club in the Mauritius Football Association Cup from 18 to 29 April 2024 in Mauritius.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the composition of the delegation was as follows:

1. The Adviser in Sports Matters as head of delegation.
2. One representative of the Rodrigues Football Association.
3. Official coach of Rising Sports Club.
4. Six officials from the Rising Sports Club including one First Aid Officer.
5. 20 players.

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that the facilities provided to the delegation included return air tickets, full board accommodation at Mount View Hotel and transport facilities. The total cost incurred by my Commission with respect to this delegation amounted to about Rs800,000.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the outcome of the competition speaks for itself as it is the first time indeed that a team from Rodrigues qualifies for this phase of the competition. The Rising Sports Club defeating three teams and won three consecutive matches namely against: The High Performance Centre U17, the Black Horn Youth Club and the Association Sportive Rivière du Rempart in the quarter final. This performance confirms the success of the policy of my Commission to promote the development of football from grassroots up to the elite level.

This is why, following this outstanding performance, the Executive Council, at its meeting of 03 May 2024 approved the allocation of a grant of Rs100,000 to the Rising Sports Club so that it can enhance its preparation for the semi-finals.

I would like to seize this opportunity to congratulate the Rising Sports Club for this outstanding performance and for having put Rodrigues on the forefront once again. I would

also like to thank the population at large, especially our expatriate who are in Mauritius for their presence and support during the different matches played.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

ASSISTANCE – PATIENTS UNDERGOING PRIVATE TREATMENT/MAURITIUS

(No. B/49) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the assistance provided to patients undergoing private treatment in Mauritius, he will inform the House on the:

- (a) budget item vote therefor;
- (b) selection criteria for beneficiaries thereof;
- (c) mode of application to benefit from the scheme, and
- (d) number of persons that have benefitted therefrom since its inception, stating the nature of the different diseases/medical conditions concerned?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that assistance to patients undergoing private treatment in Mauritius are paid under vote item 5-101–27210.008 – Assistance to Patients Needing Specialised Treatment.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the eligibility criteria of patients to benefit from a financial assistance are hereunder listed:

- (i) Applicant must be a resident of Rodrigues;
- (ii) Claims for financial assistance will be applicable for medical services not continuously available in Rodrigues;
- (iii) Claims for financial assistance should be submitted not later than six months from completion of treatment and investigation only (excluding outpatient services and appointments;
- (iv) Claims will be entertained only once for same medical service, excluding any complication arising from same;
- (v) Claims will not be entertained for cosmetic procedures;
- (vi) For claimant holding a private medical insurance policy, financial assistance will be considered for ticket/s only and to top-up as per the provided coverage limit by the insurance company;

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- (vii) Claimant may be called for an interview by the Examination Committee, should additional/relevant information be required.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as for part (c) of the question, an applicant has to fill an application form available at the Commission for Health and Others.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to part (d) of the question, I am informed that 55 patients have benefitted from the financial assistance to date since its inception, for medical services not continuously available in Rodrigues.

MANAGEMENT OF DENGUE/RODRIGUES

(No. B/50) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the management of Dengue in Rodrigues, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the detailed expenses incurred in connection thereto since August 2023 up to date?

Mr Chairperson, Sir, I wish to inform the House that since June 2023 an amount of Rs4,648,375.72 has been incurred representing expenses in connection with actions being undertaken in the context of management of dengue.

The related expenses are procurement of medicines, drugs and vaccines, office sundries, passage and accommodation costs of doctors and other medical staff travelling to Rodrigues, rental of 4x4 vehicles, radio/TV spots, printing of stationeries and cleaning of health infrastructure premises.

The amount due as at date stands at Rs1,374,965.70.

IMPLEMENTATION – AGRICULTURAL GRANT SCHEME

(No. B/51) Dr H. Agathe (First Local Region Member for Grande Montagne) asked the Commissioner for Agriculture and Others whether, in regard to the implementation of the Agricultural Grant Scheme, he will state the:

- (a) budget item vote therefor;
- (b) opening and closing dates for applying therefor;
- (c) eligibility criteria thereof;
- (d) number of applications received and of subsequent successful candidates, and

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- (e) authority responsible for the management thereof including the monitoring and evaluation stages?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with your permission, I would like to reply to question B/51.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the House will recall that as former Chief Commissioner, I announced in the Budget Speech for Financial Year 2022/2023, I quote:

“La mise en place du Programme d’Accompagnement à la professionnalisation de l’Agriculture. A cet effet, une somme de Rs30 M sera bientôt décaissée pour mettre à environ 60 professionnels de l’agriculture et de l’élevage d’avoir un meilleur accès à des infrastructures, équipements et autres outils modernes pour améliorer et accroître leur production.”

