

4. Questions to Ministers Without Notice - The Chief Minister:

4.1 Deputy A. Breckon:

I wondered if the Chief Minister could tell the House what progress has been made at the dairy, bearing in mind it is about a year ago that the House gave the vote of confidence that the industry wanted but, unfortunately, there is no movement that people can see and I know negotiations were at a protracted stage at one point, Sir and I wonder if the Chief Minister could explain exactly where we are at the moment?

Senator F.H. Walker (The Chief Minister):

Yes, Sir, I can. The negotiations which the Deputy quite rightly says have been extended, have nevertheless been successful and there is agreement now on the way forward, to restructure the industry. The Deputy will also be aware because of the work his Scrutiny Sub-Panel did on the future of the industry some time ago, that it is planned and, as this House agreed, that a new dairy will be built on the Howard Davis Farm site. There is still, sadly, a hitch over the Howard Davis Farm site because of the covenant issue, which the Property Office is urgently seeking to resolve. But as far as the future of the industry is concerned, the size of the industry has been agreed, the restructuring of the industry has been agreed and I expect to see the new structure emerging in the very near future.

4.1.1 Deputy A. Breckon:

Could I just follow that up by asking the Chief Minister if that has general support of the industry, if not unanimous general support?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I cannot say it is unanimous, certainly I can say it is very widespread and certainly would qualify as genuine, yes.

4.2 Senator J.L. Perchard:

Some time ago, Sir, I asked the Chief Minister if he would bring forward a report for public consultation that explores the social and economic consequences of the Island changing its time zone to Central European time. Could the Chief Minister advise the Assembly as to when we can expect this report and the consultation process to begin?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Yes, Sir, given an hour or 2 either way, at the beginning of March. [Laughter]

4.2.1 Senator J.L. Perchard:

It is a very serious question. When can we expect the report to be made publicly available and the consultation process to begin, and does the Chief Minister agree with me that any formal proposal to move to Central European time could be put to a referendum this autumn?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I did answer the question and said the beginning of March, which is a case where it would help if the Senator listened to the answers given to his questions, but we will pass on that. It will be the beginning of March. It is currently out for consultation, it has been out for consultation; many views have been sought, many views have been expressed. As for a referendum, I think it probably is a very good topic for a referendum because it is, as all referenda need to be, a simple yes or a simple no, and that is something that will be given serious consideration.

4.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Chief Minister indicate why the existing terrorism laws could not be used to control the whole issue of possible terrorism financing through charities? Secondly, Sir, would he indicate whether by using the proposed law we are indeed, by a back door, getting the finance

industry to register trusts that operate under a level of charity, which has been a move previously resisted successfully by that industry.

Senator F.H. Walker:

The changes are, I am afraid, essential if Jersey is to get the very, very important good, clean bill of health from the I.M.F. (International Monetary Fund). Nothing is being introduced which is not necessary in that respect. There is no hidden agenda here; there is no plan to introduce additional controls, compliance or whatever other than - as I have said - that required to get a good, clean bill of health from the I.M.F.

4.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Regarding a question I asked the Economic Development Minister a couple of weeks ago, would the Chief Minister indicate what other methods were looked at as opposed to using this very indiscriminate, all-powerful instrument of the J.F.S.C. (Jersey Financial Services Commission) to see whether, for example, the St. Ouen's Scout Group is a funding channel for Al Qaeda?

Senator F.H. Walker:

The Deputy manages to put on this, as ever, a very negative spin and chooses a very interesting example. The fact is that it has been widely agreed, including with consultees, that the way forward is the best way forward under the current circumstances and I am very happy to agree to that. I support that. I believe that what Jersey is doing here is appropriate, is sensible and absolutely essential to protect the future of our economy.

4.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister accept that research on survey design shows that inclusion of non-mutually exclusive options, rolling 2 options into one and changing the wording of questions to change the emphasis, renders surveys and questionnaire work unreliable and does he not accept that this happened, unfortunately, with the Imagine Jersey 2035 surveys, both on Saturday and on the computer?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I do not. It saddens me that the Deputy has sought to rubbish Imagine Jersey from day one until he was in possession of anything remotely approaching the facts. He made it very clear he does not agree with us consulting with the public. He made it very clear that his answer to the inevitable ageing of the population is quite simple; he has come to his own conclusions, never mind the views of the public, that we need to downscale the economy and pay more in tax. The fact is that Imagine Jersey was a genuine, well constructed and very widely and warmly appreciated exercise in consulting with the public, which came up with some very helpful information, and which will help this House ultimately make better decisions in how we manage the inevitable consequences of the ageing population.

4.5.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Supplementary if I may, Sir. The Chief Minister, as ever, tries to put words in my mouth. He is incorrect but I would like to ask him further what qualifications he has in survey and questionnaire design, because I have some.

Senator F.H. Walker:

I have no qualifications in survey design nor, I do not think, would many Members of the House expect me to have. I rely on people who do and I am absolutely satisfied that Involve, whom we used both for the survey and for the Imagine Jersey event, are very experienced in design, make their living out of advising governments throughout the world in consulting with the public, including recently a major exercise with the Government of California, and I am very satisfied that they know considerably more about this topic than does Deputy Southern.

4.6 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

The recent plans that have been unveiled by the Durrell Wildlife Organisation represent a fantastic opportunity for development in this field and also to identify a honey pot within Jersey for visitor attractions. Does the Chief Minister support the outlying plans, and if so, will the Chief Minister bring at the earliest opportunity real support by way of a proposition to allow the States to decide whether or not they can help to fund this exciting project?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I have absolutely total support for the plans that Durrell have put forward. I think they are innovative, they are exciting and they are excellent for Jersey. Whether, though, anyone is ready for a proposition to be debated on possible States' financial support for the scheme I think is a little premature. There is a lot of work to be undertaken yet in terms of the business base that underpins the vision and only when we have a clearer picture of what the actual financing arrangements are and what the business plan is, could we seriously consider coming to the States with any such proposition. But, I reaffirm my support in principle for it.

