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STATES OF JERSEY

YOUTH ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL REPORT

TUESDAY, 15th MARCH 2016

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[13:32]

The Roll was called and Mr. D. Hodnett led the Assembly in Prayer.

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

1. Welcome to Members of the Youth Assembly

The Bailiff:

But you can speak in English if you would rather. I expect you will want to do, I am quite sure Ministers would much prefer you to speak in English, but prayers in French and those few opening words in French do say something about our history, our culture, our differences. In a parliament, the debates are usually about the problems of today and what we should do to make tomorrow better, so let us not forget yesterday in reaching the right decision. There is always a reason to be where you are. Sometimes it is a good reason and sometimes it is not a good reason, but in my view, to make good decisions for the future it requires an awareness of why we are where we are. At Question Time, this is the prime time for you to be able to put Ministers on the spot to justify just why we are where we are and I know they are looking forward to that. We come to the first question, which Francesca Germain of Jersey College for Girls will ask of the Minister for External Relations regarding the U.K.'s (United Kingdom) referendum on the European Union. Ms. Germain.

QUESTIONS

2. Oral Questions

2.1 Ms. F. Germain of Jersey College for Girls of the Minister for External Relations regarding ...

Good afternoon. Mr. Senator Bailhache, what impact, if any, will the U.K.'s referendum on the European Union have on Jersey?

Senator P.M. Bailhache (The Minister for External Relations):

We are not ourselves seeking any change to our formal relationship with the European Union, a relationship which is set out in Protocol 3 of the United Kingdom's Accession Treaty, but whether the U.K. decides to stay in or to leave the European Union, we will seek to protect the interests of Jersey. In the event of a U.K. vote to remain, there will be no direct impact for Jersey. Our existing relationship with the E.U. (European Union) through Protocol 3 will continue. If the U.K. were, however, to vote to leave the E.U., there would be at least 2 years of negotiations between the U.K. and the E.U. to determine the terms of the U.K.'s new relationship with the European Union, a relationship to replace membership, and quite possibly it would take longer. The impact on Jersey will be determined by the form of this new relationship, as well as the extent we want to and are able to participate in those discussions. We are working to ensure that we are consulted as closely as possible by the U.K. throughout this process so that in due course we can make an informed judgment about the most effective way of protecting our interests.

The Bailiff:

A supplementary?

2.1.1 Ms. F. Germain:

Thank you. Years ago it was mainly tourism and agriculture that helped the economy. However, since then the finance industry has become a major economic booster for the Island. With regard to the E.U. referendum and the debate and the fact that the finance industry in Jersey has many connections to places around the E.U., how do you think this will affect Jersey financially and economically?

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

I am so sorry, Sir, I am sure this is my fault, but I had some difficulty in hearing part of that question, but I understood it to be a question as to the economic consequences of leaving the European Union.

The Bailiff:

Economic and financial, Minister.

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

Financial consequences. It is a question that is difficult to answer and it is a question which many people in the United Kingdom are asking themselves at this very moment. Those who favour the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, who favour a Brexit, would say that the economic consequences of leaving would be beneficial for the United Kingdom, it would be freed from many of the constraints to which it is subject as a member state of the E.U. and that it would have the ability to develop its economy in a way untrammelled by European rules. On the other hand, those who argue against a Brexit say that the future would be very uncertain; all that would be certain would in effect be the uncertainty, and uncertainty is a bad thing for financial services in particular. Investors would not be prepared to invest in the United Kingdom if they were uncertain as to what kind of relationship the U.K. would have with the E.U. and that would be bad for business, bad for employment and bad for profits.

The Bailiff:

Minister, you are being asked for your view.

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

My own view is I have to say that as a Jerseyman, I do not have a right to vote in the referendum in the United Kingdom. If I did have a vote and I had Jersey's interests in mind, I would certainly vote to remain in the European Union. To leave the European Union would place Jersey in a position where the uncertainty afflicting the United Kingdom markets would affect Jersey and that, I think, would not be good for our financial services industry and would not be good for Jersey either.

The Bailiff:

Are there any further supplementary questions? Yes, Mr. Hodnett.

2.1.2 Mr. D. Hodnett:

Having referenced Protocol 3 and the Treaty of Accession, I would like to ask Senator Bailhache, should the U.K. remain part of the European community after the forthcoming referendum, would the States consider revising and updating Protocol 3 to omit drawbacks, such as the designation of the Islander passport status to individuals who have neither parents or grandparents from the U.K., meaning they would be granted equal rights to settle and work in Europe?

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

It would be very nice to think that we were able to revise Protocol 3 in that way. Over the decades since the United Kingdom entered the European Union, there have been many questions in this Assembly seeking to persuade Ministers that steps should be taken to amend the protocol in this way. The truth of the matter is that the amendment of the protocol is something that would require the assent of every single member state of the European Union. There are now 28 member states and any one of those member states would be in a position to say to Jersey: "If you want to change the protocol so as to allow Channel Islanders to have free access to Europe, then you must give us certain privileges in return." The things that might be demanded of Jersey in exchange for such a

change to the protocol would be very likely to be things that were not in Jersey's interests. Sadly, I have to say that the interests of the 6,000 or 7,000 people in Jersey who do have this stamp in their passport have to take second place to the interests of the community as a whole.

Mr. D. Hodnett:

In your notes in the agenda you have said: "We are working to ensure that we are consulted as closely as possible to the U.K. throughout this process to make an informed judgment for protecting our interests." In 1973, I think it was, when the U.K. was negotiating on behalf of Jersey, Protocol 3 contained this flaw, which meant that the passport stamp had to be implemented.

[13:45]

Would it not be wise to proactively, in dealing with the U.K., make sure that they are aware of this flaw in the protocol so that it can be addressed if there was a referendum whether or not the U.K. retained its membership in the E.U.?

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

It is an interesting question and it is a good point to make, that if the United Kingdom votes in favour of Brexit, then of course Protocol 3, which is part of the United Kingdom's Treaty of Accession to the European Union, will fall away and therefore the revision which governs special arrangements for Channel Islanders and their access to the European Union will also fall away. So if the United Kingdom votes for Brexit, then those with stamps in their passport will be in the happy position of not having the stamps in their passport. Unfortunately, the rest of the community - and that might include those with stamps in their passport - will be in the position of not having access to the European Union either.

The Bailiff:

90-second rule, Minister. A final supplementary, Ms. Germain? Do you wish to ask the last question or not?

Ms. F. Germain:

No, thank you, but thank you for your answer.

The Bailiff:

Thank you. We come to question 2, which Ms. Yettram will ask of the Minister for Housing.

2.2 Ms. J. Yettram of Jersey College for Girls of the Minister for Housing regarding ...

If the States are really concerned with reducing congestion on the roads and improving the environment, why is the bus service not free for all school students?

Deputy E.J. Noel of St. Lawrence (The Minister for Housing - rapporteur):

The Minister for Infrastructure gives his apologies, he is out of the Island, so I drew the short straw, but it is a pleasure to be answering this question. The school bus service is expensive to provide. It is operated by a large number of vehicles that are mostly not needed for normal services during the rest of the day or at weekends and in school holidays. These buses travel special routes to pick up as close to students' homes as possible. Because of this, they generally cannot be integrated into commercial routes and require a subsidy. School buses cost nearly £1.5 million per year to operate. In 2015, almost 380,000 passengers were carried, but with a fare currently at 75 pence per journey, the total revenue covers just under one-fifth of this cost, thus the subsidy provided to taxpayers to the school bus network equates to 80 per cent of the cost or £3.09 per passenger journey. The States have to balance how they spend taxpayers' money against many competing priorities, such

as health, education, emergency services, protecting our environment and the maintenance of infrastructure.

The Bailiff:

90-second rule, Minister.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I will just finish this paragraph then, Sir. Free bus fares could generate some transfer of school journeys from car to bus, but there is necessarily only a limited amount of money available, so without the income for fares, the States would ultimately be only able to fund 80 per cent of the current school bus service.

The Bailiff:

Ms. Yettram, do you have a supplementary question? No. Yes, Ms. Waddington.

2.2.1 Ms. B. Waddington:

Does the Minister have any other plans to reduce congestion?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Yes, there is a travel strategy and the main aims of that is obviously to get people out of the cars and either walking or cycling to their work or school. One is increasing car parking charges, but as you can imagine, that is not very favourable; restriction on the provision of private parking spaces, so that again will encourage people to use the bus or cycle or walk; better facilities for walkers and cyclists and also continuing the bus service, and again making more shelters so when people do wait in bad weather at least they will not be open to the elements.

The Bailiff:

Are there any further questions for the Minister? Very well. Then we come on to question 3, which Mr. Deacon will ask of Deputy Pinel.

2.3 Mr. L. Deacon of De La Salle College of the Minister for Social Security regarding ...

Why has the Minister chosen to cut support for people with disabilities, single parents and pensioners, despite surveys showing that poverty is on the rise in Jersey?

Deputy S.J. Pinel of St. Clement (The Minister for Social Security):

Thank you, Mr. Deacon, for your question. All States departments are making significant savings to their budgets as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan, the financial plan that is used to balance tax income with public spending over the next 4 years, up to 2019. As part of this plan, the Social Security Department was asked to make £10 million worth of savings. The decision to make any savings against benefit budgets is especially difficult. As part of the overall plan, Ministers also decided that it was essential to make significant investments in education and health. We had to balance the importance of investing in schools and the health service against the money we spend elsewhere. As far as possible, we have chosen to hold benefit levels at current rates, rather than make reductions in existing payments. The recent survey of incomes did show an increased gap between higher and lower income households compared to 2009. However, the survey does not provide a measure of poverty, it reports on relative low income. The relative low income threshold in Jersey in 2014/15 for a couple was £410 per week before housing costs. The department is committed to helping people to achieve and maintain financial independence and to provide well-targeted support to people who cannot support themselves fully.

The Bailiff:

Do you have a supplementary question?

2.3.1 Mr. L. Deacon:

You mentioned that there was a bigger increase between high earners and low earners. Is there anything being done to rectify this inequality in society?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

If I understood the question correctly, I think the inequality in society, which there will always be in any society in which one lives across the world. With the income support situation, as I said in my opening remarks, it has mainly been staying at a steady pace as opposed to being increased, rather than reduced, although in some situations, in some benefits, there have been reductions.

The Bailiff:

Are there any further questions for the Minister?

2.3.2 Ms. B. Terry-Marchant:

Deputy, you said that as far as possible you are holding benefits at a steady rate instead of decreasing them, but surely with rising inflation over the years, this will essentially equate for the benefit recipients to a decrease in their benefits, which this cannot be a favourable outcome for anyone?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Thank you for your question. I think holding the benefits at current levels at this particular point in time, where there is relatively little or no inflation in retail prices, is a reasonable thing to achieve and they are only being held for the next 2 years. They will be revisited after that from the income support perspective.

2.3.3 Mr. Polly:

Before the Minister has mentioned that it was essentially to make significant investments in education and health. Surely if you are wanting to improve health, the worst thing you could do is cut benefits to some of the most vulnerable people in the Island, who are going to need to healthcare if their benefits are cut?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

The investment in health has already been made in one way with the introduction of long-term care, which we introduced in 2014. That is to allow people to retain mainly their main asset, which is usually their house, to be cared for in their own home if they wish to do so, and if not, to be able to be cared for in a residential or nursing home. So a big investment has already been made in that. The reduction, as I said to the previous questioner, in income support is merely holding it steady. The other reductions in benefits are largely to provide fairness across the system. For instance, the lone parent benefit was not fair in equation to couples with a child and so the whole reduction in benefits that we have made to date has been to improve equality and balance across the system.

The Bailiff:

Mr. Deacon, do you have a final supplementary question? No. Then we come to question 4, which Mr. Dorris will ask of the Connétable of St. Peter, the Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services.

2.4 Mr. C. Dorris of De La Salle College of the Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services regarding ...

Why has it taken so much time and money to decide a location for the new hospital, despite the assistance from U.K. experts?

Connétable J.M. Refault of St. Peter (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services):

Thank you, Mr. Dorris. Certainly the members of this Youth Assembly today would have received a table which set out the timeline of the activities which have gone on since 2012 and summarised the extensive work that has been undertaken in trying to find the correct location for our new hospital. One should not underestimate the amount of work it takes to find and develop the right type of site for a hospital. We need to be involving people such as architects, healthcare planners, construction experts, transport planners, cost accountants and of course clinical and other staff that would in time need to run the hospital if that option were to be proposed. This is the case for any hospital built anywhere in the world. In addition, all of the work for the new hospital site needs to be independently assured by those same experts who have not been involved in that development. Given the importance and cost to the Island of any of the hospital locations, the outputs of all this work need to progress through a challenging and rigorous process of governance involving a project board, ministerial oversight group, Council of Ministers, Scrutiny Panel, and finally the States Assembly. Unfortunately, this all does take time.

Connétable L. Norman of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Are there any supplementary questions for the Assistant Minister? For such an important topic, I thought there might have been. You are not letting him get away that easily, are you? It seems as though you are. Mr. Le Dain.

2.4.1 Mr. Le Dain:

I was just wondering if I could ask the Minister, the hospital site, it is proposed that it could be built on the site where the hospital currently is. I was wondering what would be the plans for people in high-dependency units if this were decided to be the best case situation?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

A very good question. This is something that obviously we looked at very closely when we looked originally at the dual site option, how much could we develop on the site and at the same time develop some new facilities outside at Overdale. Unfortunately, if we do try to rebuild onsite, the programme timeline increases to about 10 to 12 years and effectively patients in the hospital would have to endure being treated on effectively a building site for almost all of that period of time. The cost that we will incur for that extended timeline significantly contributes to the overall cost. It is unfortunate that people of your generation will be paying that bill, you will be working before we even finish building that hospital and you will be having to contribute to that bill. The optimum is a green site - or sorry, an undeveloped site - where we can get on quickly and get the building done

in a period of around about 6 to 7 years maximum. That would be the optimum that we would like to achieve, if at all possible. Thank for those very good questions.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Any further questions for the Assistant Minister? Yes, Ms. Waddington.

2.4.2 Ms. B. Waddington:

If the People's Park was such a good site, why was it removed and was it not kept on to be considered if it was a good site?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Again, another excellent question. Certainly I think one needs to think about in life do you use emotion to make your decisions or do you need proper rational argument to come to those decisions? Unfortunately for all of us, we are tied to things in our past and people become very attuned and very precious about things that are precious to them in their lifetime. It became very clear to us that although the People's Park would have potentially delivered the best possible site for a hospital financially and for the co-adjacencies that we need, the passion for retaining the park as a park was greater than people's need for the hospital on that site. There are other sites we can build a hospital. They may not perform so well, but they will still be excellent hospitals in their own right, maybe with other complications, but that is where we will end up at some stage in the very near future, hopefully.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Any further supplementaries? Yes, Mr. Power.

[14:00]

2.4.3 Mr. K. Power:

One of the problems with choosing the hospital site is the argument that we would not be able to reclaim any space. If we take People's Park or any of the other sites, we would lose that green space, yet it was reported in the paper the other day that one of the Millbrook fields might be turned into a car park. How can the Environment Department justify taking more green space when in fact we need to replace some that we are about to lose?

