

## **8.1 Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Technical and Transport Services**

### **The Bailiff:**

We come now to questions to Ministers without notice. The first question period is of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services.

### **Deputy G.W.J. de Faye of St. Helier:**

A point of order, Sir. I am sure Members would rather see me fully roasted and parboiled. I cannot help but notice that the 15 minutes does run into the lunch break. I wonder whether...

### **The Bailiff:**

It does not run very seriously into the lunch break.

#### **8.1.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

During the determination of the tenders for the summer bus service how much regard did the Minister have to the States' policy on competition?

#### **Deputy G.W.J. de Faye (The Minister for Technical and Transport):**

I am aware of the States' policy pertaining more accurately to transport, which is that there should have been in place a single-operator bus service. In fact the existence of a summer service and school service under licence was something of an anomaly in respect of that policy. However, with regard to the aspect of the competition I - as I think may be seen and it will be helpful to slightly correct the Hansard that Deputy Martin provided - instructed my Chief Officer to take up the position with respect to a future tender process with the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority because quite clearly there was a possibility that the result of the tender process would have an impact on the level of competition within the Island. I was satisfied with the results I received from those negotiations and discussions that the J.C.R.A. had no particular difficulty with that aspect of competition and indeed they regarded a renewable tender process for contracts relating to public transport services in general as the competitive element.

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

In the light of the Minister's previous so-called answers, will the Minister clarify on the matter of the Connex and Easylink tourism bus tenders whether the Connex tender came in as the lowest bid before or after the amendment of their unrealistic projected revenue figures and whether, when judging tenders, normal practice would be to identify any unrealistic, fantasy estimates in order to eliminate the tender and not to further adjust the bid?

#### **Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

In respect of the first part of that question, it is open to anyone conducting a tender process to apply whatever calculations they see fit in order to properly understand the tenders that are being put forward. It is in fact the case, and I am sure I have advised the House on this matter in the past, that on the calculations made as to the relative value of the tenders, in financial terms they came extremely close indeed. But, it is not all about finance; it is about the overall quality of tenders as well as the perception of what will be the best value for the public of the Island. So, there are criteria beyond finances to consider. But, as I think I have explained in some detail already, it is open to me, and it is a course I pursued, to apply a number of calculations to the revenue forecast in order simply to have a better picture of the quality of the tenders that had been put towards me.

#### **8.1.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

During the recent Home and Lifestyle Exhibition on his department's stand - which was rightly praised I should add - I think it said, Sir, that 82 per cent of what we dump could indeed be recycled, and as the Minister well knows, Sir, the figure of 32 per cent became an absolute article of faith in the summer's composting debate. Would he now say, Sir, having gone public and said 82 per cent could be recycled, that the Maginot Line that was set by the former and the current department was, indeed, utterly pessimistic and that he needs to revise his policy?

**Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

I am very grateful to the Deputy for raising the subject of the recent trade exhibition because I am very delighted that the Transport and Technical Services won the award for the best stand in the show. That is against notable local companies who are renowned for their marketing and public relations skills and I think it bestows great credit on all the members of the department who took part in that particular exercise. With respect to the 82 per cent figure, this is an aspirational figure and it is an understanding that high levels of recycling can indeed be achieved, but at what cost? This is the entire point that I am having extreme difficulty conveying to Scrutiny side. It is absolutely vital to understand that recycling and re-use is, of course, possible to a very high level of percentages, but it is the price of achieving that. I am quite satisfied that my department have come up with sensible, practical proposals about recycling, properly costed, and that they are achievable and we should set ourselves practical targets that can be attained and that is what I intend to do.

**8.1.4 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

Would the Minister not agree that it is only in the very higher level of recycling that costs come in? It is in the medium levels that there is a cost saving to recycling.

**Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

This is something of a myth that needs to be exploded. It is like saying: "Where there is muck there is brass." It might be true in some cases but it certainly does not apply to anything. There is very little value in recycling glass as far as this Island is concerned. There is very extensive cost to recycling fridges. There is a fantastic cost to recycling some areas of plastic and, in particular, hazardous style waste. Now I know that some Members of this House labour under this myth that as long as we stockpile vast quantities of plastic bottles and wait for the plastic market to swing in our favour we can all suddenly cash-in and our recycling programmes will be funded to infinity. It just simply is not the case, and we have to be realistic about it. Even the scrap metal market does not always pan out in favour of the private contractors who handle it for us, it is a difficult area but it is not one where anyone can expect to become rich and a lot of people in this Island suffer from that delusion.

