

2.6 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Chief Minister regarding impact on Jersey of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change:

Following the Chief Minister's announcement that he has requested the ratification on behalf of Jersey of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, would he inform Members what impact the Protocol will have on the Island and whether conflicts with the objectives and commitments in the Strategic Plan will arise?

Senator F.H. Walker:

The Kyoto Protocol sets a target to cut greenhouse gas emissions to 5 per cent below 1990 levels. Jersey has already cut its local greenhouse gases by about 30 per cent since 1990 by switching to imported electricity. Jersey has also made a commitment to a solid waste strategy including a new waste incinerator; a recycling programme and composting of green waste; an integrated transportation strategy to reduce the impact of traffic by using less fuel and by reducing traffic congestion; and an energy policy which tackles energy-related carbon emissions. In addition, the Countryside Renewal Scheme will also give rise to more permanent pasture and woodland to create carbon sinks for greenhouse gases. There are no substantive conflicts with strategic objectives and economic growth is not adversely affected in any significant way because Jersey does not rely on heavy manufacturing industries. Kyoto will be almost entirely beneficial, both domestically and for our international standing. It shows our commitment to tackling global climate change, supporting the U.K. Government in seeking wide international commitment to the Protocol and making progress towards the States' strategic objectives on the environment; objectives, Sir, which I would remind the House which were approved in the Strategic Plan and indeed improved by amendments brought by the Constable of St. Helier which were also approved by this House.

2.6.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Would the Chief Minister not agree that, for instance, a large incinerator flies immediately in the face of the Protocol generating huge amounts of carbon dioxide that are possibly not necessary? Would he also agree, Sir, that the Protocol causes us some difficulty with regard to tourism which I thought we were hoping to rejuvenate under the Strategic Plan because the Protocol itself recognises that air travel is one of the greater pollutants and we are required under part 2 of Article 2 to pursue a limitation or reduction in those areas?

Senator F.H. Walker:

The question on the incinerator is merely seeking to re-light - if that is not a pun - the debate on waste management. I would remind the Deputy and through you, Sir, the House that in fact the demand for incinerators worldwide has risen dramatically in recent years because it is increasingly acknowledged as the most efficient way of dealing with waste, coupled of course with a major... I see queries from the Deputies Benches, Sir. I invite them to research the facts. But of course any incineration waste management process has to include a heavy recycling programme as does Jersey's. So far as air travel is concerned, my own personal view is that any moves to restrict air travel as an effort to reduce emissions are absolutely doomed to failure. Air travel is an absolutely integral part of the lives of virtually everyone throughout the world - certainly the Western world - and I see little prospect of air travel reducing. I would also invite the Deputy to look at the proportion that air travel contributes to the emission problem generally.

2.6.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I wonder, Sir, if the Chief Minister could justify what does appear to be an hypocrisy here because he has just stated that it would be ludicrous - I think that was the adjective he used - to reduce our air travel and at the same time it is required by the Convention. It does require pursuing limitation or reduction of emissions from that area.

Senator F.H. Walker:

Any initiatives from air travel are not going to be led by Jersey. They will be led by particularly the major Western nations. I frankly see, as I have already said, little prospect for any great movements in that respect.

2.6.3 Senator S. Syvret:

Will the Chief Minister undertake to place a copy of the Stern Report on the economic impact of global climate change in the Members' Room downstairs for Members to read? Would he also undertake to do the same with the forthcoming I.P.C.C. (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) Report on global climate change which is due to be released this Friday? Would he be prepared to make a statement recounting the key findings of that report to this Assembly?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Yes, Sir.

2.6.4 Deputy S.C. Ferguson:

When the Minister puts the I.P.C.C. Report for Members to read will he also point out that at the back of the report it says that in climate research and modelling we should recognise that we are dealing with a coupled non-linear chaotic system and, therefore, that long-term prediction of future climate states is not possible. The most we can expect to achieve is the prediction of the probability distribution of the system's future possible state by the generation of ensembles of model solutions. In other words, we are tying ourselves into a Protocol which would probably only reduce temperature by a fraction of a degree by 2050.

Senator F.H. Walker:

I am not a scientist and nor do I intend to enter the argument over how much of a reduction we can expect to see or what is going to cause it. From a Jersey perspective, I refer back to my main answer which shows very clearly the measures which are, I think, entirely appropriate to an Island such as ours; the measures that Jersey is taking to play its part in the international initiative to reduce emissions. I am very pleased that Jersey should be in that position.

2.6.5 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Like the Chief Minister I do not wish to open a debate on waste management but can we now have his assurance that he will be opposing a new, large incinerator, which is of course a huge creator of carbon dioxide, when there are other forms of waste disposal which are much less damaging to the environment?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Is the Deputy asking me if I would oppose the introduction of an incinerator into Jersey?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes.

Senator F.H. Walker:

The answer, Sir, which I think he well knows is very firmly: "No".