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I cannot quite link Millbrook Park to the hospital site, but you are right. That was one of the arguments, was could we provide other green space. Yes, we could. The current hospital site, for example, we had already worked on some potential plans for converting that hospital site into a park more closely aligned to the middle of town, closing Parade Road and diverting traffic, widening Kensington Place, taking traffic straight the way down Kensington Place and then turning left through Patriotic Street into Gloucester Street, so it would have made a contiguous park there right the way through that western part of the town, right the way up to the Cenotaph. So there are ways it can be done, but what we cannot ignore is the passion that was being clearly shown for the retention of People's Park as it was and the need to retain that, irrespective of what else we could deliver. It became obvious to the Council of Ministers and to Members in this Chamber when we had a debate in here that that debate was going to fail and therefore that was not considered good use of our time to fight a fight which we knew we could not win at that particular stage. Thank you for your question.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Do you wish a final supplementary, Mr. Dorris? Okay, thank you. In that case, I will ask Mr. Houillebecq, who will ask a question of Senator Farnham, Minister for Economic Development, regarding recreational sport in the Island.

2.5 Mr. A. Houillebecq of Hautlieu School of the Minister for Economic Development regarding ...

Minister, what additional efforts, if any, has the Minister made to promote sport in the Island, especially after the legacy of both the Olympic and the Island Games?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

The legacy of the Island Games identified 4 themes: Profile Jersey, Active Jersey, Facilities Jersey and Community Jersey. Profile Jersey set out to use the games to raise the profile of Jersey both internally and externally and contribute to the growth of the economy, building upon the success of the games. Officers from Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture are working with organisers of future sporting events that will take place in Jersey. I am pleased to report today that in 2016, in addition to the many regular sporting events, Jersey will host a World Division 5 cricket league tournament involving Jersey and 5 other countries from across the world; the Dance World Cup, with over 3,000 participants and the European Touch Rugby Championships, with up to 1,000 visiting participants from over 20 countries. It is estimated that these events will occupy at least 25,000 bed nights and bring in over £3 million for the local economy. Active Jersey set out to use games to help the Jersey community to be more physically active and involved with sport. Extra funding was secured to employ staff to work with sports clubs, in primary schools and in the community to provide more opportunities for young people to take part in sport and physical activity. The recently-published report for 2015 has shown a significant increase in programmes and the number of people taking them up. Facilities Jersey used the games as an opportunity to upgrade and improve facilities and equipment for the benefit of locals and visitors beyond attending the games and beyond 2015. These works included the refurbishment of the F.B. fields, an athletics track with a new stand, jumping areas, floodlights and changing facilities and a new 3G football pitch laid at Springfield with new floodlights. Community Jersey used the games to engage the whole community through sport, culture and participation and learning in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way since the games culture and sport organisations have worked more closely together and are planning joint initiatives to further develop their activities and events.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Thank you, Minister. Are there any supplementary questions? Ms. Pollard.

2.5.1 Ms. C. Pollard:

You say £3 million was brought into the local economy based on these events. Everyone knows that obesity levels are often highest in the lowest areas of income and it is fantastic that facilities are being refurbished and I can see it in Haute Vallee, but one of the biggest problems is then the States are charging the local sporting clubs using that facility far too much than they can afford. How do you combat this?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I would say that I think, to the best of my knowledge, the States are charging very reasonable rates to sporting clubs. We give over £500,000 in grants to sporting clubs to help them with their activities, so I am not aware of any over-charging. I think that we offer excellent value. The taxpayer does subsidise a lot of these facilities and the community will benefit significantly from the investment in the infrastructure that we receive from the Island Games, but of course I would be

pleased to hear of any concern about charges, and if they are too high, I will certainly look into them.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Any further supplementary questions? Do you wish to ask the last question, Mr. Houillebecq, were you satisfied?

2.5.2 Mr. A. Houillebecq:

Minister, the position of Athletics Development Officer has been empty for around 18 months now. Do you believe that leaving positions such as this open and empty is a hindrance to the development of sport compared to sports such as football and rugby, and if so, what will the Minister do to personally ensure that sports are not left behind?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

The Sports Development Team, which currently the States fund to the tune of £1.2 million per annum, which consists of 10 full and part-time staff, is extremely important for the development of all sport through the spectrum. I am a member of Jersey Spartan Athletics Club. I am not quite up to the standard. I passed the standard where a development officer could help me, but I was not aware that the position had been empty for 18 months, so that is something I am going to look into and if there is a gap that needs filling urgently, we will address it.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

The next question is from Mr. Richard Allo of Hautlieu, who will ask the Minister for Home Affairs a question regarding the use of legal highs.

2.6 Mr. R. Allo of Hautlieu School of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding ...

Minister, if any, what actions are being planned to tackle the use of illegal substances and the growing problem of so-called legal highs in the Island?

Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Peter (The Minister for Home Affairs):

One of my central strategies as Minister for Home Affairs concerns community safety and substance misuse. This is called: “The Building of a Safer Society” known as the B.A.S.S. strategy. The strategy has recently been updated, and following some independent research into drugs in the Island, has some key objectives about minimising the harm to individuals and to families and communities caused by drugs and alcohol. B.A.S.S. is an inter-agency strategy and necessitates close partnership working with many agencies and individuals to make it successful. I should say at this point that the term “legal high” is no longer commonly used and is a misnomer here in Jersey, as most of the substances that are imported are banned very quickly, becoming Class A or Class B. New Psychoactive Substances, are they are now referred to, can contain illegal compounds and are in that case very dangerous. The States of Jersey Police and Customs and Immigration Services, as well as the Health and Services Department, Probation and the States Analyst are some of the representatives of the Misuse of Drugs Strategy Advisory Council, which makes legislative recommendations to local government on drug matters. One aspect currently being examined by the council is the potential for new legislation to combat the threat of N.P.S. (New Psychoactive Substances), possibly similar to the current U.K. Psychoactive Substances Bill. One of the outcomes from the strategy following the recommendations from the drug research will be the formation of a Drug and Alcohol Action Team, known as a D.A.T.T. This will be a dedicated multi-agency group which will oversee the substance misuse objectives and take the necessary action to address our drugs issue in the Island.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Are there any supplementary questions for the Minister? Yes, Mr. Allo.

2.6.1 Mr. R. Allo:

What specific necessary actions will be taken by the Drug and Alcohol Action Team?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

As I said, the Drug and Alcohol Action Team has not yet been set up, but it will be in the very near future and it will oversee substance misuse objectives and look at the issues such as introducing the potential Bill changing the legislation.

2.6.2 Ms. Terry-Marchant:

Sorry to run all around, but you say you will be setting up a Drug and Alcohol Action Team, but to me this just seems to be in keeping with the long-held political tradition of setting up committees and teams to discuss things. You say they are going to be overseeing objectives and taking action, but there does not seem to be any discussion of what the action will be or what these objectives are when the problem of legal highs - or New Psychoactive Substances, as you call them - has been around for a few years now. Surely you should have some idea of what you want this team to do.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

That is a very fair point. It is very difficult sometimes to get across what happens in the background and perhaps we need to work a little more on communicating the work that a lot of these groups do behind the scenes, because one thing that I have learnt in doing this job is how very important it is to get the people in the room who have the knowledge and the professional experience of conducting their role. Whether it might be in law enforcement or from a health perspective, it is so vital to get those people from different perspectives into a room so they can thrash out the best way forward for the community. Sometimes that is a difficult process, because if somebody is coming from a health perspective, it might not sit naturally with that view of a person from a law enforcement process. So it is important to have these groups. They are not just talking shops, but they do get to the nub of an argument and they do drive things forward to a ministerial point where we are able to make decisions. It is part of the process, and I can appreciate your frustration, but I do genuinely think that it is a positive feather in our cap. Things are being progressed and there are different groups such as Prison! Me! No Way!!! which has recently launched the Legal Highs Exposed campaign, which has gone out to schools, approaching parents as well as students. There is a high-profile campaign going on on the back of buses at the moment and so I think there are many things going on simultaneously.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Thank you for that very full response, Minister, but I could remind Members, there is a lot of people wanting to ask questions, so if we can keep the answers as succinct as possible, please. Mr. Shirley.

2.6.3 Mr. C. Shirley:

Thank you. I would just like to ask the Minister, reading here about the Building of a Safer Society, or B.A.S.S., as you call it, you outlined that the initiative has some key objectives about minimising the harm to individuals' families and communities. Would the Minister be able to elaborate on such objectives and is there a timescale in place in which we could then judge how well these objectives have been met?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

As I mentioned in my original answer, the B.A.S.S. strategy has recently been reinvigorated, republished, and it does go back over the parameters that were set in the previous strategy and it

marks and gives indications as to how well progressed each aspect of the strategy is doing. I do not have it in front of me, unfortunately, and because of its nature, it covers a great variety of different aspects of life in the community, not just focusing on drugs and N.P.S. So I am unable to exactly point to that particular objective, for which I apologise, but I can get you the information. It will be on our website. It is something that we are very much aware of.

2.6.4 Ms. E. Wetherall:

Do you think that the concentration on legal highs is perhaps making people think that normal drugs, illegal drugs, are okay and that there is less emphasis on stopping other drugs and more emphasis on the legal highs?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I very much hope not. Class A and B drugs remain that and are highly illegal. I think perhaps the emphasis has, rightly so, been on N.P.S. lately because of the dire circumstances that we see people experiencing when they do take these drugs, so I think that there has been a great need to change the perception and understanding within the community so that it is fully understood how dangerous these N.P.S. substances are.

2.6.5 Ms. B. Waddington:

The Minister talked about alcohol, but does the Minister have any plans to combat binge-drinking?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

There has been a great deal done in relation to alcohol, particularly with the States of Jersey Police, who in the past few years have set up a licensing team. They are a dedicated team who go out in the evenings and also they engage with people on the street and they also engage with publicans and landlords around the Island to ensure that people are drinking safely in establishments. Obviously we cannot enter into people's homes and monitor their drinking before they go out, but there is also another route, the Shadow Alcohol Licensing Police Group, which your neighbour will be pleased to hear about, I am sure, who focus on issues around alcohol.

[14:15]

2.6.6 Mr. K. Power:

The Minister mentioned the incredibly important work of the States of Jersey Police and the Customs and Immigration Service in combating the New Psychoactive Substances. However, there does not seem to be any sort of discussion of the new liberal ideas that are being introduced by the Liberal Democrats in many countries around the world, which are saying that the war on drugs is failing. There seems to be an extension of police crackdown and that has not really worked in the past, so I am wondering if there is any discussion of safer alternatives through the legal highs that could be discussed?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Thank you for that interesting question. There is a great deal of reporting at the moment about the situation, particularly in the U.S. (United States) with the legalisation of cannabis in some states. That is something that we are watching with great interest. I think it is very much early days, but talks have been held with the Chief Medical Officer, who is very knowledgeable on the subject, and it is an issue that is regularly discussed.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

A final supplementary, Mr. Uttutia?

2.6.7 Mr. R. Uttutia:

The Deputy mentioned early on Prison! Me! No Way!!! in combating and educating children on legal highs. Will the Drug and Alcohol Action Team be working in conjunction with the Prison! Me! No Way!!! team or will it be separate and not really conversing with them?

The Deputy of St. Peter:

That is a very good question. I do not have the exact answer, but as I said before, a lot of these groups do bring together people from different groups. That is the whole point, to make sure that we are not duplicating work and effort across the States of Jersey, that we are in fact providing a sensible flow of work and attention to these issues. So if there is not an absolute member of Prison! Me! No Way!!! on the Drug and Alcohol Action Team, then there will be somebody who will be the link person between those 2 groups so that they are aware of the work that each is conducting.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

When a telephone goes off in the Chamber, there is normally a significant fine, which the Greffier is happy to collect and pass to a charity at the end of the year. Do you wish a final supplementary? Thank you. We will move on to the next question, which Luke Glover of Victoria College will ask the Assistant Chief Minister, Senator Paul Routier, about immigration levels. Mr. Glover.

2.7 Mr. L. Glover of Victoria College of the Assistant Chief Minister regarding ...

Mr. Routier, have excessive immigration levels led to undesirable social and economic impacts, such as congestion, a downturn in wages and pressure on local infrastructure.

Senator P.F. Routier:

2 factors are driving population growth in Jersey; migration and our ageing population. Since 2001 the number of Jersey residents aged over 65 has increased by 35 per cent to over 16,000. By 2035 this figure will have reached 28,000. The major challenge this poses for health costs, pensions and tax revenue will be compounded if Jersey's workforce decreases at the same time. With net nil migration retirees will quickly outpace the number of people starting work. Rising costs would be borne by a workforce that would shrink by 11 per cent by 2035. That means increasing taxes, reduced public services which might persuade businesses and workers to relocate elsewhere. Many places will compete for them as they see skilled workers as a solution to the ageing society challenge. London, for example, is planning a 15 per cent population increase by 2030. Importantly these places recognise that part of their attraction must be the quality of life they offer. Increasing population and a better quality of life are not seen as mutually exclusive. We need an informed debate about Jersey's capacity for future growth that challenges current preconceptions and behaviours. The issues raised today provide useful examples. Peak hour traffic flows in St. Helier decreased by 1.7 per cent between 2009 and 2013. There is scope to do more. The 2011 census showed that 24 per cent of people living and working in St. Helier commuted by car. Forty per cent of all commuters drove to work in an otherwise empty car. The key pressure on Jersey wages in recent years has been the impact of global economic conditions. Migration can play a vital role in kick-starting high value added emerging sectors creating jobs, driving productivity and thereby increasing wages. Pressures on infrastructure are often the result of its age and the demands placed upon by it by Jersey's existing population and our lifestyle choices, for example Jersey currently recycles about 30 per cent of its waste. Singapore aims to recycle 70 per cent by 2030. Since 2009 immigration has sustained the size of Jersey's working age population. Perhaps the best gauge of its broader impact is Jersey's residents' ranking of life satisfaction. Since this measure was introduced in 2012 Jersey's rating of 7 and a half over 10 has recently compared with the best among the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Are there any supplementary questions for the Assistant Chief Minister?

2.7.1 Mr. L. Glover:

With the ageing population becoming more and more of a problem are the States doing enough to encourage our university students to return to the Island on completion of their degree?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Firstly, I would like to just challenge the description of the ageing population being a problem. It is something I believe we should celebrate because people are living a lot longer and the Chair has quietly identified that he is among that group of people and I am as well. This is my last term in this Assembly. The serious point about encouraging young people to come back to our Island is something which we need to address and to ensure that Jersey is recognised as being a wonderful place to live. I think the recent survey that was carried out does show that Jersey is appreciated as being a fabulous place to live. It is safe. It is a good place to bring up a family and I think if we can achieve that ... but we also have to ensure that we have the right jobs available obviously but that is the diversification of our economy with regard to moving from the finance industry to digital economy and also there are other things in hospitality and retail which are all attractive places to work.

2.7.2 Mr. A. Allo:

Minister, you mentioned that the ageing population within Jersey is going to bring various benefits and will include the idea of reduced crime in areas and allow the celebration of the grey pound. You mentioned that the number of Jersey residents aged over 65 has increased by 35 per cent. Aside from immigration and the strategies that you already have in place are there any future developments which are yet to come?

Senator P.F. Routier:

That is a very good and challenging question. What we are currently doing is we are setting out on a programme of work which is to look at the whole future of our Island and over the last week or so there have been 3 workshops which have attracted a number of organisations from across our community to think about our future. What I would really love to be able to do is to ensure that the younger generation is involved in that, forming our future. What we need to ensure is we have an Island which appreciates what our younger generation wants; not necessarily what the older generation wants. We need to provide an island which yourselves would love to continue to live in Jersey and being able to provide a good community for you to live in. I am sorry that is not a direct answer to the question but that gives a general overview of what we are planning to do.

2.7.3 Ms. H. Hemaya:

You said that retirees will quickly outpace the number of people starting work but with the improving health facilities and care available in Jersey people now retire later to keep up with the expenses. So how do you suggest that this issue will be overcome?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I think what we need to do ... we are not going to do anything about the ... we are going to encourage people to live as long as they possibly can obviously and we have got to ensure that our health services are appropriate for their needs. What we need to do is to ensure that we have a generation which is going to come along to carry out all the work that is required to ensure we can support the older generation. We have to make it an attractive place to work in Jersey and to bring up families and to pay taxes to pay for the services. There is a general move to ensure that we want to have Jersey as a great place to live.

