

### **3.10 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding the movement of seaweed on St. Aubin's Bay and other beaches:**

Would the Minister advise how much it costs to move seaweed on St. Aubin's Bay and other beaches and clarify what purpose it serves to move it to the low waterline only for the sea to move it back up the beach?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):**

The cost of removing vraic and green sea lettuce around the priority beaches of the Island has been £21,650 so far this year. The degree of effectiveness of removing the seaweed down to the low waterline is to a large extent dependent on the tides and weather. We try to undertake the work when we think the prevailing currents will take it out to sea, as happened just before the Bank Holiday weekend.

#### **3.10.1 Deputy M. Tadier:**

So is the Minister saying that the seaweed does not come up the beach? The seaweed that I have been seeing recently - and I am sure other Members have been seeing - on what one would think was a football pitch if one did not know it was a beach, is not coming up the beach? How effective would he say that the policy is that the seaweed does get washed out to sea and that it does not come back in?

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

It is not possible to say but inevitably some does return. It is very dependent on weather, wind direction and strength, temperatures *et cetera*. However, our cleaning regime is such that we normally only clean after a spring tide so that each day the high tide mark is lower than the day before, reducing the result of newly deposited weed at the top of the beach. We only do this type of weed removal when it is absolutely necessary and then only from the top of the beach.

#### **3.10.2 Deputy S. Power:**

I wonder, does the Minister know or can he answer this question, how many tonnes of seaweed has come up on St. Aubin's Bay this summer, and has he considered any other possibilities, such as using a barge, a flat-bottomed barge of some kind to load 100 or 200 tonnes at a time, take it 6 miles down, 6 miles south, which may be a more effective way of removing it and might answer some of Deputy Tadier's...

#### **Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Not in any great detail. We have looked at barges but not in any great detail. In addition to any significant logistical cost of doing this, we believe we would need a licence from the Department of the Environment under the Food and Environment Protection Act 1985. We would also need an F.E.P.A. (Food and Environment Protection) licence which controls the consent to dredge and deposit dredged material. There have been suggestions in the past and recently in the local press regarding the use of barges filled with weed, towed out to a suitable dumping area at sea. Just one of the problems to be overcome would be the positioning of the barge for filling on the beach when the tide is falling from spring tides and leap tides. There would need to be a narrow window of opportunity so that boats with a shallow draft could pull the barge off the beach, possibly late at night.

#### **3.10.3 Deputy S. Power:**

It seems to me that the Minister and his department are duty bound to investigate all options. The Minister has not answered the question with regard to what sort of tonnage came in this year and I think he is overstating the problems with regard to using a barge on spring tides because it seems to me that it is a fairly simple option and the States have a very valuable tug. Would he not agree that he and his department are duty-bound to investigate all options?

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Indeed we are exploring all options. We are working with our colleagues in the Department of the Environment to find a solution to this. Using the States tug I do not think would be a particular option. I certainly would not want to run it up on to the beach but we are looking at all options. As for the tonnage, I am not sure of the exact tonnage, but if we had all the licences in place, we would have to be very careful where we dumped it at sea, bearing in mind the ecology of the area and indeed our local fishermen.

**3.10.4 Deputy S. Power:**

Just to correct the Minister, I was not implying that anyone run the States tug on to the beach. I was implying that the barge be put on the beach at a low tide and the tug pull it off when it floats again.

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

This is indeed something we could look into.

**3.10.5 Deputy M. Tadier:**

I was just interested by the word “remove” because normally what that means, it means to take away and one would usually use the word “move” in this context when you are taking seaweed from one part of the beach to another part of the beach. Would the Minister give serious consideration about perhaps obtaining a licence from the Department of the Environment? I am sure it is not that difficult, and if he has got difficulty perhaps talking to the Minister, I could do it for him, because I sit next to him. Would he consider getting the various licences that are needed and finding a long-term efficacious solution to the actual removal of the seaweed and putting it to better use, as perhaps the Minister has already suggested, for agricultural purposes, which I am sure would not be too difficult to do in Jersey.

**Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I talk to my colleague in Planning and Environment on a regular basis, not a problem. The sea lettuce is a totally different consistency to vraic, which is used on the land. I am not sure of the exact analysis but I am not sure whether it is suitable to be used as a fertiliser. As I say, it is an ongoing situation, my discussions with the Minister for Planning and Environment, and I am sure we will find a solution to this.