

STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

THURSDAY, 14th DECEMBER 2023

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[9:30]

The Roll was called and the Dean led the Assembly in Prayer.

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central:

Sir, may I ask a question about an amendment that is coming up because it may be really clear, and if not, it will just speed the process up later.

The Bailiff:

Well, we are mid-debate. I wonder if the best thing to do is to finish the matter that we are dealing with at the moment.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Of course, sorry, I forgot that.

The Bailiff:

Then we will come back on the rest, Deputy. Yes, by all means. Deputy Le Hegarat, did you have a point to make at this stage?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North:

Yes, Sir. I have spoken to as many people as I could see this morning prior to us sitting, and I would like to propose that we finish at 8.00 this evening. I am aware that there will be one or 2 Members that may not be able to attend for various other commitments, and that we finish at 5.30 for half an hour in order that both Members can have a break and the staff working within the Assembly. That is my proposition, Sir.

The Bailiff:

The proposition then is we stop at 5.30 for half an hour and then resume, concluding at 8.00 p.m. Is that seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak?

Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

I think we are making good progress. If we were to stay until 6.00 this evening it would give Members an opportunity to have a great session today. We only have 9 amendments remaining and then the consequent summing-up speeches afterwards. I really think if Members focus their energy on being succinct and getting through the business, I am sure we can do it with a 6.00 finish this evening.

The Bailiff:

That is presumably on the assumption, Chief Minister, that we will continue tomorrow, as is presently scheduled in the Assembly, because of course there are consequential laws to be passed following the Government Plan and indeed the traditional Christmas greetings. I am looking at the Connétable of St. Helier and, I think, Deputy Southern on this occasion. Does anyone else wish to speak on the proposition? The proposition is that we pause at 5.30 and then resume at 6.00 until 8.00.

Deputy E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity

Do we really need a 30-minute break at 5.30? Could we have 15 minutes and finish slightly earlier?

The Bailiff:

I think we have to vote on this proposition. No, it is fine, it is a legitimate question that it may cause people to vote against it and then other propositions to come, but does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition? In which case I close that debate. Do you have anything that you wish to respond on that, Deputy Le Hegarat?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Those Members that I was able to speak to, we did discuss about not having a break at all and also a shortened break but the thing was, was that by the time you have risen and got out of the room, 30 minutes made more sense. In relation to what the Chief Minister said, we did discuss it. Yes, we have made good progress, but I think it is probably prudent to see ... if things change this afternoon then I am happy to maybe look to reduce that. But I think at this stage, I would propose that we still stay with what I have proposed and that we go for the appel, please.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats and the vote is on stopping at 5.30 for half an hour and then resuming at 6.00 to finish at 8.00. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. That proposition is adopted: 31 votes pour, 9 votes contre, one abstention.

Pour: 31	Contre: 9	Abstain: 1
Connétable of Trinity	Connétable of St. Brelade	Deputy S.Y Mezec
Connétable of St. Peter	Deputy I. Gardiner (H)	
Connétable of St. Martin	Deputy K.L. Moore	
Connétable of St. Clement	Deputy D.J. Warr	
Connétable of Grouville	Deputy H.M. Miles	
Connétable of St. Ouen	Deputy J. Renouf	
Connétable of St. Mary	Deputy R.S. Kovacs	
Connétable of St. Saviour	Deputy A.F. Curtis	
Deputy G.P. Southern	Deputy M.B. Andrews	
Deputy C.F. Labey		
Deputy M. Tadier		
Deputy S.G. Luce		
Deputy K.F. Morel		
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
Deputy S.M. Ahier		
Deputy R.J. Ward		
Deputy L.J. Farnham		
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache		
Deputy T.A. Coles		
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		
Deputy M.R. Scott		
Deputy C.D. Curtis		
Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Deputy R.E. Binet		

Deputy M.E. Millar				
Deputy A. Howell				
Deputy T.J.A. Binet				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				

The Assembly therefore will break at 5.30 this evening and resume at 6.00, and then we will work through until 8.00, unless a proposition is brought subsequently during the course of the day, to vary those times in the light of the progress we make.

PUBLIC BUSINESS - resumption

1. Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): seventh amendment (P.72/2023 Amd.(7)) - Extension of marginal relief - resumption

The Bailiff:

We now resume the debate on Deputy Mézec's amendment; seventh amendment, Extension of marginal relief. Does any other Member wish to speak?

1.1. Deputy E. Millar:

Famous words, I had not been intending to speak, but I have been giving this quite a lot of thought overnight. Deputy Bailhache mentioned yesterday that the 20 per cent tax rate has been a feature of Jersey's tax law for decades, and that is certainly the case, as has Jersey's reputation for certainty and stability. That reputation cannot be underestimated. It is absolutely vital to our economy that we are seen as a certain and stable jurisdiction. Every time we have this debate, it creates a little chink in that reputation. Is Jersey really the certain and stable place it once was? Can we be sure that if we bring people here on the basis that they will pay 20 per cent tax, before we know it they are going to be paying much more? I have been involved in recruiting and bringing people to Jersey since the late 1990s, and the 20 per cent tax rate is one of the real draws to Jersey. If you are paying 40 per cent tax in the U.K. (United Kingdom), as was pointed out by Deputy Coles, I think - very many people are paying that level of tax - the 20 per cent tax rate is one of the things that really brings people here, as well as our quality of life, our beaches, the myth that you can knock off work earlier than you would do in the city and go to the beach. Not totally true because they are still working until 8.00 or 9.00 at night, a lot of these people that come over here. But it is really valuable for people coming here. It is not just about individuals coming here, it is about businesses coming here. People choose to put business in Jersey for a reason. The stability of our tax system is one of them. We are competing globally and not just in financial services. For all sorts of areas, we are in competition with other parts of the world. It is not just about where would people go. I do have to emphasise that it is not just about ... people with money are not just people who have come to the Island. There are lots of people in Jersey who have earned money, who are from Jersey, who are born and bred, and who have worked hard and have got themselves into a position where they would be paying the 25 per cent tax under this proposition. Where might people go or where might they leave Jersey to go to? Where may they not come to Jersey instead? We are competing with the likes of Dubai, Luxembourg, Singapore, all our competitors in financial services. But also G.P.s (general practitioners). We are competing with Australia, New Zealand, the U.K. The U.K. is competing for G.P.s and doctors. Every time we change our system, it makes us less attractive. How is that as a proposition for someone who is interviewing a G.P.? "Well, when you can you come here, you will

not pay 40 per cent tax, you will pay 25 per cent. But just so you know, the vast majority of your patients will not be paying any tax at all and most of your colleagues in here who are not doctors will not be paying any tax at all. That itself is not necessarily a comfortable message. A lot of people will not think: "Yes, that is a great idea. I will come and pay 25 per cent when lots of people do not pay any tax at all." We have the idea as well ... I think there are some misplaced ideas that both individuals, people who come here and their businesses, they come to Jersey to pillage and plunder and exploit. That is not the case. Many people come here and they develop businesses and they put tens of millions of pounds every year into our economy. Their businesses are paying lawyers and accountants and financial services firms to administer their businesses. They are recruiting, they are employing local people, and not just in low-value jobs, not just as cleaners.

[9:45]

But they are recruiting managers, secretaries, administrators and people who have skills, who are earning good money and who are being given careers in those businesses. Perhaps, personally, they may be employing cleaners and gardeners and nannies and housekeepers and interior designers. Most of us are not doing that, but it is supporting all of those local businesses in the Island. We have to be very careful about dissuading people to come here and generate money. How does it encourage people to get on and work hard? The point of the marginal rate is that it offers ... it stops the cliff edge. Let us say someone is just below the tax threshold and suddenly they get a pay rise for a couple of thousand pounds and suddenly they have gone from paying no tax to paying 25 per cent on everything. How does that encourage people to develop businesses, to develop their careers, to work hard? Generally there is just an overall question of fairness. My view of fairness and the view of fairness in other Members are clearly 2 different things. I strongly suspect if you went to the pensioner group in Jersey and said: "Do you think it is fair that a pensioner couple can earn north of £230,000 between them, or have income of £230,000 between them, and not pay any tax? Do you think that is fair?" Do you think pensioners would think that is fair, that other pensioners can earn that amount of money and not pay tax?

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Sir, I do have a point of order. The Minister, I think, is not speaking to the amendment because she is ...

Deputy E. Millar:

I am.

Deputy M. Tadier:

She is bringing in arguments which are not ... no, because ...

Deputy E. Millar:

Yes, I am.

The Bailiff:

Well, I think there is a fair amount of ... if you could sit down. There is a fair amount of leeway that I have been allowing up to now in the speeches people give. I did not see that this was straying off the topic at all. So, in my view, no, it is not a point of order that I am prepared to ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

Can I ask a point of order then? The ruling I wish you to make is to clarify exactly what the proposition asks. Can you clarify that the proposition it is to ...

The Bailiff:

No, Deputy ...

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is important that we know what we are debating.

The Bailiff:

I would rather hope every Member knows what they are debating, because I rather hope they have read the proposition, read the report, and I am not prepared to further refine it beyond that.

Deputy M. Tadier:

It is an important principle. If we were debating buses and we were proposing to reduce buses by 50p and Members started making arguments about free buses, that would not be in order because that is not addressing the proposition. Similarly, the Minister's comments are addressing the proposition.

The Bailiff:

As a matter of relevance ... I note your desire that I will uphold and keep people strictly to relevance within speeches. That may well truncate a certain amount of the things we hear in the Assembly today. But the reality of it is people are entitled to talk to an extent around the subject. I mean, no personal criticism, but you yourself from time to time talk around the subject with a point of view of making your point and, provided it eventually zones in on the point and it can be seen to have a line that takes you there, then I cannot say that it is completely irrelevant.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I will put my light on now to speak, Sir, just while you are looking at me. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

Very well. I shall write it down.

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

If the Deputy would give way for a point of clarification.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Millar, will you give way for a point of clarification?

Deputy E. Millar:

I have been completely disturbed now, Sir, so, yes.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I will be gentle. The Deputy said that ...

The Bailiff:

I am so sorry. I was assuming you simply wanted to speak next.

Deputy K. Wilson of St. Clement:

No, Sir. I just wanted to raise the défaut on Deputy Ozouf.

The Bailiff:

Well, let us wait until ... I beg your pardon. This is getting a little out of hand. Perhaps people could exercise some judgment when they put their light on in the Assembly. If they wish to speak, then wait until I nod, turn it off. If there is seriously a point that needs to be made now, by all means put the light on. But if someone is speaking and the point can very easily wait until they have stopped speaking, then it will be helpful not to turn the light on because it could be a point of order that you are making, and I would have to then move from one speaker to you. If you make that application when Deputy Farnham has asked for his point of clarification.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Would the Deputy clarify what she meant when she said that ... she alluded to the fact, unless I misheard that, Islanders earning under £230,000 would not pay tax? I think she might have meant they would perhaps pay less tax, if she just clarified that, please.

The Bailiff:

That is a valid point of clarification, if you would make that point.

Deputy E. Millar:

I am happy to clarify. My understanding of the graphs that accompanied this proposition, and perhaps I have misread them, in which case I apologise, but I understood that what Deputy Mézec said yesterday was a pensioner couple could earn £253,000 ... they would have £253,000 of income before they paid any tax. [Aside] Well, clearly I have misunderstood that then, so I apologise. But the intention of the graphs were, I understood, that many people were not going to pay tax. So if I have misunderstood that, that is fine, and I apologise. But I do believe I was speaking to relevance. I was answering questions posed by Deputy Coles as he asked a question, where would they go? I was addressing that question, and I do find it somewhat ironic to be challenged by Deputy Tadier on relevance. Clearly I have misunderstood everything, so I will end here.

The Bailiff:

Did you have an application to make?

Deputy K. Wilson:

Can I raise the défaut on Deputy Ozouf, please?

The Bailiff:

The défaut is raised on Deputy Ozouf.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Apologies, Sir, I would like to raise the défaut on Deputy Doublet as well.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Doublet, yes. The défaut on Deputy Doublet and Deputy Ozouf is raised.

1.1.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

The reason I made the point of order is that I know as well as anyone that the chair is often generous in allowing latitude in speeches that do not always address the point, or they do it in a roundabout way. But the presumption is that a Member, especially a Minister, should have read the proposition and understand the fundamentals of what is being asked. Of course you can bring in tangential arguments, you can bring in as many strawmen, and you can even bring in strawwomen these days, if you want to, to make your arguments. But at least understand what the basics of the proposition are. The fundamentals of this are, first of all, if you do not pay any tax at the moment, you will not be paying any tax in the future. Any income tax, that is. If you are a marginal rate payer, that is, if you pay 26 per cent marginal rate at the moment, you will pay 25 per cent marginal rate and you will still have your allowances. If you are a 20 per cent taxpayer at the moment, you will no longer pay 20 per cent income tax. Instead, you will pay 25 per cent income tax, but you will get the same allowances that everybody else has. Therefore, it is the extension of marginal rate, which is what it says on the tin, or in this case what it says on the proposition. So the beauty of this is that you do not even have to read the proposition. I will not be holier than thou and say that I read everything that comes into the Assembly, but I at least make sure I have got a grasp of what it is about. Read the title, please. It is simply not factual to say that there will be a 25 per cent tax cliff edge, because everybody at the moment who is paying no tax is still going to have their allowances. It is simply

not true to say if you earn an extra pound and it takes you into the barrier of being a taxpayer, guess what, you will only pay 25 per cent on that £1 - which is how much? - it is 25 pence. So you probably will not even get a request from Treasury. I do not think they are quite yet that officious to send you a tax request for 25 pence, although I remain to be proven wrong. First of all, have we all established the facts about what this proposition is about? Yes, I think we have. Now the next question is do we like it or do we lark it. Some people do not like it. The first thing to do is just understand what it is about. The second point to say, and I do not want to misquote, is it the Tony Benn phrase? I do not know if it has been mentioned already, but it goes something like this: "At first they think you are mad [and is it?] then they think you are dangerous. Then there is a silence and then after a while, there is no one who can disagree with you." Because we are in a stage at the moment where, first of all, there is a misunderstanding. I think we have moved past the misunderstanding. We know it has been to the Assembly enough times that we should know what this policy is about. It is very simple. We are starting to get privately Members, even in Government, saying: "Actually this proposition is quite good. We quite like it. In fact, we do not even know if it goes far enough. Why did you not put a 26 per cent tax rate in for everyone." The private conversations will go something like this: "Well, you know, we want to try and reduce tax a little bit for those in the middle because we know that middle earners are feeling the pinch. But if you want to bring an amendment to make everyone pay 26 per cent tax, then be our guest." Outside the Assembly we hear former Ministers saying to us - I will not name them. I do not want to embarrass them: "Actually, this is a really good policy coming forward from Reform Jersey and I am not a Reform Jersey supporter, but it makes entire sense." They even say: "We were looking to do that when I was in Government." So it cannot be that bad an idea. If we peel the Reform label off it, I am not precious about the Reform Jersey label on it, any Member can choose to support this and make it their own policy. Mark my words, I think that in the next 5 to 10 years, a Government will be doing this because it makes sense. When we trot out these old Walkerite expressions about Jersey stability, what we are actually saying is that we have got a situation in Jersey where there were public demonstrations virtually every week now, where our schools cannot even have teachers guaranteed to be in them. And that is in normal times, let alone in strike times, because there is not the full supplement of teachers that we need. Where, if you come to Jersey, you can expect to have to stay home to look after your children because the Government after a whole year cannot negotiate a decent pay settlement with its own public sector staff in this particular area. This is the stability that this Government is bringing to the Island. To say that people come to the Island because of the 20 per cent tax rate ... I spoke to a teacher last night and she was telling me about the troubles they are having recruiting staff over here, and she said it is not like previously where they could just get staff to drop what they were doing and come over to Jersey because it was so lucrative. She did specifically mention the tax rate. She said: "What they do is they look at the tax rate and think: 'Oh, that is great.'" But what schools have to do to make sure that they are not bringing people over under false pretences they provide a little booklet to say: "By the way, when you come to Jersey, this is what you can expect to have at the end of the month in your pay packet, once you take into account your social security, of course your stealth living ... your long-term care tax, your charge", which you may not end up claiming if you do not end up living in Jersey anyway. But it is a stealth tax. But fundamentally Jersey is built on the 21.5 per cent tax, is it not? The stability of the 21.5 per cent tax, which includes the long-term care tax, because it is a tax, it is not a charge. Government has already tweaked and tampered with the 20 per cent tax rate. When was the 20 per cent tax rate introduced, does anyone know? I will leave it perhaps to another Member to say that. But I do not know. It was probably introduced under interesting circumstances and it has remained here. Incidentally, does anyone know when duty was introduced? It was introduced originally back in the days of the pirates and privateers. Or a bit later than that, actually. But around that time there was an interest in building a college in Jersey. I think this is relevant, because this talks about how taxation and public services are intrinsically linked. There was an idea to build a college in Jersey, and it was a college which would ultimately become Victoria College. So the Government of the day introduced an impôt duty. When they had the impôt duty ...

the school never came until about 100 or 200 years later. But they already had the impôt duty, so that came in. Of course, around that you get the whole history of smugglers and privateers. But of course we know today that people do not come to the Island just to be smugglers or privateers. It is much more sophisticated than that, although we do still see Russian money in the Island that needs to be frozen. At the beginning of this debate, I had to check, are we debating ...

