

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

6. The Chairman of the Comité des Connétables - statement regarding the Island-wide rate for 2013:

The Deputy Bailiff:

The time for asking questions of the Deputy Chief Minister has now expired and there is nothing under J. We come to Statements on a Matter of Official Responsibility. The Chairman of the Comité des Connétables will make a statement regarding the Island-wide rate for 2013.

6.1 Connétable J.L.S. Gallichan of Trinity (Chairman, Comité des Connétables):

I wish to inform the Members of the cost to ratepayers across the Island of the Island-wide rate for 2013 which has been determined in accordance with the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005. The 2013 annual Island-wide rate fixture is the 2012 figure of £11,480,403 increased by the Jersey Retail Price Index for the 12 months to March 2013 of 1.4 per cent resulting in the sum of £11,641,129. In accordance with the Rates Apportionment (Jersey) Regulations 2006, 55 per cent of the annual Island-wide figure is to be met by the domestic rate and 45 per cent of the annual Island-wide rate figure is to be met by non-domestic rate. A sum of £6,402,621 is therefore raised from the domestic rate and the sum of £5,238,508 from the non-domestic rate. The rates are determined by dividing the sum to be raised between the number of quarters assessed on domestic and non-domestic property. The rates, therefore, will be 0.69 pence per quarter for domestic and 1.21 pence per quarter for non-domestic ratepayers. I am delighted to inform the Assembly this is exactly the same amount as last year. There will be no increase. Due to the number of quarters and the low percentage of increase over the year, the rates will be the same as the previous year.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any questions for the Connétable? Deputy Trevor Pitman.

6.1.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Would the Connétable agree with me, join with me in advising that if option B goes through unamended and then all residents are disenfranchised, members of St. Helier should refuse to pay the Island-wide rate in protest at their becoming second-class citizens in terms of voting equality?

The Connétable of Trinity:

I am not sure that has anything to do with the Island-wide rate but ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

At its margins, Connétable. [Laughter]

The Connétable of Trinity:

At its margins, yes.

The Deputy Bailiff:

He did manage to get the words into the question.

The Connétable of Trinity:

I know we have not got a lot on the agenda today. I suppose we can go with this. No, I do not think so. They have a house to live in. They have exactly the same sort of problems for St. Helier. They have all their refuse collected, they are just ordinary citizens. I would say this is part of the Island-wide rate that helps towards the economy of the Island and I am afraid where the ... it is down to the members of the Parish of St. Helier to come out and vote occasionally and that might help their cause.

6.1.2 Senator A. Breckon:

I wonder if the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables could say whether this will have any effect on Parish Assemblies when they are setting the rate to be taxed in the various Parishes?

The Connétable of Trinity:

It should not have any effect on Parish Assemblies at all. This is the Island-wide rate. The Parish runs its accounts and their rates are levied on the budget that the Parish runs. This is very similar. I am not going to get into it but it is something that the Parishes do very well for Treasury. This is collecting on behalf of the Parishes, we collect it for the Treasury and that saves them incurring great costs to the Island.

6.1.3 Senator A. Breckon:

Could the Constable confirm that a Parish Assembly could vote to reduce the Island-wide rate or not?

The Connétable of Trinity:

No.

6.1.4 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Following the Senator's previous question, will this encourage the Connétables to peg their rates rather than increase them?

The Connétable of Trinity:

I would have thought ... in this climate, I do not know many Connétables that will be raising their rates. Obviously if something comes up in their Parish which would need a major sum of money, they may review that but, in general, most of the Connétables I am talking to try to keep their budgets very, very tight because of the climate we are in.

6.1.5 Senator L.J. Farnham:

I wonder if the Constables would just be kind enough to indicate now to the Assembly who are going to raise their rates?

The Deputy Bailiff:

That is not a matter for the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables.

6.1.6 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Is the Chairman aware that the board responsible for agreeing wage increases in the public sector has agreed a 4 per cent increase next year and that is clearly going to have an impact on any Parish which employs a large number of manual workers?

The Connétable of Trinity:

Well, we are dealing with 2013. We will look at 2014 next year.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any other questions for the Chairman? If not, that will bring question time to an end.