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By **SW** NARA Date **8/12/04**

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6	5	5	5	SUBJECT : Diego Garcia Ilois				RS/AN	
3	5	5	5	REF : Port Louis 0995				ANALYSIS BRANCH	
5	5	5	5	On October 24, Maurice Lesage, Leader of the Opposition, asked					
10	5	5	5	the Prime Minister in the Legislative Assembly for details					
5	5	5	5	concerning the former inhabitants of Diego Garcia. The Prime					
10	5	5	5	Minister's statement of reply is enclosed.					
5	5	5	5	Brewer					
10	5	5	5	Enclosure: <i>dtl m.m.</i>					
5	5	5	5	As stated					
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Response of the Prime Minister to a question of the  
Honorable Maurice Lesage

Sir,

Honourable Members are aware that a few islands of Chagos Archipelago were handed over in 1965 to the British Government who then established what is now known as the British Indian Ocean Territory.

People who were working there have since that time been coming back to Mauritius on the expiry of their contract. Some of them have been able to find suitable employment in Mauritius or Agalega; others, who are over 60 are drawing old age pension and those who have not been able to find employment are assisted by the Public Assistance Department.

A census of these workers was carried out recently and a communique has been published inviting those who have not yet registered or have changed their addresses to notify the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of their whereabouts.

On the statement published in the press regarding the imprisonment of 116 workers expelled from Diego, I am advised that, with the reduction of activities in that Island, the workers were given the option of working in Agalega, Peros Banhos or Salomon Island or to return to Mauritius. 8 employees with their families making a total of 14 persons, opted to come back to Mauritius whilst the rest agreed to work in Agalega, Peros Banhos or Salomon Island. Those who had opted for work in those islands were paid a disturbance allowance of Rs 500. The other 8 employees and their families were transferred to Seychelles on the 30th September and are returning to Mauritius. They will be paid all monies due to them under their contracts by Messrs. Rogers and Co. who are the representatives of the employees. Due to lack of other suitable accommodation they were, during their stay in Seychelles, housed in an unused modern prison building completely separated from the main prison building, and were supplied with cooked food.

Ever since the question of the rehabilitation of persons from the Chagos archipelago was raised, I have constantly been assured by the British Government of their readiness to cooperate in resettling all Mauritians evacuated from that area. Possible resettlement plans are now under

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investigation. These plans will be designed to take into account both the wishes and the best interests of the people concerned and will cover both those now being evacuated and others already in Mauritius.

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In a further discussion with British High Commissioner Carter on October 27, he stated that HMG had initially left to Moulinie of Chagos-Agalega Ltd. the preparation of a resettlement scheme on Agalega for the non-Seychellois Ilois from Diego Garcia. Moulinie had at some point indicated he preferred not to do this. He alleged that unspecified "Directors" of his company would press for more elaborate plans than were necessary in order to obtain greater British financial help. Accordingly, Moulinie and BIOT administrator Todd are now working together in the Seychelles to produce an acceptable resettlement plan which HMG will finance. Meanwhile the Ilois on Peros Banhos have received their "disturbance allowances" and will gradually be moved to Agalega as the Todd/Moulinie project can be developed.				Carter noted that the situation with respect to Mauritian Ilois who had returned here is more complex. He had understood that there were only a limited number of such people but has now been told that there are more than 400 heads of family here. More substantial funds would thus be required to relocate them on Agalega or in Mauritius. The question has been discussed with Foreign Ministry Permanent Secretary Burrenchobay who is expected shortly to develop a questionnaire which can be used with the Ilois here not only to ascertain their precise number but also to determine their preference with respect to future residence. It seems likely that many will prefer to remain here. Carter noted that MMM leader Berenger and UDM politician Ollivry are calling on him on October 28, presumably to discuss the "humanitarian" issue which they raised earlier (Port Louis 977). Carter expects Ollivry, an astute lawyer, to raise the embarrassing question of citizenship. If he does, Carter will confirm		19	
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