

VERBATIM REPORT

Committee: Finance and Public Accounts Committee
Meeting: Meeting with the **Immigration Division** to discuss the Auditor General's Report of 2009 and 2010
Room: Committee Room 2
Date/Time: Wednesday 22nd August, 2012 at 1045 hours

Present:Committee

Hon. David Pierre - *Chairperson*

Hon. Charles De Commarmond – *Vice-Chairperson*

Hon. Lenny Lebon

Hon. Marc Volcere

Hon. Bernard Arnephy

Hon. Sebastien Pillay

Hon. Nichole Barbe

Immigration Division

Mr. Charles Bastienne – *Principal Secretary for Immigration and Civil Status*

Mrs. Florianne Vidot – *Director of Administration and Finance*

In Attendance:Office of the Auditor General

Mr. Marc Benstrong - *Auditor General*

The Secretariat

Ms. Sandra Hall - *Secretary to the Committee*

Ms. Angelic Appoo – *Committee Advisor*

Ms. Saviona Isaac - *Secretary Assistant*

HON DAVID PIERRE

A very good morning to you and Madam Vidot. We are the Public Accounts Committee and you are here to assist us with some clarifications with respect to reports of the Auditor General for 2009 and 2010. First, let me just tell you that Article 104 of our Constitution gives the Assembly the power to form Standing Committees of which PFAC is one and 104 (3) states clearly and I quote: "For purposes of effectively performing its functions, a standing or other Committee may summon any person that the Committee believes may assist the Committee in the performance of its functions, and the Committee shall have the powers, rights and privileges of the Supreme Court for:-

- (a) enforcing the attendance of witnesses and examining them on oath, affirmation or otherwise;
- (b) compelling the production of documents; and
- (c) issuing a commission or request to examine a witness abroad."

So, basically this is where we get our powers from and before I go further let me introduce the Committee and then you will have the opportunity to introduce formally your delegate. I myself Honorable Pierre, am the Chairperson of the Committee, and then we have Honorable De Commarmond who is the Vice Chairperson of the Committee. Other Members are Honorable Volcere, Honorable Barbe, Honorable Arnephy, Honorable Lebon and Honorable Pillay, and getting assistance from, Sandra can you kindly please introduce the Secretaries.

MS SANDRA HALL

Good morning. My name is Ms Sandra Hall, I am the Committee Secretary, on my left is Mr. Marc Benstrong the Auditor General and on my right I have

Ms. Angelic Appoo, she is the Committee advisor and Ms. Saviona Isaac, the Secretary Assistant to the Committee.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

If I may, Charles Bastienne, Principal Secretary for Immigration and Civil Status, and with me today I have Mrs. Florianne Vidot who is the Director of Administration and Finance with the same department.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Ok, thank you very much. Before we start I want you to know very well that we are here today to ask you questions so as to clarify issues with respect to 2 reports 2009 and 2010. We may refer you to one report only and the Committee expects any witness to speak the truth and nothing but the truth and everything that is said here remains for the consumption of the FPAC. So, having said that, let me begin and I will be the first person to ask you questions. And let me refer you to page 70, do you have copy of the reports with you, 2010 and 2009? If you don't have a copy of the report we can make one. Page 70 of the 2009 report, this one is 2009 is it or 2010? Yes, that's it page 70 please. Do you have a copy of the report?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Mrs. Vidot you have the extract that you showed me this morning.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Ok, I am referring to 2.1 and 2.2 page 70, 2009, personal emoluments overtime payment from payroll records examined by audit, a total of R28,000

was noted paid as overtime to three drivers from the Division personal emolument budget for duties undertaken for the Prisons Division, ok. So, basically this is where the problem is and in response the management agreed to invoice the Prisons Division, you were not supposed to pay on behalf of the Prisons Division. So, the question to you would be; why was this payment made on behalf of the Department of Prisons and has this amount been recovered from the Department of Prisons?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

I can inform the Committee that this amount has already been recovered from the Department of Prisons. More or less at the time the payment was made by the Immigration Department for the duties undertaken for the prisons, and yes the payment has been refunded by the Prisons Department to the Department of Immigration.

HON DAVID PIERRE

And some clarification as to why this was it made on behalf of the Prisons Department?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Mrs. Vidot?