The Bailiff:

Is this a point of clarification or a point of order?

Deputy E. Millar:

Yes, Sir. I am just questioning the relevance of why we are now talking about impôts and Russians? Why we are now commenting on impôt and Russians.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

Me too, Sir.

The Bailiff:

I think it might be helpful if matters of relevance were left to the Presiding Officer, otherwise it simply becomes an excuse to interrupt people's speeches. That is not, as we know, a good thing, whoever does it, unless it is absolutely necessary. Deputy, I do think it is a slight struggle for me to understand the relevance of impôts and privateers to the nature of the proposition currently before the Assembly. But if you are prepared to explain it in a sentence, that will be very helpful.

Deputy M. Tadier:

The frustrating thing is I did actually explain before I even said it why I was saying it, because it is relevant. First of all, there was an allusion in Deputy Miller's speech to, I think it was pillaging, and saying that there is an idea that people come to the Island to simply plunder and pillage. Those were 2 words that I think she definitely used. I am saying that historically there were people in the Island who did come to the Island to do that, and perhaps the piracy and pillaging and plundering that happens around the world nowadays is much more sophisticated. That is a point to make directly in relation to that. I already prefaced, and I am having to repeat myself here, so the time on the clock is going.

[10:00]

The point I am making is that we are debating a Government Plan and Government Plans are very fundamental; they are about taxing and spending. Taxing is about whether we have direct taxes or indirect taxes. What we have seen from this Government is the fact that they are quite happy to introduce or tweak indirect taxes. The long-term care charge is a great example of that. It is capped and it features in there. We have to take the Government Plan in its round. This is a specific measure here, which talks about direct taxation; about direct taxation on income and on personal income tax. The point I was about to make before is that I had to pinch myself and say, are we debating personal income tax here or are we debating corporation tax because there is no suggestion that anyone is saying change the corporation tax from zero. I have understood that Jersey, as a financial institution, requires the 0 per cent tax rate for financial neutrality, and that is what it markets. But we have several rates of personal income tax. Let us look at how that currently works. If you are at the very bottom you do not pay personal income tax. Because even this Government and previous Governments have not stooped so low as to tax people who cannot afford it. That is why you have got personal allowances, but they will find other ways to tax them through stealth, i.e. through G.S.T. (goods and services tax) and through the impôts, which were, as we know, introduced originally to fund the school that never happened. They will happily put those taxes up in excess of R.P.I. (retail price index) when they think it is the thing that they want to do, to make sure that those who do not currently pay income tax are caught. We accept that and we debate that. The next group who pay

income tax after an allowance pay the rate at 26 per cent, so your lowest taxpayers in Jersey pay a 26 per cent interest rate on their taxable allowance. Correct? Correct. Yes, they do on their taxable allowance because the ...

The Bailiff:

This is not a conversation. This is a speech.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am hearing voices in my head, Sir, so I am responding to them.

The Bailiff:

It would be helpful if people did not interject during the course of a speech, even if only because that slows it down. Please do carry on.

Deputy M. Tadier:

When I ask these questions obviously it is a rhetorical device, so I am not encouraging people to answer. Correct, we have a 26 per cent tax rate on the taxable allowance because your allowance is not taxable, and everyone is going to get the new allowance under the Reform Jersey proposition. Then the next stage is that if you are the next level up and you have more earnings, therefore you have got more disposable earnings, you only pay 20 per cent tax but you pay it on all of your income. Then if you are even richer and you are invited to Jersey, because Jersey is not your original tax home, you can pay 1 per cent tax on most of your income. That is the very definition of a regressive tax rate. These are not radical ideas. These are not made up. These are just statements of fact. What Deputy Mézec is trying to do here is say, look, we have already got a pretty good system here with the marginal rate. It allows everybody to have an allowance to live on. It recognises the fact that the people in Jersey who are struggling, and I do ask, especially those who maybe live in the smaller constituencies who have had time to talk to their constituents, who knocked on doors, and they know in Jersey that it is the middle that is struggling. There is this argument in Jersey, which is perhaps slightly unsophisticated, but probably ultimately true, is that Governments have looked after the very poor and they have looked after the very rich, and it is always those in the middle who are feeling the pinch. That is certainly something we have heard. That is something that we have recognised. So this proposition is very much to make sure that those in the middle who are the marginal taxpayers in Jersey get a little break. It means that those many employees who are looking to come to Jersey at the packages that are here for them, do not simply do it on the headline 20 per cent tax rate, which they may not even be paying. They will look at it and say Jersey has just reduced its tax rates for the majority of its personal income taxpayers from 26 per cent to 25 per cent. That makes it slightly better for me to come to Jersey. I also noticed that Jersey has just introduced free G.P. visits for students, and I am relocating to Jersey as a professional. But I also note that my children are still at university, so when they come back to Jersey, they will be able to get free G.P. visits in Jersey. I also notice that Jersey has free bus travel for all of its pensioners and for all of its young people, maybe even more young people. That is also a good reason for me to come to Jersey, because Jersey is becoming slowly a social democratic model, which, let us face it, the U.K. is moving away from. We also attract people from not just the U.K., but from all over the world. What I would say to Members is that this may ... do not be taken in by the idea that this is some kind of radical tax reform. It is actually very simple. It is often complicated I think deliberately by Ministers or accidentally by other Ministers who do not understand it properly. If you are going to vote against this, do it on the basis that you understand what it is. I think it will come in sooner or later. The last thing I would add is that when we hear Members of the public blaming Government for X, Y and Z, we have to remember that Government can only do what it does with the support of the majority of this Assembly. I think today we have got a very simple proposition here that says we can move in one direction, which is down the road of more regressive taxation, business as usual. We know where

business as usual gets us. Or we can take a proactive measure here, which is targeted. It is a small tweak to our tax system but, more fundamentally, it brings in, according to Treasury figures, somewhere in the region of £11.5 million. Those are not our figures. Those are figures from the Government's own Treasury. That is £11.5 million, which can be spent at Home Affairs, on the police and on front line services. It can be spent in the next few years if we need to give public sector workers an increased pay rise. It can be spent on the public realm, on our roads. It can even be spent in Parishes and developing the public realm there. It can be spent in education and right across our system. So next time the salami board comes round or the saucisson, as I know that Deputy Ozouf referred to, we can say we have got a much bigger saucisson and it costs us £11 million, and we are going to give our public something decent to eat.

Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:

May I give notice? I do not think I can give notice to close the debate immediately under Article 85, but can I give notice for the 30-minute guillotine?

The Bailiff:

Very well, notice is given at 10.07.

Male Speaker:

Can I raise the défaut on Deputy Alves, please, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Yes, the défaut is raised on Deputy Alves. Does any other Member wish to speak on this amendment?

1.1.2 Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

I will try to be brief. I thoroughly enjoyed the speech yesterday of the leader of the Liberal Conservatives. Often when he is on his feet, I feel a great empathy with the view of the Jersey Liberal Conservatives. Members know where my political persuasions lie. I suppose I just worry about the liberal bit of the Liberal Conservatives. I do think it is an important point because the last speaker has just made it absolutely clear in his view he thinks we should move to a social democratic model; that is perfectly legitimate. What he is really saying is we should move to a socialist model. That is also .. and I see the mover of this proposition is nodding his head. That is, I think, right. This is where we should have our political debate. The mover of this proposition does so as the leader of Reform Jersey. But I read with interest the Scrutiny Panel's review of the Government Plan and one of the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations, of whom the mover of this proposition is chair of that panel, says: "The Treasury and Exchequer should undertake modelling exercises to identify the impacts of revenue-raising measures on businesses, the Island economy, Islanders and Island life. This should be undertaken ahead of delivering all budget measure proposals and future Government Plans, and should be evidenced within the Government Plan to demonstrate the impact of the proposals." But there is none of that with this amendment. I think the Scrutiny Panel's own recommendation shows why today Members should not make this change. We can argue ... perhaps we cannot ... Deputy Scott is not in the Chamber. Perhaps we cannot argue about the number of taxpayers because they are in the Tax Digest. I know there has been some confusion about the number of taxpayers. There are currently about 50,000 taxpayers rather than the number that was indicated by another speaker. But it is right that around 4,000 or just over 4,000 pay at the marginal rate ... sorry, that pay at the standard rate. This proposition is masquerading as a simple reduction to the marginal rate. It is not a simple reduction to the marginal rate. It is also the abolition of the standard rate. So let us be clear about that. There are just around 4,000 people paying that standard rate, but they are paying 43 per cent of all income tax. In the opening speech, the mover talked about, well, we do not really have a 20 per cent rate anyway, because we have also got a long-term care charge, which is charged through the I.T.I.S. (income tax instalment scheme) system. So Islanders who are paying the standard rate are seeing a slight increase. What he then did not go on to say is,

in that case we are amending the marginal rate not to 25 per cent but to 27 per cent. We cannot have it both ways. You cannot try and add it on to the 20 and then take it off the 25. The reality is that we should not, and I know that we live in an age that says let us just get everything done as quickly as we possibly can. When it comes to tax policy and tax measures that have served our economy and our Island well, and we remind ourselves back to my opening comments, our economic success is built on low tax and on tax competition. They are not, to my mind, things that we should be ashamed of. They are the basis of our success. Most Members of the public that I speak to, and certainly the business community, are concerned that little by little that stability is being undermined. The Minister for Social Security was right. Every time we give an indication to businesses and to Islanders and to the broader economy that actually we are not as stable as I think we are, then we undermine that trust. That is why we cannot simply today accept this amendment. The other thing I remind Members that we are doing is bringing forward changes to independent taxation. And why do I mention that in this debate? Because once we have independent taxation in place ... and I will be lodging those revised regulations next week dealing with some of the challenges that Members wish me to deal with. Once we have introduced independent taxation, then it could be that other changes, other allowances as some have wanted, we can do a piece of work to look at ... in the long and medium term, we might want to look at how we simplify our income tax regime. How we simplify our income tax regime. But it would, to my mind, be irresponsible and foolhardy and the wrong thing to do. That is just not me making a political statement. Of course, that was a political statement. It is what the movers - wearing a different hat, that other hat must be under his seat now, I am not sure where it is unless it is a proverbial 3-cornered hat - says we should not do. It is for those reasons - I do not want to get into numbers and all of those things - it is a simple thing. You change a tax rate that is underlaying your economic success and stability for generations, you change it at your peril.

[10:15]

You certainly do not just change it on the back of an amendment to the Government Plan in the way proposed. I urge Members, even those who think there might be some benefit in it, not to accept this amendment for all of the reasons that I have said and the Scrutiny Panel have recommended to me as well.

1.1.3 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central:

I was not going to speak because we can often gauge which debates it is actually futile to speak in. But I do want to address some inaccuracies and some concerns. I think the first concern is that we have got some Ministers talking on a tax system that they do not even understand themselves, where they are making statements that are completely inaccurate, although they have now taken that back. Deputy Gorst almost forced me to speak, I think, because he mentioned that on the standard rate, currently 43 per cent of all of our income tax payers are on the standard rate. I have been hearing a lot of protests against ...

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Sir, I did not say that.

The Bailiff:

Are you wishing the Deputy give way for a point of clarification.

Deputy C.S. Alves.

Yes, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Either of your speech or of hers?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Yes, Sir. I said that 43 per cent of income tax is paid by the highest earning decile.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

That is fine. Sorry, I stand corrected. I am hearing a lot of protests and I am here and I heard the word “irresponsible” as well. There are currently people on the standard rate which will be moving to the marginal rate as a consequence of what we are being sold to as independent taxation. Now, during that debate, which I think it was Deputy Farnham brought forward a proposition on, I asked about what were the figures of those people who are having to move from marginal rates ... sorry, from the standard rate to the marginal rate as a consequence of independent taxation and how much that raises. I still have not had my answers on those figures. The only answers I have had is that Treasury were happy to lose out on - I think it was £5 million, approximately - of tax revenue from moving from the married allowance that are currently in place to the independent taxation. Why was that not said to us as something radical and something that would really affect people? Because there are standard rate payers that are going to be moving to marginal rate under the masquerade, as the Minister has used, of independent taxation, which is being sold to us as obviously a very good thing because everybody should have rights over their own tax. But it is not really in some cases because some families are being financially negatively impacted and treated in a better way than other families, depending on when they were married and all of those things. But I will not get into that detail. But I will say to the Minister, once again, can I have those figures or, at the very least, the Assembly, around how much is that raising? Just that small consequence from moving those people that are on the standard rate to the marginal rate, or how much are we losing? Because the Minister seems to think that this is a radical idea, but it is already happening under one of his policies.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, it obviously is not possible for the Minister to answer that. He has spoken already in the amendment debate and he has no right to speak again.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Thank you, Sir. In the future.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? No other Member wishes to speak ... Deputy Southern.

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

I have spoken already in this.

The Bailiff:

Yes, indeed you have.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

However, I do have a question because I did ask that the Minister for Treasury and Resources detail what his conclusion is, if it is responsible to have these changes. ...

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, Deputy, there is no opportunity ...

Deputy G.P. Southern:

He has not answered that.

The Bailiff:

... for the Minister for Treasury and Resource to answer any question in connection with this amendment. Because he has spoken already he has no right to speak. There is no question facility within Standing Orders during the debate on a proposition, unless it is to the Attorney General or indeed to the proposer. Unless Deputy Mézec can answer the same question, which I doubt in the circumstances is likely to be the case, but that is a matter for him, there is no room to ask a question of the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

So there is no study being done.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? No other Member wishes to speak. Then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Mézec to respond.

