

2.10 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour to the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding banning from all schools very high caffeine energy drinks:

What consideration, if any, will the Minister give to banning from all schools very high caffeine energy drinks that could raise metabolic rates in children?

The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

Although a complete ban on the sale of very high caffeine energy drinks could be introduced, it would be extremely difficult to enforce a complete ban on the consumption of high caffeine energy drinks in schools. A more constructive way of dealing with this issue would be to continue to actively discourage their use and to work with the Department of Public Health in the introduction of a school nutritional standard.

2.10.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

This product alone is full of ginseng and caffeine. If we look at caffeine content alone, a cola drink contains 9.2 mg per 100 ml. This product contains 200 mg per 100 ml. Should a child be taking this product on a sports day with an undiagnosed heart condition, it could be very dangerous indeed, if not fatal. Does the Minister not agree?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Absolutely and I would encourage and would like to take this opportunity to encourage all parents to ensure that where possible their children are provided with healthy drinks and understand the dangers that some of these high caffeine energy drinks can present.

2.10.2 Senator S. Syvret:

Could the Minister give us an assurance that seagulls that might be accreting around schools and school playgrounds are not being made more aggressive by the over consumption of caffeinated drinks?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am sorry. I could not hear that question. [Laughter]

Senator S. Syvret:

Could the Minister undertake some research, I mean given this is obviously such a desperately important topic for this Assembly, to see whether the seagulls around schools are being made more aggressive by consuming caffeinated drinks?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think that would be outside of my remit. [Laughter]

2.10.3 Deputy S. Pitman:

The Minister has said that his department are continually and actively discouraging this type of food. How is his department continually and actively discouraging unhealthy foods and is his department selling unhealthy food within schools?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

As I said before, we are working with Public Health to consider the introduction of school nutrition standards to be phased in over the next 3 years. This would enable us

to regulate the types of food and drink available for sale in our canteens and vending machines in the schools.

2.10.4 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

This is a very serious subject in my book. One of these shots of drinks contains the same amount of caffeine as 21 cola drinks. It is also full of ginseng making the children very hyper. Part of the problem in town at night is children drinking very, very strong lagers combined with one of these shot drinks or more which is making them very hyper and very aggressive. Will the Minister be working with other departments to warn children of these dangers?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Absolutely and we do have a healthy schools programme which is designed to teach children and young people the importance of a balanced diet, regular meals, healthy snacks and drinks, all of which are conducive to a healthy lifestyle, and I am sure that due to the efforts of the Deputy, far more attention will be paid to this new high energy drink.