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Yes, it happened because at that time the Prisons Division and the Immigration Division were under the same Ministry. So, as and when the prisons were badly in need of drivers, so our drivers that means, the Immigration drivers were asked to

perform duties to help out the Prisons when they were in need.

HON DAVID PIERRE

So, basically they were drivers from the Immigration who were helping out the Prisons?

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Helping out the Prisons Division.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Within the same Ministry.

MR MARC BENSTRONG

Initially that payment should have been charged to the Prisons Division, OR otherwise within the same ...

HON DAVID PIERRE

So, even if they were helping, in fact, because they were helping the Prisons then ...

MR MARC BENSTRONG

It is a cost to the Prisons Division.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

But since they were employees of the Department of Immigration, so, this is where the ambiguity arose I suppose.

HON CHARLES DE COMMARMOND

Mr. Chair, yesterday when Mr. Tirant was there, I think he said that, he said that they do not have any Financial Controller or Accountant and so on and it is the same Accountant Mrs. Vidot from the Immigration who deals with the accounts of the Prisons as well. I think it is a bit ambiguous yes but that is the way it is done, I don't know the way forward, maybe Immigration can

explain to our Committee the way forward if there is anything they are doing to separate those two accounts management because the Prisons yesterday they stressed that they have got a lot of problems where they do not have any Procurement Officer, they do not have any Financial Controller, no proper Accountant and so on for the Prison itself, I don't know, maybe that can be explained during our meeting.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

What I can tell the Committee is that I was recently in a meeting where the prison Superintendent Mr. Tirant was there and it was the Minister responsible for Internal Affairs who directed him that he should recruit his own staff asap. So, he is supposed to be in the process of recruiting his own Financial Controller, Procurement Officer and everybody else that he will need on board to carry out those functions. So, it has been over a month now since he was directed to do so.

HON DAVID PIERRE

So, basically this problem is

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

It should not continue, it should not, it should go away once he has recruited all his personnel.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Thank you very much. If you go to page 70, 3.1, if I may refer you to this, can I ask you; why was this 30 day credit facility not being respected in this case?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

I suppose the system that the Immigration had in place before if I may say, control was not necessarily in place at the time with regards to collection of fees regarding fast track services. Beneficiaries of such services were allowed to take their own time to effect payment. But what I can reassure this Committee is that we now have a system in place whereby a maximum of 30 days credit is given to those DMCs and other agencies in order to effect payment to the Immigration Department. The process is such that whenever they require such services, they send a letter in advance to us, to Department of Immigration and a copy is sent to the airport so that those clients requiring fast track services are cleared through the fast track lane and subsequent to that, immediately upon receiving the letter, Immigration sends the document to the Accounts Department who in turn raises the invoice and the invoice is immediately sent to the DMC. And in most cases, payments are made within 1 week, but in 1 or 2 odd cases they do pay within 30 days. So, this is the time limit that we have. And in addition, we have statements that can be generated on a regular basis to monitor payments that are being made by those DMCs to prevent such occurrences.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Very good.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

The question is in line with this if I may, so according to space 71 which you elaborated on, there is this fast track system facility but there is

also the Gainful Occupation Permit Debtors, you have outstanding debtors

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Yes, we were talking about fast track services, GOP I suppose if you want to take GOP together with that I can clarify for the GOP, for the Gainful Occupational Permit. No companies are given credits for GOPs, you pay upfront, if you do not pay upfront you are not given any GOP certificate. However, we do have companies that do pay us by cheques. There are instances where the cheques bounce ok. In such case, if the cheque do bounce, we give them 7 days to effect payment if the certificate has already been issued, if they do not make the necessary payments within 7 days then we move to revoke the GOP and they have to return the expatriate. So, this is what we have been doing for the last 2 months, the system that we have put in place to prevent us from falling into the same situation that we had before. So, no GOPs are issued on credit compared to fast track services, it is two different things and GOP we process it, it cannot be processed, no GOP can be processed without first Accounts Department activating the payment in the system.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

I have a follow up question, if I may. So, you have recently put the system in place to ensure the prompt collection of debts, this is in relation to Gainful Operation Permits.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Yes.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

With your permission and your permission Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct the question to Mrs. Vidot given that you were there you would have knowledge of the situation. There is an outstanding amount in relation to amounts owed for Gainful Occupational Permits. Now, what is your Department's stance on that and what are you going to do about the outstanding amounts that are there now; have they been recovered or is there a move to recover them and can you just tell us a little bit about that situation?

