

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF KEYS (QUESTIONS)

**Douglas, Tuesday, 4th March 2003
at 10.00 a.m.**

Present:

The Speaker (the Hon. J A Brown) (Castletown); Mr D M Anderson (Glenfaba); Hon. A R Bell and Mr L I Singer (Ramsey); Mr R E Quine OBE (Ayre); Mr J D Q Cannan (Michael); Mrs H Hannan (Peel); Hon. S C Rodan (Garff); Mr P Karran, Hon. R K Corkill and Mr A J Earnshaw (Onchan); Mr G M Quayle (Middle); Mr J R Houghton and Mr R W Henderson (Douglas North); Hon. D C Cretney and Mr A C Duggan (Douglas South); Hon. R P Braidwood and Mrs B J Cannell (Douglas East); Hon. J P Shimmin (Douglas West); Capt. A C Douglas (Malew and Santon); Hon. J Rimington, Mr Q B Gill and Hon. P M Crowe (Rushen); with Mr M Cornwell-Kelly, Secretary of the House.

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**DTI – Industrial Units in Eastern Sector –
Provision for – Question by Mr Houghton**

Question 1. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the member for Trade and Industry:

With regard to the future provision of small industrial units in the eastern sector:

- (1) *how many units does your department plan to construct for let within the next five years;*
- (2) *have you made provision in future local or area plans;*
- (3) *if so, how much capital has been set aside in your department's business plan for such provision?*

The Speaker: Hon. members, we now go on to questions for oral answer and I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Trade and Industry, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In the absence of the minister I am pleased to give this answer on behalf of the DTI. The hon. member's question refers specifically to the eastern sector, by which I presume he means the general area of Douglas, Onchan and Braddan. Whereas the DTI provision of small industrial units has always concentrated on areas of the Island where private developers have not been active, developers have been active in the eastern sector but, as I say, very limited in their activities in other areas such as Ramsey and Peel.

The department's approach is considered to represent the best use of the limited capital funds which are available to the department, given the pressures which exist in relation to government's overall capital programme. In those areas of the Island where private developers provide units the DTI is able to assist eligible businesses with the costs of their accommodation through rent grants as part of the industrial financial assistance scheme. These would, of course, be funded from our revenue budget, not capital. So in the Douglas area, for example, if businesses find their own unit to rent and they fit into the DTI scheme then they can come to the DTI for a rent grant which is, we believe, more efficient than finding capital to build.

With regard to the second part of the question, the provision of industrial land in local area plans is not directly within the power of the DTI, but I can confirm that we have certainly submitted our views to the

relevant authorities on this subject where the DTI work out with the authority the provision of acreage drawing the life of an area plan and they submit their comments.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the department's business plan makes it clear that the capital funding allocated to the department is principally allocated for work on the Ramsey Shipyard on the development of a new training centre and corporate headquarters. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I acknowledge the hon. member's reply on behalf of the department, but he makes reference to those people who require those industrial units to find their own unit first. That is an impossibility in the eastern sector of the Island. Can the hon. member pledge to this hon. House today that he will take back to his department the severe requirement for such units for tradesmen, in building and civil engineering and others plus for storage purposes and the like to be built and let by his department? Thank you, sir.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: Thank you, Mr Speaker. For anybody to apply for a grant they have to come within the grant system, and that is defined under the 1981 Industry Board Act, the interpretation of industrial undertakings. So it does not mean that anybody can just come for a grant; it means that the people who qualify can come for a grant.

I would like to bring to the hon. Court's attention the comments by the hon. minister last year during the time of the signing of the memorandum of understanding with Smiths, because in a press release Mr Downie said that, if the factory was going to be demolished and a new facility built for Smiths, the DTI could then be in the business of encouraging more manufacturing and industrial businesses in the area of Onchan. So that is certainly uppermost in the minds of the DTI. Negotiations are still ongoing, though, in relation to that particular issue but the hon. minister's comments remain valid but it would not be appropriate, I do not think, at this stage to add anything further. But a successful outcome to those talks may well lead to the availability of land for some small units in the eastern sector.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker. I acknowledge the hon. member's reply for Onchan, but does his department have any plans for anywhere else such as Braddan in the future of Braddan local plan

within the next five years in order to facilitate this vastly needed requirement? And, if he does not, can he take back to his department – I will be very grateful if he would – the proposal that his department put in its five-year capital programme provision to build and let?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: I will confirm to the hon. member that I will be happy to take that back for consideration by the department, but there are no plans, as I have said, within the capital programme to build in the eastern sector at this moment.