As a matter of fact, it is mandatory to modernise and reengineer the agricultural sector in Rodrigues for food security. That is why our Regional Government is leaving no stone unturned to professionalise the sector and make it become also the main pillar of our economy. In that connection, there is need for a new class of vibrant and professional planters and breeders who are equipped with the latest scientific production techniques and state of the art technology to drive the agricultural sector in Rodrigues to new heights.

Following the decision of the Executive Council held on 11 August 2023, the project related to Incentive for Consolidating the Agricultural Value Chain and Promotion of Professional Agriculture and Farming was entrusted to the Commission for Industrial Development that will lead the project in collaboration with the Commission for Agriculture and the Economic Planning and Monitoring Unit (EPMU). Subsequently, my Commission has developed the Agricultural Grant Scheme with the aim of facilitating access of farmers/planters involved in agricultural activities to infrastructures, equipment and tool to improve and increase their production. The objectives of the project are to: -

- modernise agricultural production in Rodrigues;
- increase production;
- encourage transitioning from traditional to more professional agricultural production;
- strengthen the agricultural value chain;
- encourage the involvement of young people in agriculture;
- create supportive environment for improving and diversifying agriculture, and

- enhance the export of agricultural products.

Under the scheme, financial assistance up to Rs500,000 and up to Rs300,000 will be provided to professionals and start-up entrepreneurs respectively, to meet costs related to either new or upgrading/repairs of infrastructure costs, facilities such as land mechanisation costs, procurement of seedlings or animals to improve breed or for start of project.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that the item vote for the scheme is as follows:

Sub Head 4-104: Crop Production – Item 22900.100 Incentive for Consolidating the Rodrigues Agricultural Value Chain/Promotion of Professional Agriculture and Farming with a Voted Provision of Rs30,000,000.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that the Agricultural Grant Scheme was launched on 27 October 2023 through radio communiqué and on the official Facebook page of Invest Rodrigues with closing date set for 27 November 2023.

As regards part (c) of the question, I am informed that the eligibility criteria are as follows: -

- (i) Professional farmers and breeders deriving their living mainly from agricultural production and farming activities for the last two years or those willing to make agriculture their primary source of income;
- (ii) Start-up entrepreneurs with innovative and viable business ideas and technical certificates in agriculture, agribusiness and related activities, and
- (iii) Applicants with innovative and well-structured projects that are likely to improve food production in terms of quality and quantity sustainably.

With respect to part (d) of the question, I am informed that 136 applications were received at the closing date and following the screening and evaluation exercise by the Technical Committees, the Executive Council at its meeting held on 03 May 2024 has decided to approve that my Commission will provide financial assistance under the Agricultural Grant Scheme in the context of the Incentive for Consolidating the Rodrigues Agricultural Value Chain and Promotion of Professional Agriculture and Farming as follows:

- (i) Financial assistance up to a maximum of Rs500,000 each to 22 professional breeders and 25 professional crop producers, and

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- (ii) Financial assistance up to a maximum of Rs300,000 each to two start-ups in crop production and two start-ups in crop production and two start-ups in animal production.

Regarding part (e) of the question, in line with its mission to trigger and propel first rate entrepreneurship in all sectors through support and assistance to Small and Medium Enterprises, the Commission for Industrial Development will be responsible for the implementation and management of the Agricultural Grant Scheme.

The officers of the Commission for Industrial Development in collaboration with Technical Officers of the Commission for Agriculture, will monitor the implementation of the projects by beneficiaries as per the terms and conditions of Contract Agreement signed between the Commission and beneficiaries.