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Well some attempts are being made to recover the outstanding debts but as it is all these are backdated from 2002 and it is not easy to trace the source documents.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

Ok, so you don't have the source documents.

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Not all, in some instances.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

What I can tell you is that I have also looked at that list last week and on the list we have a lot of companies who are no longer in existence. However, there are some companies who are still around, and we are going to make one last attempt to recover whatever is due to the Government from those active companies. I know those debts are from 10 years old now, I don't know what the law says with regards to write off, after

how many years does it take for a debt to no longer be a debt but I know a debt is always a debt as long as the possibility of recovery is there. So, we have identified a list of businesses which are still in operation from which we can try to recover. However, the downside of that is that as Mrs. Vidot stated is the availability of source documents which are 10 years old. For those where we are able to identify the source document, no problem but for those cases where the source documents are not there then we will have to see how we go about it because evidently the clients or the respective businesses will ask you for proof with regards to the services that were rendered to them 10, 9 years ago.

HON DAVID PIERRE

TWO things before I allow further questions. One thing, you clarify to me and tell me and tell the Committee whether you still accept cheques, you do?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

We do accept cheques like I have mentioned earlier, we accept cheques because sometimes certain companies do come to pay in huge amounts, so it's better, so they pay by cheques. Like I have mentioned should the cheque be dishonoured for whatever reason then we give them 7 days to effect payment. We have written already to 3 or 4 clients where their cheques have been dishonoured, if they fail to repay within 7 days then we will revoke the GOP.

HON DAVID PIERRE

But if they come back and pay you with another cheque.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Second time is cash, no cheques. That is the internal rule that we have put in place.

HON DAVID PIERRE

And then secondly, can you, within a week please send us a list of the debtors.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

New debtors or these old debtors?

HON DAVID PIERRE

All the debtors, the whole list.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

But the only debtors we will have Mr. Chair is this list that was published by the Auditor General because right now we should not have any debtors with regards to GOP, fast track we will have new debtors because like I have said there is this one month facility but for GOP there should not be any debtors, no debtors at all.

HON DAVID PIERRE

But send us a list.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

We will send you the list, no problem.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Thank you very much. Honorable Barbe.

HON NICOLE BARBE

My question is, how much of these debts that have been written off with

regards to businesses that have ceased operation that you have mentioned earlier?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

From my knowledge no debts have been written off as of yet, so this is why we said that for those companies that are in existence, still operational we will attempt based on availability of source documents to recover those debts and if we are not able to recover then the case I suppose would be discussed further with the Auditor General with regards to the fate of those debts.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Honorable Arnephy.

HON BERNARD ARNEPHY

Thank you Mr. Chair. Now, is your Division satisfied that all foreigners working here they have the legal permit to operate here, and if yes can you tell us how many people are holding GOPs and they are working here in Seychelles?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

That is a good question, the first part of the question, as of 4 weeks ago there were a number of companies who had employees and those employees had overstayed or had GOPs which had already expired. I am talking about a month ago, 3 to 4 weeks ago. We did a complete exercise and in order to allow that we had to put our system in order, whereby we were able to link the GOP together with the arrival and departure and link those 2 and obtain, generate a report with regards to those people who are still in the country and their GOPs

have expired. From that list, as of the end of July there were around 500 cases where those GOPs have expired and immediately we have already taken steps and we have written to all those companies with whom those workers are employed to settle their bill, I am happy to say we have cleared all of that. So, we contacted all those companies and as we speak now we are not supposed to have anybody who does not have a valid GOP but in the country at the same time. And we want to, once we move the amendments to our Immigration Decree, we want to put in there different penalties, fines for those companies who are not respecting. We want it to be self-policing instead of us going after them, so I can confirm that right now as we speak, we are not supposed to have anyone who is the country without a valid GOP. We have a system in place whereby initially now every week a report is generated where the same report that was generated 3, 4 weeks ago where we are able to establish anyone who is in the country illegally. If I may say, the practice of the past was that this information was not available, so we were not able to check, and when a foreigner leaves the country and we find in the system that the individual has overstayed immediately whoever it is they get a P.I status but it was not his or her fault, it was the fault of the employer. So, this is what we have done now to put a proper system in place to prevent such things from happening again. So, with regards to the second part of your question, right now we have around 14,000 GOP holders in the country.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Honorable De Commarmond.