2.7.4 Mr. Urrutia:

Regarding the Senator's comment in his opening statement on the anecdote of congestion; how 40 per cent of commuters drive to work in an otherwise empty car. What do the States plan to do about this?

Senator P.F. Routier:

This is a question which is, to a certain extent, out of my remit because I focus on social policy. Certainly I am aware that the Minister for Infrastructure and the Constable of St. Helier do have some ideas to ensure that St. Helier is an easier place to get to. There are, hopefully, strategies which will be coming forward with regard to transport which will ensure that people, when they need to use a car will use a car but when they do not need to use a car they do not and perhaps they cycle and they walk as much as they possibly can.

2.7.5 Mr. Morley-Kirk:

I think it is undeniable and I do agree with you when you say that we need more immigrants to support an ageing population. However, I would not say it is sustainable and I would like to ask, what are you going to do when those immigrants then themselves age and become retired, living in Jersey?

Senator P.F. Routier:

If we need to have people working in our community we have got to ensure that they are contributing to our community in a good way, whether they be providing social services or in high value jobs paying lots of taxes and we have to do it in a measured way. We have not got a policy which is all encompassing. If people want to come to the Island they are more than welcome. I have to say that I have responsibility for approving licences along with other ministerial colleagues. We sit on a fortnightly basis making decisions about licence applications and we were looking at figures earlier today about the refusals that we have made. Of the applications that have been made for people to come to our Island to join businesses we have refused half of them but they are tough decisions to be made and we need to do it in a balanced and appropriate way. We are welcoming to people who are going to contribute to our Island and be able to continue to be that. The point about people will be obviously contributing to the older generation in the future is something we have got to be aware of and if we do agree that people are going to come to the Island we need to do that in a measured way.

2.7.6 Ms. E. Wetherall:

Do you think that immigration is having an effect on local education because people coming in, especially like Portuguese and Polish with their younger children, they tend to speak their own languages at home so the children go into education not knowing how to speak the English language? So does that affect our local students that have lived, were born in the Island, have parents that were born in the Island and they come and they are stuck in a school with children that do not speak the same language as them?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I understand the issue with regard to education having the children who have English as a second language as a challenge for them which they are facing. They are facing it very well. They know they need to put in extra resources. This Assembly has agreed extra resources for the Education Department to deal with that. I have to say that an inclusive society, that I hope we have in Jersey, is something that we should all be proud of and we do need to have people come to our community and to do the jobs that perhaps some of our community do not want to do. So we have a history of welcoming people to our Island and if the children of those families do require additional resources

to help them with their education we have a duty to provide that and we also need to ensure that the people who are indigenous to our Island also ensure that their education is of a high quality and I believe we have a very good education system for everybody and we should continue to have that.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Do you have a final supplementary, Mr. Glover? Well, now we turn to Mr. William Ingle of Victoria College who will ask the Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services, Deputy Peter McLinton, a question regarding support for young people with mental health issues.

2.8 Mr. W. Ingle of Victoria College of the Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services regarding ...

What additional support, if any, has been put in place for younger people suffering with mental health issues and does the Minister consider this to be sufficient?

[14:30]

Deputy P.D. McLinton of St. Saviour (Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services):

Thank you, Mr. Ingle, for a very excellent question. The Mental Health Strategy for Jersey 2016 through 2020 was formally launched in November 2015. The strategy included commitment to place a greater focus on early intervention with children and young people and develop services to specifically address their needs with less need to resort to residential solutions. Develop the role of specific services to provide early intervention and support the children and young people who have experienced adverse childhood events, including trauma and abuse. Work with multi-agency support teams in schools and colleges to develop an education based programme of mental health and wellbeing awareness raising. Now, there are a number of current issues that support children's and young people's mental health across health and social care. Schools and the wider community, taken together, they represent a system of support for young people with mental health issues. These include school-based services led by educational psychologists which also include a wellbeing team and emotional literacy support assistance and school-based counsellors. Community based services, the voluntary sector, which include the Youth Enquiry Service, known as Y.E.S., that runs a one-stop drop-in centre, it is a one-stop shop drop-in centre, not too easy to say, Barnardo's Leaving Care Service and Support provided by the N.S.P.C.C. (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) and Mind Jersey. The specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service provides community-based assessment and intervention for those children, young people and their families with more complex mental health needs. C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) continues to be an extremely busy service currently supporting around 600 families. Several actions have also been taken to help prevent suicide and self-harming including greater investment in staff training and increasing the availability of web-based information designed to support emotional health and wellbeing. A new suicide risk management programme connecting with people is to be introduced shortly.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Were there any supplementary questions?

2.8.1 Mr. R. Allo:

The current C.A.M.H.S. service, as you say, Minister, is extremely helpful to those adolescents requiring support who are under 18 years of age. However, these people are discharged at the age of 18 and considering that mental health issues prove to be a highly significant area of concern among young people are there considerations about the possible extension of C.A.M.H.S. either within the current system and service or about the creation of a subsidiary for individuals reaching

up to the age of 20 who already might be used to the service already being provided for them and comfortable with what they are receiving?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

Thank you. An excellent question and something that I was in conversation the other day about and the conversation went something along the lines of: “It is ridiculous to say up to the age of 18 here is your help and at 18 suddenly you do not need the help anymore” and so what we are looking to do is move it so it becomes much more of a process, an umbrella like process, to keep people feeling safe and cared for and if you like mitring far more carefully and far more considerately with further help as they move through the system. I think I made the point at the time that it is, in my view, strange that we treat anybody because of their age. We are all people after all. We are not the ages we are. We may have different experiences but if we treat the person holistically, which is what I believe the question is aimed for, then I think we will have far better results. As a part of the mental health strategy this is being looked at.

2.8.2 Ms. T. Marchant:

Again, I would like to ask a question on C.A.M.H.S. because I feel it is a very important part of the mental health services provided for us as young people. While Mr. Allo’s question focused on those who are comfortable with the services they are being provided and would like to continue them I would like to ask a question about those who are not so comfortable with the services that are provided. You said yourself it is an extremely busy service. It can be hard to get a counsellor there. It can be quite a wait to get an appointment. A longer time between appointments than one would necessarily hope for or need. From personal experience and the experience of other people I know who have been involved in C.A.M.H.S. the counsellors there are wonderful people who obviously are trying their very best to help but they say themselves, they are pushed to the limit. They feel ...

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Could I interrupt? Could I encourage you to come to your question please?

Ms. T. Marchant:

They feel underfunded perhaps and certainly run off their feet. What is being done to help the people who work at C.A.M.H.S., the therapists and such, to provide this service which they are currently struggling to do?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

Thank you and again an excellent question and, if I am honest, one I was expecting to get so thank you for asking it. Yes, you are quite right, C.A.M.H.S. were under some serious strain and you may be aware of a scrutiny report in 2014 which was looked at in-depth and because of which it currently has undergone, and is still undergoing, major transformation. For example, in order to help investment has funded an additional duty worker and a family therapist as well, because there was a great gap for a family therapist to help beyond the individual and into the family because the family must be affected. Also a behaviour therapist and a primary mental health worker or some more will also be brought in. Waiting times have got better. There is still room for improvement. The current waiting time for C.A.M.H.S. averages 4 weeks for a routine assessment. However, an increasing number of urgent assessments are seen within 48 hours of referral. So if you can imagine 600 families being cared for right now, if I could use the metaphor, it is a little like trying to maintain a car while driving along a motorway but everybody is trying their very best and there are mechanisms in place to help the system and the service grow and meet the needs.

2.8.3 Ms. C. Pollard

Reported in the news recently is that Jersey has one of the highest drinking levels in the U.K. Do you feel more emphasis should be put in place on other factors causing mental health issues and the families that have these issues rather than just individuals?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

Yes. There are some excellent questions today. The notion of self-medicating, which is essentially what this case you are referring to, drinking, in order to cope can cause all sorts of problems outside in the family, which you allude to, and many of them end up affected by it in C.A.M.H.S., in various other departments. There is a fine line, I believe, between what Government can do and the individual's right to choose what they do and really what we have is education, to spread the word, and I am very pleased that right now being set up is a recovery college, which is a place that anybody can go to get information as to how they can adjust their thinking, for want of a better word, to find help if they are suffering from a mental health issue. The truth of the matter is we are all fellow strugglers. Nobody has got it completely right and if we could all, in many ways, both at a Government level and also interpersonally, everybody could reach out and help each other then just maybe we would be drinking socially rather than drinking to cope. So taking that point I think we are all trying to do the best we can and hopefully some of this is resonating.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Our final 2 supplementaries.

2.8.4 Ms. L. Devea:

How do you plan on tackling the stigma around mental health? I mean I know a lot of the older generations, mental health was not always recognised when they were younger. You know, if I am talking to older member families and friends it is kind of like a: "Oh, it is fine, you will grow out of it." How do you plan on kind of tackling getting to the older generations?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

Interestingly, and it is a good point. There has been a time and certainly it leaked into my generation of: "You know, oh, just get over it and start thinking straight." That did not mean the people were not struggling. It just was not seen as acceptable to struggle so people kept it all in and eventually they would pop. At least now people accept, or are more accepting of the fact, that people do struggle with their thoughts and hopefully this will go from the ground up, from the younger generation. We are now seeing that there is a place that you can go to seek help. That it is okay. It is not okay to struggle but it is a part of the human experience and so eventually the old school will fall away, they will pass on, and a new generation will understand that without mental health there is no holistic health. Really many of the young people in this Assembly today are the future of the understanding of how we can become mentally healthier together. I hope that answers your question.

2.8.5 Ms. F. Germain:

Hello. In regards to Youth Services coming and educating those in schools do you feel as though more should be done to talk about the symptoms and remedies rather than just talking about who you can go to? Do you find this would be more beneficial talking about it to the person than maybe if you do have more symptoms then maybe you can talk these things or do you just feel as though it should be generalised?

Deputy P.D. McLinton:

I guess it is quite right. It is more talking to what you can do than who you can go and talk to. Well, as it stands, you may not be aware of this, 5 education psychologists regularly visit schools, primary and secondary schools, to talk to and to talk about a pupil's mental health and education.

Psychologists also work in the area of mental health of students aged 5 to 19 and then there is a Wellbeing Team providing regular visits to all primary schools in Jersey, which is excellent, because the earlier you can teach children their self-worth the better because they will be mentally stronger and more resilient. This really is about teaching resilience to people. Teach them that they have a value in this world and they are important and they are equal to everybody else, which is something I am passionate about. So as having a healthier attitude towards mental health grows in the society then I believe the ability to teach people this and it to be accepted more and more, which I think it is now, will certainly, I think, combat some of what you have asked the question about. So, yes, I believe it is happening. Yes, maybe there is more room for it. I hope that answers your question.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Ms. Ingle, do you wish a final question? Thank you. We will move on to the next question which is to be asked by Ms. Libby Cowieson to Senator Sir Philip Bailhache, Assistant Minister for Education, regarding alternative career paths to finance.

2.9 Ms. L. Cowieson of the Assistant Minister for Education regarding ...

What emphasis, if any, is being placed on encouraging young people to follow alternative career paths rather than focusing on the finance industry?

Senator P.M. Bailhache (Assistant Minister for Education):

Advice and guidance in schools and by Careers Jersey is not focused on the finance industry. Although this is a major industry in the Island students are encouraged to follow a career or training that best suits their own particular skills or interests. Students are given as wide a range of information as possible from the start of their careers which first takes place at primary school in Jersey and people from a wide range of occupations often visit schools to explain what their jobs involve. The aim is to show young people a wide range of professions to consider and to start them thinking about what is right for them in the future. Similar experiences are offered at secondary level and these often include presentations from finance companies who are of course generally keen to employ local school leavers and graduates and therefore are quite often more proactive than other industries in talking to potential future employees. All students in Jersey have an opportunity to gain work experience in a wide variety of areas. This starts from the Trident Scheme which offers 483 placements across a wide range of sectors from retail to construction, to agriculture, public health sector, health, education, creative industries, uniformed services, finance and law but only 30 of those placements are in finance. The choice of work placement is entirely that of students in consultation with their parents.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Are there any supplementaries?

2.9.1 Ms. L. Cowieson:

I acknowledge that students are guided about different career paths yet over half of my career lessons at school have been heavily focused on the finance industry. We have been taking part in finance projects, thinking about which different areas of finance we would like to go into. We have had work experience offered to us from the finance industry and we have had visits from different finance companies offering their different schemes.

[14:45]

No great emphasis has been given to us about different apprenticeship schemes or other employment that we could take and we have been informed, as students, that over 70 per cent of us will end up in the finance industry in our lives. Therefore, why, Senator Bailhache, has mine and

many other students' career paths been directed to this industry when many of us do not want to enter it? [Approbation]

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

Well, I am sorry that students at your school appear to have been deluged by representatives of the finance industry and if that is the case it is certainly something into which I, as an Assistant Minister for Education, would want to look. I think it is worth making the point however that what is really important from the Education ministry's point of view is that students who go away from the Island for tertiary education and gain degrees in different subjects are given the opportunity to come back to Jersey should they wish to do so. Certainly so far as the Island's Government is concerned we want to encourage young people with degrees and with experience from outside the Island to come back to Jersey and to offer their skills and experience in the Island for the benefit of the local community. I am sorry that the question appears to have excited so much sympathy in the Youth Assembly. The finance industry, I might say in defence of it, is a great number of different industries. There is law, there is accountancy, there is the trust industry, the funds industry, the banking; to name but a few and all of those offer careers which are very different, one from the other. The finance industry is a multifaceted industry which offers a great deal of interest in a number of different spheres. So I hope that Members of the Assembly will not be quite so negative in the future about the finance industry and the opportunities that it offers.

2.9.2 Mr. P. Lombardi:

Is anything being done to reduce Jersey's reliance on the finance sector?

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

Yes. I think it is true to say that the policy of Jersey's Government for a great many years has been to try to diversify the economy as far as it can but of course it is not up to government to create employment. Employment creates itself when entrepreneurs decide that the environment in which they are seeking to set up a business is suitable for setting up their business. So a government can do a certain amount to create diversity but ultimately it depends upon entrepreneurs and perhaps there are a number of entrepreneurs in the Assembly this afternoon who might wish to consider setting up different industries in Jersey and bringing their skills and experience back to the Island in that way.

2.9.3 Mr. I Hart:

You mentioned the Trident Scheme and that it provides a range of work experience. Given that you only get one work placement have you considered extending the scheme so that it is multiple work placements rather than just the one to provide a broader range of career opportunities?

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

That seems a very sensible suggestion and it is one certainty that will be explored. I do know that those employers who do engage in the scheme are extremely positive about it and if it is possible to expand it then it seems certainly that that should be encouraged.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Final supplementary for Mr. Le Dain.

2.9.4 Mr. D. Le Dain:

I was wondering, the finance industry to an extent benefits from the tourism industry as when business relations happen it is helpful to have a good tourism industry available for these people to use. Would it be possible to encourage the tourism industry further to encourage school leavers and students to come into schools and talk about what they do as well?

Senator P.M. Bailhache:

I again agree that that would be a very sensible suggestion. The tourism industry, as we all know, is the second most important industry in terms of employment in the Island and it depends upon the finance industry obviously for its custom and is an industry which should certainly be encouraged. The Education ministry does what it can through the Catering College at Highlands to encourage numbers of young people to enter the catering industry in terms of learning skills that can be employed in hotels and restaurants. I am sure there is more that could be done and certainly it would be a very positive thing for the Island if young home grown local people could take an interest in what is a most important industry.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Do you have a final supplementary? Right. We come to our last question which will be asked by Ms. Anna Roberts of Beaulieu to Deputy Anne Pryke, the Minister for Housing, acting on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding sea lettuce in St. Aubin's Bay.