**Employment (Amendment) Act –
Rights of Representation –
Question by Mr Henderson**

Question 2. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the member for the Department of Trade and Industry:

- (1) *Will you include in the forthcoming Employment (Amendment) Act statutory rights of representation; and*
- (2) *if not, why not?*

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Ta mee shirrey kied yn eysht y chur ta fo m'ennym.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Trade and Industry, Mr Singer, member for Ramsey.

Mr Singer: Thank you, Mr Speaker - I do now know what that means! I understand, Mr Speaker, that the hon. member's question was, in fact, intended to refer to recognition of trade unions for collective bargaining or other purposes by an employer as opposed to representation at a disciplinary or grievance hearing by a trade union representative or fellow-worker, and by your leave, Mr Speaker, I will cover both in my reply.

In 2002 the department published a consultative document intended to precede a new Employment (Amendment) Bill and this included many proposals to reform the Island's employment laws. The document contains a proposal that workers should, for the first time, have a statutory right to be accompanied at a disciplinary or grievance hearing by a trade union representative or fellow-worker and, whilst this would be a significant extension of existing rights, it would not go as far as introducing a right of representation to

assist at such hearings. The proposal to introduce the statutory right to be accompanied is intended to achieve a fair balance between the interests of workers and employers. On the one hand the companion would be permitted to address any hearing, confer with the worker and advise and support him or her. On the other hand they would not be entitled to answer questions on behalf of the worker or intervene between the worker and the employer. In this way the risk of unwarranted interference from outside individuals in an employer's business would be reduced. Now this, Mr Speaker, is a similar process to the measures introduced by the last Labour government in 1999 in the United Kingdom.

Turning to the question of statutory recognition of trade unions, the department did consult separately on this issue in 2000, and a consultative document was published at that time which set out three different options. These included retaining the status quo where employers were not obliged to recognise trade unions for collective bargaining, issuing a code of practice to provide guidance on and when and how trade unions should be recognised, and introducing a right to statutory trade union recognition under certain circumstances. Responses from consultees might be expected to reveal the clear lack of consensus on the issue and, following the consultation period, the department recommended publication of a code of practice specifying the circumstances where it was considered appropriate that employers should reasonably recognise a trade union.

The department's proposals were endorsed by the Council of Ministers and a draft code, which was the subject of a separate round of consultation in itself, was published in 2001. A final code was approved by Tynwald in October 2001, when it was pointed out quite clearly that the government retained the option to introduce statutory recognition should evidence be presented to show that the code was being ignored.

Mr Speaker, since the code was published, the department is unaware of any recognition disputes and in these circumstances would not consider that any case for a change of existing public policy, including the introduction of lengthy and complex legislation, has been made. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Will the hon. member acknowledge that whilst his new amendment Bill will give somebody the right to representation, the right not to ask questions will effectively neutralise that right to representation where it is a representative's main purpose to present the case of the person they are representing? And, further to that, will he acknowledge that there is a crisis within the private sector employers at the minute with regard to union recognition whereby certain employers and including private care areas do not and

will not recognise any form of trade union recognition whatsoever? And would he be prepared to take that back to his department and reconsider their position for the forthcoming amendment Act?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: Mr Speaker, the department believes that the code that I mentioned that was approved by Tynwald, whilst it shadows United Kingdom statutory law, is in fact more flexible, whilst it is not statutory and, as I say, we have not received any clear evidence that the code is not working.