SERVICE – DORNIER/RODRIGUES – ANY PURPOSE/TRANSFER OF PATIENTS

(No. B/52) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huitres) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the request made by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for the service of the Dornier for Rodrigues for any purpose, including for the transfer of patients, he will, for the benefit of the House, state and table the:

- (a) procedures to be followed therefor;
- (b) number of times that such requests were made per month thereby since 2022 indicating if any thereof were refused and, if yes, the reason therefor?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, upon confirmation of the Health Director's Office that there is unavailability of seats on Air Mauritius aircraft for the urgent evacuation of patients, the concerned office further requests my Commission to provide an emergency alternative mode of transport to transfer the patient to Mauritius.

As regards part (a) of the question, I wish to inform the House of the procedures thereafter:

- Firstly: my Commission makes a request to the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health and Wellness to convey appropriate approval to the Commissioner of Police for Dornier aircraft to field a trip to Rodrigues as a matter of emergency on a day as specified by my Commission and same request is copied to the attention of the Commissioner of Police, to the Dornier

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Squadron, to the Department of Civil Aviation, to Airport of Mauritius Ltd, and other stakeholders from my Commission;

- At the same time, as a matter of urgency, a line of communication is established with the Commissioner of Police to inform of the request sent to the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health and Wellness for the Dornier aircraft to field a trip to Rodrigues and same is copied to the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health and Wellness;
- It is further highlighted as per both correspondences that all costs borne in connection with the transfer of the patients will be met by my Commission;
- The Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry of Health and Wellness conveys an approval to the Commissioner of Police, which is also copied to my Office;
- Upon approval of the Commissioner of Police, the Dornier proceeds to Rodrigues for evacuation of patients the earliest possible;
- In case the patient is on oxygen support, request is made to Air Mauritius Ltd for the provision of oxygen during the airlift.

I wish to further inform the House that all patients proceeding to Mauritius through Dornier are accompanied by relevant medical personnel.

Other cases where Dornier aircraft are required are listed below:

- for the repatriation of corpse exceeding the Air Mauritius normal requirement.
- in rare cases for the transfer of drugs/medicines for patients.

As regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir,

For year 2022

January	– 6 trips
February	– 4 trips
March	– 1 trip
June	– 1 trip
September	– 1 trip
November	– 1 trip

A total of 14 trips

Year 2023

May – 2 trips

June – 1 trip

A total of 3 trips

Year 2024

January – 4 trips

February – 2 trips

March – 1 trip

April – 3 trips

May – 3 trips

A total of 13 trips

and no request has been refused.

LEPTOSPIROSIS – PREVENTIVE MEASURES

(No. B/53) Mr J. R. Ramdally (First Local Region Member for Saint Gabriel) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the increasing number of people diagnosed with leptospirosis in mainland Mauritius, he will inform the House on if his Commission is taking preventive measures in relation thereto and, in the affirmative, to give details thereof?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that as at date there is no protocol published by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. Furthermore, as at date, no case of Leptospirosis has been detected in Rodrigues.

General preventive measures have already been initiated in line with prescribed measures from the Ministry of Health and Wellness, namely from the Communicable Disease Control Unit and the Office of the Director,

Public Health and Food Safety; amongst those prescribed measures are general cleaning including derating of health institutions, markets, educational institutions and main ports of entry. Border control measures, namely ensuring placing of rat guards across mooring ropes of ships (to prevent movement of rats to and from said ship), placing of rat

baits/boards at port and airport, maintain cleanliness of port and airport compounds, health surveillance and mass sensitisation of the general public about basic sanitary standards to adopt as well as empower/educate through media and relevant social network.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, if you allow me to further explain the House regarding Leptospirosis which is a zoonotic disease, transmitted from animals to human and is caused by the Bacterium *Leptospira*. Rodents are the most important reservoirs for maintaining transmission in most settings. In addition to rodents, the organism infects a variety of both wild and domestic mammals, livestock animals (especially cows, pigs, sheep and goats), domesticated animals (mainly dogs; rare occurrence in cats). Organisms can survive for days to months in urine-contaminated soil and fresh water.

The bacteria are transmitted to humans through urine of infected animals and water/wet soil contaminated with urine from infected animals, direct contact with urine and reproductive fluids from contaminated animals and the route of transmission to human occurs mainly through ingestion of food/water contaminated with urine and urine contaminated water, and direct contact with contaminated animals. Usually there is no risk of human to human transmission. People at increased risk of catching leptospirosis include livestock related duties, example, farmers, Veterinary Division, abattoir workers, sewer workers, and scavengers. Outbreaks tend to occur after heavy rainfall or flooding in endemic areas, especially areas with poor housing and sanitary conditions.

