

## **2.4 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding recommendations arising from Scrutiny investigation of proposed sale of Jersey Telecom:**

Would the Minister assure Members that he will give sufficient time to allow full consideration of the recommendations of the current Scrutiny investigation of the proposed sale of Jersey Telecom and possible amendments suggested therein before he lodges any proposition regarding a possible sale?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):**

At the present time I intend keeping to the stated timetable of lodging my proposition in February. More specifically, on the basis that the report from the Economic Adviser will be available by the end of this work, I intend to lodge my proposals in the week commencing 19 February. I would then expect the States to debate the report and proposition on 17 April - some 8 weeks later. I trust that the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel can also keep to their timetable. On that basis I undertake to give the Scrutiny Report the respect it merits. I will certainly seek to take on board any constructive suggestions it makes. This could involve some amendment to the proposition or considering some other options which would not delay the process leading to the States' debate in April.

### **2.4.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

That answer does not give any respect to the possibility of adding value from the Scrutiny Report when it is published because it suggests that come hell or high water, whatever the details might be, he is prepared to lodge his proposal without giving proper consideration to the Scrutiny Report's findings should they be markedly different. Thereby, he will force Scrutiny to come up with amendments and a major debate rather than considering the recommendations and thereby adding value and seeking consensus from the report which might take place if he were to delay lodging. A mere fortnight would do.

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I think the Deputy is jumping to conclusions. If the Scrutiny Report provides something which gives me food for thought I may well want to amend my own proposition. But I still intend to adhere to my timetable. Whether those amendments are lodged by myself or the Panel or by anybody else, I think all Members will want to ensure that the House comes up with the best possible outcome.

### **2.4.2 Senator B.E. Shenton:**

Can I just ask the Minister why he is in such a rush to push this through?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

I like to set timetables and keep to them. But I also think it is in the interests of an orderly and best disposal. If a disposal is to occur at all it is better to be done in a timely way.

### **2.4.3 Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. John:**

Would the Minister not agree that every day that is lost in this process the company becomes worth less?

### **Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

That is a judgment which may well be right, Sir, but I would not be able to verify that one way or the other but it is quite likely.

### **2.4.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Does the Minister agree that on such a major decision - the first possibly complete privatisation of a public utilities company - a rushed decision is likely to be a bad decision?

**Senator T.A. Le Sueur:**

A rushed decision, Sir, could be a bad decision and that is why I am allowing 8 weeks at least between the period of my lodging the proposition and the House debating it. That should give all Members ample time to make a considered decision.