Now, I would like to confirm to the hon. member that the department's views are open: if evidence is given to the department that the code is not working, then the department will look at introducing a statutory legislation. But, in doing so, it would need an extra round of consultation because within the United Kingdom Act, which is schedule 1 of their Act, it actually consists of 172 paragraphs. So, in fact, it is a separate item in itself and, as I say, would need separate consultation, but if evidence came to the department that what the hon. member said was happening, there was a gap and that the code was not being followed, then the department would certainly look at introducing statutory legislation.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Would the hon. member agree with me that this situation does need revising? Certainly I am grateful for his positive answer in respect of the issues I am raising this morning, but is he aware that there is evidence already in the files at his department which indicate most definitely that there are statutory recognition rights - representational rights - being refused? The evidence is there. Would he agree to review that and in doing so would he also agree that, even if a new Act had to be brought in with 170 paragraphs, that in itself is not an onerous task if we are going to get the antiquated and outdated employment legislation of this Island up to date?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: I thank the hon. member for his question. Certainly I am not aware of this evidence within the DTI and I will certainly find out; I will speak to the department to find that out. But I think it might be worthwhile pointing out to hon. members that when I said originally that our code was more flexible than the UK legislation, can I give perhaps three examples? The UK code is black and white. Our code is flexible; for example, whereas in the UK at least 10 per cent of the members of a bargaining unit seeking

recognition must be members of the union as a precondition of a ballot taking place. The Isle of Man code suggests that an applicant union be able to demonstrate that it has at least 10 per cent of the employers in the proposed bargaining unit in membership or who would be willing to take up membership were recognition to be granted.

Now, this is an easier and inherently more fair test and does not put the union in a Catch 22 situation in that some employers will only be prepared to join a union when it can deliver the benefits of recognition, yet without a sufficient number of members joining prior to the union being recognised the opportunity to hold a ballot is denied. In the UK any application by a union for recognition is automatically disqualified if a single member of the bargaining unit for which recognition is sought is already a member of a union recognised by the employer. This dogmatic approach is not incorporated in the Isle of Man code, and whereas employers with fewer than 21 workers in the UK are exempt from having to comply with the provisions in respect of recognition the Isle of Man code recommends no such exemptions.

So I really think that it is in the interest of the management and the workers to comply with our code but, as I say, if they are not complying with the code, then I say to the hon. member that we will look at it and I will certainly ask the department to look at that information that he has given to me this morning.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. I thank the hon. member for his positive answers there, but will he agree with me that what is required here is not only evidence from myself but will he give an undertaking that his department will consult with the Isle of Man Trades Union Council on this matter for the information he seeks? And would he agree that, although the code is a step in the right direction, that really needs to be in statutory law to have the bite that is required and to give the employees of this Island a fair chance? Would he also agree that currently the industrial tribunal situation is such a shambles that employers and staff do not have this chance?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer, to reply.

Mr Singer: Mr Speaker, I note what the members says. I will take it back to the department for further discussion.

**Health Services –
Recruitment of Staff from Agencies –
Question by Mr Henderson**

Question 3. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the member for the Department of Health and Social Security:

- (1) *Has your department's current procedure to recruit health service staff through a private sector recruitment agency proved effective; and*
- (2) *will these and other agencies continue to be used?*

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Ta mee shirrey kied yn eysht y chur ta fo m'ennym.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for the Department of Health and Social Security, the hon. member for Glenfaba, Mr Anderson.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The engagement of an employment agency to assist in the recruitment of additional staff required for the new hospital has, in the department's view, proved very successful. The agency received in excess of 800 requests for information packs. The department – indeed, the clinical teams – are pleased with this response and I can inform hon. members that at least 60 per cent of the new posts required will have been filled by the end of next month. The engagement of the agency was specifically for the recruitment drive associated with the new hospital. Once this is complete, then the contractual agreement with the agency will cease and the function will revert to the department's own personnel unit. The department has no plans at this time to continue the use of an employment agency.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. I thank the hon. member for his answer on this particular issue, but could he advise if he thinks his department has had actual value for money for this, and in the meantime what is his own department's personnel section been up to while these private consultants have been out canvassing for new staff for the Isle of Man?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Glenfaba, Mr Anderson.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. There is quite a concerted effort being made not just by the agency but also by the department to fill other posts. Not all of the posts have gone out to the agency to be filled. It is particularly to the hard-to-fill posts that they have been allocated, their significant additional workload over a relatively short time and the reports of engaging the assistance and professional expertise in attracting specialist healthcare in a very competitive market. The agency is essential in being utilised to fill, as I say, hard-to-fill posts. Other posts – for example, porters and that sort of post – have continued to be filled by the normal process, and I am pleased to be able to say that of that 60 per cent that have been recruited, nearly 60 per cent of those actually have Manx connections.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Would the hon. member for the department agree with me that these recruitment costs by a private company are somewhere in the region of between £1,800 and £2,500 per head recruited, and again, does he consider that value for money when the department's own personnel section was doing the same job to a reasonably effective standard?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Glenfaba.