Prevention of infection is based on rigorous hand washing practice, avoid contact with infected animals, urine-contaminated water and soil. Domesticated animals, mostly dogs need to be vaccinated as per established veterinary guidelines by their owners. Covering of skin cuts/bruises/scratches/abrasion with waterproof dressing, wearing of suitable Personal protective equipment, waterproof protective clothing, shoes/boots, gloves and to control the rodent population.

We have already initiated active communication between the Communicable Disease Control Unit (CDCU), Ministry of Health and Wellness on related updates and forthcoming national protocol for leptospirosis. Consequently, proactively, in consultation with the Communicable Disease Control Unit and the Office of the Director, Public Health and Food Safety, of the Ministry of Health and Wellness, the following preventive measures are upcoming: -

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- Location of cases, immediate epidemiological enquiry of patient, including occupation.
- Evaluation of environmental conditions prevailing at residential and work premises of patient aiming at detecting factors that may favour the proliferation of rodents, example, burrows, proliferation traces, smell of urine, droppings and assessment of solid and liquid wastes storage and disposal, water storage system and taking any corrective measures warranted.
- Derating of premises and immediate neighbouring.
- Inspection of nearby food premises, warehouses to detect rodent infestation and ensuring remedial actions accordingly.
- Detection and corrective measures with regard to overgrown plots and littered with wastes.
- Inspection of ships/aircrafts during health clearance procedures to detect signs of presence of rodents.
- Regular control of public health institutions, public markets and food outlets in connection with presence of rodents and corrective measures where necessary.
- Timely attendance of complaints related to rodent infestation in residential, recreational and agricultural zones and to conduct regular inspections thereat.
- Regular health education, awareness and sensitisation of the public to adopt basic sanitary behaviours and promote active community participation, and adherence through media and relevant social media platforms.
- Coordination with other Commissions and stakeholders to address rodent harbourage/proliferation.
- Promotion of use of appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) among exposed working population especially farmers, Veterinary Division, slaughtering of animals, water and waste water workers, and scavengers.

I wish to further inform the House, that several meetings have already been organised at the level of my Commission during the past weeks, in view of working on a preparedness plan regarding the leptospirosis.

We are already working on a clinical management proposal for implementation in Rodrigues, in line with CDCU guidelines for leptospirosis which is to be submitted to the CDCU; pending a national protocol by the Ministry of Health and Wellness.

**TRAINING PROGRAMMES
– PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA/JUNE & JULY 2024**

(No. B/54) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the training programmes in the People’s Republic of China in June and July 2024, he will inform the House on:

- (a) when was correspondence therefor received at his office, indicating if same was circulated to all the Commissions/Departments of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
- (b) the number of applications received and the selection criteria therefor, and
- (c) to state and table, the names of the selected officers, together with their respective grades and the training courses they will be undertaking?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with respect to part (a) of the question, I am informed that a mail was received at the level of the Island Chief Executive’s Office on 04 April 2024 from the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms inviting applications for the following training programmes in China:

SN	Course Title	Duration
1.	Seminar on Modern Livestock Farming Management for Developing Countries	05 to 18 June 2024
2.	Seminar on Education Officials from Developing Countries	13 to 25 June 2024
3.	Seminar on Kindergarten and Preschool Education Environment for Developing Countries	13 to 26 June 2024
4.	Seminar on the Cultivation of Digital Cultural Industries for English-Speaking African Countries	19 June to 02 July 2024
5.	Seminar on Improving Agricultural Development Level for African Countries	26 June to 09 July 2024

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I am further informed that the Commissions concerned namely the Deputy Chief Commissioner's Office (Commission for Education), the Commission for Agriculture and the Commission for Information Technology and Telecommunications were invited through an email dated 05 April 2024 to submit applications as per deadline set for each training programme.

As regards part (b) of the question, I am informed that at the closing date for submission of applications to the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms on 22 April 2024, only one application was received from an eligible applicant.