1.1.4 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South:

Thank you to all Members who have spoken in this debate. Of course, none of which I have to thank more than the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources, whose visceral reaction in opposition to this amendment was demonstrated to be based on completely not understanding it at all. I would also point out, the graphs provided in the appendices to the report on this were not produced by me. They were produced by the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources' Department themselves for me. I was also grateful for Deputy Tadier invoking one of my political heroes, Tony Benn, when Tony Benn spoke about those who advocate for progressive change. He said: "First they say you are mad, then they say you are dangerous. Then there is a period of silence, and then you cannot find anyone who will ever say they disagreed with you." We have certainly seen that from many of our campaigns that we have led in the last 10 years. But then I think matching that up with what Deputy Bailhache said about this amendment. He said it would jeopardise Reform Jersey's chances of ever forming a Government in Jersey. I am, of course, very pleased to hear that from the leader of a party with a fifth of the representation that my party has. But I think he is dead wrong on that. I think it is precisely because of advocating progressive policies like this that will see working people in Jersey better off at the end of it, that way getting more traction. I have conversations with people across the Island who, when we sit and actually explain the detail of this policy, many of them think it is completely reasonable, including those who have politics very different to ours. I am not going to betray any confidences by naming anyone here, but I know a very senior leader of a charity in Jersey who agrees with this policy because they believe that it is a sheer pretence that we have a 20 per cent tax rate. He thinks we ought to be just more open and honest about the fact we do not. I even had very good conversations with an activist for the late Jersey Progress Party, who had much in common with us when it came to tax policy, not because he shared our politics but because of the honesty behind them and being clear about what this does and how it affects Jersey's tax system. But it is difficult to take any comments, whether they come from Deputy Bailhache, the Chief Minister or the Minister for Treasury and Resources, about claiming that the 20 per cent tax rate in Jersey is so vital for Jersey's economic success and providing us with stability. It is difficult to take that for 2 reasons. The first is we can talk about economic success, but if it is purely numbers on a spreadsheet and not matched up with people's real lived experience, and frankly it is meaningless if people are not better off. If the numbers on a spreadsheet say your economy is healthy, I do not think it is as important as how people feel. In the last decade at least, we have had real-terms earning freezes for the majority, growing inequality while the richest have got richer. There was a decade period where the number of people in Jersey earning over £1 million quadrupled, and in that same time poverty increased here. That is not a sign of a healthy economy. It is a sign of a dangerous trend that, if allowed to carry on in perpetuity, would destroy the Island's economic success and everything that goes with that. That is the first reason that I will not accept any comments on that. The second is that it is not true that we

have a headline 20 per cent tax rate, and you can repeat it until you are blue in the face. It is not true and nobody believes it. I say nobody believes it because you go out there and say to people: "Do we have a 20 per cent tax rate?" and people will laugh at you because they know it is not true, because we have introduced stealth taxes to make up for the fact that the income tax system does not do what it is meant to do. It does not raise the revenue that we need to run public services. That is why a stealth tax had to be introduced in the form of the long-term care tax, a tax which is calculated on the same basis as income tax and collected as you pay your income tax. What is the saying? If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck. **[Aside]** Indeed. So we may as well, frankly, call it income tax, because it is collected in exactly the same way and calculated in the same way. That was necessary because we needed to fund long-term care. A previous Government attempted to introduce a health tax which would have been collected, you have guessed it, through the income tax system and calculated on the same basis as income tax. That was defeated in a tied vote in this Assembly but we know work is going on on sustainable health funding, and I am fully anticipating some kind of taxing or charging mechanism to come as a result of it. Of course, we have, as we have already debated this week, the waste disposal tax. Again, that will be Islanders paying more for a service that they already get. Why? Because income tax is not working. The Government is absolutely clear in its intentions, when you scratch beneath the surface, that they intend to raise tax. The Chief Minister said in her opening speech that they do not want to, but they are planning to. That is the simple fact. That is clear in the report for the Government Plan. At this point, we have no definite idea of what that will look like. Whether it will be 1 per cent extra, like L.T.C. (long-term care) was when it was first introduced, whether it will come in some other form or some other piece of bureaucracy to pay it. That we know is the direction of travel. What this amendment does, firstly, it provides certainty. We are not attempting to mislead anyone or hide from anyone what plans we have on tax. They are as clear as day and they have been in the public domain for a few years now, so nobody can claim them to be a surprise or a shock to them. We are clear about who is affected in what way by it. It involves making the system simpler and fairer. Again, the concept of fairness was something that the Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources spoke about, and she said she thought she had a different definition of that word to other Members in the Assembly, and I can confirm she was correct on that because this amendment sees people treated the same. It says rather than have this part of our society pay under this regime, and the overwhelming majority part of society pay on this regime, they ought to pay on the same regime. To say just because you are a high earner does not mean you should not be eligible for tax allowances. Under this amendment, they will get those tax allowances. On their taxable income, after those allowances are taken into account, they will pay the same as everybody else. To say that a different regime ought to apply for some is, in my books, the very definition of unfairness. This makes the system fairer. A statistic was raised by both the Chief Minister and the Minister for Treasury and Resources about ... I think the Minister for Treasury and Resources said it was 43 per cent of the income tax paid came from the top decile of taxpayers. I hope I heard him right on that. That sounds about right to me. What a damning indictment of what an unequal society we are. If through our income tax system we are so dependent on the super wealthy. If that is the case that they contribute such a large percentage like that, it is because we are very unequal and the other deciles do not have much income in them. I would prefer that the lower deciles of income in our society were paying more. But the way you achieve that is by increasing their earnings. That is the way you do that, and I would prefer to see that. So what a damning indictment on what an unequal society we are. But the Chief Minister spoke about those high earners being mobile. The message that this would send out what that may do to influence their plans about where they locate themselves and where they will end up paying tax. I do not know if she has noticed, but it is not just the super-rich who are mobile. Everybody is mobile. The statistics that have been collected by Jersey Statistics are proving that. Where their recent report showed that over 2 years - the 2 recent years - in each of those years, around about 900 locally-qualified people left Jersey.

[10:30]

I do not think that they were exclusively the super-rich pre-emptively escaping the Island in the face of an upcoming Reform Jersey Government. I think those were mostly middle-class people, probably a fair amount of working-class people too struggling with the cost of living and thinking that their chances are better off elsewhere. They are just as mobile and we are seeing that in the statistics. Let us not contend that there is a large swathe of our society who are trapped here no matter what policies we impose on them. They can leave too and they are showing that they are doing so because of cost-of-living pressures that they are facing. This amendment would at least provide them with a very small break when it comes to the income tax they pay. A small reduction, but providing a basis for a tax system that is low, simple, broad, and fair. Going to what Tony Benn said, I do not know what phase of that we are in at the moment. It sounds like we are in the dangerous space so I am expecting silence next time we raise that. Maybe we have 2 more goes before we finally get it through but this is the direction of travel, it is to be more open and honest about the tax that we expect our population to pay, doing it through a clear and cohesive income tax system rather than the stealth taxes that are on their way under this Government, which I do not think is the kind of politics that the public expect. I think they would prefer the certainty that comes with this. I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on the seventh amendment and I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been defeated: 11 votes pour, 35 votes contre, no abstentions.

Pour: 11	Contre: 35	Abstain: 0
Deputy G.P. Southern	Connétable of St. Helier	
Deputy M. Tadier	Connétable of St. Brelade	
Deputy R.J. Ward	Connétable of Trinity	
Deputy C.S. Alves	Connétable of St. Peter	
Deputy S.Y. Mézec	Connétable of St. Martin	
Deputy T.A. Coles	Connétable of St. Clement	
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée	Connétable of Grouville	
Deputy C.D. Curtis	Connétable of St. Ouen	
Deputy L.V. Feltham	Connétable of St. Mary	
Deputy R.S. Kovacs	Connétable of St. Saviour	
Deputy M.B. Andrews	Deputy C.F. Labey	
	Deputy S.G. Luce	
	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	
	Deputy K.F. Morel	
	Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat	
	Deputy S.M. Ahier	
	Deputy I. Gardiner (H)	
	Deputy I.J. Gorst	
	Deputy L.J. Farnham	
	Deputy K.L. Moore	

	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
	Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache		
	Deputy D.J. Warr		
	Deputy H.M. Miles		
	Deputy M.R. Scott		
	Deputy J. Renouf		
	Deputy R.E. Binet		
	Deputy M.E. Millar		
	Deputy A. Howell		
	Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
	Deputy M.R. Ferey		
	Deputy A.F. Curtis		
	Deputy B. Ward		
	Deputy K.M. Wilson		
	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		

The Greffier of the States:

Those voting pour: Deputies Southern, Tadier, Ward, Alves, Mézec, Coles, Porée, Curtis, Feltham, Kovacs and Andrews.

1.2 Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): third amendment (P.72/2023 Amd.(3)) - Removal of upper earnings caps

The Bailiff

We will move now on to the third amendment, again by Deputy Mézec, and I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Greffier of the States

Paragraph (l) - After paragraph (k), insert the following new paragraph (l) - “(l) to agree that the upper earnings limit, as defined within the Social Security (Jersey) Law 1974, should be removed, abolishing the upper earnings cap on Social Security contributions and on Long-Term Care contributions and increasing the estimated closing balance of the relevant Funds by £9 million and £8.5 million respectively by the end of 2024; and redesignate the existing paragraph (l) as paragraph (m).”

1.2.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

This one should hopefully be slightly simpler than the last and more easy to understand. There is a cap on the amount of long-term care tax and social security contributions for employers that exists in the law right now, above which long-term care taxpayers and employers paying social security contributions will not pay any more on. That cap sits currently at £276,864 a year so for most Islanders to pay the long-term care tax we will pay it on the entirety of our taxable income. If you earn above £276,864 a year, you will pay a penny of that tax on your income above that. That makes it a regressive tax because as the taxable base increases, the effective rate reduces. The richer you are, the lower percentage you pay. For social security contributions for employers, a 2 per cent rate exists up to the £276,864, above that nothing is paid. Again, that makes that fit the definition of a

regressive tax. It is a longstanding position, not just of myself but others I have spoken to; in fact I referred to some of those in my previous speech from other political persuasions who recognise that caps on social security contributions under the long-term care tax are inherently regressive and unfair and mean that those with the greatest means to be able to afford to pay are afforded privileges that the rest of us do not have and are able to pay a lower effective rate. No justification has ever been made for that and certainly not one that I have ever found to be remotely persuasive. There is no reason why if you set up a tax to fund a particular public service that you would have a cutoff point for those who pay it. Social security contributions are paid by employers in this case and the reason I keep emphasising that is that it is not employees who would pay by this change being made. They would not see theirs go up, it would purely be extremely high earning employers. If those caps were abolished, we would be able to raise an extra £9 million into the Social Security Fund and an extra £8.5 million into the Long-Term Care Fund. We know that with an ageing population, we have pressures in future years for how much that we have to spend in long-term care. We are already seeing extreme difficulties in recruiting into long-term care because of salary levels that are offered to those who work in that industry. From social security contributions, as we have an ageing population, people will, inevitably, end up receiving pensions over a longer period of time. That is, of course, unless, the Government seeks to raise the retirement age, which I seriously hope they will not be considering doing. On the basis that there is no reason for the cap existing other than to provide tax privileges to extremely high earners that do not apply to anyone else in Jersey, and the fact that extra funding into those funds could be used to be beneficial for those who benefit from those services, I see no reason why those caps should continue to exist. Frankly, I regard it as immoral to exempt the super highest earners from taxes that the rest of us pay. I think it sends out the wrong message to Islanders about how, in respect to the contributions from working people, we ask them to pay higher percentages than those who are most capable of paying more. We have had this debate before and we will keep having it because that point of principle does not change by one defeat in this Assembly. The unfairness that exists by capping those contributions from the highest standards remains, no matter how many times Government Ministers try to claim that there is no issue with it. So I ask Members that today finally be the occasion where we end that unfairness in those systems and provide extra funding for the Social Security Fund and Long-Term Care Fund. I make the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

1.2.2 Deputy E. Millar:

We did discuss the same amendment in the Government Plan last year and I responded last year. I will just seek to update Members on some of the issues that we discussed last year. In the spring of this year, I published actuarial reviews of all 3 of the social security funds. Each fund has its own characteristics. The Social Security Fund is judged to be in a healthy state with reserves that will support the Island through the oncoming demographic bulge. The current forecast suggests that we have at least 5 election cycles ahead of us before any significant action may be needed. Deputy Mézec has just suggested, as did someone yesterday, Deputy Le Hegarat, that we are increasing the retirement age. I can confirm to Members that we have no plans to increase the retirement age and I simply do not know where that is coming from. Increasing the retirement age beyond 67 is not in my plan, so we do not need keep talking about that. I cannot, however, recommend raising extra money from local businesses to pay into the fund at this difficult time. The Long-Term Care Fund is a relatively new fund and it was set up to help Islanders with the increasing level of care costs across the community. The actuarial review here confirms that the fund is fine in the short term but that actions will be needed in the relatively near future as the fund supports a growing cohort of people aged over 85. Long-term care contributions are collected in different ways to social security contributions. For those with incomes too low to pay tax, no L.T.C. contribution is levied and this

low-income group receives all the benefits of the L.T.C. scheme without needing to pay contributions into the fund. Although the headline L.T.C. rate is 1.5 per cent, this is only paid by the top 10 per cent of income taxpayers. Most people will pay a reduced rate calculated in the same way as marginal tax rates. For example, if you have an I.T.I.S. rate of 10 per cent, your effective L.T.C. rate is 0.75 per cent. It is only the highest earners that are paying the full 1.5 per cent on their income up to earnings of £277,000 approximately. At this level, the person will be paying £4,153 a year into the Long-Term Care Fund, rounded up by a matter of pence. They pay that in addition to their income tax. My Ministerial plan for 2024 includes a specific commitment to look at the sustainability of the Long-Term Care Fund and the incomes it collects. This review will look at the options for increasing income, both how and when this should be done, the impact on different income groups, the economic impact of any changes, the ongoing sustainability of the funds and all other relevant matters at that time. I have to admit to be disappointed that Deputy Mézec has ignored that clear commitment in my Ministerial plan and seeks to set political ideology above careful analysis, consultation and economic consideration. I can reassure Members that the project will include a review of the use of the upper earnings limit and consider whether the cap should be changed or removed, and that my mind is not closed to changes in that area. These changes would, in particular, and I have to emphasise this, require very careful thought and consultation with relevant stakeholders. I do understand that the position of Reform Jersey is that the removal of these caps is part of their election manifesto. Deputy Mézec has talked about regressive taxation but, unfortunately, this theory does not really work in terms of the Social Security Fund. As he has said, Deputy Mezec's amendment would affect only businesses and not individual employees. Individual employees pay 6 per cent of social security contributions up to maximum earnings of just over £60,000 a year. Once their earnings exceed 60,000 - well, £60,720 to be accurate - they then pay a fixed amount of £3,643 a year. Changing or removing the upper earnings limit, as this amendment suggests, makes no difference to the contributions paid by individuals at different wage levels. For those Members who are concerned about equity, changing the social security system by removing the upper earnings limit does nothing to achieve improved equity. I would just also remind Members that people who earn high earnings are also working people. They do not earn the money by turning up at 9.00 a.m., going home at 5.00 p.m. and spending the day with their feet on the desk. However, removing the upper earnings limit for social security contributions will impose more costs on businesses at a time when the Island is working very hard to improve productivity, to attract new high value businesses and to encourage entrepreneurship. It is, as it was pointed out to me by a business leader some months ago, a tax on jobs. We really need those jobs in the Island. Imposing a sudden hike in social security contributions with minimal notice, as proposed by this amendment, sends a negative message to the high value businesses that Jersey relies on to maintain our economy.