Mr Anderson: Yes, Mr Speaker, I do consider it good value for money when you look at the cost of actually advertising in some of these specialised off-Island health journals and the likes of that. Some of those adverts actually cost over £3,000 each, and there was no way that our personnel unit could handle the volume of people to be recruited in the short time necessary, and especially, as I emphasised in my earlier answer, that they are extremely hard-to-fill areas that they have been targeted to cover.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Karran.

Mr Karran: Vainstyr Loayreyder, could the member inform this hon. House what sort of costs are involved over the last year? Could he also inform this hon. House whether this has not detracted from the commitment that we have had in the past to try and maximise training for improvement of facilities on the Island for getting staff trained up to try and fill some more of these posts?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Glenfaba, Mr Anderson, to reply.

Mr Anderson: I can confirm that it has not detracted the department from continuing its staff training. In relation to the question about the costs over

the past year, I can inform hon. members the budget for the extra 130 staff - and this is over a 12 to 15 month period - was estimated at £418,000, which included £168,000 for advertising, but I will reiterate what I said: that this has in no way impinged on us training our existing staff and making sure that they have the appropriate skills when moving into the new hospital.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Rushen, Mr Gill.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the comments from the member for health in relation to the specialist posts that he has described the agency as recruiting. Could he give us some assurance about the evident gap at the bottom end of the employment market and the unqualified jobs which are equally valuable in cleaning and the other ancillary posts which are causing great concern throughout the health service?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Glenfaba to reply.

Mr Anderson: Yes, I thank the hon. member for that question. I am pleased to be able to tell hon. members that we have been successful in filling those posts locally and, surprisingly enough, they do not seem to have been that difficult to fill. That area is not causing us a problem at the moment.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. Would the hon. member admit that the process the private recruitment agency carries out is fairly similar to what his own personnel section would be carrying out? And would he further admit that a private recruitment group would have to place adverts within Nursing Times journal and, indeed, the prices of up to £2,500 per head for recruited nurses to this Island charged by this organisation include advertising, so could he answer what is the difference and why can his own staff not do it?

The Speaker: Hon. member for Glenfaba.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. No, I would not agree with the hon. member. I think it is value for money. It has proved to be successful. If we were going to put this additional pressure on our existing staff we would not be able to fill it in the timescale that we were given, and I think it is also fair to comment that the costs, although they might seem unreasonable to the hon. member, are quite realistic in the competitive market which we are in at the moment, and in the areas in which they have contacts, obviously as a professional organisation as they are, we do not have those same sort of contacts and therefore we

would have to advertise more extensively than we do ordinarily. Therefore I think it has been a very prudent move to engage this employment agency and, as you can see from the figures, it has been successful.

**Planning – Technical Applications –
Funding for Experts –
Question by Mr Anderson**

Question 4. The hon. member for Glenfaba (Mr Anderson) to ask the Minister for Local Government and the Environment:

- (1) *Can you state the criteria adopted by your department when allowing funding to be provided to a local authority so that expert guidance can be given when assessing a highly technical planning application; and*
- (2) *how many times has this been granted in the last 10 years?*

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Glenfaba.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to ask the question standing in my name.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Rushen, Mrs Crowe, Minister for Local Government and the Environment.

Mrs Crowe: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The department does not have a criterion for allowing funding to be provided to a local authority so that expert guidance can be given when assessing a planning application. All local authorities are separate legal entities and it is one of their functions to represent the interests of their ratepayers. If an authority believes it needs to engage professional assistance in order to formulate a view and participate in the planning process it is at liberty to do so. In such circumstances it would be perfectly proper for the authority to pass on the costs of doing so to its ratepayers through the domestic rating system. Local authorities are answerable to their ratepayers for any such actions that they decide to take. However, local authorities are statutory consultees under the planning process and have the opportunity of making representations to the planning authority. A local authority is able to participate fully in the planning process and can seek a review of any initial decision and even lodge an appeal against the decision if aggrieved.