2.10 Ms. A. Roberts of Beaulieu of the Minister for Housing on behalf of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding ...

What action, if any, is the Minister taking to address the issue of sea lettuce in St. Aubin's Bay?

The Deputy of Trinity:

Thank you, Ms. Roberts. You need to address 2 issues when considering the issue of sea lettuce in St. Aubin's Bay, the conditions that are causing it periodically flourish and come into the bay as green tides. Secondly, how it can be removed and disposed of in a small island place. If either of these issues were simple the situation would have been solved by now. Sea lettuce has been arriving in the bay for decades but has only recently, when the department commissioned some research from an internationally recognised environmental consultancy, that any work has been undertaken into why this is happening. Regarding removal and disposal of sea lettuce, the lack of an uninhabited space in Jersey and the large volumes of sea lettuce mixed with sand make bringing this inland unviable. When this was done in previous years the resulting smell and pollution in the watercourse made this practice unacceptable. The current method of collecting the weed off the beach and tipping it at the low water mark when the tides are particularly low is by no means ideal but is the only course of action open to the department at present. We are looking with interest at a new machine being tested in Brittany that collects the sea lettuce from shallow water which as it is not contaminated with sand will open up options for its use as a commercial product or for composting due to much reduced volumes being collected.

2.10.1 Ms. A. Roberts:

It says in the handout that has been circulated that more research would be required to better understand the conditions in St. Aubin's Bay and enable a long-term nutrient control strategy. I was wondering how you were planning to conduct this research, how much it would cost and where the money is coming from.

The Deputy of Trinity:

That is a very good question. The department is working with the Societe in the research and I understand that there is no cost at all because the Societe are very keen on this. Work was done to survey nitrates within the Bay of St. Malo and the levels from here going down to the Ring Keys(?) and that was within the department budget.

2.10.2 Mr. R. Allo:

Minister, as it is also mentioned on the document regarding sea lettuce, it states that climate change will likely increase the temperature of sea water and that will ultimately cause sea lettuce to become more frequent. In the future once more physical data has been extracted regarding this are there any other strategies that you would take to perhaps promote the idea of a greener environment to have a long-term effect on reducing the sea lettuce? Might this include further investment in renewable energy sources, such as tidal power systems, since Jersey has one of the largest tidal ranges in the world and strategies such as this can have further benefits since it could be used twice a day and could encourage the development of coastal marshes which might encourage the spread of wildlife?

The Deputy of Trinity:

There are quite a few questions there. Regarding tidal energy a lot of work is being done by the Minister for External Affairs and the Minister for the Environment looking into these issues and, as I said, a lot of work is being done. Alongside that the Environment Department is working with the farmers to try and reduce the nitrate level in the water because that does have a small bit to play. But this is a problem I think that will be with us. It is not only here. It is, as I said, the Bay of St. Malo. I understand that it is in Japan, the Cayman Islands so it is a worldwide problem in some areas. So that is why we are working with the French to see if this new machine can help in any way. I need to say that, as you would expect, the new machine is not cheap. It costs just over £500,000 to buy so that is something that if it was agreed that we would have to give some serious thought to.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Ms. Roberts, would you like a final supplementary? Okay, thank you very much. We now move to ...

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Mr. Houiellebecq asked me a supplementary question. I said I would look into it and get back to him. Can I just ...

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Please.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Mr. Houiellebecq asked a question about the Athletics Development Officer and the Athletics Development Officer did step down last year. His position was filled by the Jersey Department of Athletics Club who have been providing an extensive athletics development programme. I can confirm that officers from my department are discussing with Jersey Spartans and the Jersey Athletics Association as to whether this has worked or not and if it has the situation will continue and if it has not then a new Athletics Developments Officer will be appointed in due course.

3. Questions to Ministers Without Notice - The Chief Minister

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

We now move to questions without notice to the Chief Minister, Senator Ian Gorst. Does anyone wish to ask a question of the Chief Minister?

3.1 Ms. B. Waddington:

How does the Chief Minister feel about the role of religion in the Government and does he feel that it is right in today's multicultural society to have it so heavily involved, such as having the Dean in the States, and the Deputy being asked to withdraw his comment about Jesus?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

Obviously I am on record of making my remarks with regard to the comments that a Member of the States made during debate and the ruling of the President of the Assembly at that point. I shall leave the questioner to read Hansard in regard to my position on that. I support the church being established. It is part of our history and tradition and I see the Dean's role in this Assembly as being a valuable one. It is part of that establishment of the Church of England and as much as some members of our community may disagree with it, and it is their right, I support also freedom of speech. It is their right to argue and make the opposing case but the church is established, the Dean is a Member of this Assembly and I will support it to continue to be the case.

3.2 Ms. F. Germain:

Hello, Senator Gorst. How does a government distinguish what is a luxury item and what is not, such as how men's razors are classed as not a luxury item but a necessity and women's razors and sanitary items are? How are they fairly judged and distinguished? **[Approbation]**

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am pleased to say that this Government has no preconceived ideas about such items and does not categorise them as such. Some others do in their taxation regimes and that is why we have a simple and low taxation regime when it comes to Goods and Service Tax because of those very reasons. How can it be right that Government makes such divisive opinions about 2 very identical items with an identical purpose? It cannot be.

3.3 Ms. C. Pollard:

With budgets being cut left, right and centre what measures are being put in place to limit States Members' spending to a minimum especially after an excess of £10,000 was spent on flights for 2 Members to South Africa? As I think most of us can agree, this money would have been better spent on local charities. **[Approbation]**

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Well, let me start by saying money is not being cut right, left and centre.

[15:00]

What this Government is doing is prioritising spend in health, in education, in supporting the economy and in making sure that St. Helier remains the driving force of our economy. That is what we are doing. We are reprioritising existing expenditure so that we can invest in what we know are the existing priorities and future priorities to deal with some of the ageing population issues that members of the Youth Assembly were asking Ministers about earlier. When it comes to the income support budget, which the Minister for Social Security answered a question on previously, what we are doing is trying to restrain the growth in the cost of benefits as are many other countries around the world. When it comes to the travelling of officials and Ministers to, for example, South Africa, sometimes mistakes are made and those 2 individuals have apologised for the way that they booked that particular flight but the work that they do for Locate Jersey and the inward investment that they create into our community and the jobs that they create in our community in a diversified economy, not just simply in financial services, are absolutely vital. Something went wrong there. I announced in the Assembly on Tuesday that a disciplinary review is being instigated under the Chief Officer Code and we shall have to wait and see what that review finds. At the same time we are also going to review whether the policy governing such travelling expenditure needs to be reviewed and changed.

3.4 Ms. E. Le Conte:

In response to an increase in unemployment in the Island I was going to ask what measures are in place to encourage those on benefits to find a job and to support themselves.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Let me say unemployment might fluctuate from month to month but we see that the previous month's employment on the seasonally adjusted version is the one that we should be considering because it takes out, as one might expect, what would happen at Christmas, what might happen at summer because of increased jobs in tourism. It has remained broadly static but since the economic downturn we saw unemployment continue to rise. It did not rise to the levels that our economic advisers projected it would because we put tens of millions of pounds into supporting people into getting into work. Again, the Minister for Social Security and her department have done a first class job in getting people into work, giving intensive support to enable people first of all to stay in the market. Sometimes we were giving employers money which would cover salaries so that they could take a risk and the risk would be with the States and not with the employer to employ those people. After a few months in that post, then they would create a permanent job. So we have got thousands of people into work. Unemployment has not risen to the levels that we expected and we have not taken that money away. So even though unemployment is going down, we are maintaining that money in place because we recognise that the thing that everyone needs is an opportunity and is a job. It might be in a more diversified economy, we accept that, but it is fundamentally important that everyone leaving school has an opportunity for further education or has an opportunity to get a job.

3.5 Ms. K. Myers:

Why is it still currently legal to rape your wife in a marriage and is there anything being done to change this law?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

That is not my understanding of the current position. We are, however, doing an overhaul of the Marriage Law and a Family Law. You will be aware of the changes that we are making to the Marriage Law to enable civil marriage. There are a number of anomalies in our legislation, which is out of sync now with other European nations and we are taking the opportunity to address those as well.

3.6 Ms. B. Waddington:

Has the Chief Minister done anything to combat the xenophobia in the Island, which was really shown by the recent reaction to the migrant crisis and also this: "There is a boat in the morning" mindset that people have?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I will not repeat what the Minister to my left just said about a boat in the morning. **[Laughter]** The question makes a very good point. I think historically there has been a view that there was a boat in the morning. That is not my experience today. I think we have become a much more accepting, multicultural community. We understand that we need immigration if we are going to continue to thrive and change and take our place in the world. We want to celebrate those that come to our community who might be of a different religion, who might be of a different ethnic minority, because they add to us as a community. So I do not want anybody to feel that the answer to any problem is that there is a boat in the morning. No, we are a welcoming and supporting community. If you want to come to Jersey and better your life and meet the legal obligations that we place upon you, then you are most welcome. Come and play a full part in our community. We will welcome you. There is a difference when it comes to migrants, which have moved across Europe for all sorts of reasons. We cannot, we absolutely cannot, be seen as a soft option of entry

to be seeking asylum into the United Kingdom and a soft option for getting British citizenship. We are working with the French border agencies to make sure that that is not the case. Of course, when I suggested that we might consider whether we were not able to take part with the United Kingdom Government in placing some people under the vulnerable persons relocation scheme, as I did last year, we found that that was not possible. There were some people who took an unfortunate response to that policy proposal, but at the same time be in no doubt I was contacted by many, many people who felt, yes, Jersey wanted to support the crisis in Syria, wanted to support those people who were in camps on the borders of Syria, who were fearful for their lives and saw no future. Just because some people might have shouted loudly about why we should not do it, there were many, many Islanders who took the opposing view and it brought out the best in them in my opinion.

3.7 Ms. L. Deveau:

In regards to companies needing licences to employ people with less than 5 years' residency, I have seen also news and from my personal experiences of people I know who have businesses for them to turn down business as they have been denied the licences to employ more people so that they can fulfil these jobs. I am just wondering why they are so strict and what we can do to get more people into these jobs.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I thank the questioner for that question because normally when we are in this Assembly, and my colleague here, Senator Routier, faces this not quite every week in the Assembly, more or less in the reverse direction, that we should be saying no more times to those people who want licences either to set up a business or to employ. The job that I asked Senator Routier and the Minister for Housing and again the Minister for Social Security and the Assistant Minister for Economic Development to do is an extremely difficult job because they have to, on the one hand, recognise that we are only a small community. We cannot have unhindered migration, otherwise we would be overwhelmed because of the pressures around infrastructure and many other things. So we have a policy in place whereby we work to a planning assumption, because Government has to plan the services that it is going to provide to the community, of an inward migration planning assumption of around 325. That is not a number that we end up delivering, but they have to make decisions week in, week out, about whether the licence that is going to be issued is going to create value in Jersey. The policy says that if the licensee is going to create value - now, that value is not just monetary value but it might also be social value and community value - then they are going to say yes. If it is not going to create value, which is largely about monetary value, then they say no, and that is sometimes difficult. That sometimes means that business goes elsewhere in some sectors, but we have to protect our environment and our community and this is one of the ways that we do it.

3.8 Ms. L. Cowieson:

What is being done to encourage females to take greater responsibilities in different industries as there are still significant differences in the ratio of males to females in the head positions in large industries?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

That is a very good question. The Community Relations Trust recently published a report looking at this very issue. It is with my department. They are reviewing the suggestions in the report. We have done a lot of work to see when it comes to the States as an employer, first of all, how we are performing, and I think we are at the point of being able to put that piece of work into the public domain but I do not have it with me this afternoon. It will say that there is some good news. We are increasing female participation in the more senior jobs in the civil service, but we want to see

that happen right across our community, yet at the same time I think everyone would agree it must be delivered through merit. What concerns me is that currently when you are appointing to positions it might be that females are of equal merit or even greater merit and for some reason they are just not getting through and being allowed to take that opportunity. That has to be wrong and we are going to continue to work on models to see how we can overcome it.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Mr. Hodnett, there might be time to ask your question. Whether there is time for the answer we will find out.

3.9 Mr. D. Hodnett:

I was going to ask aside from a new hospital and a new finance centre, what are the other major economic development policies in discussion and what is being done beyond the finance and healthcare sector?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

If I talk about capital programme first, which I think the 2 items that you mentioned fall into, let us just put something straight for a minute. I am aware the Chair is going to shut me up any moment now. The financial services industry that we have in Jersey is no longer just about finance and banks and things that are boring. It is a very broad-based part of our economy. It is not only about finance, it is about business services. It is about digital services. It is about the use of technology. It is not just for people like me who might like adding up numbers and being in the accountancy profession. It is all sorts of computer programs. There is controlling businesses. There is delivering investment around the world. There is supporting the developing countries as well. So a financial centre is a good thing because it is going to secure jobs in this community for the future, not only businesses that are already here but businesses that might want to come and invest. We have the new hospital. That is going to be critical for us to deal with the ageing demographic and make sure that we are providing a health service that we want for the future. We also have a new school out in the west of the Island. We have the new police station. We have a new site for States employees to be all together to drive out inefficiency and to create a better working environment. That is just on the capital programme. We have a £20 million pot in our budget for the next 4 years to spend on projects that might deliver economic growth. I have brought together financial services, digital, competition, into my department under one Minister because this is going to be critical. We can do all the social projects that we want and we are committed to doing those social projects, but unless we are delivering economic growth, unless we are delivering jobs, unless we are delivering income for Government, we are not going to be able to deliver on all those social projects that I think most people in this Assembly would think were the right thing for Government to be doing.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Thank you, Chief Minister. I am afraid that brings question time to a close. We have already overrun a little bit on that. I am sorry that some of you are disappointed you cannot ask a question to the Chief Minister. Before we go on to public business, can I on your behalf thank the Ministers and Assistant Ministers who have answered your questions? But I think firstly to congratulate you, the Members of the Youth Assembly, for your very penetrating questions and your quality questions. **[Approbation]** I say that because on a number of occasions the Ministers and the Assistant Ministers opened their answers by: "That is a very good question." Now, you may realise that that is to give them thinking time because they are not quite sure of the answer, so it is a testimony to the quality of your questions. You certainly made them think, but they equally were frank and clear in their responses and on your behalf I thank them for that. They are extremely busy people, as you probably realise, and I think we are grateful as Members of the Youth

Assembly for the time that they have given us this afternoon and the interest they have taken in the questions that you have asked. Perhaps we could thank them in the traditional way. **[Approbation]** Thank you very much, Ministers and Assistant Ministers. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

4. That all class A to C drugs should be legalised in Jersey

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

We now move on to public business and the first item of public business is in the name of Mr. Kieran Power of De La Salle, and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

[15:15]

The Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of opinion that all class A to C drugs should be legalised in Jersey.