[10:45]

It would reduce confidence in the stability of our Government and it would reinforce the recent message from the Jersey Business independent review that businesses have a low level of trust in Government. I have to remind everybody that Government in that context includes all of us. I urge Members to reject this amendment and let me continue my planned work on the L.T.C. scheme next year, which will include a review of the income into the Long-Term Care Fund and consideration of possible changes to the upper earnings limit for our L.T.C. contributions in future years.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Sir, I must apologise to the Assembly and to you. I was a bit slow off the mark in declaring an interest in this matter. It has been recorded previously but I wanted to raise it.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Chief Minister. Does any other Member wish to speak on this amendment?

1.2.3 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

I would be minded to support the gist of this amendment because I think it is not out of place. I think it is a bit regrettable that the Minister did not amend the amendment to align with what she is proposing anyway because I think she is going in the same direction. I am aware that the long-term care arrangements are tight for the providers and, with increasing wage costs and inability to recruit staff, it is just getting more and more difficult. What we are seeing is the local offering being displaced by U.K. imports, for want of a better word, which is not an ideal situation. I think, on the basis of, as the Minister suggests, a lack of the economic impact, I do not think the amendment that is tabled at the moment can be supported but I for one will be keeping an eye on what the Minister comes up with to progress this discussion, which I think needs to happen.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. Chief Minister, I should perhaps have asked you not simply to declare an interest but could you say what your interest is?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

It would have an impact on my household. I think I have set this out previously, my husband is a partner of a business that would be impacted upon by this.

The Bailiff:

That is very clear. Thank you very much, indeed.

1.2.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:

This is very interesting that we talk about the Long-Term Care Fund and it is very clear that we need to look at that. I would suggest that one of the things that will come up is an increase in the percentage of the Long-Term Care Fund, it will inevitably be something that is suggested. What this change does, it either lessens that, puts it off, or prevents it having to happen. I want Members to think very, very carefully about this because we have had ... and also we are at this point, again, of constant reviews. We are going through a review, we are going to look at it. During that time, we get closer and closer to the point where we need emergency action because no action is being taken and we inevitably end up with an increase in the rate for every single taxpayer on the Island as opposed to making this small change now that can address this issue early on. I also want to address this issue of people leaving the Island because this would affect them. It is interesting that the Chief Minister declares an interest. I hope this would not make the Chief Minister leave the Island with her family, because I would hope that there would be more commitment to this Island from those types of people as where is the recognition of the beauty of this Island and all the positive things that go with it. I think that is not just a simple but pertinent example of where that mythological idea that people will just leave comes from. Look at the people themselves. We are here for a reason because it is beneficial to us, for our families, for our lifestyle. We work, we pay our taxes and we contribute to that. I am pleased to see that it is a simple amendment. What it does is remove a cap. A cap on a contribution. There will be many, many people on this Island who are sat there thinking: "Well, I pay my contribution on every single part of my salary." But we get to a stage where some people, when they earn an amount of money that I cannot even imagine just simply do not pay anymore. That is a simple view of fairness. When we get to the point where we end up with the long-term care charge increasing for everybody, they are going to sit there and think this is even more unfair. Why did they not deal with that issue first? Because people can pay. I have to say as well, there is an insinuation that there was something said about work 9.00 a.m to 5.00 p.m. and then just put their feet up on the desks. I would like to say to the people out there who are working 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. in their jobs, I do not think you sit and put your feet up on the desks, those who are not the highest earners. I know that you work and contribute to this Island. I think we have to be very minded in the way that we address working people on this Island who are sat there committing to

their work every single day. I wish that there would be some thought as to what is said about people outside of this Chamber a little bit more and address working people with more consideration and more respect. But that is just something I feel I have to say personally. Finally, just to very quickly say, the Social Security Fund, this is an opportunity to increase the amount of money available in the Social Security Fund and we have a catch-22 situation always here. If we ever try and look at more spending on the Social Security Fund to increase provision, we are told we cannot because it will take money out of Social Security Fund, but then when we say this is a scheme to put more money into the Social Security Fund, we are told we do not need any money to put into the Social Security Fund. You cannot have both of those things. I think we have seen too many ... and this is interesting when we have a long debate, again and again and again the same poor, circular, unfounded arguments are made. At some point, I think we have to recognise that they do not wash. So this is a simple move, it is something that will happen inevitably, let us do it now, let us recognise that it is needed now, rather than waiting for review after review after review and in a few years' time we inevitably increase the Long-Term Care Fund. Simply, I do not believe that the retirement age will not be affected. I think many believe that would be the case because that is the simplest way to address this issue and it will be the emergency way because we have not acted soon enough. So be very wary of what you are voting for here and what you are dismissing.

1.2.5 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

The upper earnings cap is wrong. It is the sort of thing that people in future will look back on as something ridiculous from the past. At some point this Assembly will abolish it. There is no rational defence of the upper earnings cap. High earners will not leave because they are asked to pay a reasonable amount of social security. The upper earnings cap is an antiquated privilege and should be made obsolete. By abolishing it, Jersey will receive an extra £17.5 million in revenue. I urge Members to be the Assembly that is the one to finally abolish this out of date and inequitable nonsense and thereby add to our revenue.

1.2.6 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour:

The move of this amendment on behalf of Reform Jersey colleagues has put forward a purely political amendment based on a manifesto commitment. The Deputy is quite clear that this is his sole motivation but there has been no review to identify that this extra funding is needed, no analysis of the impact of the proposed change and no consultation with business or the public. I hold the Assembly in high regard. As elected Members, it is our solemn duty to take decisions based on a clear understanding and good evidence. We should not be driven purely by political ideology. As such, I cannot support this amendment. The Minister for Social Security has already confirmed her Ministerial plan, which was published in September. It includes a clear commitment to consider the substantiality of the Long-Term Care Fund. That review will include looking at the income coming into the fund and the use of the upper earnings limit within the Long-Term Care Fund. The Social Security Fund and its associated reserve fund are worth around £2 billion. Our pensions are secure for many years to come. Deputy Mézec talks about regressive taxes and inequality. The Social Security Fund is not a tax system. The change proposed would only affect businesses, not individuals. Removing the upper earnings limit from the social security system will make no difference to income inequality between workers. I urge Members to reject this amendment.

1.2.7 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade:

Just to say that although you might not regard this as tax, I was just looking at the comments of the Council of Ministers and it was referring to the Fiscal Policy Panel, indeed referring to one reason for not supporting this not being not to increase taxes. Actually indicating that there are some tax rises in the proposed Government Plan. These are targeted and designed to drive behavioural changes. I personally feel a bit cynical about that. I do feel that I would like to see more of this joined-up thinking. It is a bit frustrating. We keep hearing we are waiting for another review and

then we will come back you. Indeed, perhaps in terms generally of the social security review, the results were actually promised back in June, or in the summer, and they still have not really come through. So I will not be supporting this proposition because of that but I do feel that in terms of delivery, it would be somewhat more edifying if the actual Government did deliver in the times they said it would.

1.2.8 Deputy M. Tadier:

Just very quickly. I just wanted to address the point of view from a business. Something that has always bothered me slightly is that if a business relies on employing a greater number of employees at a lower or middle wage they are going to have to pay the full rate of social security contributions for all of them, but if you happen to just rely on perhaps a fewer number of very highly-paid staff, the effective rate that you are paying towards the social security contributions as an overall proportion of your tax bill is much less. I do not think we can get away from that fact. I am willing to say that this is actually a very good proposition and amendment here. Of course, it is. I also noticed that we have heard from a number of speakers outside the party who encouraged both the Minister to work towards this and have said that they are not sure if they are supporting it at this time but might be inclined to support it in the future. I would encourage them, especially those who have brought propositions to do with the Social Security Fund more generally, because there is a recognition here that the health of the Social Security Fund and the need to keep it replenished into an uncertain future is very important. I think there is a need to be able to do that in a much more sustainable way. So it is interesting that some of the arguments against this that have come forward are saying: "Well, you have not included employees in it." Clearly, one of the reasons I suppose that employees have not been included in that is because the rates at which earners would be hit, if the cap were to be lifted and put to the full amount completely straight away, would obviously take a lot of those middle earners that I think we and others are trying to help into perhaps a more negative situation. So if Members are inclined to not support this because they do not think it penalises employees, that is a very interesting state of affairs. If they have a way forward or amendments that they obviously have not brought now but they might wish to bring in the future, then I think that the conversation needs to be had across the Assembly. I think we do have a working proposition and I hope that the Minister recognises that fact in future.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Mézec to respond.

1.2.9 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you to Members who spoke in this debate. I cannot help but wonder, having listened to the Constable of St. Brelade, whether we are getting to the final stage of that Tony Benn commentary on how people respond to positive changes, and I think that is because there really is no justification for providing tax caps for the highest earners in Jersey. It was kind of ironic, really, when Deputy Ferey said that we cannot make these kinds of decisions driven by ideology.

[11:00]

Well, if you were genuinely not driven by ideology and you were starting with a clean sheet, you would not be proposing tax caps. You would say: "Charge it across the board." That would be the non-ideological position. The ideological position, the Tory ideological position, which his party espouses, is to focus on tax privileges for the rich and hopefully the wealth will trickle down. That is an ideological position. If we also want to talk about consultation and evidence, I would say that if you believe in trickle-down economics you may as well believe in the tooth fairy because there is about as much evidence for both of those positions. The Assistant Minister for Social Security also said the social security system is not a tax. You might have been able to hear people laughing outside

the Chamber because I think most working people in Jersey would regard it as a tax because they pay it out of their pay packets and it goes into services that they will get one day. It is pure sophistry. I know it is not titled income tax but to all intents and purposes that is what people regard it as. It is absolute madness that Members will say it is not a tax. For goodness sake, of course, it is, it is just a different type of tax. Deputy Millar said that she will consider the issue of the caps in a subsequent review. It is great to secure that commitment, it probably spells the death knell for this proposition. We see Members do that from time to time. She said her mind was not closed on it. If you listen to her speech on this save to pay last year, it certainly was closed then. So I do not have much optimism for that review. There are 2 comments she made that have to be addressed. She used the phrase “tax on jobs”. Let us absolutely clear, it is already a tax on jobs, social security contributions. It is a tax on my job, it is tax on your job, it is a tax on jobs for most of the working people out there in the Island but it currently is not a full tax for those earning above £277,000 a year. We are saying apply the same tax that the rest of us have to pay across everybody’s income. It is not new tax, it is not an extra tax, it is the same tax that already exists. You want to talk about businesses operating here. Most businesses will not be affected a single penny by this because they do not employ people on such high salaries. This is only for the really high-value jobs. Those above £277,000 a year. I am not being funny but if you are on that kind of income, I mean you are pretty lucky compared to what the average salary is in Jersey. I think it is well over 5 times the average salary. Come on, for goodness sake. The Minister also referred to ... I think it was a survey or I cannot remember exactly which one she was citing about businesses having low trust in Government. Well, if you are a hospitality business, I do not blame you for having low trust in Government because of the attitude on alcohol duty. If you are a business that suffered through the co-funded payroll scheme and the appeals process after that, I do not blame you for having low trust in Government. But, as I said, most businesses would not be affected a single penny from this, so I do not see why the issue of trust for them would come into it. I thank Deputy Tadier for explaining some of the maths here, that businesses that employ lots of people will, as a proportion, pay more in social security contributions than those who employ a small number of people but on very high salaries. So, you know, again, you want to talk about tax on jobs, it is a tax for the many and not the very small number of very high paying ones there. Again, as with the previous amendment, we make no apologies for bringing this proposition. Again, I know of plenty of people out there in society with politics that are very different to mine who recognise that the tax caps here are unfair, unjustifiable and they do nothing but serve as a symbol of inequality that we are prepared to offer privileges for the super high earners, but for most working people, they are not entitled to those things and it sends out all the wrong messages to them. I asked Members to perhaps save some time because it sounds like we are on our way to getting there when we can have Members who, again, do not share my politics, saying they have sympathy with what is trying to be achieved here because they know it makes sense. Hopefully, we can skip some of those phases and get to that point where we get the inevitable done because this will happen in years to come. It is simply the unsustainable position to argue for tax privileges for the super wealthy when nobody else gets to benefit from them. I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on the third amendment. If Members have had the opportunity of returning to their seats, I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, then I ask the Greffier close the voting. The amendment has been defeated: 12 votes pour, 33 votes contre, no abstentions.

Pour: 12	Contre: 33	Abstain: 0
Connétable of St. Martin	Connétable of St. Helier	
Deputy G.P. Southern	Connétable of St. Brelade	

Deputy M. Tadier	Connétable of Trinity		
Deputy R.J. Ward	Connétable of St. Peter		
Deputy C.S. Alves	Connétable of St. Clement		
Deputy S.Y. Mézec	Connétable of Grouville		
Deputy T.A. Coles	Connétable of St. Ouen		
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée	Connétable of St. Mary		
Deputy C.D. Curtis	Connétable of St. Saviour		
Deputy L.V. Feltham	Deputy C.F. Labey		
Deputy R.S. Kovacs	Deputy S.G. Luce		
Deputy M.B. Andrews	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
	Deputy K.F. Morel		
	Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
	Deputy S.M. Ahier		
	Deputy I. Gardiner (H)		
	Deputy I.J. Gorst		
	Deputy L.J. Farnham		
	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
	Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache		
	Deputy D.J. Warr		
	Deputy H.M. Miles		
	Deputy M.R. Scott		
	Deputy J. Renouf		
	Deputy R.E. Binet		
	Deputy M.E. Millar		
	Deputy A. Howell		
	Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
	Deputy M.R. Ferey		
	Deputy A.F. Curtis		
	Deputy B. Ward		
	Deputy K.M. Wilson		
	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		

The Greffier of the States:

Those voting pour: the Connétables of St. Martin; Deputies Southern, Tadier, Ward, Alves, Mézec, Coles, Porée, Curtis, Feltham, Kovacs and Andrews.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Howell, did you have a point you wish to raise?

Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Please may I raise the défaut on Deputy Jeune?

The Bailiff:

The défaut is raised on Deputy Jeune.

1.3 Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): eleventh amendment (P.72/2023 Amd.(11)) - Assisted Purchase Home Ownership Scheme.

The Bailiff:

The next matter for debate is the eleventh amendment proposed by Deputy Andrews and I will ask the Greffier to read that amendment.

The Greffier of the States:

Paragraph (l) - After the words “as set out at Appendix 3 of the Report” insert the words - “, except that, on page 9, after the words “to enter the housing market” there should be inserted the following new paragraph - “The Assisted Purchase Home Ownership scheme will be amended to allow a greater number of first-time buyers to be supported, through a reduction of the shared equity loan to between 5 and 15 per cent of market value.”

