

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

6. The Chairman of the Comité des Connétables - statement regarding the Island-wide rate for 2014

The Deputy Bailiff:

Any other questions for the Chief Minister? No? Chief Minister, you have beaten them down. All right, we have come to the end of Question Time. There is nothing under J. Under K matters of Statements on a Matter of Official Responsibility, the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables.

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

I wish to inform Members of the cost to ratepayers across the Island, the Island-wide rate for 2014 which has been determined in accordance with the Rates (Jersey) Law 2005. The 2014 annual Island-wide rate figure is the 2013 figure of £11,641,129 increased by the Jersey Retail Price Index for the last 12 months to March 2014 of 1.7 per cent resulting in the sum of £11,839,028. In accordance with the Rates Apportionment (Jersey) Regulations 2006, 55 per cent of the annual Island-wide rates figure is to be met by domestic rate and 45 per cent of the Island-wide rate figure to be met by the non-domestic rate. The sum of £6,511,465 is, therefore, raised by the domestic rate and the sum of £5,327,563 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 0.7 pence per quarter for domestic ratepayers and 1.23 pence per quarter for the non-domestic. Just to show what the rates were for 2012 and 2013, they were 0.69 pence - they did not change - and they have now gone up to 0.70 pence. The non-domestic was 1.21 pence which will now rise to 1.23 pence.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any questions for the Chairman of the Comité des Connétables?

6.1.1 Senator P.F.C Ozouf:

May I just ask if the Chairman gave any consideration to changing the 55 per cent and 45 per cent split?

The Connétable of Trinity:

No.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

May I ask why not?

The Connétable of Trinity:

Depending what the question would have been. If we had considered it I might have said we had considered it but he asked us had we ever thought of it and I said no. But I would say we could consider it in the future. There is nothing to say it cannot be changed but this year it was not considered.

6.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I think the Chairman may have already answered my question. What plans are in place to discuss with the Minister for Treasury and Resources the changing of these rates to potentially achieve a greater proportion from business?

The Connétable of Trinity:

I think it is fair to say, Deputy, we would like to keep these figures as low as possible and I think if we talked to the Minister for Treasury and Resources he might have different views on taking the figures lower so we might find there could be more increases. What is in place at the moment I think is satisfactory for the Island, domestic and non-domestic at the moment, but these can be reviewed at any time and, of course, we would have to discuss ... I know people think businesses make a lot of money but to run a business does cost a lot in this Island and we would have to review these quarters, or not the quarters, certainly the price would have to be taken into account with the problems of the retail business and a lot of the businesses in the Island at the present time.

6.1.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the rates be lower if the States were to pay rates on their properties?

The Connétable of Trinity:

A very interesting question that because you usually find that if ... there is no free lunch in Jersey not usually. Certainly not in the States. Can I just say that whatever income that would be paid forth by the States obviously we are trying to recoup it from some matter of taxation, so I would say it has to be reviewed very carefully because before you realise you may think the States are paying rates and that will bring down the quarters but the thing is, who is going to pay for the States portion of that rating? I think we have to be very careful. Obviously, as you know, the Connétable of St. Helier has strong views on that. There is paperwork being done between the Treasury and the Connétables and I am sure in the ... it certainly will not happen this year but in the forthcoming year you will see progress made on Island-wide rates for the States.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Are there any other questions for the Chairman? Then we come to an end of the Statements of Matters of Official Responsibility and we come to Public Business.