4.7 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Following recent media stories, in Lisbon the European Union states met recently in Portugal with a view to changing the constitution of the states. This was recently highlighted by Deputy Le Claire. Is the Chief Minister...

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

On a point of order, Sir, the Deputy may have inadvertently said that they met in Lisbon to talk about the constitution of the...

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The Lisbon Treaty.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

The member states, not the States of Jersey.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The member states of the E.U. (European Union) met to discuss the Lisbon Treaty with a view of changing the constitution of the European Union. Is the Chief Minister keeping himself fully abreast of changes in the European Union to protect Jersey's interests?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Absolutely, and can I make the point that, perhaps contrary to some media comment, the Lisbon treaty in no way changes - in no way changes - the existing Protocol 3 arrangement between Jersey and the E.U. member states. But nevertheless, a very close watching brief is being maintained to ensure that that remains the case.

4.8 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

I just wondered if the Chief Minister could confirm an approximate timescale that he might be able to answer through his Council of Ministers in relation to the question on Durrell and its future, because I think it would help to have an indication of a timescale that he might feel he would be able to report back to the House.

Senator F.H. Walker:

I understand the Deputy's concern. At the moment, the position is in the hands of Durrell. I met with representatives of Durrell late in December and we agreed at that meeting, as I mentioned in my response to Deputy Le Claire, that they were to put a lot more work into a more well-defined business plan underpinning the vision, including full details of the financing required, the likely

returns and so on, and as soon as we have that information from Durrell we will be able to assess it. I do assure the Deputy and the House that I will be responding to that as quickly as I possibly can.

4.9 Deputy J.A. Martin:

In answer to questions last time in the House the Chief Minister seemed surprised that I was not aware that the consultation on-line on Imagine Jersey 2035 had been agreed at the request of the Chairmen's Committee to continue to the end of February. My question is, Sir, after 19th January, the Royal Yacht - the on-line consultation paper - has now disappeared. Could the Minister advise me how then we are having consultation with the public, on-line or in any other form, to the end of February?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I was unaware it had disappeared and I will look into that straight away. I had no idea it had disappeared, but of course the hard copy consultation documents are still in circulation, there are other means of contacting my department and the consultation does indeed continue until the end of February. I will look into that issue the Deputy has raised on the on-line issue.

4.9.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:

He does make it clear where people can now find this information but anyone now filling in any consultation, with it already being put together by Involve, would they not see this as a waste of time as figures already put together on the 19th are being presented to members of the public in the States as a *fait accompli*. We had this last Friday at the Island Plan Review. Half an hour on the outcome of Imagine Jersey 2035. It was only the electronic one, Sir, not even the on-line. How is this a fair cross-section of the community of Jersey that is going to go into 2035?

Senator F.H. Walker:

The Deputy has made it very clear that she thinks the whole exercise is a waste of time and not just where we are at present. But it is not a waste of time and again the Deputy misunderstands what has been put in the public arena since the Imagine Jersey event. There is no *fait accompli*. The results of the Imagine Jersey event are the results of the Imagine Jersey event. They are the results of the people, the opinion of the people who attended the event. Nothing more. There have been no commitments made, no guarantees given that that will be the final policy coming forward to this House and, of course, it will be for this House to decide what the future of Jersey looks like in any case. So it is absolutely not a waste of time for anyone to provide us with their opinions until the end of February and I encourage as many people as possible to do just that.

4.10 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Following a previous question to the Chief Minister, Sir, regarding Ministerial responsibility, I was sad to see that the minutes of the Council of Ministers have agreed that procedures were not in need of change. My experience over the Christmas period was that I tried to contact the Assistant Minister for Economic Development: he was leaving at noon. The Minister was out of the Island, so I e-mailed the Chief Minister who I found was also out of the Island. When I tried to get hold of the Deputy Chief Minister, he was unavailable as well. Would the Chief Minister now agree that a list of which Minister is responsible for which department is needed before each recess?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Yes, Sir. The Deputy could, of course, have got in touch with the department in any of those cases and I think in every case Ministers were available, should it be necessary, on the end of a telephone. I know I was. Nevertheless, I take the Deputy's point. The Council of Ministers has responded to it and the list that he has requested will indeed in future be published.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Very well, the time for questioning the Chief Minister has now expired. Before we move on to the next matter, Deputy Southern I think you asked a question of the Minister for Home Affairs about whether there was wheel clamping on States' properties at the last meeting and she said she would revert. I understand this is more properly a question for the Minister for Housing and if the Assembly agrees it might be convenient to ask him to give a reply to that question as the Minister for Home Affairs had promised it.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I would love to hear a response, Sir.

Senator T.J. Le Main (The Minister for Housing):

Thank you for allowing me to respond. The Minister for Home Affairs has asked me to try to respond to Deputy Southern's query. The issue, as far as Housing are concerned, is that Housing have a contractor that does wheel clamp on Housing property. All illegally parked vehicles or vehicles with no permits have a notice placed upon them at least once and sometimes twice. If that vehicle continues to park illegally, then they are clamped and afterwards removed. I have to say that there have been issues where we have specific disabled clients who have specific disabled parking areas and illegally parked vehicles on those are removed immediately.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am not sure we can allow much on this, but one supplementary.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

One supplementary, Sir. That is very kind of you, if such a thing exists in a Deputy Bailiff, kindness. Would the Minister inform Members what fees are charged for this wheel clamping service?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I think it is £80, Sir.