The eligibility criteria, as specified in the letter of invitation from the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms, were as follows:

- (i) Age: under 45 for officials at or under director's level and under 50 for officials at director general's level;
- (ii) Health: in good health with health certificate issued by the local public hospitals; without diseases with which entry to China is disallowed by China's laws and regulations; without severe chronic diseases such as serious high blood pressure, cardiovascular/cerebrovascular diseases and diabetes; without mental diseases or epidemic diseases that are likely to cause serious threat to public health; not in the process of recovering after a major operation or in the process of acute diseases; not seriously disabled or pregnant;
- (iii) Language: capable of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English during the training;
- (iv) Others: family members or friends shall not follow.

Regarding part (c) of the question, I am informed that the application received in respect of Mrs M. C. G, Departmental Head for the "Seminar for Education Officials from Developing Countries" has been submitted to the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms.

However, the final decision to award a fellowship to nominee rests solely with the sponsoring agency.

To date, no reply has been received regarding the selection of the officer.

PHYSIOTHERAPY DEPARTMENT – QEH

(No. B/57) Ms M. N. Raffaut (Second Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the physiotherapy department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, he will state:

- (a) if it is properly staffed, giving details thereof;
- (b) who is actually heading same, indicating if treatment to patients is being given according to prescribed standards and practice?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, I am informed that the actual staffing position of the Physiotherapy Department of the Health Services, Rodrigues Regional Assembly stands as follows;

- 1 Senior Physiotherapy Assistant;
- 1 Physiotherapy Assistant (Substantive Capacity), and
- 4 Physiotherapy Assistants (Temporary capacity)

I am further informed that amongst the four Physiotherapy Assistants (temporary capacity), one Physiotherapy Assistant (temporary capacity) fully qualified for the post of Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist was made to assign higher duties at the level of Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist for the period 04 December 2023 to 10 May 2024.

On 10 May 2024, the same Physiotherapy Assistant (temporary capacity) assigning higher duties was made to proceed to Mauritius for further training for a period of one year in accordance with the scheme of service of the grade of Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist.

I wish to further inform the House that the other three Physiotherapy Assistants (temporary capacity) have also proceeded to Mauritius for a training of one year in accordance with the scheme of service of the grade of Physiotherapy Assistant as the course was going to start and they would have missed the opportunity to join such course and would have had to wait for several years as the said course is only available every few years.

I wish to inform the House that for the past years, this department has been functioning without a permanent Physiotherapist.

Therefore, the fact of facilitating the training of those officers so that they fulfil the requirements to be considered on substantive capacity will ensure that we finally have a full fledged and adequately staffed department.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, in view of ensuring that there is no disruption in service delivery at this concerned department, my Commission submitted a request to the Ministry of Health and Wellness for the posting of one Physiotherapist/Senior Physiotherapist and two Physiotherapy Assistants on tour of service in Rodrigues. A reply is still being awaited.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, regarding part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that actually, the Senior Physiotherapy Assistant is heading the Physiotherapy Department and the work is being done according to the prescribed scheme of service.

REPATRIATION OF CORPSES – FROM MAURITIUS/JANUARY 2023 TO DATE

(No. B/58) Mr J. P. Spéville (Fourth Island Region Member) asked the Commissioner for Health and Others whether, in regard to the repatriation of corpses from Mauritius, from January 2023 to date, he will, for the benefit of the House, state the:

- (a) service provider(s) and the cost per repatriation, and
- (b) procedures and/or conditions required therefor?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, repatriation of corpses is catered for by my Commission in two circumstances as follows:

- For any person who has proceeded to Mauritius at the cost of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, be it for treatment or any other official mission; in such case of demise the repatriation is being catered for by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly;
- For those persons who have proceeded to Mauritius on their own for treatment, part of the cost of repatriation is borne by the Commission on the basis of humanitarian ground, upon decision of the Executive Council.

I wish to inform the House that repatriation is being done either by Air Mauritius Ltd or Dornier aircraft depending on the size of the corpse.

From 2012 to 2023, services for repatriation were done by Moura Operations Co. Ltd. I wish to point out to the House that there has never been any contract with the said company for the provision of those services.

As from end of July 2023, the services of Elie & Sons Funerals Directors have been requested in view of the repatriation of corpse as my office has received lots of complaints against Moura Undertaker on how corpses were being handled.

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The House is informed that in view of ensuring the procedures are being followed in view of the provision of repatriation services, I wish to inform the House that my Commission has already initiated actions in this direction accordingly.