1.3.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North:

Firstly, I would just like to commend the work of the previous Minister for Housing, Deputy Mézec, who worked tremendously hard to secure the funding for this first-time buyer scheme in his time as the Minister for Housing. I think it is inevitable that Jersey’s housing market is in a very extreme position where, as Deputy Ozouf said, we are in a housing emergency. I think I said at the last sitting that I certainly do share the same sentiment. What we are seeing is a generation of perpetual renters who are seeing their incomes stagnate and we are seeing in high inflation. Also, we have seen house price inflation as well be very extreme in Jersey. We are seeing the relationship between renting and homeownership becoming a weaker relationship with those who are renting. Partly the reason is down to a couple of things. We just need to look at the distortion we see in our housing market, there is a finite supply and that is really adding to the pressures in terms of rental costs. Now, compounding this issue, we also have Andium Homes and their rental policy is 80 per cent of the equivalent of the private sector when the market is distorted and it is in a position of partial market failure. The market is not in an entire collapse position but it certainly is in partial failure because there is inadequate supply to meet the demands of households and households’ needs. Looking at this first-time buyer scheme that we have before us, I know it has obviously taken a bit of time to get there in the end in terms of being prescriptive with the first-time buyer scheme. The scheme in the Government’s literature, the shared equity is between 5 per cent to 40 per cent of the value of a property. In the comments paper, it is allegedly 10 per cent to 40 per cent. I do not understand why there is a discrepancy once again in in the comments paper. However, there is an unintended consequence by setting a shared equity loan at 40 per cent, and that is really for one-bedroom households. What we need to be looking at here is longer term instead of looking short term in terms of how can we support those households who are renting, who want to be those first-time buyers. Because really the problem lies here, it is upon the discharge of a property where the household is going to be receiving 60 per cent of the proceeds and they may want to, say, move on to another one-bedroom unit, for instance, and they do not have sufficient level of proceeds to then acquire another property. What that basically means is there is a risk that some households may need to revert back to renting. We just need to look at instances where, say, people have mechanical issues such as, you know, a knee replacement or they might have had, say, a hip replacement and the home that they are living in is no longer adequate for them. Now that would also put the person in a very difficult disposition because financially they are stuck. What really is of concern to me is when I was reading the comments papers ... the Minister, I think, is fully aware of this. However, it was mentioned as one of the bullet

points in response to the comments that I made in my amendment. I quote: “Providing subsequent opportunities for homeowners who benefited from the first step scheme to move up the property ladder and purchase again through an assisted home ownership scheme when their personal circumstances change.” But this is a pilot scheme, why are we speaking about a home ownership scheme in 50 or 60-years’ time when the legislature is going to be far different and most of us will probably be dead? I really am mystified as to why that statement is made in the comments paper because I think it is unintended but it is a statement that has been made. I think it is, to a certain extent, without causing any offense to somebody, misleading. What we are technically seeing here is the Government is saying: “Well, look, we are going to assist you to right size in the future if there is unintended consequences.” Well, I am afraid we do not know who the Chief Minister and who the Council of Ministers will be in 50 or 60-years’ time when this problem arises. I think what is happening is we are seeing a promise that is in place in this comments paper, and this is only a statement that has arisen to oppose me. That is all it is. I do not think that statement can at all be taken in all seriousness. I think we have to be very, very careful about going forward with this scheme in its current form. I think there has to be some degree of revision to the scheme because it is not fit for purpose as it currently stands. Now it is not to say that we are saying we are not going to be helping first-time buyers because we already have Andium Homes who are doing a very, very good job, and they are supporting first-time buyers year upon year. This open market scheme, it is not about supporting first-time buyers to buy a home that is a new build, this is for older homes that have been previously lived in as well. We are seeing shared equity loans for up to 40 per cent. Now what about the time when we are disposing of the property? It is going to be a lot more difficult to dispose of. Also, we have to factor in here that credit lenders, they want to be in a confident position that the person who is living in the property that they own until the mortgage is then paid off is capable of not having to then incur renovation costs. That is also something that we have got to factor in here. I know the Minister is also going on about staircasing. Unfortunately, I hate to tell him but somebody who has got a 40 per cent shared equity loan is probably not in position where they can staircase throughout the duration of the mortgage being paid off. It is probably only those who are going to be paying a lesser shared equity loan will that then be applied because they are in a position where they are higher earners and they have more income to then pay off the debt obligation through staircasing. Now, even when I was looking at some of the comments in the comments paper to the amendment, what we were seeing are fixed figures from 2022. Looking online, you know, in terms of when we are looking at one, 2, and 3 bedrooms, property values are actually less compared to what has been put on the paper. When we are looking at, say, a 3-bedroom property, I saw numerous properties about £500,000, £550,000. Even looking at, say, one-bedroom properties, I saw about 35 to 40 properties that were under £250,000. What we are seeing is this is a scheme to support those who are on earnings between £44,000 and £69,000, but I think we can be assisting some of those earners who are slightly lower earners. We just need to be looking at how we can provide a bit more flexibility within the scheme because, as far as I am concerned, the scheme just too rigid and there will be unintended consequences.

[11:15]

I am sorry but I do not want to allow first-time buyers to be misled potentially to say: “Well, look, we will help you as a States Assembly. We will get you on to the property ladder” and then in 50, 60 years’ time we are not there to be held to account for a decision that is an improper decision and that is going to affect these people in the long run. So I am very happy to move this proposition and I hope to hear from my colleagues.

The Bailiff:

Is the proposition seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

1.3.2 Deputy D. Warr of St. Helier South:

I am hoping to keep this speech fairly short and to the point. A lot of work has gone into developing the first step scheme, leading to a policy that will offer between 10 per cent and 40 per cent. I am not quite sure - I am at the comments page - where Deputy Andrews got 5 per cent from. I am aware it says 10 per cent to 40 per cent to help first-time buyers with the purchase of their first home. I want to help lower to median income first-time buyers who aspire to be homeowners but could never afford a mortgage on their own. It is a sad fact that, yes, a contribution of up to 40 per cent of the price of a home is needed to bridge the affordability gap for those individuals, particularly those with families who need a larger home. Five per cent to 15 per cent is not enough to help those families. My scheme will help those Islanders, lifelong renters, who thought they may never have the opportunity to purchase a home. Though I must highlight that my scheme will be lending up to 40 per cent, some people may need less, which will mean more people can be helped, just as the Deputy would like to see. It is vital we have the flexibility to meet different needs, especially in light of current market conditions. My scheme will reduce the amount of deposit required as well as the amount of mortgage borrowed. It is not just acquiring the property, it is about meeting the monthly repayments as well. My first step scheme has been scrutinised by economists, banks, property lawyers and estate agents. They have been hugely supportive of how I have approached the scheme. These people know what they are talking about. They are out there at the coal face. They have to deal with the disappointment of first-time buyers being unable to access the housing market on a daily basis. Deputy Andrews' amendment is going to severely hinder our ability to help these people. We therefore cannot accept this. Finally, just to pick up on a few other points raised by the Deputy in his amendment. I want to assure Members that there will be options for anyone wanting to move up the ladder if they choose to sell their home. I will allow staircasing to full ownership over time. Bear in mind that if you buy a home ... if you develop one in your role of employment, you will have a greater level of income. You will have that first step on the ladder. Therefore, there is no reason to dismiss the fact that some people will be able to staircase their way through this scheme. I am also thinking about possibly allowing purchases to what we call port their loan and use it to buy a larger property. I also want to highlight that we have other assisted purchase schemes. Andium Homebuy offers a 25 per cent deferred payment. The average bond in 2023, for your information, has been around 22 per cent, suggesting that this is the level that purchasers need in these difficult times. Andium is also building 1,000 new homes to be sold through the Homebuy scheme by 2030. Let us not forget that the rezoned housing sites from the bridging Island Plan will also offer opportunities for up to 400 first-time buyers. There are opportunities out there and more are to come. I met the Deputy last month to discuss the many issues with the amendment. I do think he understands where I am coming from on all of this but here we are having this debate anyway. I am not going to go any further on this now. I urge Members to read my published comments on the amendment and trust in the fact that my team and I have done a lot of work on the first step scheme, what we have proposed gets it right. I also urge Members to reject this because we want to get on with the scheme. I was criticised yesterday by Deputy Bailhache for the delays, I have been criticised by Deputy Mézec for the delays. We do not want to see any further delay in this scheme. As I say, I urge Members to reject this to ensure that we can get on and help Islanders with this first step into homeownership in a meaningful way and without further delay.

1.3.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I seconded the propositioned to enable the debate to go ahead because I think there are some absolutely reasonable points to what Deputy Andrews has proposed and it is worth having the debate about what the right levels of support are. That is an entirely legitimate debate to have. He does not have my support on this amendment though. I will not be voting for it because I think that if you reduce the percentage that you are willing to offer people, okay, that means you could potentially help more people but they will be at the relatively more affluent end of the spectrum compared to the types of people you can help if you can offer a greater percentage. Deputy Andrews is absolutely right to say that if you have a relatively lower percentage ownership in your property that when it

comes to the time for you to move on it is hard to do that because you then have a smaller amount that you can end up cashing in on to then find a bigger home and that you will not be getting shared equity support. He is right there. There are ways around that. The main way around that is that you offer a particular deferred payment at the start of your ownership of that home then if your financial circumstances improve you can offer to sell them the outstanding balance at that point. You might even get to a point where you have a 100 per cent ownership on it and then you are ready to move on and be able to cash in on that. There are all kinds of detail like that that you can work out, I think, to mitigate that. That is basis upon which that myself and my colleagues will not support this particular amendment. The first step scheme is very, very good in principle but, let us be frank, it is not going to help many people and despite the words of the Minister for Housing and Communities not wanting to delay, he literally just the other day said no to more money going into that scheme because we have to wait a year to see if it needs more money in it. I call that rank hypocrisy to level that charge at another Member while being completely guilty of it himself. We ought to get behind the first step scheme because in its concept it is absolutely the right thing to do to help people who otherwise would not be able to afford homeownership. To bring homes that are currently in the private sector into the first-time buyer market is something we ought to be doing as much of as possible. Even though that is not about creating new supply, it is about reducing future demand because then those homes cannot end up in the hands of investors who want to buy them and charge extortionate rents on it. That scheme is worth getting behind but it is worth getting behind to a much greater, more vociferous degree than the current Government appears to be prepared to do. I am sorry to Deputy Andrews to not be able to support this amendment because he makes fair points in proposing it but there ought to be other ways of supporting the first step scheme. I do not have any confidence that those in Government opposing Deputy Andrews have the answers either though.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Andrews to respond.

1.3.4 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I will be very quick. I think I have made my points that I outlined in my initial speech, so I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for and I invite Members to return to their seats. At least one or 2 Members leaving the Assembly got whiplash at the shortness of the speech; they will need to return. If Members have had the opportunity of returning to their seats, then I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The vote is on Deputy Andrew’s amendment number 11. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been defeated: one vote pour, 42 votes contre, no abstentions. Yes, I do not think we need to read out the one.

Pour: 1	Contre: 42	Abstain: 0
Deputy M.B. Andrews	Connétable of St. Helier	
	Connétable of St. Brelade	
	Connétable of Trinity	
	Connétable of St. Peter	
	Connétable of St. Martin	
	Connétable of St. Clement	
	Connétable of Grouville	

	Connétable of St. Ouen		
	Connétable of St. Mary		
	Connétable of St. Saviour		
	Deputy G.P. Southern		
	Deputy C.F. Labey		
	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
	Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
	Deputy S.M. Ahier		
	Deputy R.J. Ward		
	Deputy C.S. Alves		
	Deputy I. Gardiner (H)		
	Deputy I.J. Gorst		
	Deputy K.L. Moore		
	Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
	Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf		
	Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache		
	Deputy T.A. Coles		
	Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		
	Deputy D.J. Warr		
	Deputy H.M. Miles		
	Deputy M.R. Scott		
	Deputy J. Renouf		
	Deputy C.D. Curtis		
	Deputy L.V. Feltham		
	Deputy R.E. Binet		
	Deputy H.L. Jeune		
	Deputy M.E. Millar		
	Deputy A. Howell		
	Deputy T.J.A. Binet		
	Deputy M.R. Ferey		
	Deputy R.S. Kovacs		
	Deputy A.F. Curtis		
	Deputy B. Ward		
	Deputy K.M. Wilson		
	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		

1.4 Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): thirtieth amendment (P.72/2023 Amd.(30)) - as amended (P.72/2023 Amd.(30) Amd.) (P.30/72/2023 Amd.(30) Amd.(2)) - Freeze on Public Health staff appointments

The Bailiff:

The next is the thirtieth amendment brought by Deputy Howell. Deputy, is this something that (a) you would like to have read as amended by your own amendment to it and (b) are you accepting the amendment of the Council of Ministers?

Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Yes, Sir, I would like both of those things, please. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

Then are Members content if we read this as amended by the Council of Ministers and by the amendment of Deputy herself and that will give us one debate. If the Greffier could read, please, the amended proposition.

The Greffier of the States:

Paragraph 1 - after the words “are set out at Appendix 3 of the Report” insert the words “except that on page 10 after the words ‘£3 million on an ongoing basis.’ there should be inserted the following - ‘The funding provided for the public health function is predicated upon a freeze on any recruitment within the service, excluding legally required positions, whether due to increases in staff numbers or fulfilment of vacancies, until a full business case for the public health function has been produced, scrutinised and approved by the States Employment Board.’”

Deputy A. Howell:

I am not sure what to do now. I am accepting the ...

The Bailiff:

Well, at the moment, you have proposed an amendment to the Government Plan. The form of the amendment is now as changed by your own amendment to it and by the Council of Ministers’ amendment. I do not know if the Council of Ministers would be minded to accept that amendment now in its current form but, whether it is or not, the Assembly still has to vote upon it because it was not read in that amended form. So, I think, given the indication is the Council of Ministers now accept it, you might wish to make the proposition but in shortened form so that if there is any debate upon it then it can be dealt with rather more quickly.

Deputy A. Howell:

Please can I call for the appel?

The Bailiff:

I do not know. That is in even more shortened form that I had in mind. I think what you can do is you could, if you wish, make the proposition.

1.4.1 Deputy A. Howell:

I just brought this proposition because I feel that the Public Health Department has grown considerably over the last 3 years from 7 staff in 2019 to 61 now and it has not been scrutinised. I feel that we should look ... I really support Public Health, it does a great job. We need them to keep down obesity and diabetes, we need them for coping with P.F.A.S. (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), but it is just to scrutinise what is going on. That is why I brought this amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

1.4.2 Deputy M.R. Scott:

I support this amendment and I do hope that there might be some opportunity for perhaps just the whole structure itself being looked at, because it is rather disturbing to read reports that there are posts being advertised in terms of managing things just like a voice for ... sorry, the Speak Up Guardian and also managing health rotas, which were advertised at salaries that we hear a junior doctor gets something in the region of much less. I very much welcome the Ministers being receptive to this but I do hope that more work will be done.

1.4.3 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I have to say this confuses me, this amendment, because what we are saying is that there is a freeze on positions until there is an agreement by S.E.B. (States Employment Board) for a department that has been rearranged. Actually, the increase in the number of people in Public Health is because they have been moved from one section to another. What needs to happen is some clarity on what the role of Public Health is now it has increased so that we can actually make a real genuine or have a real genuine understanding of what that Public Health Department is going to do in its fuller form.

[11:30]

I do not know how the decisions are going to be made on this. I have to say that what the Government is trying to do here, I think, is deflect away from I do not know what, in order to do I am not entirely sure, in order to have an outcome which we are not entirely clear about. I would put this whole situation down - as I would characterise it - I am afraid as a bit of a dog's dinner. We have a Public Health Department that has "grown" because there has been a reallocation of jobs into a different department. There needs to be clarity on what is happening there. There absolutely does need to be clarity on what is happening there. Where are those jobs coming from and to, and why have they been moved into the Public Health Department? There is also a part of the amendment at the end that says we must be careful there because some of those jobs might be legally required, i.e. the person in charge of Public Health, which is a legal requirement for the Government. We are left with a compromise that was decided across the Assembly, with a few chats in the background, which I do not think is entirely necessary at all. I think this whole thing could have been removed and we could have just sat down and understood what the Public Health Department is actually about. These are jobs within the Health Department, it is nothing to do with the Speak Up Guardian. The Speak Up Guardian is a completely separate issue. I have to say my frustration on this is that entirely within the Health Department there were so many convoluted issues being raised together that we cannot see the wood for the trees. It is making scrutiny almost impossible. We are getting voices from outside, which I am not entirely sure what we are aiming to achieve but if there are problems in the background between Government and Health, please sort them out before you come to this Assembly rather than waiting until the last minute, doing something on the floor of the Assembly and bringing us a mishmash ... I had to email the Greffier, that was my question at the beginning, as to whether the S.E.B. part would still be in the amendment because the amendment of the amendment ... well, the amendment, did not include a part about the S.E.B. but now it has been read clearly I thank the Greffier for making clear. I am minded to vote against this because it is simply not necessary. Forgive my frustration, but it is becoming almost impossible with battles going on to undertake a real understanding of the structure of where we are. I do not think this helps. Now I understand what is happening and you are trying to fix something and to placate ... and I understand the intention around the original amendment because there is, I think, a misunderstanding. However, it has been brought to the Assembly and I think we have compounded that misunderstanding. I will not say anymore but I do need to get off my chest seeing as I am trying to deal with the health scrutiny.