4.1 Mr. K. Power:

We are proposing today the legalisation of all class A to C drugs, hereby ending the illegalisation of the consumption of any and all substances. We believe this is the only appropriate response to the absolute failure of the so-called war on drugs. I would like to begin by quoting from Michael Botticelli, who is the director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. When asked about the war on drugs he said: “We cannot arrest and incarcerate addiction out of people. Not only do I think it is really inhumane but it is ineffective and it costs us billions upon billions of dollars to keep doing this.” He is right. The fact of the matter is despite decades of incredibly harsh crackdowns on drug usage people continue to take drugs. In 2014, it was estimated that over 15 million Britons, around a third of the adult population, had taken illegal drugs and, of these, around 760,000 were classified as frequent users. The U.K. Home Office estimates that 17 per cent of children are still taking drugs; 17 per cent, that is one in 6 nationally. These statistics are the result of an estimated \$1 trillion spent worldwide to tackle the drug problem. The war on drugs has barely affected drug rates while simultaneously wasting billions of dollars of taxpayers’ money, wasting police, court and prison resources and increasing incarceration rates for non-violent offenders. Richard Branson was part of the Global Commission for Drug Policy, along with U.N. (United Nations) Secretary General Kofi Annan and many others, and said: “We studied international drug policy over the past 50 years and found that it had totally failed to stop the growth and diversification of the drug trade.” Between 1998 and 2008, most of the life of the people in this Chamber, opiate use increased by more than 34 per cent, even as prison populations swelled and profits for drug traffickers soared. This brings us to the next issue with drug policy. The current penalties for drug possession mean that an addict has to seek their drugs through often dangerous, violent criminals who may overcharge and threaten them, only to give them substandard, impure and toxic forms of the drugs. Organised crime related to drug trafficking is a \$330 billion per year business and growing. Essentially, it is time for a new approach. It is time to start treating drug addicts as medical patients, not as criminals. We believe that this will save the country billions of pounds every year, which can be invested into fighting violent crime. It will also encourage those addicted to the most toxic and life-threatening drugs such as heroin to seek help in treating their addictions. It will reduce incarceration rates and it will reduce the power of criminal gangs. We would like States-funded rehabilitation centres to open in conjunction with schemes such as needle exchange programmes to aid those suffering with the most serious addictions. To clarify, we are not promoting drug use and we would overwhelmingly encourage more education around the topic, but we believe that to simply continue with our current stance on

drugs is to condemn people across the nation. Please support this motion and help us to bring drug laws into the 21st century.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Thank you, Mr. Power. Is the proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** The proposition is proposed and seconded. It is now open for debate. Does anyone wish to speak on the proposition?

4.1.1 Mr. C. Langford:

This decision is not viable on a moral basis. While the public should be entitled to certain freedoms, this decision would surely have the consequence of mass loss of life by overdose and create an Island-wide issue of addiction. While some revenue from taxation could be gained, the decision would, in fact, be detrimental to the economy, notably in the Health and Social Services Department, which would be forced to support the rehabilitation and medical aid of an influx of drug addicts. Furthermore, damage would be made to the future economy by the possible creation of a drug-dependent workforce in the next generation. Ultimately, legislature imposed by the States should be in the interests of the welfare of the people and this simply would not be. **[Approbation]**

4.1.2 Ms. C. McInnes:

I would just like to add the legalisation of class A, B and C drugs could enhance drug use and currently dozens of addicts visit pharmacies every day to obtain supplements in which they require prescriptions from G.P.s (general practitioners) anyway and, therefore, they are using up doctors' time over self-inflicted issues when the G.P.s could be supporting people who have health issues that have not been self-inflicted through substance abuse. Therefore, other people are suffering at the hands of people who are self-inflicting these issues.

4.1.3 Ms. K. Myers:

I was just wondering how this will solve any current issues. Surely legalising them will not solve any if they are already existing issues while they are illegal. Legalising them is going to increase the consumption rate, so it is going to obviously put more pressure on all aspects of the health sector as people are going to suffer from the consequence of taking drugs and obviously are going to seek assistance.

4.1.4 Ms. E. Wetherall:

You say that in a democratic society we should have the right to choose, but in any society laws are needed to ensure that the society has some kind of system and that there is a universal idea of what is right and what is wrong. Laws are needed as the backbone for any society. Even in a democratic society, laws are still needed to determine what is right and wrong.

4.1.5 Ms. K. Terry-Marchant:

I just wanted to take issue with Ms. McInnes' description of drug addiction as a self-inflicted problem because I think that is a very problematic way to see an addiction to drugs. We have this view in our society that it is someone making a selfish choice that they are going to be a drug user and that is all they want to do with their lives and they are doing it to hurt themselves and other people. In fact, many people who become serious drug addicts are people who are very deeply damaged themselves. They are hurting and they use drugs as a way to escape that pain. They are people who need help anyway, some form of counselling or therapy. They are not people who are necessarily committing some horrible crime or acting against other people. The only crime they are committing really is against themselves as they lash out in their own pain. **[Approbation]**

4.1.6 Ms. F. Germain:

This is more specifically a question. Everyone who uses drugs, whether recreational or not, uses different dosages, which has a varied effect on the individual itself. Therefore, as you said, in order to control the market you would be using prescriptions. However, like many prescription drugs, would there be varied doses of these class A to C drugs and how would that be deferred and how would that be prescribed?

4.1.7 Ms. A. Roberts:

I think you said during your speech that legalising drugs would cause people to try and recover from addiction more openly, but for every person that recovers from addiction surely there would be one more person encouraged to use drugs. Is that really solving the problem? [Approbation]

4.1.8 Ms. B. Waddington:

I think that the perception that the legalisation of drugs would encourage people to take drugs is wrong. I feel like the fact that they are illegal can a lot of the time be a draw towards drugs for young people and I think it would take away the fact that they seem cool and illegal. [Approbation]

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Bear in mind, Members, that you can only speak once in the debate and I think one or 2 people have put their lights on wishing to speak again. That will not be possible, I am afraid.

4.1.9 Mr. D. Hodnett:

Further to the comments posed by Mr. Langford, I would like to ask whether the legalisation of these substances would not affect all Islanders because the Island would become synonymous with drug tourism where given our ease of transport with the U.K. and Europe would we not have an influx of tourists coming to use our drug liberal facilities.

4.1.10 Mr. I. Hart:

In response to Ms. Terry-Marchant in claiming that we cannot blame drug users for their own addiction, who does the burden then fall on? Does it fall on society for not being able to provide for these people, in which case how do we really prevent people who are already suffering from falling into these addictive relationships with drugs? If we legalise the use of drugs, is that not more likely to cause these relationships to occur and in the long run to cause more suffering for these people and their families? [Approbation]

4.1.11 Ms. L. Cowieson:

Surely legalising class A to C drugs would mean that drugs are more easily available and especially young people are more susceptible to the consumption of illegal drugs. This will result in more health issues and burdens on the health sector. Should we not as a society have the moral values to look after the health of our people? [Approbation]

4.1.12 Mr. J. Gibbons:

I think in a modern country or territory people have the right and the ability to choose for themselves. In a country like the Netherlands, which is seen as a modernised example that Jersey could follow, drug usage has gone down, even when a lot of drugs have been legal. I think that this point about people being drawn to drugs if they are legal, I do not think it stands. We would see crime go down as opposed to going up and this could save costs throughout the economy, whether it is policing or prisons. It is something that costs the U.K. economy £2 billion a year, so just on a local level in Jersey any savings around that relative to Jersey would be useful in any other aspect of the economy. [Approbation]

4.1.13 Ms. L. Deveau:

In regards to what Ms. Terry-Marchant said in regards to Ms. McInnes, I do not think she was suggesting that these people did not have issues within their lives and I do not think she was suggesting that these people are selfish. I think she was suggesting that surely legalising these drugs would just give them more access to it and thus give them more problems further in life. **[Approbation]**

4.1.14 Ms. J. Yettram:

Cigarettes are obviously currently legal and smoking has a serious impact obviously on the health of Islanders and as well on the N.H.S. (National Health Service) and taxation money being spent to treat those suffering with lung cancer, et cetera. Would the legalisation of class A to C drugs have the same impact on the health of Islanders?

4.1.15 Mr. F. Morley-Kirk:

I think people really do have a massive misconception on what would happen if you legalised drugs. I think people really do think that if you suddenly legalise drugs people are going to go into a shop tomorrow and say: "Can I buy some heroin?" Quite simply, this just will not happen. If you do not want to do drugs and drugs are open for you, you just will not do them. I think it is really as simple as that. The misconception people have, especially with saying that it is really dangerous, you have to think why are drugs really dangerous? You go to your dealer and what does your dealer do? Your dealer will cut your drugs with all sorts of toxic chemicals so they can make more of the drug so they can sell more of the drug to people like you. You do not know what is in it. You do not know how potent it is, and then that causes damage. That damage then goes on to the healthcare service. However, if you have a fully regulated system, you have more pure drugs. You know what is in the drugs and you know how strong they are, so people who do take drugs will not be taking all of this rubbish which is causing real harm. To say that lots more people would be doing drugs and causing damage, first of all, it is going to be safer so it is not causing damage. If we look at some of the examples like Portugal, the year after they fully decriminalised all drugs the cases of overdoses throughout the whole population went down by 50 per cent in a year. If we look at examples like the Netherlands, it has also gone down with similar results. In countries where this has been trialled it has worked every single time without fail and it helps. It helps people. It helps drug addicts. It cuts out the black market and it helps the health service. **[Approbation]**

4.1.16 Mr. C. Dorris:

A lot of things have been thrown around about addiction. I just want to say that addiction cannot really be cured by prison and incarceration and legal penalties. The only real way to fix addiction is to send someone who is addicted to a drug to a rehabilitation service and to help them, rather than brand them as a criminal. This is why I would say that investing in rehabilitation is much more important than the drugs being illegal. **[Approbation]**

4.1.17 Ms. K. Myers:

If you are saying that legalising drugs would reduce the amount of people that take drugs, we have legalised alcohol and still just as many people become alcoholics, so how is it going to help? **[Approbation]**

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does anybody else wish to speak on the proposition? If not, I call on Mr. Power to respond.

4.1.18 Mr. K. Power:

I think the issue of increased drug use has hopefully already been addressed by my colleagues Mr. Gibbons and Mr. Morley-Kirk that the idea that legalising drugs leads to an increase of their use is completely redundant. It has been well disproved by this point in society, so I hope that does not

influence anyone in their vote today. Just to cover a couple of other points, one of my colleagues, Mr. Hodnett, mentions the drug tourism possibility, that people would come here just to take advantage of liberal drug laws. I would suggest that is not necessarily a bad thing. We are always looking to improve tourism and the idea that people come ... if we look at the Netherlands as a public example of a country that has hugely increased its tourism revenue because of their laws and that money goes back into schools and health services and other things that we need that have been discussed in this Chamber today. So I would not necessarily put that as an instantly bad point.

[15:30]

The next thing to suggest is that drugs would be more available if they were legal. The fact of the matter is drugs are already easily available. I am sure almost every single person in this Chamber could name someone or some route through which they could gain illegal drugs and they would probably be incredibly dangerous. So the fact of the matter is they are available. There is no point pushing people to illegal sources anymore. Just to cover a last point about alcohol, the fact of the matter is alcohol is quite poorly regulated with extremely strong varieties being allowed to be sold on the free market, but this is still better than when it was illegalised, for example, in America in the 1920s, when people had to go through gangs, go to back-room brewers of alcohol. It was a very terrible situation and I would hope that that does not become the same again. In conclusion, I would like to offer an impassioned plea to the young Members of the States today. We are all going to be in a generation dealing with these issues. A perfect world is where no one is addicted to any substance. We do not live in that world now and we are never going to, so we may as well have a real, proper solution and that is what we are trying to propose today. **[Approbation]**

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

If all Members are in their seats, I will ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity to vote, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the proposition has been lost. There were 20 votes in favour, 22 against, and 4 abstentions.

5 That sex education in Jersey should be compulsory and extend beyond mere facts and biology

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

We now move on to the next item of public business, which is in the name of Ms. Carla Scott of Jersey College for Girls, and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of opinion that sex education in Jersey should be compulsory and extend beyond mere facts and biology.

5.1 Ms. C. Scott:

Sex, a topic many people feel embarrassed or ashamed to talk about. However, we feel that sex education within schools should be compulsory and extend beyond mere facts and biology given the fact that it is not just about reproducing. In addition, it is more important to teach about consensual relations as approximately 85,000 women and 12,000 men in England and Wales each year are raped. This is around 11 rape cases an hour. In Jersey, 820 females and 130 males are raped every year and the Sex and Relationships briefing paper that is the guideline for sexual education in schools does not mention the definition for rape or, perhaps more importantly, what to do and where to receive help if you are a victim. Seeing that only 15 per cent of rape victims report it to the police, we are forced to question, is this because they have not received sufficient education and support on the matter. In conjunction to promoting consensual sex, safe sex should also be installed within classes. For instance, all S.T.I.s (sexually transmitted infections) should be

explored, explaining the risks that come with them and how to go about receiving treatment for them. This step is vital to ensure the health of individuals as well as helping to decrease the levels of teenage pregnancy. If we have more knowledge on methods of contraception then it is less likely for unplanned pregnancies to arise. In order to equip ourselves to make discerning choices in relationships we need to be aware of the influences we face from social media and pornography. Social media is the gateway for many teenagers allowing them to access material that sets unrealistic representations of how we should look. This is then taken one step further when predominantly males aged 10 to 12 start watching porn, either out of curiosity or for the shock factor. Repeated watch of such material mainly affects the expectations males have of women as they are compared to that of perfectly maintained porn stars and are expected to re-enact what they have watched previously. Another topical matter that needs to be discussed within schools is sexual orientation and preference. We need to educate young people on how to be accepting of others so we can reduce prejudices in the future. This is vital because, in the gay, lesbian and straight, education network survey they discovered 89 per cent of transgender students are verbally harassed and 55 per cent have been physically harassed within a school environment. The more this topic is discussed, the more accepted and welcomed L.G.B.T. (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) students are likely to feel within the school environment. Please support this proposal.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Thank you. Is the proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** The proposition is proposed and seconded. It is now open for debate. Does anyone wish to speak? Ms. Roberts.

5.1.1 Ms. A. Roberts:

It says in your report that a key part of every girl's life is contraception. Do you have any evidence for this?

5.1.2 Ms. C. Pollard:

In response to that, yes, there is. Contraception can play more than just the fact of preventing pregnancy and the hormones involved can do other things other than just that. So, yes, it does. To point out some of the stigmas involved, I researched the part about the sexual preferences, which is something not often talked about, and to my dismay a picture of my notes was soon escalated around the 6th form at our school. Many people laughed at me for what I had written and I was plainly upset by this, as you would expect to be if people were laughing about you. But I soon realised that the reason they were laughing is because they were too childish and uneducated about these issues to have a proper grownup conversation. There is only one way to reduce stigma and childish behaviour to this and that is to educate people about perfectly natural acts and this is why I believe that sexual education should be beyond biology. Thank you. **[Approbation]**

5.1.3 Mr. R. Allo:

I certainly agree with the point that was just made. I think that there needs to be, because sex is such a natural process and should be explored more through education, there is an element of embarrassment I think among students and teachers, which needs to be overcome. Essentially through personal experience of biology lessons in secondary school, quite often just the matter of bringing up sex will cause a tension within a classroom and will most likely have a consequent result on the way in which a lesson is delivered. So I think that, once the stigmas and the embarrassment about sexual education are overcome, then you can ultimately have an effect on education as a whole, because there is no longer going to be disruption to classes, et cetera. Thank you. **[Approbation]**

5.1.4 Ms. E. Le Conte:

I was just going to talk to you about the fact that you think that there should be more biology, and around other sexualities and sexual orientations. But, did you take into account the fact that we have Catholic schools in the Island such as Beaulieu who are religiously oriented and should well support no sex before marriage, so cannot possibly come to that?