HON CHARLES DE COMMARMOND

Mr. Chair, on this issue of GOP, people working in the country without GOP, there are people on visit, visitors and people married to Seychellois. They are also in employment without GOP, how do you control this, or do you notice that issue?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

The only way to find out is to through reports that are made to our department but what I can tell you is that a visitor, has got a visitor's status, he is not supposed to be gainfully employed. He or she is doing it illegally and this we get calls every day with regards to such cases and we deploy our staff to go and verify on site and for us to establish the nature. And with regards to foreigners married to Seychellois I don't think there is the need for them to just engage in employment. With regards to foreigners married to Seychellois they have a dependant permit and they can obtain a GOP where they are given 50% discount on the GOP fee. So, it is an incentive for them to be gainfully employed, to come to us to regularize their employment. So, as a way of encouraging those dependant on Seychellois, that is, married to Seychellois not yet obtained citizenship, they should obtain a GOP from our Department. So, if there are any cases like I have said, the only way of us knowing is through reports that are made to our offices.

HON DAVID PIERRE

But if you go on site and you verify, what do you do? You see that some people are in employment without a GOP what do you do in that case?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Immediately they would be asked to leave the country.

HON BERNARD ARNEPHY

Thank you Mr. Chair, Mr. Bastienne what sort of mechanisms do you have in place to network with the Employment Department because for instance we see a lot of companies especially the Indians, merchants ok, they advertise for several posts in the shop business whatever, and where we do have Seychellois qualified who can be employed but what happens is come 2 months, 3 months you see their Indian relatives coming in to fulfill those posts, so what sort of mechanisms do you have in place in partnership with the Employment Department to ensure that those things do not happen? Because it is on the rise actually right now.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

No, it is the to the contrary. Since 3, 4 months ago it has reduced drastically I can tell you. I see all requests for GOPs and for such instances like Indian shops, shop managers etc, it has reduced drastically ok. You see advertisement in the paper, it doesn't mean that they are granted, a lot of cases we are turning down nowadays and we are asking them to do proper advertisement. Example, I had a case last week, a gentleman came to my

office and he wanted to bring in a Whole-Sale Manager and he had advertise for a Masters in Commerce and he was going to give a Seychellois R2,500. After questioning and I ask him about the total costs with regards to the expatriate he told me over R10,000. I said, you go and place an advert with regards to the same job for R10,000 with the proper qualifications and he has done so, I have seen it in the paper. So, the problem that arise Mr. Chair is with regards to, not necessary with the employment but it is with regards to whether indeed they got that qualified individual but still they are not taking that person. I think some work needs to be done there because we won't know, it all depends on what they disclose to us or unless somebody comes to us and says, I have been for such and such interview and that person decided not to recruit me anyway. With regards to the first part of your question, the Department of Immigration under the Act can assess a job with regards to whether there are merits to employ a Seychellois or not. But we have a lot of discussions with the Employment Department concerning specific fields like construction, there is no need to us to discuss we know we have a shortage of masons, carpenters, construction workers in general, same thing with tourism. But when it comes to certain areas which we feel is sensitive, I give an example, we are now receiving lots of applications for security guards for non-hotels. We have not entertained any single one, we referred all those cases to employment and we are seeking their advice, it has been over a month and we are waiting for their

advice with regards to such services. Whether indeed we are going to allow or not, so this is how we go about it but for general cases, construction workers, hotels etc, shop managers, I can tell you we are being very strict on that now. We are simply entertaining more with the renewal but at the same time we are scrutinizing their applications where they said it is going to be for one year or 2 years and they are going to find a Seychellois for replacement and it is already 5, 6 years and they have not done so. So, we are putting them to task now ok. So, these are the sort of things that we are doing, rest assured that as much as possible where it is possible to have Seychellois in conjunction with the employment based on information that they provide to us we do not approve for any foreigner to fill those particular posts.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Same approach for the hotel industry?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Hotel industry is different, hotel industry they all have their own quotas, they have got quotas and I believe that is going to be amended. I don't know under which law it will fall whether employment or where at the end of the year. So, they have got their quota, Immigration only verifies that they are within their quota. If it says 50, 50 we have to ensure that it is within 50, 50 based on the information that is provided to us.