**8.1.5 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

Would the Minister not agree, having made those comments, that in fact there is a cost of course to incineration or other disposal? In respect of glass there is the cost of creating new reclamation schemes and when you take it in the round, very often recycling does prove a saving.

**Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

I can assure the Deputy there is even a cost to getting out of bed in the morning. Yes, everything has costs attached to it and I am delighted with the progress that the Department is making, particularly, for example, in the recycling and re-use of wooden pallet boards. We have now developed things so far that we can now offer animal bedding as a part of the process. There is a private contractor who offers kindling wood, those are all various aspects of re-use and recycling. It is, and I have said this from the day I walked through the door at Transport and Technical Services, recycling is my number one priority. I regret to say that it comes at a cost at every single stage of the process. Yes, incineration does cost money but it is one of the more

economical ways of dealing with waste. There is a difference, and I remind Members, between incineration - simply burning - and what we do in Jersey, which is energy from waste. In other words, using the heat acquired from the burning process to run electricity generation. Now, it does not pay for everything but it gets some money back.

#### **8.1.6 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

There are signs around Springfield that the road works around that area have been completed 2 weeks ahead of schedule. Will there be any savings to the taxpayer as a result of this work being completed ahead of schedule and if not, why not?

#### **Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

I am afraid there is no money back aspect to the road scheduling contracts. The fact of the matter is that a certain number of weeks are normally allocated and within that time is a buffer period because one has to expect that there may be bad weather or whatever unexpected feature may come along to cause delay and disruption to a particular project. The fact that it has come in 2 weeks early is simply an indication that everybody has worked hard, that there have been no serious problems, and as far as I am concerned that is the bonus for the people of the Island; that the disruption has been kept to the minimum timeframe.

#### **8.1.7 Deputy R.C. Duhamel of St. Saviour:**

Will the Minister advise the House of the average cost of disposing one ton of mixed refuse through the incineration process?

#### **Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

I require notice of that question, but I will very happily let the Deputy know in due course, if he would care to email me.

#### **8.1.8 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

I think the Minister, and indeed the Chief Minister, made a statement that the Transport and Travel Strategy will be put in front of us before the end of the year. Could he confirm the actual date on which it will be put in front of us and could he confirm whether it will follow a green paper format, i.e. all the clear options will be researched and presented?

#### **Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

I had hoped to put it in front of the Council of Ministers last week but unfortunately the agenda was slightly disrupted due to unexpected circumstances. As a result of that Members may obviously come to the conclusion that it will be presented to the Council of Ministers at their next meeting, which is what is planned, and thereafter it will become effectively open house as far as I am concerned. I want it to be treated as a green paper or as a consultative document because I am very anxious that Members - both Scrutiny and otherwise - will want to have a look at it and I want to also emphasise that I am open for additional contributions from Members as they wish.

#### **8.1.9 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

Does the Minister agree that the current level of graffiti in the Island is unacceptable and will the Minister undertake to remove all graffiti from Transport and Technical Services property and agree to prosecute anyone caught so doing?

#### **Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

I am not particularly aware of the amount of graffiti in the Island. Frankly speaking, I do not see very much of it. What I am aware of and what I was concerned about at the time when the issue of graffiti was first brought to me by the local media was that I issued a warning to the

publication involved that the very fact of publishing photographs of graffiti of itself would encourage further graffiti to be put into place, because it was effectively giving the oxygen of publicity for people who deliberately seek that sort of thing. I very much regret to say that as a consequence of ignoring my advice and proceeding with, quite frankly, a not very interesting and barely relevant storyline, the level of graffiti has subsequently risen because you may have a chance of having your work of art displayed in the pages of the local newspaper. I find the entire subject really unhelpful and I regret that the Deputy has given yet further promotion to the work of these particular characters.

**8.1.10 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

A Site of Special Interest to the Minister would be the pumping station at the Dicq Slip, which was devastated by graffiti a matter of weeks after being completely repainted. Part of it at the moment on the steps has been graffitied with obscenities and if the Minister will not do anything about it I will be quite prepared tonight after this sitting to go down with white paint and sort it out.

**Deputy G.W.J. de Faye:**

I am very grateful to the Deputy for his contribution to our work, Sir. [Laughter]

**The Bailiff:**

That completes the first question period.