5.1.5 Ms. E. Wetherall:

I think that the point about the L.G.B.T. discrimination is a good point to make because personally I have a lot of friends that are of that community and I feel like people do need to be educated on that community because it is a very complicated community and they have their own descriptions of themselves and these can be anywhere from “lesbians” to “non-binary” and it is such a large description that I think people have no idea about and it is a good idea to educate people on that area as well as sex. [Approbation]

5.1.6 Ms. K. Terry-Marchant:

I cannot see this person’s name but a point has been made by another Member about Catholic schools not wanting to teach people about contraception because they believe that you should not have sex before marriage. Unfortunately for them, while this can be the school’s position, it does not mean that they should be allowed to withhold information and education from young people. Teaching young people about sex and how to safely have sex is not the same as telling them to go out and have a lot of sex. [Approbation] They can retain their position that one should not have sex before marriage while also teaching these young people that, if you do decide to have sex before marriage, or even after marriage, because marriage is not a point at which you stop using contraception, married people also use contraception. They should have to teach on these matters, whatever their personal religious position is.

5.1.7 Ms. L. Cowieson:

I would just like to pick up on a point from my colleague about where you got your statistics from, about a key part in every girl’s life is contraception, as that was not properly addressed, and the fact that sex is mainly for pleasure, where did you get your statistics for that. Also, you said that rape is a result of lack of education, and surely it is the result of the ignorance and disrespect from males to females, and sometimes in the case vice versa. [Approbation]

5.1.8 Ms. L. Deveau:

In relation to a couple of things that have been said by the opposition, I just wanted to say that we did not suggest teaching about the biology, of which people of other sexual orientations take part in, we just thought it was important to teach young people about the different sexual orientations, clearly because many of us do know people who are part of the L.G.B.T. community and I am not talking about how they have sexual relations, just how they live their lives and how they feel and how society treats them. Furthermore, we did not say rape was because of people not being educated, we said that only 15 per cent of people report rape due to the fact that they are uneducated on what is classed as rape or they feel very ashamed. [Approbation] We have our statistics from the U.S. Government and Sexual Health website. Thank you. [Approbation]

5.1.9 Ms. C. McInnes:

Just a quick response in relation to the question about religion in schools. We did take that into consideration, as you can see in the last 2 lines.

5.1.10 Mr. K. Power:

I support the motion and the idea that sex education should be introduced more frequently in Jersey. I would just ask as a question what age the proposers believe this should happen, as they mentioned

in the speech sex education unofficially starts at the age of 10 or even less than that. What age is appropriate to start teaching children about this sort of thing? But I do support the proposition.

5.1.11 Mr. Morley-Kirk:

I would just like to say that in general I do overwhelmingly support this proposition. I believe currently in our sexual relations lessons there is pretty much almost no emphasis on L.G.B.T. relationships and I really do think by having this and introducing this especially will drastically decrease homophobia in the Island and I think that is a very positive thing. However, I must say, especially with the opening paragraphs, I am getting sick and tired of people calling men rapists, saying men are copying things from porn and forcing women to do it, men are forcing this thing on women, and I think it is just very, very unfair that men over the years have been labelled this. Yes, it does happen, but I also think that it is fairly equal that it does happen the other way around, because it has been mentioned that it does happen the other way around, but you have to remember, because of different mentalities, a lot of men hide it, so the statistics will be much, much higher, and I would say they are around virtually the same. **[Approbation]**

5.1.12 Mr. I. Hart:

Just a quick question on the statistics mentioned in the proposal, I did not hear the exact numbers, I think it was 15 or 50 per cent of rapes go unreported to the police. It is just a bit of an odd statistic to bring up because I do not see how the other percentages can possibly be determined if they are unreported. I am assuming they are addressed to someone else who is then reporting them to the police, but it was not clear in the statistics. **[Approbation]**

5.1.13 Mr. Flores:

Just a quick question, how can you make sex education compulsory in a private school who does not have to adhere to a State rule instead of takes the advice rather than a compulsory rule?

5.1.14 Mr. C. Shirley:

I would just like to make the point that, while I do support the motion, I would like to get back to the point of sex education and the fact that you can bring feelings and you can bring emotions into such lessons, whereas perhaps in the more, shall we say, scientific subjects, such as biology, whereas there may be a more factual line of teaching, that the emphasis should really be on the feelings and, while the facts and the science behind it are vital, that they should really be at the forefront. I would also like to make the point of discussing the L.G.B.T. community within these lessons is vital, especially as it was not so long ago in so many so-called civilised societies that homosexuality was illegal. So I do feel that we have a chance within Jersey to change such stigma or any sort of homophobia or any form of, shall we say, unpleasant feeling towards such a group, we have a chance to change this for future generations. **[Approbation]**

5.1.15 Ms. R. Cubbin:

In response to the statement that we are calling all men rapists, we are merely stating the fact that most rapes that are reported are rapes that are reported by women against men.

5.1.16 Ms. B. Waddington:

About the point on contraception, even if you do not choose to use it, you are still choosing not to use it, and that is a personal decision, so it is still a part of your life and you still should understand what you are choosing not to use, even though you are choosing not to use it. **[Approbation]**

[15:45]

5.1.17 Ms. F. Germain:

In regards Beaulieu's questions about how religion, and Mr. Flores's question about how we should make sexual education compulsory in private schools, hours of R.E. (religious education) are compulsory in public and private schools, and must be taken for G.C.S.E.s (General Certificate of Secondary Education) as you probably are all aware of. This could be taken into a sense for such education, maybe not necessarily for G.C.S.E., we definitely feel as though it should be compulsory, like religious education, as that also affects society as a whole. **[Approbation]**

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does anyone else who has not already spoken wish to speak in the debate? If not, I will call on Ms. Scott to respond.

5.1.18 Ms. C. Scott:

80 per cent of all rapists are men, and that is merely fact, not what we have created ourselves. Even though it may seem like we have tried to man bash because as a woman and as are us all, that is not what our aim was, it was just mere facts and that is all that has been reported. Perhaps it is because there are many more males that have been raped, but they feel it embarrassing or perhaps are ashamed to talk about it. Again, there is another stigma around that because it is not openly discussed in schools. So, if it was, perhaps more people would report it and perhaps it would turn out that more men are in fact raped than that of women. We just simply do not know because it is not reported. Also, in terms of the use of contraception that was in our report, contraception is not necessarily just the use of a pill, it can also be the traditional pull-out method, which people use instead of using a condom, it is to prevent pregnancy, which, in itself, is not in addition to anything else, like you do not need to use anything, but even the education on that, against maybe Catholic views of using things to stop you from being pregnant because that is against your religion, but even things like that that you can learn about that can reduce teenage pregnancy is better than nothing, because then it is not against your religious views because you are not preventing anything with a physical barrier or anything killing it. Also, in terms of the age, someone asked at what age did we propose to implement these ideas, was that we gradually introduce them step by step so that by the time you have come to the end of your formal education, say at 6th form perhaps, that you have a basis and you have covered all these bases, so maybe from around higher primary education, so like years 6 and 7, have like a basic understanding of things in terms of how, not necessarily the full discussion of what sex is in different forms and sexual orientation, but a basic understanding and, as I said, gradually become more and more informed as they are older, so they have then, they know different avenues and places where they can go and get help on different matters because nowadays things like puberty is happening at a younger age and it is affecting more and more younger people, so it is more of a pressing matter that we do need to discuss and not just wait until they are teenagers. It does need to start earlier. Thank you, we hope you support our motion. **[Approbation]**

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

All Members are in their seats. I will ask the Greffier to open the voting please. All Members have had the opportunity to vote. I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can now say the proposition has been adopted, 30 votes in favour, 10 against, and 6 abstentions. **[INSERT VOTE TABLE]**

6. That public funding for private schools in Jersey should be cut

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

We move to the next item of Public Business, which is in the name of Ms. Waddington of Hautlieu and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of the opinion that public funding for private schools in Jersey should be cut.

6.1 Ms. B. Waddington:

We believe that public funding for private fee-paying schools in Jersey should be reduced to even out the total funding to each student at each school per year without a change to the cost of fees for each school. This would give every child a fair chance and a good education regardless of their parents' or carers' income. This is not a debate about religious schools, selective schools, or any individual school, but about an overall failure by the States to give equal opportunities to all the Island's children. Some people may think that, if we did this, the parents would not be willing to pay for their children to stay in the private schools and that it would end up costing the States more in the long run. But the current setup is essentially the opposite of means-testing, giving more money to those schools who are already performing well. The current system is also very different to how other public services, such as healthcare, are run and how public services should be run. We would then invest the extra funds into under-performing schools as well as increasing funds for Highlands. We would also increase a 6th form in the new Quennevais, which is being built, and we feel that this would give a greater subject diversity for students at States schools and allow more students to take A levels at States schools. We would also invest in special needs facilities and in-school counsellors. Essentially, there is an unacceptable funding and performance gap between schools in a wealthy Island with enough money to give every child a good education. **[Approbation]**

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Is the proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** The proposition is proposed and seconded. It is open for debate. Does anyone wish to speak? Ms. Germain.

6.1.1 Ms. F. Germain:

I do wholeheartedly agree with your proposition that the money used from public funding should be put into those with special needs, learning, education and so forth. However, you did say in the table, on your second table, that the reason that this public funding increases the gap between the standards of education in private and States schools, I would like to point out, and wholeheartedly I believe that all level of standard of teaching should be the same no matter whether you are public school or private school. I understand from the table that J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls), compared to Haute Vallée, have a vast difference in the academic arrangement. This is primarily, in my opinion, because of the fact that public schools are not selective. J.C.G. is a selective school, which intelligence co-operate with their results. Haute Vallée, Les Quennevais, they contain pupils who have learning disabilities, who do not speak English as a foreign language, thus affecting their academic results at the end. We should not be focusing on the results itself, but on the people and how themselves kind of perform like as an individual and not as a college. **[Approbation]**

6.1.2 Mr. Morley-Kirk:

I would like to ask how you are going to stop the price of a private fee-paying school from rising. I think, if you look at it, because they essentially do run like a business in a certain sense, you have to talk about the economics of it all. If you have a business, i.e. a school, and it has a subsidy from the States, it was going to give out a certain price, which you get in the fees. Now, if your subsidy is undercut, what the businesses largely do is they are going to put that then on to the customer and the consumer. Now, you say you want to stop the price from rising, however you cannot really do that because it is a business and it would be out of your control. So the price is going to rise and that is then going to go on to the customer and we have already seen this and it is happening, I know personally for myself, I go to De La Salle, and I have seen the rises go up and up and up and this is partially due to private school budgets being cut by the States. If this happens any more,

what is going to happen is that people are going to leave the private schools and they are going to have to go somewhere else. Now, either they are going to be home-schooled or go to a States school, and my bet would be that they are going to go to a States school. Now, if they go to a States school, you are going to have this massive influx of people from private schools going to States schools, which is then going to massively damage the States schools, so, as nice and honest and fair as it may sound, it is going to do more damage than good. I would also like to mention that all of the parents and guardians who pay for their kids to go to private fee-paying schools, they are also taxpayers, so they also pay for education. Why should we not be allowed to have a subsidy if we are paying in tax for the education? **[Approbation]**

6.1.3 Ms. L. Deveau:

Just something, I believe I heard you say that families with a slightly lesser income are unable to send their children to these fee-paying schools. I just wanted to point out that all of these fee-paying schools do have scholarships, so while we are means-tested, if one is entitled enough to pass the means test then they are able to apply for a scholarship.

6.1.4 Mr. D. Le Dain:

I would just like to return to a point made earlier by Ms. Germain about the difference between States-funded schools and private-funded schools could be put down to selective behaviour. I do not think a difference that large could ever be put down to selective behaviour and I think you also have to consider, as a previous Quennevais student, that our building is no longer watertight and when you consider this as well as other changes to the facilities and how poor it is there, you cannot say that does not have an effect on the quality of education given.

6.1.5 Ms. K. Terry-Marchant:

I wanted to say, in response mainly to Mr. Morley-Kirk's position on this idea that the private fee-paying schools would raise their fees if we were to cut their funding, and that we could do nothing to stop this, we would be powerless in the face of these businesses, at the end of the day they are still schools and the States does ultimately have the power to tell them that, if they decide to raise fees and take this money from the parents, they could cut more funding and that they can take other actions against the schools to prevent this from happening. The States is not at the mercy of the fee-paying schools.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does anyone else wish to speak in this debate? Mr. Power.

6.1.6 Mr. K. Power:

Just in response to that last point made by Ms. Terry-Marchant. I agree that the States are not at the mercy of fee-paying schools, but it is an undeniable fact that a lot of the people who are going to J.C.G., Victoria College, Beaulieu and De La Salle, are middle class people, middle earners, who simply would not be able to cope with the £8,500 worth of school fees, there is just no way, and most of these people would go to Hautlieu or, if not, to Highlands, and that is undeniably an extra burden on those schools and on the States of Jersey. I also support the mention earlier that these people who are paying for private schools are already taxpayers, so they are essentially paying twice to send their children to school, so I do not think it is fair to burden those people once again. **[Approbation]**

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does anybody else wish to speak in this debate? Mr. Hodnett.

6.1.7 Mr. D. Hodnett:

I agree with the point raised by Mr. Morley-Kirk, would an increase in fees not mean a greater number of pupils entering States education, which would result in an increase in tax, which would also affect the most vulnerable people in society to a greater extent? **[Approbation]**

6.1.8 Mr. I. Hart:

It is unfortunate for this proposal that there are so many practical issues when trying to cut the private school funding. I mean it tends to be more of an issue of whether people believe everyone should have equal opportunity to the same education and whether wealth should play a role in it. With the current system, if we were to scrap private school funding, we would definitely have a hit to the private school prices that people have to pay to get in. I think one of the main issues is the fact that they exist in the first place with the funding as an integral part of the way they operate. One could suggest that we completely remove the funding as an element to them entirely and then just completely run them by the States, but that would probably lead to a decrease in the quality of all the education as we spread the budget over all the schools without being supported by the funding. Unfortunately there would have to be a compromise in terms of the prices and in terms of increase in taxation.

6.1.9 Mr. C. Dorris:

In response to quite a few times ago about the Le Quennevais being not watertight and so clearly the building not being perfect, up to scratch. As I go to De La Salle, I know for a fact that, even though we have fees, our buildings are also not always up to scratch and some buildings are also not watertight. So, just because we have fees does not mean that we have like the best modern facilities. **[Approbation]**

6.1.10 Ms. E. Wetherall:

Someone pointed out earlier that the private schools have scholarships and financial help, but they do not have enough financial help for possibly like all the people that are of a lower wealth that want to go to them, because they do not have the capability to let that many people in for free. So you are limiting to the people, because the private schools have this kind of thing that they have better education and they are desirable and more people want to go to them, but people go to Hautlieu because they cannot afford to go to the private schools quite often, so I do not think the scholarships and the financial help are widely enough available for all the people that want to get in.

[16:00]

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does anybody else wish to make a contribution to this debate? I see Mr. Trott.

6.1.11 Mr. J. Trott:

If you force the prices to stay the same in private schools, then, in the end, the schools will suffer as they need more funding, but they are not able to achieve it, so it leads to disintegration of these schools and the public school overflow. **[Approbation]**

6.1.12 Ms. C. Scott:

In your second table on your proposed speech, the figures show that Hautlieu has a higher percentage of A star to C grades than that of De La Salle and Beaulieu, 2 fee-paying schools, then surely that means your school could be more selective over them 2 schools as well, seeing that apparently your teaching is of such an adequate standard as J.C.G. and Victoria College, because of that significantly higher percentage.