In answer to the second part of the hon. member's question, I am not aware of any occasion in the last 10 years when assistance has been given to a local authority in such circumstances. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Glenfaba.

Mr Anderson: I thank the hon. minister for her reply, but it was my understanding that the Braddan commissioners have had this facility afforded to them in recent times over complicated planning applications. What the hon. minister is saying to me in her reply is this is not the case. I am well aware that local authorities have the ability to borrow from her department, but I would seek confirmation from her about what she is saying, that local authorities in the past 10 years have not on any occasion received moneys to examine a complicated planning application.

The Speaker: Minister for Local Government and the Environment to reply.

Mrs Crowe: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yes, that is my understanding. However, as you mentioned a local authority that did contest a planning application - that was for the energy-from-waste facility at the special inquiry in 1998 - Braddan Parish Commissioners did, indeed, employ legal counsel including a QC to lead on their opposition. This involved a very considerable amount of money in professional fees, but the commissioners received no assistance from the department and raised the income through their rating system, and I seem to recall that the commissioners on that occasion explained to the ratepayers what they were doing and why they were doing it, and of course this is the proper way to raise this kind of funding.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Karran.

Mr Karran: Vainstyr Loayreyder, would the shirveishagh not agree, with the commitment to open government . . . will her department review this policy, allowing for the fact that you have got some local authorities that have 300 parishioners who have not got the financial means to be able to do their active rôle realistically when the government has the open pot of taxpayers' money to be able to throw at a problem?

The Speaker: Minister for Local Government and the Environment to reply.

Mrs Crowe: Yes, indeed, I have no problem at all in reviewing all these instances in the department, but again I think the hon. member for Onchan makes the case, as he did in another place, that may be joining authorities together would give them more power in this process.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Ayre, Mr Quine.

Mr Quine: When the minister refers to the instance of Braddan commissioners and states that they did not receive any financial assistance with the

planning inquiry, does that extend to assistance that may have been given to them in relation to an evaluation of environmental issues preparatory to the planning inquiry?

The Speaker: Minister for Local Government and the Environment to reply.

Mrs Crowe: Well, I was not in the department, as you know, at that time, but if what the hon. member is suggesting is that people have had access to the environmental studies for the energy-from-waste plant, indeed that may well have been the case because that is the case at the present time with the planning application that is in the department that is involving the Patrick commissioners.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Karran.

Mr Karran: Vainstyr Loayreyder, would the shirveishagh not agree that it would be too simplistic just to say about the issue of local authorities joining together? Would she not agree that basically small local authorities are unable to be able to take on the might and the wealth of government in order to do their statutory obligations? Would the shirveishagh not agree and inform this hon. House where there would be a suitable piece of legislation coming in front of this House so the law can be amended so that we have a balance whereby not just government is having its say but also local government, which is there to protect their local community, can have a fair input as far as the money that the taxpayer gives to us in the first place?

The Speaker: Minister for Local Government and the Environment to reply.

Mrs Crowe: Well, in answer to the first part of that question, I would agree that it is very difficult for some of the smaller authorities to complete their statutory function of opposing these planning applications if they are in their area; and no, I do not know if there is any legislation that could be amended or altered coming before the House in the short interval that may be a suitable vehicle, but I will look at that.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Middle, Mr Quayle.

Mr Quayle: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As it is my understanding that Braddan Parish Commissioners did receive assistance in special circumstances in relation to a major government scheme, could I ask if the minister would agree to clarify this situation as she has accepted that she was not in the department at that time and, in relation to a major proposal envisaged such as the facility proposed for Archallagan plantation, would

she not agree that not all experts are correct when they come to any conclusion and that it would be in the public interest to enable and allow local authorities to effectively check and provide a balance to what is proposed by the government?

The Speaker: Minister for Local Government and the Environment to reply.