1.4.4 Deputy K. Wilson:

I agree with some of the sentiments that have been expressed in the sense that we have inherited a number of public health functions that need organisation and co-ordination. That is exactly what we are trying to do, which is to bring some coherence to the public health function to take us forward. That might look like growth but in actual fact this is people who have been fulfilling public health responsibilities for a number of years and the attempt, through the Council of Ministers, is to try and, as I say, bring some coherence to those functions. The Council of Ministers is proposing a simple amendment to Deputy Howell's amendment because what we are talking about here is people's jobs and functions and that is why we have made a reference to the business case, which Deputy Howell refers to, being submitted to the S.E.B. in relation to any changes that we make as a result of our review of the public health function. I would ask the Assembly to support this because it is looking to ensure that there is absolutely no ambiguity about what a public health service and a public health function looks like in the Island. I have recently submitted a paper to the Scrutiny Panel that details the functions and the number of posts assigned to Public Health responsibility, which I hope will be open to further scrutiny. If we do not accept this amendment to the amendment today ...

The Bailiff:

Well, Minister, the amendment has been read as amended so the vote is simply on whether the amendment as amended by Deputy Howell's own second amendment and the Council of Ministers amendment will be adopted. You do not have to argue for the amendment, it is on the proposition that we are arguing.

Deputy K. Wilson:

Thank you. I was just going to make a comment in relation to Deputy Ward's concerns, but I accept that and I will move on. As I have just said, I have submitted a detailed paper to the Scrutiny Panel for their review and it does respond to the number of recommendations that they have highlighted. I hope this has been helpful to Members and hope that they would support this amendment on the back of that. I am happy to provide any further answers to any other questions that people have during this debate.

The Bailiff:

Well, unfortunately, of course, you will not be able to provide answers because you have now spoken, in case Members leap up and seek to take advantage of a non-opportunity. Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment?

1.4.5 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

I have to say I am quite surprised and concerned about the Council of Ministers supporting this amended amendment on the basis that this kind of work should be happening anyway for any kind of recruitment and any kind of restructured department. Including a reference to one area in particular rather suggests to me that it is not happening as a matter of course when it should be. Also, I note that ... well, my understanding, and I am going to look to Ministers for a nod, is that the public health function now sits within the Cabinet Office and the Cabinet Office budget. Now, the Public Accounts Committee have been pointing out to accountable officers and have been asking accountable officers for business cases in relation to the changes for the Cabinet Office and that Cabinet Office restructure. We have been told that that business case does not exist and that we cannot have it. That is the business case that I want to see for the whole of the Cabinet Office. By accepting this amendment what States Members are effectively saying is: "Do not worry about that, that is all being done but we are going to pick up on public health." This is why I do not understand the logic of Ministers making the amendment first as amendment and then accepting it, because it rather suggests that we do not expect it to happen as a matter of course for every other area. The other reason that I object to this amendment is because I am aware that recruitment freezes can be incredibly risky, particularly

if a key member of staff ... and I accept that this now amended amendment does not include legally required members of staff but that does not mean that somebody that is not legally required is not an essential member of staff. If a vacancy were to arise during this recruitment freeze, I would be very highly concerned about the impact of that if a business case had not been forthcoming in that time, considering that we have been able to structure a whole Cabinet Office without one. If a business case was not to come forward in that time we would not then be in a position to recruit an essential position. I will not be supporting this amendment to the amendment but I would expect that business cases would be going to the S.E.B. as a matter of course for absolutely every single area of every single department.

1.4.6 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

Sorry to jump up early on Deputy Feltham there. It began a "F" and that is all I heard. Firstly, I would just like to say thank you to Deputy Howell for meeting with myself and Public Health colleagues the other week to get a better understanding of the whole situation. I think that was really useful part of this process so I thank her for that time. As a member of the States Employment Board, I am grateful for her accepting that amendment whereby business cases will come through that board so that they can be properly scrutinised. Thank you.

1.4.7 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:

I would just like to speak in favour of the Public Health team and I understand that the team has grown since COVID but I think there are several areas of work that perhaps Members are not aware that the team carry out. It is not just immunisation programmes but they are vital input into improving child nutrition in the Island. Indeed, when I was formerly the chair of the B.F.I. (Baby Friendly Initiative), the breastfeeding steering group locally, a member of the Public Health team is part of that steering group and makes a really important contribution to the work of that group. There is much policy development ongoing regarding sexual health and indeed women's health. We have a Women's Health Political Oversight Group, which the Minister for Health and Social Services has set up, and I am a member of along with several other Ministers and Assistant Ministers. This is a large piece of work which the Public Health team, again, are critical towards delivering. Indeed, it is important to all Ministers that we take an evidence-based approach to how we improve outcomes across our population. This is the very core of the Public Health team. They use evidence to inform Ministers which policies to pursue in the best interest of the population. Some of the recent conversations we have been having in C.Y.P.E.S. (Child, Young People, Education and Skills) is that we would like to improve our parenting programmes and doing this in partnership with the Health Department and the Public Health team is a critical part of this. It is something that is really important to us and will deliver evidence-based outcomes for children and families. I would like to support the Public Health team and I hope that Members will also do so.

1.4.8 Deputy K.L. Moore:

As Members have heard, the Government chose to amend Deputy Howell's amendment in order to give a greater level of certainty to those hardworking members of our Public Health team who are working on important projects that have been outlined by previous speakers. I simply wanted to add that we are very grateful to Deputy Howell for listening to this discussion and for working with us to achieve this. I also would simply like to add, in response to Deputy Feltham's comments, that, of course, she is very well positioned as the chair of the Public Accounts Committee to consider such questions. Of course, being a person with a keen eye for detail, we have the greatest of respect for her in her role, which is an important one to fulfil in our structure. However, of course, as the Deputy is aware, the role of the Public Accounts Committee is to look back once matters have been implemented and to assess the success of their implementation. Therefore, I do have to remind the Assembly that some of the information that the Deputy is currently requesting relates to matters that are policy under development and, therefore, it would not be proper to share at this point with the

Public Accounts Committee. I can assure the Deputy that there is a high level of scrutiny when restructuring bids or even P.59s, which are requests for appointments to roles of over a £100,000 salary, that there is a robust process in the current States Employment Board. In fact, it has met with some questioning as people coming to the board had not previously been expected to receive such a level of scrutiny, but we believe it is absolutely proper when considering the use of public money to ask questions and to challenge and make sure that the board members are assured and reassured that that public money is being spent wisely and to the best effect, to deliver the best possible quality services that we can deliver as an Island. That is what we do. We take that role with the greatest of seriousness. I urge Members to support this amended amendment.

[11:45]

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Could I just raise a point of order about something that the Chief Minister just stated?

The Bailiff:

Is it a point of order or is it a point of clarification?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I think it is actually a point of clarification, to be honest.

The Bailiff:

Chief Minister, do you give way for a point of clarification?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Yes.

The Bailiff:

What is the point of clarification?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

The Chief Minister just alluded to the Public Accounts Committee requesting information that was not within our remit. In relation to this particular amendment ...

The Bailiff:

Well, it is not open to you to offer a speech in order to clarify, you can ask the Chief Minister to clarify something that she said but as a point of “could she clarify if” something like that.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes. Could the Chief Minister clarify exactly what she meant there?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I think that in her speech the Deputy suggested that she had made requests for restructuring bids that may or may not be being prepared at this moment, and I was simply reminding the Deputy, as she well knows, that the work of the Public Accounts Committee is to look back and assess implementation; therefore, it does not seem that it is fitting of that role to request policy under development.

The Bailiff:

Whether you agree with that or not, the Chief Minister has clarified what she meant.

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I will follow that up in writing.

1.4.9 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:

Very briefly. I am very happy to rise as an Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services for the, I think, first time just to simply say that I am aware in relation to this issue that public health has been previously funded in maybe a confusing and unscrutinisable way because it has not been clear because the funding of public health has been funded by the Jersey Care Model which was previously in Health, by Building a Safer Society, which I understand was in Home Affairs, and also various COVID budgets. What I have learnt is that we have a Minister, the Minister for Health and Social Services, that is looking at public health in a proper way, in a joined-up way, that will clarify matters that Members are clearly concerned about because it is understandable that there has been confusion. But let there be no doubt at all that the Minister has seized upon this issue, is properly dealing with it, putting it in the right place, and there has been some confusion and there is none. I am grateful for Deputy Howell having brought the amendment, having the amendment accepted, but the direction of travel is clear that we are going to get clarity and certainty. People will understand what public health is and there will be proper funding that can be properly funded with Scrutiny but also in the questions between the head of the Public Accounts Committee, which of course is absolutely right, there are officers that are held to account for budgets allocated and Ministers need to propose the right things. I urge Members to support the amended proposition because it makes sense and we can move on to more business.

1.4.10 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

I wanted to add my voice to those who have spoken in support of this proposition as amended, particularly because the principles and the practice of public health in the community have been so well displayed in recent years. I, as most people in my age bracket will have done, have been offered an extraordinary amount of support and protection in terms of the pandemic. I cannot find it now but I was just looking on the Opinion and Lifestyle Survey where more than 60 per cent of people polled expressed confidence in the ability of the Public Health Department to manage any future pandemic which may arise and, of course, we all hope it will not, but it does seem to me that there is growing co-ordination and confidence in this department. I think it is extremely important that the message that comes out of the States Assembly is that we have confidence in our public health professionals because all too often these debates, particularly about staffing and about numbers, can be picked up, I think, by people listening, by people who are working for the Government, as negative and suggesting that what they do is not valued. If I may say so, in the area of public health the work being done by our officials is valued very highly. [Approbation]

1.4.11 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

I am just going to be brief. I am not quite sure whether a vote for or against this makes any difference because quite simply this is a function that is going to go ahead, it is a function that I think everybody in this room supports, so voting against it means that business will carry on as usual under the function allocated to the Cabinet Office for public health. By supporting the amended version of this amendment means that they will go to S.E.B., which it should be anyway, so, yes, no, we are wasting time, can we vote, please?

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Howell to sum ...

Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour:

Sorry, I put a note in the chat to ask if I could speak.

The Bailiff:

I am sorry, I did not see that. Yes, please.

1.4.12 Deputy T. Binet:

It is a very brief one. I would just like to propose a vote of thanks to Deputy Howell because I firmly believe that without her intervention on a number of matters recently we would not be getting the promises of coherence that we have just had from the Minister for Health and Social Services and from Deputy Ozouf. I think a lot of that is down to Deputy Howell and I would personally like to thank her.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Binet, it sometimes takes time for an indication of a desire to speak to move from the home computer to the screen of the Greffier, so if you could anticipate if you are intending to speak at all in the debate, then we will not run the risk of cutting you ...

Deputy T. Binet:

Apologies, Sir.

The Bailiff:

No, there is no need for an apology, it is just ...

Deputy T. Binet:

Unfortunately, my desire to speak only came about virtually as I typed in the request. Under normal circumstances I would have flagged it up earlier but I saw the debate was coming to an end and I just wanted to make that point because I thought it was quite important, so I apologise if that has caused any confusion. Thank you.

1.4.13 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, sorry, I was just going to say the £40 million I.T. (information technology) budget should sort that out. [Laughter]

The Bailiff:

I will note you as having spoken then, Deputy Farnham. Does any other Member wish to speak? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Howell to respond.

1.4.14 Deputy A. Howell:

I would like to say that I really, really appreciate everything that the Public Health Department does and it really keeps us all safe, and all of the staff who work there are amazing, but it was just I felt we should be looking at the £7.43 million that they are requesting and just make sure that the outcomes that we are having are what we deserve. Now I say, please could I propose the amended amendment and call for the appel?

The Bailiff:

Very well, the appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on the thirtieth amendment as amended. If Members have had the opportunity of returning to their seats, then I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been adopted: 37 votes pour; 10 votes contre; no abstentions.

Pour: 37		Contre: 10		Abstain: 0
Connétable of St. Helier		Deputy G.P. Southern		
Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy M. Tadier		
Connétable of Trinity		Deputy R.J. Ward		

Connétable of St. Peter	Deputy C.S. Alves		
Connétable of St. Martin	Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
Connétable of St. Clement	Deputy T.A. Coles		
Connétable of Grouville	Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		
Connétable of St. Ouen	Deputy C.D. Curtis		
Connétable of St. Mary	Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Connétable of St. Saviour	Deputy R.S. Kovacs		
Deputy C.F. Labey			
Deputy S.G. Luce			
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet			
Deputy K.F. Morel			
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat			
Deputy S.M. Ahier			
Deputy I. Gardiner (H)			
Deputy I.J. Gorst			
Deputy L.J. Farnham			
Deputy K.L. Moore			
Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf			
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache			
Deputy D.J. Warr			
Deputy H.M. Miles			
Deputy M.R. Scott			
Deputy J. Renouf			
Deputy R.E. Binet			
Deputy H.L. Jeune			
Deputy M.E. Millar			
Deputy A. Howell			
Deputy T.J.A. Binet			
Deputy M.R. Ferey			
Deputy A.F. Curtis			
Deputy B. Ward			
Deputy K.M. Wilson			
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson			
Deputy M.B. Andrews			

The Greffier of the States:

Those voting contre: Deputies Southern, Tadier, Ward, Alves, Mézec, Coles, Porée, Curtis, Feltham and Kovacs.

1.5 Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): twelfth amendment (P.72/2023 Amd.(12)) - as amended (P.72/2023 Amd.(12) Amd.) - Value for Money Savings

The Bailiff:

We now come on to the twelfth amendment of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel and I ask the Greffier to read ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

There is a proposed amendment to this amendment by the Government ...

The Bailiff:

Are you prepared to take this as amended?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

... which we are happy to take as amended. Well, “happy” is not the right word but we will come to that.

The Bailiff:

Do Members agree that we can take the twelfth amendment as amended by the amendment lodged by the Council of Ministers? Very well, I ask the Greffier to read the amendment as amended.

The Greffier of the States:

Paragraph (1) - After the words “Appendix 3 to the Report” insert the words “, except that, on page 57 after Table 16, there should be inserted the following new paragraph - In accordance with the recommendations of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel, as set out in S.R.20/2022, a report published alongside the annual report and accounts will (i) include a report on all Value for Money savings which were made during the duration of the previous Government Plan; and (ii) identify and provide full details of the monitoring process that has been undertaken on the Value for Money programme during the duration of the previous Government Plan.”

The Bailiff:

Before I call upon Deputy Mézec, do the Council of Ministers accept this amendment now as amended by the Council of Ministers’ own amendment?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Yes, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Very well, that just might help truncate the debate as fewer Members might feel the need to make a contribution.