As regards part (a) of the question regarding the cost of repatriation, I wish to inform the House that same depends on the weight, length and the mode of repatriation; that is either via Dornier aircraft or regular Air Mauritius aircrafts.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as for part (b) of the question, I wish to inform the House that the prevailing procedures and/or conditions required regarding the repatriation, are similar to those established by the previous government since 2012.

STREET LIGHTING LANTERNS

(No. B/59) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to street lighting lanterns, he will, for the benefit of the House, state:

- (a) the number thereof connected to the Central Electricity Board (CEB) grid in Rodrigues indicating how many are out of service and to table a breakdown of same per village;
- (b) the monthly amount paid by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly therefor, and
- (c) if there is any outstanding amount due thereto as at date?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed that there are some 2,500 street lighting lanterns connected to the Central Electricity Board (CEB) Grid in Rodrigues.

I am further informed that a survey on defective lamps along tarred roads has been carried out by officers of the Commission for Public Infrastructure from 01 to 13 December 2023 and has established that 661 lamps are out of order.

I am hereby tabling the list of defective street lighting along public roads in Rodrigues with details on the number of defective lamps therein.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, the list submitted excludes defective lamps along track roads in villages. A survey of defective lamps along track roads is being carried out in collaboration with the Rodrigues Council of Social Services (RCSS) in villages and the data will be compiled in due course.

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In the meantime, my Commission has already initiated procurement proceedings for the procurement of 3,000 lamps and bulbs for street lighting for repairs and installation of new street lights for the Financial Year 2024-2025.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, as regards to parts (b) and (c) of the question, I am informed that the monthly amount paid by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly is Rs760,792 and that there is an outstanding amount of Rs4,438,430 for which payment is under process.

DRAINAGE WORKS – NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT/ACCACIA

(No. B/60) Mr N. Lisette (First Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) 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 description 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?

Reply: Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (a), I am informed that the National Development Unit has submitted a request for drainage works at Accacia.

The scope of the project comprises the following:

- (i) To review the existing infrastructure road networks in the locality;
- (ii) To identify causes of flooding and their historical evolution, and
- (ii) To define possible drainage system to resolve the problems; and to implement the different solutions identified

With regard to part (b) of the question, Mr Chairperson, Sir, the different sites to be covered include the hill sides of Accacia as well as the low lying areas.

Mr Chairperson, Sir, with regard to part (c) of the question, as a matter of policy the Commission has informed the National Development Unit in correspondence dated 30 October 2023 that the Executive Council has decided not to go further with the proposed works at Accacia. An alternative proposal with an option of a new bridge in a holistic approach with respect to port and airport development will be considered.

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Mr Chairperson, Sir, during the mission of the National Development Unit and Land Drainage Authority to Rodrigues for period 03 to 05 April 2024 for the presentation of the projects to the Rodrigues Regional Assembly and other departments, discussions were held on the proposed drainage works at Accacia. The NDU was requested to review the project and come up with a new proposal in line with the policy decision of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly for consideration.

DEPUTY CHIEF COMMISSIONER – MISSION/MAURITIUS – 12 TO 16 MAY 2024

(No. A/1) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Deputy Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the mission he undertook in mainland Mauritius from 12 to 16 May 2024, he will, for the benefit of the House, give a brief outcome thereof?

Reply: With regard to PQ A/1, I wish to inform the House that I did not undertake any official travel/mission to Mauritius from 12 to 16 May 2024.

**PROJECT – ROLOCATION/STONE CRUSHING PLANT
– GRAND LA FOUCHE CORAIL**

(No. A/2) Ms K. Roussety (Second Local Region Member for Baie aux Huîtres) asked the Chief Commissioner whether, in regard to the envisaged changes to the project of relocation of the stone crushing plant at Grand La Fouche Corail, he will inform the House as to where matters stand as at date?

Reply: The stone crushing plant located at Grand La Fouche Corail is problematic due to its adverse environmental impacts on the nearby residents and villages through air pollution in spite of several mitigation measures implemented by the company.

Meeting have been held with the management of Welcome Industries Ltd for the relocation of the stone crushing plant.

The Commission for State Land has earmarked have identified a plot of land at Montagne Croupier for the implementation of a stone crushing plant, the manufacture of concrete blocks and other proposal for stone related activities.

Discussions are ongoing with the management of Welcome Industries Ltd to finalise the relocation process.