6.1.13 Ms. C. Pollard:

I would like to second Ms. Scott's point, and in relation to Ms. Wetherall's point, it does not matter where you go, there is always going to be problems with the teaching, always going to be problems with this and that, and sometimes it just comes down to hard work. As long as you have the facilities there, which Hautlieu supplies, and so do our schools as well, you have just as any capable right to achieve the highest grades with a bit of hard work. **[Approbation]**

6.1.14 Mr. C. Shirley:

I would just like to make a point that my colleague to my left has just mentioned to me that, going back to your point that private funding means that the private schools are able to rectify any issues they find within their school, whereas public schools must rely on the States, so to a certain extent the private schools have it within their means to fix anything, whereas it would be fair to say the public schools rely on the outside agent that is the States.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does anyone else have anything to say on this debate who has not already spoken? If not, I will ask Ms. Waddington to respond.

6.1.15 Ms. B. Waddington:

So there has been a lot of talk in this debate about the results table and about Hautlieu's high results. Obviously, the fact is that Hautlieu does select and that Beaulieu and De La Salle do not have the same kind of entrance exams, so that is the reason for that. But, overall, if you look at the private and the States schools, there is a very obvious difference. Also, someone has said about the States schools having lots of children who do not have English as their first language but should you coming from somewhere else and having another language as your first language affect your education? Should that be allowed to affect it like that. Also we would be able to stop the fees from rising and that would mean that even those schools, because they are doing well, they do not need the extra money whereas other schools that are underperforming do need that extra money. So in conclusion this is a debate about whether you think that because someone is more wealthy they should be allowed to have a higher standard of education, they should be able to pay for a better education, or whether you think that equal opportunities for education should be available to all, regardless of wealth.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Thank you, if all Members are in their seats, I will ask the Greffier to open the voting, please. If all Members have had the opportunity to vote I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the proposition has been lost: 6 votes in favour, 35 against and 5 abstentions. **[INSERT VOTE TABLE]**

7. That all new parents should undergo a childcare course before they are able to have children

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

The next item of public business is in the name of Ms. Hervieu of Bealieu and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition, please.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of the opinion that all new parents should undergo a childcare course before they are able to have children.

7.1 Ms. E. Hervieu:

In every stage of our life we are trained and tested to see how competent we are with almost everything. All throughout our school life we have to take tests so we can get the right

qualifications to get the right job, however we are not assessed and trained for the basis of life, which is having children. A Google search for advice for new parents gets 393 million results in 0.57 seconds. This shows it is clearly a well searched topic and why should it not be? New parents often feel that they are jumping into the unknown when they have their first child with nothing but instinct to help them raise their child. In contrast, parents who are not able to have their own children have to go through 6 to 8 months of applications, security checks and assessments before they are even allowed to adopt a child. They have to provide 6 people who will comment on their ability to look after children and there are 11 plus documents that they have to sign. By this time the children may have already been kept in care for at least 6 months, adding to the trauma caused by being taken away from your biological parents. Being removed from your biological parents not only disrupts a family but also scars a child, a scar which in many cases is permanent. In a report by the BBC a boy named Russell said: "If I had the support around me when I was younger I would have stayed sweet and smart and innocent, but it was the fact that I built myself up with so much anger that I am not used to anyone supporting me." The number of children in care in Jersey was 77 in 2010. This number is miniscule compared to the 69,540 children in care in the U.K. in 2015. However, since 2010 the number of children looked after in Jersey has increased to 95 in 2015. If Jersey adopted a plan to make all new parents undergo a childcare course this number would decrease. Parents would learn what they need to do to support their child and keep them safe and happy. Our proposal would also help decrease the cost spent on childcare and social service as less families will need the support and care. This will help the Jersey economy grow as the Government will have more disposable income to spend on other services such as education and healthcare. Finally, although the definition of family differs from person to person ultimately it is a sense of safety and commitment. Many children have this taken away from them from a very young age; are taken away from safety and familiarity and often they never see them again. Our proposal would decrease the number of children who experience this and by doing this we would create a happy generation of children for the years to come.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Is the proposition seconded? [**Seconded**]

7.1.1 Ms. E. Osmand:

In agreement with Ms. Hervieu I would like to make a further emphasis on the reasoning behind your proposition. We aim to generate a better system and a more competent and prepared generation of parents. The proposition is in place as an assurance to prevent further cases of child negligence as a result of insufficient parenting. Creating a supportive parenting network has many advantages, including a decrease in costs spent on social services and undoing the psychological damage set by inadequate and in some cases distressing parenting which may have severely damaged some children, while helping parents to feel a sense of readiness for the journey ahead. Our proposition aims to improve the forthcoming generation's capability to raise further generations, thus resulting in an overall chain of improvement to the childcare system.

7.1.2 Ms. B. Waddington:

I feel that this proposal is entirely impractical because it does not deal with many issues such as unplanned pregnancy where your only option would be forced sterilisation from the point that someone is able to become a parent or forced abortions which are huge infringements on someone's right to choose what happens to their body. The proposal also does not outline what the course would cover and how a course on a good parent would work, whether it would deal with the emotional side of parenting, which is obviously something that would be difficult to assess in a pass/fail examination or whether it would purely be practical. It also does not deal with the fact that for almost every exam people are able to practice beforehand, but it is going to be quite

difficult to find a practice baby to practice looking after. There are also childcare course available. You talked about the Google search, there are a lot of different childcare course available that you can sign up for here already. Also you said that you think that the adoption service, the selection that people go through, you seem to be quite down on this and you seemed to think that it took too long. But surely it should take that long to make sure that these children are going somewhere where they are going to be safe and they are going to be loved. It is also important to safeguard children in care. You also said that children were being taken away from a place of familiarity and safety but if a child is being taken from its parents it is not in a place of safety. They are not taken from somewhere that is safe. **[Approbation]** So I obviously cannot agree with that.

7.1.3 Ms. J. Yettram:

I have a question about the funding of the proposition. Would the parents have to pay for this course or would it be funded by taxpayers? Also, what would happen if the parents were deemed to have failed the course? What would be the course of action for that? **[Approbation]**

7.1.4 Ms. F. Germain:

I understand that what you are trying to do is a brilliant suggestion but you forget, like many things, such as dancing, learning a science, that it is a gradual process of learning, something which you cannot do unless you do it. Having a childcare course, as Ms. Waddington rightly said, it is available throughout the Island and having a test on something that you do not even know the emotional and the physical side of things is truly impractical and something which only you can find out as a parent, if you can do that, by having a child. **[Approbation]**

7.1.5 Ms. E. Wetherall:

You pointed out about abortion but there are other ways to go about having as well as abortion, you can have surrogate and sometimes families choose to keep their surrogate involved with the baby's life as well. I also agree with the point made that what happens if a parent fails the test or has an unplanned pregnancy, would you then be saying abortion is right? Also you say that children that have negligent or bad parents should be taken away but what happens when it is the other way around, when it is the children against the parents, like there is no help for parents, it is always focused on the children.

7.1.6 Mr. I. Hart:

The proposer stated that having children was the basis for life, if you agree with that suggestion then anyone who does not have children does not have a basis for life **[Approbation]** and it is the part of the process of having a child which effectively mean you have achieved something in the meaning of life.

7.1.7 Ms. L. Deveau:

Firstly, I agree, what would you do if a new parent was to fail this course? Tell them they have to abort the child? Adopt it? Well, part of your point was that adoption rates are really high. What about existing parents? Are you going to ask your parents to take part in this? If they then fail are you going to go into adoption? Are you going to go to a foster home? Do you want to do that if your parents fail? **[Approbation]** I would also like to point out that instinct got us through raising children for millions of years before Google was around. **[Approbation]**

7.1.8 Ms. L. Cowieson:

First of all, in our proposal it does not mention any test whatsoever, so I would just like to point that out. So once a parent becomes pregnant you put them on the childcare course. It is not a test to see if you pass or fail, it is to simply put the parent in the best position to raise the child. It is not teaching them how to raise the child, it is things like first aid, which many parents are not in a

position to act upon if their child is in an aspect of danger. We are not promoting abortion or adoption if the parent does not feel that they are in the right way to bring up the child and the childcare course would help to identify any problems in the family that are already existing to help them in support of what they would like to be, and it would help us with less money being put to social services and adoption for that way.

7.1.9 Ms. F. Gardener-Hillman:

I just wanted to ask like how can you teach parents how to parent when like every child is different and what about kids with special needs and stuff, is there a different course for them or ... just curious?

7.1.10 Ms. C. Pollard:

You said in your report that most of these children are put into care due to neglect. Neglect is mainly due to being unable to financially provide things like food, shelter or suitable accommodation, so surely these should be addressed rather than the parenting? I would like to second Mr. Hart's point about the ethical reasons for denying people's right to life. Surely a more sensible solution, rather than a parenting course, is to educate people on birth and family control so that they are ready to have a family and they are in control of being able to do this. I would also like to ask, what is your stance on a single parent? You have talked about having 2 parents together but with a modernised world many people are having children on their own without partners. What is your stance on this? [Approbation]

7.1.11 Mr. C. Shirley:

Yes, I would just like to firstly raise a few points. I would like to pick up on the adoption statistic that is mentioned in the report of 69,540 children are awaiting adoption as of March 2015. You also mentioned in your report that if their genetic parents had been examined before they may not have had to go through the trauma of not having security. I feel that this is a very poorly phrased statistic in the very essence that life itself is unpredictable.

[16:15]

People can lose jobs, people can fall ill and there is so many aspects of family life that cannot be boxed off into that will happen at that time. So I feel that to say that if there had been a prior test then maybe they would not have gone through the trauma, I do not feel that is necessarily fair or correct in that no one could see what will happen in the future. Going back to my point, life is unpredictable and to say that if that test had been in place beforehand then such trauma could have been avoided is, I feel, unreasonable. Secondly, I would also like to mention that I feel that parenting within itself, while none or very few of the people in this Assembly today would have gone through what it is like to be a parent, or to look after a young sibling perhaps, one person's idea of good parenting may be another person's idea of poor parenting, in which case who would lead such a course or who would ... because I do not feel that any ... you know you could go through any family in the whole of the world, there is no perfect parent, in the same way there is no perfect doctor, no perfect teacher. So my question would be who would lead such courses throughout the Island. My final point is that like many things in life parenting evolves constantly, what may have been seen as acceptable parenting 10, 20 years ago may not be seen as so acceptable nowadays. Who knows where we will go in the future, in 10, 15, 20 years, or practices that commonly show up in parenting nowadays, will they be unacceptable or will they be even more acceptable in years to come? [Approbation]

7.1.12 Mr. Morley-Kirk:

You say it is not a test, well fair enough then. If you really want to push this through, what is the point if it is not having a test, because people can just go along, dally about and muck around and

they will really get nothing out of it. So what is the point then if there is no test? It sounds like it is going to be very subjective and who is going to make this ... how are you going to come together and come up with a score sheet. As we have discussed before there are many different mothering and caring methods, and different ways that you can care for a child. Surely if you are having this course you are going to push just those few views and you are really excluding some of the new caring methods and I feel like this could be damaging as it does exclude some of the new methods.

7.1.13 Ms. T. Marchant:

Ms. Cowieson earlier explained that they never said they wanted to have a test, and, as Mr. Morley-Kirk said, what is the point of it without a test? What we all seem to have missed is that at the bottom of the proposition's report is a sentence which reads: "These statistics add further emphasis to the need for people to pass an examination before becoming parents." [Approbation] So you do not appear to have read your own report. [Laughter] As many people have said, you have not made it clear what it is you are asking people to learn in these courses. Do we teach them that when disciplining your child you should hit them or that you should never hit them? Do we teach them that you should raise your child with your religion or that you should raise your child to choose their own religion? You just say: "We should teach people to be parents" but you do not seem to have any understanding of what that entails. I am not saying you should because, like myself, you are not parents, I am not a parent, how can you be placing restrictions on what people should know before they can become parents when you are not one yourself and have no understanding what that would entail. [Approbation]

7.1.14 Ms. C. McInnes:

While in hindsight the proposition does seem like a slightly good idea, I also agree that it is extremely impractical. While there seems to be double standards with how adoption ... people who are trying to adopt children, they have to go through so many tests, yes, that does seem like double standards how normal parents do not seem like they have to go through any tests, it is just, bottom line, quite patronising on people who feel they might not need it and also how will you ensure that people who feel that it is very patronising will participate with the course in general?

7.1.15 Mr. K. Power:

I would first of all like to commend the idea of the proposition. I do believe that the proposers were genuinely trying to improve childcare in the Island, so I do think that should be commended. However, I do have to go back to the practicalities and 2 points I would like to bring up. First of all, the cost. I know it has already been discussed but it would seem that the cost is inevitably going to fall on taxpayers because it would be ridiculous to ask low earning parents or potential parents to pay for this course. It is another example of people who do not have children having to pay for those that do, and that already is obviously huge in education. People are already paying for children whether they have them or not. This just seems to be another burden on those taxpayers. But another point I would like to make is that many parents are travelling constantly and it would seem impossible for them to set aside time on a weekly basis or a monthly basis to take this course. For example, whether they are in the business world or whether they are in the Armed Forces, there would be a potential that a lot of parents would miss out on this apparently valuable information. So I wonder how you would combat that. [Approbation]

7.1.16 Mr. C. Dorris:

I just want to second ... sorry, what is your name? Just, her. I want to second her opinion because I have that written down on my pad as well. She beat me to it, so well done. Yes, everything she said is what I would like to put forward.

7.1.17 Ms. A. Roberts:

I just wanted to answer Ms. Gardner-Hillman's question. You are never completely sure a child has special needs before they are born and when a child is born there are support groups to attend like outside of the States and they will attend the standard course, obviously the parents. We are not trying to emotionally shape how you parent a child, we are purely trying to teach you practical skills such as nutrition and safety, which every parent should know inarguably.

7.1.18 Ms. M. Mackenzie:

We would just like to make the point that you said that you would need a licence when you passed the examination, but how do you decide ... whose right is it to decide whether or not you are going to be a good parent and how can you do that without taking into account subjective views like religion and other factors which like differ in such a multi-cultural society? **[Approbation]**

7.1.19 Ms. S. Angell:

In overall response to everyone's questions, our proposition aims to address the problems of an education at the source, so there are no existing problems outside of the birth of the unborn child. This then avoids the problems of adoption and abortion. This course does not stand to play guard or tell people who can or cannot have children, it is a course of education and support and, to come back to Ms. Cowieson's point, we are not telling people how to parent, it is guidance to ensure a safe environment for the future generations.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does any other Member wish to speak in this debate? No one else has a contribution to make who has not already spoken? In that case, I will ask Ms. Hervieu to sum up, please.

7.1.20 Ms. E. Hervieu:

First of all, just to emphasise we have never said it was a test, examination does not mean a test. It is not about whether you pass or fail, it is just kind of the basic skills to look after a child and to be a good parent, for example, like give basic infant first aid. A lot of parents do not know how to do that, because it is very different to adult first aid, so giving an outline of what to do there. What someone said about: "Who decides what makes a good parent?" a collection of Social Services workers obviously have a lot of experience in this field, so getting meetings with them, coming together and everyone agrees on what a basic good parent should be, to look after their child, to keep them safe, to make sure they are happy, everyone can agree on the basis of what a good parent is. Also single parents, what Ms. Pollard said: "Would it be different for a single parent?" It would be the same for both parents, if you had one parent or not, if you are a guardian, both parents would be on the course. It does not matter if you are male or female. Also a lot of people said about: "What about free will?" but when you have children, you will want the best for them. Even if you disagree with me now, maybe in a couple of years when you do have children, then you definitely want the best for them. We understand that our proposal will not solve all the problems associated with childcare. However, we hope that it will solve a few. Social Services and adoption places will still be there when they are needed and there will still be support and care if people need it and want it. Just having the education and the basic skills to be able to provide for your children can make the difference between your children going into care or staying as a family. In a report from March 2015, published at gov.uk, it states that: "Providing early help is more effective in promoting welfare for children than intervening in later life. Providing help for parents before they even have their child can ensure they know how to handle and look after a newborn, which reduces the likelihood of any problems later on in the child's life."