HON DAVID PIERRE

One clarification, if a foreigner married to a Seychellois is found to be in

employment without GOP, what do you do in this case?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Normally we would ask them to regularize it, and if they have children I suppose it, if you have a visitor in employment these are cases where it is totally different. But if it is a Seychellois married to a foreigner and you find the foreigner in employment normally we would entertain it and ask them to regularize it and tell them the procedures involved in doing so.

HON CHARLES DE COMMARMOND

I just wanted to know if the same approach which has been explained by the PS is being used for new recruitment of new Gurkhas or when the GOP of the existing one expires? Especially that they are paid around \$1500.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Mr. Chairman, I will not be able to comment with regards to this particular issue.

HON DAVID PIERRE

And why will you not be able to comment?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

This was done before my time and I do not know what were the procedures involved with regards to those Gurkhas specifically. I don't know what was involved in that.

HON DAVID PIERRE

But there are new ones coming.

HON CHARLES DE COMMARMOND

We do have the information that is why we are asking.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

What I can say in general with regards to approach, with regards to recruitment of expatriates how it is done, specifically with regards to Gurkhas which involves the Police Department, like I mentioned is that I will not be able to comment on that Mr. Chairman. So, you will ask me whether we will grant the GOP or not that is totally different than the norm. Whether it was advertised or not, whether the procedures have been followed Mr. Chairman I will not be able to comment.

HON DAVID PIERRE

But under this, you should be giving us all the information ...

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

I should be giving you but I don't have the information, if you want I can find the information and I can make it available to you.

HON DAVID PIERRE

That is much better.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

I do not have the information, the procedure that it went through I was not there at the time and as you know I am doing my ...

HON DAVID PIERRE

Please kindly send us some written explanation in respect to this and to be lenient we will give you a week.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

No problem.

MR CHARLES DE COMMARMOND

Just to elaborate, maybe to see where we are going because what you explained to us earlier is very valid regarding the post of the Shopkeeper, they want to bring in someone to pay R2,500 where the post is supposed to be R10,000 and so on. We are feeling the same thing with the prison for example which falls under your Department.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

No, it does fall under my Department this is why I cannot comment. Prisons do not fall under my responsibility.

HON CHARLES DE COMMARMOND

Not anymore?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

No.

HON CHARLES DE COMMARMOND

Except for the accounting part.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Except for the accounting which is presently, yes.

HON CHARLES DE COMMARMOND

So, for the prison for example you see, the difference in salary for the Gurkhas and the locals is very, very far apart. So, that is why I ask this question to see. We can recruit Seychellois, maybe if it was more open, if the same conditions were applied then we could get more Seychellois. Maybe we in Parliament could stop and go there as

guard prisoners, as guards, they are paid more than us. Thank you.

HON DAVID PIERRE

No, I think it would be important for you to send us the information.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

I will obtain the information from the Minister concerned, yes.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Honorable Pillay.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

Thank you. I would like to bring to your attention this issue of GOP, GOP is a way to generate revenue for Government, and there is a role that licensing plays in terms of what happens in the procedure for GOP because I think some companies have to get a license first and then come it and get the GOP. How is this process released from your Department, because there have been complaints in the past whereby companies without valid licenses were being granted GOP when others needed to have a license or certificates from for example, a cruise ship, needed certificates from SMSA, which is Maritime and Safety Associations so that they could get a GOP. What kind of internal control mechanism have you put in place to monitor what is happening and then the second part is that role with licensing is it a smooth process or is it a complicated process to your knowledge?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Well, it is simple. Anybody who is applying for GOP first of all will need to have their certificate of incorporation, that is, they have a business registered and secondly, they will need to have a valid license attached with their documents, and in addition to other information like the medicals etc of all the people that they are employing. So, to answer your question we will not process any GOP if that business does not have a license. However, we have to understand that there are numerous businesses right now in Seychelles that do not require a license, ok, so that is different. So, wherever, we know who those businesses are that do not require a license as long as they are properly registered, but to answer your question, yes we will not process a GOP where the business is licensable that they do not submit us with a copy of their valid license.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

What about internal mechanisms you have put in place?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

It is there, we have got check lists, we have got everything to ensure that that is happening. And normally, all GOPs come to me for approval and I do verify.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Domestic workers?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Domestic workers they need to advertise normally, Government Cabinet gave its approval that Seychellois can recruit domestic workers from abroad. So, no you don't

need a license for it, it is for your own purpose, you own consumption, for your own use.