1.5.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Now I will deliver my 3-hour speech I have planned. **[Laughter]** Scrutiny has decided to accept this amendment. I spoke to Deputy Gorst yesterday to explain that to him but told him that I would still have a pop at him in my speech, and I will explain why. Members will know that the value-for-money programme is contentious. We have already discussed it quite a bit in relation to other amendments in this Government Plan so far, in particular for the extra funding for agriculture and fisheries where we find out at the last minute that the £10 million target for value for money that they

have for this year was magically able to be raised to a £13 million target with only a single sentence to substantiate how that was possible. In the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel's report last year we contributed some commentary about the value-for-money programme and our concerns that there were not appropriate reporting standards that the Government was providing along with them. Speaking frankly, we really do not know a lot about what exactly is going on, where those savings are being targeted, where or how they are being delivered. We have had correspondence with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, which I have not been particularly satisfied with, and we have had interactions at Scrutiny hearings that I have not been particularly satisfied with, where we have tried to push the Minister for Treasury and Resources to give us tangible examples of value-for-money savings being made. I do not feel that we were given amazingly clear answers on that. In our report last year we did make a recommendation that subsequent Government Plans should, in the document itself, provide much greater reporting on the value-for-Money savings that have been achieved in that year of the Government Plan and tell us where they are trying to target those savings in the next year of the plan beyond a simple line in a table saying how much her department is expected to contribute to that. The amendment that the Government has proposed says that instead of being provided in the Government Plan document itself that commentary should be provided in the annual accounts. There is some logic behind that in that the timing of the production of the Government Plan necessarily means that they will not be able to provide a full year's worth of commentary because it is published before the end of the year, so there could be 3 months potentially of success ahead that the plan would not be able to tell us about. Or there could be 3 months ahead of great difficulties that they would not be able to tell us about or maybe a wonderful solution would be waiting around the corner in the November that the Government Plan would not be able in that document itself to tell us, so for the Government to amend this to say that that should come in the annual accounts is probably fair enough. That will be a place where a much fuller picture of what was delivered in that year will be able to be provided and I hope that when they do that in the next set of annual accounts it will be as substantial as possible and we can scrutinise it from that point. The timing of that then means our next Government Plan review will have had that substantially in advance to be able to look at it, so that is probably quite helpful. But here is where I have a pop at the Minister. His amendment in the way it is worded has meant that this cannot be taken as separate parts but as well as saying that this information ought to be provided in the annual accounts, they are also proposing removing part (1) of the list of things we were asking the Government to provide in the Government Plan which was to clearly distinguish the specific areas and projects to which value-for-money savings are attached. That is a forward-looking thing which obviously cannot be produced in the States accounts; that would still have to be produced in the Government Plan document itself, but the way this amendment is worded that would not be possible. So we are now not able to secure a decision from the Assembly about ensuring that the next Government Plan document itself, when it tells us of their targets for value-for-money savings in the next year, will not be required to provide a greater breakdown of the areas and projects to which they say they will achieve those value-for-money targets. That is extremely disappointing and means that we will continue to be in the situation where when the Government says to us: "We reckon we can deliver £10 million of savings next year" we are able to do nothing other than just decide whether we take their word for it and trust them.

[12:00]

We will not be able to see exactly where they project those savings are coming from, and that itself provides a risk that we do not get to see what they are planning to do and scrutinise it and work out if it is credible and test it, so we could end up inadvertently agreeing to that table in the Government Plan to impose a target for savings on a government department that might transpire to be unreasonable or unrealistic. In my book, such a target without substantiation is speculative. It is, I think, based on the: "I reckon we can do this" rather than: "I can prove we can do this and here is the evidence and here are the specific projects that we can take this from." The Fiscal Policy Panel now twice has had to say to the Government: "You should not be including speculative savings in the

Government Plan because it means if you do not deliver them because you have still set those budget lines for each government department, if you get halfway or two-thirds of the way through the year and it turns out your expectations were wrong and you cannot deliver those savings, that pressure is going to move elsewhere.” We will not have any guarantees that where that pressure moves on to will not be somewhere where it less resembles savings and more resembles cuts or forces departments to make the kinds of decisions on prioritisation that the Assembly would not have agreed to if we had have known that is where it was going to go all along. So, we find ourselves accepting their amendment and asking the Assembly to vote for the amendment as amended knowing that when we get the annual accounts we will get a better picture of what value-for-money savings were made in the year before, which we are pleased with. That will be useful information and it will be laid out to us better than it would be if it were in the Government Plan as we had suggested but we still do not find ourselves in a position where in the next Government Plan they will be required to provide us a much greater level of detail in their forward-looking projections for value-for-money savings. So I think our Scrutiny Panel today will have to settle with what is on the table but early next year may have to consider how we further pursue that part of our previous recommendation to the Government to provide greater reporting on what they are projecting before the moment so that when it comes to the next Government Plan the Assembly is in a better position to make an informed judgment on that one way or another. So it is not completely ideal but we do get something out of this in the way of transparency and accountability and the ability for Scrutiny to do its job and so I think we can settle for that for now and then return to this issue, to the outstanding parts of this issue, as soon as possible.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment? If no Member wishes to speak on the amendment, then I close the debate. Those in favour of adopting the amendment, kindly show. Those against? The amendment is adopted.

1.6 Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): tenth amendment (P.72/2023 Amd.(10)) - Payroll Expenditure

The Bailiff:

The next matter to be dealt with is the tenth amendment proposed by Deputy Andrews and I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Greffier of the States:

Paragraph (1) - After the words “as set out at Appendix 3 of the Report” insert the words “, except that, on page 57, after the section entitled ‘Thematic reviews and Best Value Reviews’” should be inserted a new Section as follows: “Payroll Expenditure Savings. During 2024 the Government will implement a scheme to reduce payroll expenditure by £40 million in non-front line roles, such savings to be transferred to the Stabilisation Fund and Strategic Reserve Fund. While it is not anticipated that the full £40 million savings will be realised during 2024 it is expected that the process to effect the reduction in staffing will be underway and this will be reported in the Government Plan 2025-2027.”

1.6.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

The reason why I have decided to lodge this amendment is due to the Council of Ministers who have really been prioritising growth bids in this Government Plan. We have seen £48 million in growth bids be proposed and we have not seen any transfers being made to the Stabilisation Fund. Now the Stabilisation Fund once had a value of about £50 million, now it has got a value of about £600,000 and I just think it is very disappointing what we have seen, once again, is more government spending and there have not been priorities in the right places. It is a real concern because even the Fiscal Policy Panel mentioned in their recent report that the Government ought to be making transfers to the reserves and instead what we do see is, as Deputy Mézec just highlighted before, speculative

savings. So at the end of the next calendar year the Government is going to rely upon, if additional income is seen or if any underspends are made, then such transfers will be made to the reserve. I think that is unfortunate because really what we should be seeing is explicit detail in terms of how those savings will be made and how those transfers will be secured. I know of course we have got 12 Ministers in the Council of Ministers and there are some Ministers who I think are on the same page as I, and they would have wanted those transfers to be made in this Government Plan and unfortunately that has not happened. But I also want to get on to another thing. Looking at the Strategic Reserve as a percentage of gross value added, it is about 17 per cent, and ideally, as the Fiscal Policy Panel have highlighted, it should be somewhere between 30 to 60 per cent, so we are way off where we need to be and we do need to be increasing the value of the Strategic Reserve. What that means is we have got to find funds to do that. Now some people are going to be of course opposed to additional taxes. The other mechanism that you have is by making reductions within public sector spend and making transfers that way, and that is another alternative that some Members may be in support of. It is obviously very clear ever since I was elected, I said I want to address the structure and organisation of the Government because I truly do believe that Ministers should see civil servants be accountable to them, but I think the more convoluted the structure where you are seeing the size of a government expend, then you are questioning the accountability and also to a degree the transparency that we see as well. I think accountability and transparency has often been mentioned and it is just words and I do not think we have seen it be conspicuous enough, in my view. Now turning to head counts, I have always been asking questions ever since I was elected, and I have to say there are a few things that are quite alarming now. Because when I asked one written question about head count in different departments, the Cabinet Office now has 640 persons employed and that was as of 30th June 2023. Now there is a breakdown when we look at the department itself. So within the Chief Operating Office there are about 374 personnel. Looking at the Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance there are about 194 personnel and looking at the Office of the Chief Executive we see 72 people employed. Now, that for me is quite alarming because I have also been asking other questions and looking at previous years to look at how many people have been employed within the Office of the Chief Executive, the Chief Operating Office and the Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance before the emergence of a Cabinet Office. The figures that I have here from 2018: there were 238 people employed in all of those areas as an aggregate number and we then see an increase up to 640; so the number of employees has increased by 402 across a fairly short time period. You can question why so many people have been upset with the way how the politicians such as us have been managing public finances when you see no control in head-count growth. Also you have to then question of course the accountability between civil servants and Ministers. Now looking at even the salary bands across the public sector, it is quite disconcerting when we look at some of the figures here because it seems to me that we are just employing too many people and in certain instances in the wrong areas, as we see with the Cabinet Office, that is not really about providing a front line service for the public. So, those on a wage between say £60,000 and £79,000 up to nearly £80,000 has increased by 425 employees between the period of 2018 and 2022. Now when we are looking at those employed who receive a salary between £80,000 and £99,000, again across the period, 79 more employees have been employed, and with those on salaries above £100,000, 43 persons have been employed as well. So we just need to look at the growth bids that have been proposed in the Government Plan. I think all we are going to be seeing is additional public servants and also that is going to be depriving the private sector of employing people. It has been mentioned by private sector leaders such as the I.o.D. (Institute of Directors) who have been complaining, and quite rightly so, because we have already got a tight labour market and the public sector is expanding. Really what the Government should be doing is looking at how we can try and improve public administration, and I am a firm believer in improving public administration, and that was something that Anthony Giddens predicated and he was really one of the founders of the New Labour movement, because at this moment in time I think it is a shame really that the public are just seeing the expansion of the public sector and we are seeing growth in the wrong places as well. Now

I think if we were seeing an improvement in public administration, then people perhaps would say: “Well, no, it is well justified” but I really do not see the justification. I know other Members do feel the same way as I privately but I think in terms of the way in how they will be voting here, then they are going to be voting a bit different because they do not want to stand up and they do not want to be different and they do not want to be kind of considered to be similar, say, to Deputy Higgins who was a bit of a character, and I am probably just like him now. I will ...

The Bailiff:

Well it is not really appropriate to name people who are not Members of the Assembly within the Assembly because they have no right to reply or answer.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

No. He was well outspoken, I will say that, a bit like me. That is in a positive way I am saying it but I move the proposition.

The Bailiff:

Very well, is the proposition seconded? If the proposition is not seconded ... is the proposition seconded? If the proposition is not seconded, it is deemed withdrawn. The proposition is withdrawn.

1.7 Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): eighth amendment (P.72/2023 Amd.(8)) - Extend existing bus pass scheme to individuals 21 years of age and under

The Bailiff:

We move now to the eighth amendment which is brought by Deputy Ward and I ask the Deputy to read that amendment.

The Greffier of the States:

Paragraph (1) - After the words “Appendix 3 to the Report” insert the words “, except that, on page 91, after the words, ‘previously agreed increases in fuel duty.’ should be inserted the words ‘£1,500,000 of the funding allocated from the Climate Emergency fund to the 2022-2025 Carbon Neutral Roadmap budget will be moved from the TR1 policy subsidising electric vehicles and e-bikes to finance an extension to the Avanchi18 bus scheme to all Jersey residents aged 21 and under.’”

1.7.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am going to keep this as short as possible, see if I can win the record. This amendment extends the age of the extremely popular and successful under-18 bus pass to 21 years of age. Please note this has been extended to all full-time students previously, which was accepted by the Government last time; I was hoping they would accept this one. To make real change in transport habits we must start early and the current provision is doing just that. Extending the age, we continue the incentive to young people as they start to travel regularly to work and begin their working lives. This is a clear message from this Assembly to continue with this cultural change in the means of travel from a private car to public transport. It targets a reduction in car use, which is good for our environment, good for others who may necessitate private car travel, and good for the residents of St. Helier. I invite Members to add to the debate in as brief a way as I have and I lodge the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

1.7.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

I think that was a great speech, apart from the last part when he said: “It is great for the residents of St. Helier” which it no doubt is, but it is also great for the young people throughout all of the Island. I am particularly thinking of the wonderful skatepark that we have got in St. Brelade at Les

Quennevais which, despite some of the concerns perhaps of some of the residents, is seeming to work very well and it is popular with young people. Not just young people, in fact, older skaters and parents who accompany younger people to that skatepark throughout the Island.

[12:15]

One of the great things that we have seen is that young people who are perhaps in full-time education or under-18 can go from St. Martin and they can change at St. Helier and then they can get to Les Quennevais and do some skating and then go back to town. It may seem like a slightly long journey but for those who do not want to be reliant on their parents, there will be people doing that from all over the Island: Trinity. We do not need to name all the parishes, do we? I am sure I could. I think this scheme, again, we talked about a knife edge earlier about when you get to 18 and what if you are not in full-time education but you may not also be in full-time work: you may be doing voluntary work, you may be doing informal study. I think this is a logical progression of a scheme that some, I think, were sceptical about initially, but we have seen that the scheme does work very well, so extending it to young people wherever they live in the Island for that benefit. The last thing to say is it is also very popular with parents and grandparents because it means that those parents and grandparents do not always have to be on call to be the “taxi of Mum and Dad”. So I commend Deputy Ward for bringing this and I hope this is one of those positive things that we can all get behind as an Assembly.