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Thank you very much. I will now ask the Greffier to open the voting, please. If all Members have had the opportunity to vote, I will ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the

proposition has been lost: 12 votes in favour, 31 against and 3 abstentions. [INSERT VOTE TABLE]

8. That a sugar tax should be imposed on unhealthy and sugary foods in Jersey

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

I will now move on to the final item of Public Business in the name of Mr. Donahoe of Victoria College and ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of the opinion that a sugar tax should be imposed on unhealthy and sugary foods in Jersey.

8.1 Mr. L. Donahoe:

I would like to clarify the proposition before I start: we wanted to put it on sugary drinks and it would be a 20 per cent sugar tax. I believe we have ignored the issue of obesity on this Island for too long. Currently in the U.K., the N.H.S. spends £4 billion on obesity-related and non-communicable diseases every year. This cost is expected to rise to £6 billion if nothing is done by 2050. The fact that one in 6 people in Jersey are obese is a figure that startles me. Surely if one in 6 people are at huge risk to health issues such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and a wide range of cancers, then we as an Island must do something. Now, you may be asking why the issue of obesity matters, surely it is only an issue to those directly affected, and while the individual effect of obesity is substantial, the effect on the collective is definitely undoubtable. The money spent on dealing with obesity-related issues could be spent on a multitude of other worthwhile things. It is the taxpayers' money that is spent solving issues that often result from other people's greed. I am by no means saying that obesity is always the fault of the individual and that they should be to blame, often it may be hereditary and cannot be solved easily. However, if the issue could be prevented by action taken earlier in life, then surely that would be preferable. The matter of obesity and the money being sunk into it can still be solved. Multiple governmental legislations could help save lives, save money and increase the amount of money that the Government can spend on helping those at risk, firstly through the implementation of a 20 per cent tax on sugary drinks. This tax is a 2-pronged system, as it has 2 substantial benefits. Firstly, it would mean fewer people would be buying these sugary drinks and leaning towards a healthier diet; secondly, the money gained from the tax can be used to help those who are suffering from obesity-related issues through subsidising the cost of fruit and vegetables and improving healthcare support. This means that the more sugary drinks that people purchase, the more money they pay towards the overall obesity healthcare. Another legislation that could be imposed would be a health rating system on foods to make it easier to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy variations of different foods, similar to one that was imposed in New Zealand. Imagine if a parent wanted to buy a snack bar for their child, would it not be better if they could compare between the contents of each one to make sure their child was getting the best diet possible? One place that has successfully implemented this policy is in Mexico. Now, recently they have been falsely portrayed in a bad light by figures such as Donald Trump, but perhaps in this respect Donald Trump should be looking up to Mexico's political ideas. In Mexico there is a 20 per cent on all sugary drinks and it has been a great success. After just one year, the purchase of these sugary drinks is down 17 per cent. How can we fail to see that this legislation would have a huge positive impact? The idea has been rotting on Government desks for years and nothing has been done and the problem keeps growing. We must act now if we wish to stop this epidemic. It is absurd to do nothing. This is a profitable, efficient and proven solution. What is not to like? If we do nothing, the problem is not just going to go away. It will keep getting worse and worse, decaying like an unbrushed tooth, until we reach a breaking point. The waistline of the Island grows, our bills increase and the heartache of heart disease hits more

families. Alternatively, we can act now and curb the issue. A 20 per cent tax on sugary drinks will have a plethora of benefits to Jersey.

[16:30]

For example, benefits predicted to decrease by 5 per cent, the farming industry will benefit and the environment therefore bolstered. We will have more money to improve our hospital, our schools and a variety of other things. Of these 2 outcomes, I know which I would prefer. You probably will know that the British Government rejected this idea last month, but so what? Think of the myriad of ways in which Jersey and Britain diverge. We have a different Government and we print our own money. This differentiation is what makes Jersey so special, so why should we not be the trailblazer and set the precedent in solving the obesity crisis that has plagued us all for far too long?

[Approbation]

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Is the proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** I see Mr. Dorris.

8.1.1 Mr. C. Dorris:

I am quite glad that you said sugary drinks instead of food, because that makes my argument even stronger. Basically you probably all know of Aspartame. It until recently has not been proved, but now many health organisations have proved that this sweetener has many products in it which are definitely 100 per cent carcinogens. These include formaldehyde and the product which is metabolised from methanol, methanal, which is also a carcinogen. Both of these toxic substances can cause cancer, which you said you wanted to stop by stopping sugar, so how is that helping?

[Approbation]

8.1.2 Ms. C. Pollard:

As a daughter of 2 dentists, I see the effects that sugary drinks have, as they endlessly rattle on at me about them, with dental decay being the largest health problem on the earth, with 99 per cent of people affected and in the U.K., 2 out of 3 anaesthetics are for the removal of teeth. Though why stop at sugary drinks? They are not enough to reduce obesity like you said you wanted to do. Why not go on to foods as well?

8.1.3 Ms. F. Germain:

I completely agree with your statement about you should tax sugary drinks. However, a lot of time people drink those drinks because it is a lot cheaper than healthy drinks, maybe diet drinks or water, so therefore in order to try to tax those drinks, do you believe that we should reduce the price of healthy drinks and maybe water to try to compensate so that more people can drink?

8.1.4 Ms. F. Gardener-Hillman:

While I agree with your statement, you said that you wanted to have colour-coded logos with green, orange and red, but correct me if I am wrong, but I am pretty sure that we already do that on a lot of drinks and stuff and food as well.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Are you asking for a point of clarification? Can you clarify that point, Mr. Donahoe?

8.1.5 Mr. L. Donahoe:

The one that I put down in the proposition was slightly different to what I have just spoken about. This one is more of a rating system in which you compare all foods, say you take 2 different of the same food, you can see the health contents of that food and decide which is better for you.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Have you completed your speech then, Ms. Gardener-Hillman? You have finished. Okay, thank you.

8.1.6 Ms. A. Roberts:

I was just going to say fruit juices, which are healthy drinks, also contain quite a bit of sugar. Will they be taxed?

8.1.7 Mr. Morley-Kirk:

I would just like to come into the defence of the proposition. I would just like to mention that I think people are wrong in thinking that it is just about sugary drinks. If you read the start of the report, I quote: "We believe that a tax of 20 per cent should be imposed on overly-sugary goods in fast-food chains" so that does include everything, not just sugary drinks. I would just like to talk about I think the real problem is essentially that healthy food is more expensive than unhealthy food and that then strongly ties into sugary foods and goods. I would like to say, the problem with economics - again, sorry to be boring, but it must be mentioned - that if you have 2 products, you have probably got the more ideal product that is going to be your main product, which is this healthy food. However, you have these cheap, sugary goods which end up being a substitute good that people buy because it is a lot cheaper. I guess what the sugar tax is going to do is if they can raise the price preferably above that of the healthy foods price, then that is going to make the healthy foods more appealing because it is a lower price. However, I would like to mention the problem with that would be that if you do that, you are going to hurt the lower income groups most, as you are going to raise that higher, and some of the reasons that they are choosing unhealthy food is because it is cheaper. I would like to ask, if you are going to do that, would you have a subsidy for healthy food as well to make it work? [Approbation]

8.1.8 Ms. B. Terry-Marchant:

I hate to bring us back to a previous question, but on the idea of the green, orange and red system, I feel that this was not properly explained. As Ms. Gardener-Hillman said, we already have green, orange and red labels on our food which does compare sugar, fat, saturated fat and calorie content. I do not see what it is that is different you are proposing. When the British Government was looking to bring this in, which was not even really that long ago, they looked into different ways that this could work, how we would be comparing foods, would we get one label on each food to compare across the board. Essentially medical professionals, doctors and such, nutritionists explained to them that that would be much too hard to do, because there are so many factors that go into what makes food healthy or unhealthy, and that overall it is one's diet across the board. It is not one sugary drink that will make you fat or rot all your teeth, it is your diet across the board. So the labelling system we currently have is pretty well as good as they were going to get it. Instead of taxing people on perhaps the one sugary drink they are going to treat themselves to, we should be helping people to afford the healthier options. There has been discussion of sometimes unhealthy options are cheaper or whatnot and I find that a lot of the time when we make this point, people say that: "Oh, these healthier options are a lot cheaper" and then show you some organic vegetables and grass-fed chickens and say: "Oh, cook these yourselves, it works out being cheaper and healthier than this pre-packaged ready-meal soaked in grease and Aspartame." But this does not take account of the time factor of someone who is perhaps on a low income and who has to work long hours going home, heating up the stove, slaving over a hot oven and all this to produce this healthy meal for their family. Many people just do not have the time for this, so a ready-meal which perhaps might not be as good for them is this last resort that they just have to go to and turn to to feed themselves. [Approbation]

8.1.9 Ms. E. Wetherall:

I do not feel as though the proposition will successfully discourage unhealthy foods because it is not the price of the unhealthy foods as such that is the problem, it is the addiction to the refined sugar within these foods, because refined sugar acts like a drug and if you cut it out of your diet completely, you do end up getting withdrawal symptoms like you would from stopping drugs. So I think another way would have to be thought of, because if you put a tax on it, people would still buy it, because they are in effect addicted to these foods. [Approbation]

8.1.10 Ms. J. Yettram:

While I agree with your proposition, you said that a 20 per cent tax would benefit the farming industry. I am kind of intrigued as to how that would happen. [Approbation]

8.1.11 Ms. B. Waddington:

I do not feel like the issue here should be solely with sugar, because a lot of things like fruits do contain a lot of sugar, but I think there is a big problem with the price difference between healthy and unhealthy foods and I do not think we should just focus on sugar. I think we should focus on reducing the cost overall of more healthy foods.

8.1.12 Ms. L. Deveau:

I would just like to ask, because we were saying we have this colour coded system already, but way that are a lot of unhealthy food companies get around this is to alter their portion size, because these colours are in relation to the portion size. So what Cadburys do is their portion is 3 little squares, and that is a portion of chocolate anyway, so how would you propose that this would be any different, how people would not be able to get around it and just say, yes, it is just a little portion so that is fine?

8.1.13 Mr. K. Power:

I would just like to return to a point made by Mr. Dorris at the start about the sweeteners, and I think it was also mentioned over here as well. I do think that just taxing sugar is not enough to solve the obesity crisis and in fact many diet drinks are being proven to be worse for your health than the regular sugar versions. So, while I do support the idea of the proposition, I do not think this is necessarily the best way to go about it. I would also follow up the suggestion that the money used, if this proposition is adopted, will money entirely going to subsidising healthier food, in which case I may be more willing to adopt the proposition.

8.1.14 Mr. T. Terry:

To summarise our proposal for a 20 per cent tax on sugary drinks, this is just the first step in fighting the health problem in many places across the world, and, just to clarify, we are focusing on the 20 per cent tax of sugary drinks if that helps. Jersey needs to take the reins and lead by example, as 17 per cent of our population suffer from obesity and 6 per cent have type 2 diabetes, it is essential for the health and welfare of our population. This year, the World Health Organisation has also called for a tax on sugary drinks in order to counter childhood obesity, which has been described as an exploding nightmare, literally bursting at the seams. Childhood obesity poses a threat to future world health and is causing problems right across the globe. Public Health England has also backed the implementation of a sugar tax of 20 per cent. In 2013, Harvard researchers conducted a study, which showed that, by increasing the price of a 20-ounce sugary drink by 20 cents, the sales dropped by 16 per cent. This mirrors the Mexican tax implemented on the sugary drinks, which also led to a drop in sales of 17 per cent. Soft drinks are the largest single source of sugar for children aged 11 to 18. By accepting our proposal, a decrease in sales will be seen, as backed up by the Harvard study and the Mexican tax examples. This will help to lower childhood obesity, thus improving health outcomes for our population. In conclusion, we believe a 20 per cent tax on sugary drinks will help benefit the future health of the Jersey population. It will provide

extra revenue, which can be directed towards improving education and help fund the new hospital. Also, a healthier population will provide a saving on the health budget, further increasing our Island's prosperity. I hope that you join us in our proposal for the sugar tax for the sake of our Island's welfare and future.

8.1.15 Mr. J. Trott:

I would like to support the statement and say I think it is clear that we should focus on more things than just sugar. I think this is a good place to start, so therefore we should support the tax.

8.1.16 Mr. J. Gibbons:

I just wanted to ask why the tax is being aimed at consumers, not the corporations themselves, especially in Jersey with high inequality. We already have G.S.T. (goods and services tax) so it is just going to hit lower earners a lot more than the corporations who really should be paying for the obesity crisis, not the people themselves. **[Approbation]**

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does anyone else wish to speak on this proposition? Mr. Hart.

8.1.17 Mr. I. Hart:

Just a brief point about something mentioned very early about the sweeteners being carcinogenic. I do not see a reason why we have to necessarily replace the sugars with sweeteners.

8.1.18 Mr. L. Deacon:

I think that point was more associated with, if you cannot buy the full sugar drinks, like say Coke, you would get the Diet Coke, which has those additives in, which would give you that.

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

Does anyone else wish to make a contribution? No. In that case I ask Mr. Donahoe to respond.

8.1.19 Mr. L. Donahoe:

There are 2 main issues that people are finding, firstly is the higher costs hitting lower-income families. But through subsidising the price of fruit and vegetables and other healthier foods it means that they will be more affordable, and so those families will be able to afford a healthier diet rather than having to buy the cheaper unhealthy goods. Also, through this subsidising, it will help the farming industry, as more money is spent on crops and stuff. Then, also, there is the issue of other foods and unhealthy foods, but this tax will just be a start and that obviously more action would be taken, but something has to be done to get the ball rolling and start. **[Approbation]**

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

As all Members are in their seats, I ask the Greffier to open the voting. Everyone had the opportunity to vote. I ask the Greffier to close the voting and I can announce that the proposition has been adopted, 22 votes in favour, 13 against, and 11 abstentions. **[INSERT VOTE TABLE]**

[16:45]

That concludes the business for today but before we close I would just like to say a couple of things. Firstly, to thank all of you who have taken part in this Youth Assembly. I must confess, I found the contributions really stimulating and fascinating and what I have enjoyed most has been the spontaneous contributions. The prepared speeches have been good, but the spontaneous contributions from all of you have been heartfelt, considered and extremely well delivered, so I congratulate on that. One of the things, which I am sure you must have noticed, is that the young people are listened to. You did have 9 or 10 Ministers and Assistant Ministers here to take your

questions and we did overrun a little bit on that, but I think it was worthwhile. During the afternoon, I have noticed a fair smattering of States Members coming in and listening to your question time and to your debates. So we, as States Members, really are interested in what you think and the things that are important to you. One person I would like to thank particularly, because an event like this does not just happen, a lot of hard work goes into organising it, and I would like to thank, on your behalf, Deputy Greffier Lisa Hart [**Approbation**] who talks with the schools, your teachers, gets all the name plates organised, puts the signs up so you know where the toilets are, it is so well-organised I do not know where we would be without Lisa, so thank you very much, and let us give her a real big thank you. [**Approbation**] Our generosity knows no bounds, so please take with you the folder and the paperwork and I think there was a pen provided as well.

Mr. K. Power:

Could I just take a moment to thank you, Constable Len Norman, for chairing the debate on behalf of the Parliament as well. [**Approbation**]

The Connétable of St. Clement (in the Chair):

I appreciate it, cheers. If I could just remind you that there are refreshments available in the States Members common room downstairs, to which anyone in the public gallery is also invited to join us for soft drinks and crisps. So thank you all very much indeed. We stand adjourned.

[16:47]