Mrs Crowe: Yes, I was not in the department at the time of the Braddan special inquiry but there are officers there that were, and the information that I have been given, I feel, is correct: that the money raised by Braddan Parish Commissioners was a rate-borne expense, and I daresay that the parishioners of Braddan are still paying in their rate system for the employment of legal counsel, including a QC, to lead their opposition to the energy-from-waste facility.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Glenfaba, Mr Anderson.

Mr Anderson: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Would the hon. minister agree with me that it is unreasonable for a small local authority to be seen to be raising all the money to challenge the might of government for a significant planning application that DoLGE has already spent over half a million pounds in bringing forward? And does she not think that there should be some means where the local authority can have some assistance outside the rate system for helping in putting a case for their ratepayers?

The Speaker: Minister for Local Government and the Environment, Mrs Crowe.

Mrs Crowe: Yes, as I have stated before, it is very difficult for the small authorities to perform their statutory function in protecting their ratepayers in circumstances such as these, and I would be quite willing to look within the department to see if there could be some measure introduced that may well help (*Interjections*) but, of course, we hear the 'Time for Change' being reiterated once again and it does point out that smaller authorities do face great difficulties in these circumstances.

**TT Period – Arrangements for Events –
Toilet Facilities –
Question by Mr Earnshaw**

Question 5. The hon. member for Onchan (Mr Earnshaw) to ask the Minister for Tourism and Leisure:

With less than 12 weeks to the commencement of TT practising, will you indicate what arrangements your department has made for –

(1) activities and events on Loch Promenade during the TT period; and

(2) toilet facilities to cater for spectators at those activities and events?

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Onchan, Mr Earnshaw.

Mr Earnshaw: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

The Speaker: I call on the hon. member for Douglas South, Mr Cretney, Minister for Tourism and Leisure.

Mr Cretney: Gura mie eu, Vainstyr Loayreyder. It is, as the hon. member has indicated, less than 12 weeks before practising begins at the greatest road races in the world. However, my department begins making arrangements for events and activities which take place during the TT period in the summer of the preceding year, in fact almost as soon as the previous event has come to a close. Indeed, following TT 2002 the first debriefing session with our external partners, following a number of internal departmental sessions, took place on 16th July, when my department reviewed with our partners what had gone well and what areas needed improvement for the following year.

I can confirm that the first item on the agenda for that meeting was the provision of toilets for the event, which I will come to shortly, and at my instigation officer level meetings with Douglas Corporation have taken place throughout the year to avoid any of the problems identified last year in relation to toilet provision and litter.

Regarding the first question, I can advise hon. members that the entertainment and activities planned for Loch Promenade and the southern end of Harris Promenade for TT 2003 will follow a similar pattern to those that have occurred in recent years. This entertainment and activity will centre upon the area adjacent to the Jubilee Clock and the area in the vicinity of the War Memorial. Once again we plan to have a big TV screen situated alongside the Jubilee Clock opposite Bushy's beer tent. There will also be a variety of motorsport-related entertainment on a nightly basis from the Thursday evening prior to the first race extending until the following Thursday to be staged in this area. This is to include stunt shows, trail riding displays, mini-motos and similar activities designed to appeal to the audience that are attracted to the promenade during the TT period. It is also intended to feature the TT tramcar event in addition to a special event staged by the British Arm-Wrestling Federation to add additional interest in the area. Bushy's will, of course, be offering live entertainment, as will a number of other businesses, to add to the atmosphere. The promenade walkway is also to feature various attractions, including bungees and simulators but, as is

usual, there will be an area set aside surrounding the War Memorial which will not be utilised as a mark of respect to that monument and what it represents. Furthermore, during the TT period provision will also be made for outdoor catering to be provided by local caterers who have recently shown an interest in doing so as a result of my department's advertising.

In answer to the second question, there are a number of toilet facilities provided at various sites to cater for the needs of people attending the activities and events on the promenade, and these are as follows: a permanent public toilet block on the promenade opposite the Jubilee Clock, a permanent public toilet block on the promenade located towards the War Memorial, male and female mobile toilet units located adjacent to the Bushy's tent, and toilet facilities, including provision for people with disabilities, within the Sea Terminal building, although I must add that these are provided first and foremost for the use of the travelling public.

