

4.6 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding action taken by Environmental Health Officers as a result of a recent incident at the harbour:

Would the Minister explain what action, if any, was taken by his Environmental Health Officers as a result of the recent incident at the harbour which occurred during the unloading of aggregate for use in the airport runway project?

Senator B.E. Shenton (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

The Health Protection Service received 2 complaints alleging dust nuisance from the unloading of aggregate at the harbour on 30th September and 1st October. Initially the matter was raised with the harbour authorities on 30th September with a view of securing suitable dust suppression to prevent recurring emissions as the loading activity was undertaken. The problem was associated with fine grade aggregate being discharged from a boat in windy conditions. Later deliveries of aggregate were of a more coarse nature and therefore did not raise the same problem. Given the difficulties which arose, which had been obvious to the operators - and the *J.E.P (Jersey Evening Post)* picture of 1st October graphically captured it - it is surprising that handling activities were not immediately suspended by the harbour authorities and only resumed upon provision of adequate dust suppression being provided or the climatic conditions changing.

4.6.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Does the Minister consider that information should be given in such instances to those affected, not least the Parish authority in which the incidents take place, and would he agree that on this occasion it was left to the media to publicise the fact that the incident had occurred and that according the harbour official consulted that nothing harmful or corrosive was released into the atmosphere?

Senator B.E. Shenton:

I would agree with the Constable on that matter. I received a complaint at home on the evening of 30th September from a member of the public who thought there was a cement boat being unloaded illegally and was concerned about the health implications of that. I went down to the harbour but unfortunately the unloading had finished by the time I got there. The aggregate being despatched from the boat was non-toxic and could be classified more of a nuisance than anything else but you would have thought that people unloading the boat and the harbour authorities would have used a little bit of common sense because certainly when I went down there in evening the amount of dust in the area was quite unacceptable.

4.6.2 The Connétable of St, Helier:

A final supplementary. Is the Minister satisfied that the Health Protection Unit is sufficiently independent and impartial from the States bodies whose activities it regulates in order to do its job properly.

Senator B.E. Shenton:

I believe it is independent and impartial and certainly as a Minister I do not tend to interfere in any way, shape or form into what they do when dealing with individual matters. However, I would say that perhaps they should have taken more action in this particular instance and I think a meeting between them and the harbour authorities to ensure that a reoccurrence does not occur would be a very good idea.

4.6.3 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

I understand that a company of cleaners have been engaged to clean the numerous leisure craft lying around the area. Could the Minister confirm who would be paying for that contract?

Senator B.E. Shenton:

Well, it certainly will not be me. One would assume that this is down to the harbour authorities and I would suggest that the question is directed towards the person responsible for the harbour.