

2.2 Deputy S.C. Ferguson of St. Brelade of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the cessation of milk deliveries for all Parishes outside St. Helier:

I should perhaps say that this question has been bouncing around the Ministries because I originally asked it of the Minister for Social Security, but the Minister for Economic Development has gallantly agreed to take it on.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Economic Development):

I was just about to ask my Assistant Minister, Constable Fisher - with responsibility for milk - to take this [Laughter].

Deputy S.C. Ferguson:

Given that the milk deliveries have stopped for all Parishes outside St. Helier what steps, if any, are being taken to ensure that housebound or disabled pensioners can still have milk delivered?

Connétable G.W.J. Fisher of St. Lawrence (Assistant Minister for Economic Development - rapporteur):

I do not see myself as a knight in shining armour gallantly riding to the rescue, but I do want to make the point that I do not believe this question is correctly addressed to the Economic Development Department because it is not an Economic Development issue. It is more a welfare issue, income support or possibly a health issue, but it certainly is not an economic development issue. I will do my best to answer the question from the information I have. The Deputy will be aware that Jersey Dairy ceased its home delivery in 2005 due to the significant losses it was incurring on that operation. One employee who was made redundant as a result of that decision decided to set up his own home delivery service called Sunrise Deliveries and took on the housebound or disabled pensioners as part of his customer base. Due to the ever-increasing costs of delivery this company was losing money on delivering to the country Parishes and has discontinued this service. Jersey Dairy does not have the resource to resume this loss-making service. Fresh milk is just one element of a normal shopping basket. Those on low incomes with personal care needs receive additional sums under income support to cover those needs which would include paying for deliveries from shops offering home delivery services if they are unable to shop themselves.

2.2.1 Deputy S.C. Ferguson:

That really is not an answer. I wonder if - seeing that the Member does not believe that it should be for Economic Development - perhaps in his capacity as a member of the Comité des Connétables he can comment on this? Perhaps Economic Development could combine the school milk deliveries with the deliveries to housebound pensioners so that the 2 can still carry on. Would the Assistant Minister care to comment?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

No, I would not really. I would have to think about that.

2.2.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Is the Assistant Minister aware that the delivery of school milk forms an integral part of the capacity of this particular entrepreneur to continue to deliver this valuable social service to many pensioners on the Island and that school milk funding must continue?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I think that is a different subject all together. We are going to be debating school milk later on. This question is about deliveries to the housebound and disabled elderly people and I do not suppose any of them attend school.

2.2.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The Assistant Minister is obviously not aware that Sunrise Deliveries has taken over the school milk delivery service and this formed an integral part of the functioning of Sunrise Deliveries and without the school milk it is likely that this particular service may cease.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, I do not think that is, with respect, a matter for the Assistant Minister arising out of this question.

2.2.4 Deputy F.J. Hill of St. Martin:

In view of the uncertainty as to which department should be dealing with this, can I have an assurance from the Assistant Minister that he will meet with the Ministers for Health and Social Security with a view to ironing-out this problem because clearly there is a problem and the sooner it is dealt with the better?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I do not really see that as my role. I think the position should be that the question needs to be directed at one or other or both of the Ministers mentioned.

2.2.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In that case, will the Assistant Minister on the part of the Minister agree to take this back to the Council of Ministers and deal with this issue which I brought to the House a year ago: and now here it is again? Will he take it to the Council of Ministers?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I may be wrong, but I think where Deputy Southern is referring to school milk which is **[Interruption]** He is not? He tells me he is not referring to school milk. Nevertheless, it is not an Economic Development issue and I do not think anybody can say that it is. To me, we are responsible in Economic Development for the development of the industry - the dairy industry - which does not include beneficial delivery of school milk to people who are in an unfortunate situation.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may, the question was will he agree to take it to the Council of Ministers to resolve the issue?

The Bailiff:

I think the answer to that, I heard, was: "No".

2.2.6 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement:

On a point of order, I wonder if I could ask why it was not possible to deliver this question to somebody who has responsibility for this because it does seem to be going around in circles and no satisfactory answer is forthcoming.

The Bailiff:

Any Member can ask any question of the Assistant Minister for Economic Development which relates to his functions. What does not relate to the Assistant Minister's functions is school milk.

2.2.7 Senator F.H. Walker:

Can I endorse the comments of the Assistant Minister and say this is clearly not an issue for Economic Development and ask him if he will accept my invitation to discuss this with me so that we can resolve this matter and ensure that we do allocate the whole question of milk deliveries to disabled pensioners to the appropriate Minister?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I would be delighted to speak with the Chief Minister.