In response to the needs identified following last year's TT the following toilet facilities will also be made available in addition to those used for TT 2002: a new mobile toilet unit purchased by my department and a new mobile toilet unit purchased by the Department of Transport and, in recognition of the demand for additional facilities, my department have made improved arrangements regarding the provision of toilets for TT marshals sited around the course where we are providing 22 Portaloos around the course, which is almost double the usual provision, and also for events to be staged in the Villa Marina Gardens.

The effect of these changes means that this year the Villa Marina Arcade toilets will also be opened to the general public as well as being able to redeploy two further mobile toilet units and 12 single Portaloos owned and operated by the Department of Transport to the promenade. We are also able to deploy two single units for people with disabilities. Can I say that my department is very grateful to the Department of Transport for their assistance and co-operation in this matter. In addition to our proposals and permanent public conveniences toilets do, of course, exist within the hotels to guests and in the public houses that are sited on the promenade for their customers' use.

In summary, Mr Speaker, I can confirm the toilet provision on the promenade will more than double this year in order to cope with the demand and there will be an increase in what we might term 'toilet spaces', by which I mean ladies' and gents' facilities from 59 to 134, an increase of 127 per cent. I stated, Mr Speaker, we would substantially improve the situation, and I trust this demonstrates my department's commitment together with the practical efforts of various other departments and authorities to deliver such improvement.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Earnshaw.

Mr Earnshaw: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know the minister, like me, is a 100 per cent TT supporter and cares about the event's image and reputation, and I thank him for his reply. It should be clear that the thrust of my question relates to the inadequacy of the temporary toilet facilities at last year's events, (**Mr Houghton:** Hear, hear.) and the question has not been asked to cause mischief or rake over the problems of 2002.

The Speaker: Hon. member, can I remind you you are asking a question, not making a statement.

Mr Earnshaw: My supplementary in the circumstances, Mr Speaker, is simply to ask for the minister's undertaking to ensure that all that is needed to be done to overcome last year's appalling shortcomings in this respect will be done.

The Speaker: Minister for Tourism and Leisure to reply.

Mr Cretney: I am not convinced, Mr Speaker, that I need to answer that; I already have.

The Speaker: Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

Mr Houghton: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Can the hon. minister tell this hon. House how many toilets were provided by his department from the Jubilee Clock to the War Memorial on the sea side last year? This is not including those provided by Bushy's. How many were provided and, in receiving his welcome news this morning of the additional provision, which is sorely needed, can he also advise this hon. House whether this fits in with the environmental health standards for provision under their criteria that have been advised to his department?

The Speaker: Minister for Tourism and Leisure to reply.

Mr Cretney: I think the easiest thing I could do, Mr Speaker, would be to circulate to hon. members a full graph of what the provision was last year (*Laughter*) and what the provision is this year. To go into the detail required by the hon. member in a verbal response I do not believe would be helpful, but I am more than happy to circulate that to hon. members.

The Speaker: Hon. members, that concludes questions for oral answer. We now have a question for written answer and that question has been circulated in compliance with our standing orders.

**Health Services – Recruitment of Staff
from Agencies – Cost –
Question by Mr Henderson
for Written Answer**

Question 1. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the member for the Department of Health and Social Security:

- (1) *What is the average cost for health care worker recruitment through a private recruitment agency such as currently contracted by the health service; and*
- (2) *what is the comparative cost with in-house recruitment using our own personnel staff?*

Answer:

- (1) The average cost for the recruitment of a health care worker, through the employment agency contract, is between £1,800 and £2,500 depending on the type of post being appointed, these costs being payable when an appointment is made and the successful candidate has commenced employment. If the

agency is unsuccessful in recruiting to a post, then no payment is made for costs incurred.

- (2) Unfortunately, it is at this time, impossible to detail the comparative costs of using the in-house recruitment function. However, the department believes that the overall costs would be comparable when taking into account the processing and advertising of posts. An advert in a Health Care Journal, for example, can cost in excess of £3,000.

It should be remembered that a strict cost comparison is not indicative. The in-house recruitment could not have successfully dealt with this recruitment drive without the provision of additional resources and staff. It was also recognised that to successfully fill the posts required prior to the opening of the new hospital, in a highly competitive employment market, we needed the input of an employment agency who could offer a first-class integrated professional advertising and recruitment service.