HON DAVID PIERRE

What are the mechanisms for you to ensure that they have to pay GOP right? So, the mechanisms are there to ensure that they pay?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

It is there, there are different mechanisms. Like if somebody is here working illegally normally we know that you will be given maximum visitor's permit is for 3 months, and we have out data base, we can extract the report any time, normally we will do it on a weekly basis for us to establish who have already overstayed in the country. So, we can check on that, so somebody cannot come as a visitor and stay here indefinitely without the Immigration Department knowing. It is as simple as that, ok, so for domestic workers, yes, they do have to complete an application, they pay the same fee like anybody else, R1,000 processing fee plus R700 per month for the domestic worker, they need to have their medicals, they need to have everything like any other individuals, same procedure. Except, in that case they do not need a certificate of incorporation, they do not need a license.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

Just one additional question in regards to this; so in relation to the payment of GOP when the payment is being made who will receive the cash or the cheque payment being made, the cashier?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Yes.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

How do you ensure that the payment being made is the payment that should be paid or there hasn't been any reduction, decrease in payment or any anything like that?

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

Normally, if I may, on your application form normally you state for how many months you require the GOP, whether you need it for a year. So, if it is for a year we know that it is R8,400 for the GOP fees and R1,000 for the processing fee, so a total of R9,400 should be paid for that particular. The Accounts staff will do an analysis before accepting the payment, if it is a batch of payments that you are making to us. But it is clear and I don't think that it has ever happened that somebody is underpaid no. It is not easy, the system like I have said that we have in place now, before it was done only in the back office, since 2 weeks ago it starts from the front. Ok, it starts with an Immigration Officer who is there who verifies the document, once he or she establishes that document is in order, all the requirements have been met then he refers that person to the cashier where he or she goes and make the payment to the cashier. Once that is completed, then he hands over the documents, keeps it with the cashier, the Immigration Officer later on collects that, enters all the basic data then within half an hour, every half hour they collect it in the back office, they process the GOPs. GOPs in the past

were being made available between 4 to 6 weeks now GOPs are being made available to clients within 3 days and we are working in making it available the next day. So, this is the sort of service delivery we are working on.

HON DAVID PIERRE

No further questions? Ok, thank you very much. But I would like to ask Mrs. Vidot a few questions with respect to the Department of Prisons and let me turn your attention to page 53 of the 2010 report, you have the report? Ok page 53, 2.2 up to 2.6.

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Yes Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to apologize to the Committee for my not turning up yesterday because I was informed at the very last minute and I was in a meeting with my PS.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Alright, we understand and we are very happy that you are here today. I will not go through all the paragraphs but let me just point out a few important things, 'no evidence of goods received or services rendered prior to effecting payments, and then we have payments not adequately supported 2.4, and those are the issues that I am going to ask you questions on and I am going to start with question number 1. What mechanisms are in place to ensure that Accounting Officers follow Financial Instructions? What is the current situation with regards to those payments that we are talking about in those paragraphs? And what mechanisms are in place to ensure compliance?

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Well, Mr. Chairman could I make a note of the sections so I may ...

HON DAVID PIERRE

Ok, you feel that at this point in time you are not prepared enough to answer those questions?

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Not prepared.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Ok, but if that is going to be the case then we expect an answer from you within a week, would that be alright?

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Yes.

HON DAVID PIERRE

Ok, so have you taken note of the questions?

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Yes.

HON DAVID PIERRE

You have got all the questions?

MRS FLORIANNE VIDOT

Yes.

HON DAVID PIERRE

So, if there is the necessity to call you back based on answers that you are going to provide, we will call you back but for the moment we are happy that you are willing to send us written explanations with respect to those questions. Good luck to everybody. Ok, if there are no further questions. Mr. Bastienne, it remains for the Committee to thank you so very much for

appearing before us and answering our questions. We await written explanations to the questions that we have asked you and we await for the list. So, kindly send us all our requests within a week.

MR CHARLES BASTIENNE

We will work on it Mr. Chairman, Members thank you very much.