1.7.3 Deputy T. Binet:

I certainly was not intending to speak this early but I did not want to miss the chance of saying something, and I have certainly been caught off balance by the brevity of Deputy Ward’s introductory speech. I thought I would be listening for a lot longer. I am under no illusion about how difficult it is going to be to persuade Members not to vote for this amendment but I hope they do not vote for it. The reason is simply because free bus travel is so seductive but I would urge Members to look beyond that seduction and take a look at some of the facts that underlie a decent bus service. I may be guilty of a false assumption but everything I hear from Deputy Ward when he stands up to talk about buses indicates to me that he is really quite keen on seeing a very-heavily subsidised bus service, if not a free one. We will notice this because there is another attempt to have free services in amendment 9, which is yet to be debated. However, the evidence within the transport industry suggests that heavily-subsidised bus services are not always the best or most practical or economical way to resolve transport problems or to encourage bus usership in an economical way. It might be helpful if I identify some of the areas where I agree with Deputy Ward, and I certainly think we probably both agree on we want to increase bus usage, reduce congestion, promote healthy lifestyles and active travel and improve the environment. I do not think we would be disagreeing on those parts but I think where we do differ is on whether we should continue to chip away at what is already a well-subsidised service or maintain a level of customer contribution that is sufficient to provide an incentive for the bus operator to continue to improve the services while ensuring that they remain cost-effective. I am very much of the opinion that the latter is by far the best option for us here in Jersey and I have little doubt that the service driven by commercial incentive produces a generally better result. I think where cost is a barrier for particular groups in society that issue should be dealt with through social policy rather than transport policy, as is the case in many progressive societies. In order to substantiate that, our head of transport, who is a very experienced individual, has provided some information, and in one of those instances of information he has referred me to the *International Journal of Transportation*. Within that there is an article entitled a “Free Fares Policy” and I do not think I would recommend it to anybody if they are at a loose end but there are a number of facts in there. Within that they state the following: “Free public transport as a political goal in its own right is of course legitimate but when free fare schemes are advocated and justified as a means to meet the environmental, social or efficiency goals, the evidence presented here suggests that the arguments are largely misguided.” With that in mind, rather than the continuous injection of public subsidy to

increase bus usage, the more productive way I think is to significantly improve the quality of the service. Evidence also suggests that the most important factors are things such as geographical coverage, the frequency and the timing of the bus departures, and the distance and quality of walking routes to and from the bus stops and the waiting environment at the bus stops themselves. Additional elements are the perceived or actual availability of seating on the buses, along with individualised information and special offers to encourage behavioural change and changes in routine. Perhaps I think the most compelling of these, according to the evidence, is increased frequency and I think further improvements in this area would certainly be of greater benefit than subsidised fares. It is also seemingly a fact that free travel does little to get people out of their cars because this is a bigger and more serious issue if we are going to reduce congestion and exhaust emissions. By way of example, if you are a car owner and you are on a route where you have to wait for up to an hour at each end of the bus journey, the chances are that you take your car even if you had a free bus pass. I have got a free bus pass for my sins and I am afraid I would take the car because I cannot afford the waiting time. To me it is the sort of situation that needs to be addressed if we are going to continue with our transport initiatives and that is what our policy seeks to do. The aim there is to build on the success of the current bus service model, and it is a bus model that has been well-recognised in the U.K. for the large increase in passengers that it has achieved over the last few years. I think a failure to maintain this approach would risk destroying the commercial principles that have made the current bus-operating contract as successful as it is. Not only that, but it is likely to adversely affect the service quality that has taken many years to achieve. It would bring with it a lot of extra costs, I think, and there is no sign as to where the money is going to come from in the longer term, and that is a very crucial point. I think we need to be mindful of the fact that a commercial operator can respond to demand more quickly and can invest in new services. By way of an example, a new electric bus with all of the paraphernalia that is required with it is about a third of a million pounds. A commercial operator can also take financial risk and does not have to wait to bid for money through long-winded Government Plan processes. It is really in large part because of this advantage that we already have 2 electric buses operating in town. I think it goes without saying that if money were no object we would have a fleet of buses scouring the Island and running as frequently as took our fancy. However, as we have heard a fair amount in recent days, we are already in danger of living well beyond our means. We are a low-tax Island and we have to accept that there are limits to what we can achieve in terms of providing highly subsidised services. That might sound like a statement of the obvious but when I listen to certain Members, I do not think that is always fully appreciated. I would just like to make one additional point and it is rather counterintuitive. The evidence that has been provided also suggests that free buses are more likely to bring about a reduction in cycling and walking rather than a reduction in traffic. It is not what you would expect but that is what the evidence suggests. This is due to what in the transport world is referred to as “cross-mode elasticity”. That is not my term, that is what the evidence says. An example, free transport in Tallinn in Estonia resulted in reduced cycling and walking and the same occurred in an area of Belgium where they tried that as well. Indeed, in the latter, the free bus service eventually became such a financial burden that they had to reintroduce charging for the service. In practice, I think that is what we know instinctively: car drivers do not give up the comfort of their cars very readily but cyclists or walkers may well be wanting to change their habits and jump on a bus if it is going their way, particularly if the weather is inclement, but most especially if they have been given a free bus pass. We are currently renegotiating the bus contract and that may well result in a further upgrade to our bus fleet, making it more efficient and environmentally-friendly. I think the danger here is if we go along with this amendment it is going to further erode the commercial advantages that we currently enjoy and simply be another step towards casting the entire cost of the bus service on to the general taxpayer. I am trusting that there are many Members that fully get this and they know that we cannot go on doing that, so on that note I seriously urge Members to reject this otherwise very seductive amendment.

1.7.4 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin:

Other jurisdictions really support subsidised transport and these places are an absolute joy to visit because the reliance on the car is taken out of the equation. My son took his first Masters in Amsterdam, my daughter is living and studying in Montreal, and transports are subsidised, and it is used, and it is really highly appreciated. I do not agree with the previous speaker. I would say that the more use and reliance on public transport, the less cars there will be on the road. Cycling and walking, somebody like me who does not like too many cars on the road to cycle, I would think about taking my electric bike further than St. Martin. I do think that for students and young people up to 21 ... I do travel quite a lot, I have been to these places: my son, as I said in Amsterdam, my daughter in Montreal, and I am going to support this. I would say to the previous speaker, baby steps; we cannot say you cannot use a bus because it is not convenient at that time. I think the more we progress with public transport, the better it will be for the Island, and we should not rely so heavily on our car, so I will be supporting this.

1.7.5 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I would like to start off by saying that I completely agree with Deputy Ward that funding should be taken from the electric vehicle subsidy vote and applied to sustainable transport initiatives. I have said this more than once and I am hopeful that, now that I am a member of the Council of Ministers, I will be able to persuade those who hold the electric vehicle budget that it simply is not right to give money to wealthy people to buy expensive cars when there are so many other sustainable transport initiatives that have been neglected by the States over the past few decades. I do not agree with the previous speaker, and it is an interesting comment, because Deputy Binet, the Minister, has already mentioned that if he had extra money to spend on buses, he would spend it on improving the frequency of routes, particularly the routes to the countryside, to the rural Parishes. If you want to use a bus to travel to St. Martin, for example, or St. Ouen, your options are very limited. There certainly are not any late buses, so if you want to enjoy the vibrant offerings of the capital, St. Helier, you had better fork out for a taxi and probably book it in advance if you want to get home after a night out. I think that there is a good argument that later buses and other useful information like real-time information at bus stops, which is still lacking in most parts of the Island, would be a good way to spend some of this extra money if we are going to spend it on buses. What this goes back to of course is we still do not have a bus strategy despite years and years of asking for one. Rather than belabouring the Minister for Infrastructure for the absence of a bus strategy, or indeed a cycling strategy, or indeed a walking strategy, or indeed a parking one, I have offered the Chief Minister when I agreed to join the Council of Ministers, that I will get these strategies brought forward because we really need them. I would rather not have another debate next year on the next tranche of bus subsidy. I would rather have a joined-up discussion about how in the round we could improve our buses in this Island that will help everyone. I am confident that we can do that even though, as I say, the delay has been quite extraordinary. But if we are to spend money in a more holistic way on buses, and if we are to make cycling safer for the many people who would like to cycle but find it simply too dangerous, if we were to make walking more convenient, then we are going to have to have some money to spend on sustainable transport. The problem about whittling away the available money to spend on sustainable transport is that the pot is only so big. Now I am hopeful that it will be bigger than before because, as I say, I hope we will not spend it all on motorists buying expensive cars. But even if we do that, just the cost of putting in the kind of pedestrian crossing facilities we need on the busier roads is enormous and that could easily use up all of the funding. Of course, there has to be discussion about priorities but the priorities that we have all signed up to in successive debates, because we are very good at debating transport in general terms, we have all signed up to putting the most priority on the disabled, and the next priority is the person who is walking, and after that is the person on their bicycle.

[12:30]

So, to put all the funding, or a large tranche of the funding available, into bus travel is simply to get our priorities wrong. It is to leave the needs of disabled transport-users, the needs of walkers who cannot get conveniently and comfortably across and along our busy roads, particularly the needs of those who would like to cycle more but find it too scary, it is to neglect them at the expense of people on the buses. So, much as I admire the work that Deputy Ward has done to promote bus travel among the young, I think there are a lot of young people who would, if it was possible to do so, rather get on their bike and they would welcome the kind of facilities that I think we should be spending, and we should be spending under the overall aegis of a transport strategy for Jersey.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

May I just ask for a point of clarification, please?

The Bailiff:

Do you give way for a point of clarification, Connétable?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

For my fellow Minister, yes, I will.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is just the Assistant Chief Minister said there was no walking strategy, et cetera, et cetera, but can he clarify whether, in his understanding, they do form part of the framework for a sustainable transport system, part of the sustainable transport policy under the active travel elements of that? Is he able to clarify that?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

It is a difficult question because of course I am now a Member of the Government and I certainly feel to a large extent bound by collective responsibility, though I know that not all Ministers feel that way. I have been a critic of the Island's transport strategies for years and I believe that simply bringing out one document every year or so with lots of fine words and talk about quick-start plans and such like is not really worth much more than the paper it is written on. I do not find walking or cycling, certainly around town, any easier for the production of the latest document. We need detailed practical help for people who want to walk and cycle and use disabled transport around our Island. We do not need any more fine-looking documents. I would not have said any of that if my fellow Minister had not asked for a point of clarification.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Very well clarified.

1.7.6 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I do have a bus pass. I know you might not think I am old enough, but I do, and I do sporadically use it. The reason I do not use it all the time is probably because of the reasons highlighted by the Minister for Infrastructure, in that where I live the buses are not as frequent as I would like, where I have to stand on the side of the road is not the best. However, I will support this particular proposition in relation to extending the bus scheme from 18 to 21 because I do feel that this might be a good opportunity to encourage, or continue to encourage, those that have not got the dependency so much on cars, that opportunity. I also, like others, am not keen on the idea that we give subsidised electric cars and bikes because they are very expensive and mostly people who can afford to buy them will be able to afford to buy them without the subsidy on them. Of course, as has already been mentioned on a number of occasions, we do not know what happens to them, whether people use them or whether they keep them on the Island or not. Also, there are no cycle routes really from the east of the Island, which is where I live. So in the past I have also tried to cycle but, quite frankly, if you cycle between Five Oaks and St. Martin's Church, on your head be it, because I have seen people

cycling on the pavements rather than cycle on the road because it is quite congested and the lighting is pretty poor. So I will support in relation to the first amendment; I have not decided about the second, so will move forward on that.

1.7.7 Connétable P.B. Le Sueur of Trinity:

I would like to support this proposition but I feel if I do I am going to incur the wrath of a number of parents in my Parish who write to me and my fellow district Deputies complaining that their youth can get to town on the bus but if they want to stay there past 6.00 p.m. in the evening they cannot get home. We are saddled with a bus service which was designed to service the Island needs 20 or 30 years ago and it really needs a whole code of looking at and not just tinkling with it. So I am afraid in respect of my parishioners who, as I say, have youngsters who would like to use the bus and cannot because there is not a bus to use, I am afraid I will not be supporting this proposition.

1.7.8 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I was just thinking in an attempt to perhaps persuade the Constable of Trinity otherwise, which is never easy, I must say, and that is a compliment, that surely by increasing demand, a further service, that will be a catalyst for an improved service. The more people we get on to the buses, the more chance we have got of getting a better service. I hope that helps.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak then I close the debate and call upon Deputy ... I am sorry, Deputy, Deputy Renouf in the chat had indicated a desire to speak.

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I hope you can hear me.

The Bailiff:

Yes, we can hear you, Deputy.

1.7.9 Deputy J. Renouf:

I wanted to pick up a line of reasoning that has been raised by a few people to do with E.V.s (electric vehicles) and e-bikes but before that I would like to emphasise the points that Deputy Binet made about the arguments to reject this amendment on the grounds of its impact on the bus service and the untargeted spending that it involves. The evidence suggests that many of the users of free travel, regardless of what we might believe anecdotally, the users of free travel will replace short, active travel journeys that already occur, and I think that is a very, very important point to make. The current bus service and the way we fund it is a success and we should be very wary of doing the damage to this that Deputy Binet pointed out that will happen. I think it has been fairly clear that Deputy Rob Ward, who has a very clear commitment to free bus travel and regards free bus travel for the whole Island as his eventual goal, this is another step in that direction, and that is fair enough. I think it is the wrong direction, for reasons I will come on to in a moment. The element of this I want to talk about in particular is the other aspect of this amendment, which is to take money from the E.V. and e-bike incentives. I wanted to update Members on these subsidies to explain why I do not think we should take the money from them for this purpose. I do also want to signal a shift in direction in spending of the Climate Emergency Fund money over the next year or 2, but if I could first of all deal with the e-bike and E.V. incentives as they are currently operating. They were introduced because not enough people were, supposedly these people who are well-off and so on who we would like to buy E.V.s and e-bikes, not enough people were buying them. That was recognised in the Carbon Neutral Roadmap and that was why these policies were voted for. It was recognised that a significant proportion of the Island's greenhouse gas emissions come from fossil fuel private vehicle use. People will continue to make private vehicle journeys and, therefore,

reducing emissions from this sector is a crucial part of our emission reduction pathway. I would say to those people who think that buses are the answer to this, it is not, there is plenty of evidence of places where buses have been made entirely free. I know particularly about Luxembourg. The Luxembourg bus network is entirely free throughout the entire territory but they still have traffic jams. I recently asked the ambassador about this and he said: “Yes, people are just wedded to their cars” so we need to decarbonise private vehicle use. That is a necessity if we are to meet our carbon reduction targets. It may be that we kind of struggle with that, that we would prefer to reduce car use even further. I would like to reduce car use further but there will still be car use, and we will still need to shift to electric vehicles and we, at the moment, find that price is a barrier to that. This was recognised in the inclusion of policy TR1 in the Carbon Neutral Roadmap which was publicly consulted on and then agreed by the States Assembly in 2022 and voted for by many Members in the Assembly, including the Constable of St. Helier and others, although I can say to the Constable that I have some positive things to say about his own speech later in my speech. So, the TR1 policy, as I say, adopted by the Assembly included money for 1,200 electric vehicle incentives and 1,000 electric charger incentives. That was also partly to recognise the fact that policy TR5 in the Carbon Neutral Roadmap includes a commitment to ban the importation of petrol and diesel vehicles from 2030, so the incentive was part of the market preparation for the introduction of that legislation and that move. As we already know, it is funded through the Climate Emergency Fund, revenue from which comes in part from fuel duty and vehicle emissions duty hypothecated into the fund to directly support decarbonisation. The Carbon Neutral Roadmap agreed that policy TR1 would have £4.3 million with an additional £521,000 for the E.V. charger incentive. So we finally launched the E.V. incentive at the end of August, up to £3,500 offered to new and second-hand electrical vehicles registered for the first time in Jersey up to a maximum vehicle value of £40,000. Up to the end of November I can say that 228 E.V. purchase incentives have been issued and 25 charger incentives and the total direct cost has been around just under £800,000. It is important, I think, to note that of those 228 E.V. purchase incentives, 83 per cent have been for second-hand vehicles with an average price of around £25,000. That is second-hand vehicles that get their first registration in the Island; it does not apply to vehicles that are already in the Island on the second-hand market. There has been a significant increase in electrical vehicle registrations observed since the start of the incentive; we can already tell that. For example, in 2022 there were a total of 449 additional E.V.s coming into the Island. To the end of October there were already 555 and at the rate of acceleration we have seen with the E.V. incentive scheme it could get close to 1,000 by the end of 2024. Looking at e-bikes, I wanted to address some of the arguments that people use against the e-bike incentive. It is really important to note that people getting e-bikes are often replacing car journeys and this is exactly what we would want. We want to encourage active travel. E-bikes are a more active form of travel obviously than sitting in a car. We have not done the full analysis on people who have taken up the e-bike incentive in Jersey yet but if we look at Guernsey, which did, they ran an e-bike incentive scheme in 2017/2018, and I have these figures from my opposite number in Guernsey. They had a total of 387 e-bikes sold under their scheme and they surveyed those people. On average they found that each e-bike had been ridden for 683 miles over a year, and if that was applied to all of the e-bikes sold it would give us a total of 265,000 miles a year. Crucially, data from the Guernsey survey showed that 57 per cent of those e-bike journeys mainly replaced car journeys, while 63 per cent of e-bike owners reported that their e-bike had replaced motor vehicles as their primary mode of transport. Now, as I say, we have yet to do our own research but there is little reason to suppose that Jersey’s e-bike incentive would have operated in a radically different way to that. However, I would say that we recognise we need to invest substantially in sustainable transport. The aim of course, as put forward in the Sustainable Transport Policy, was to have separate budgets for this, and indeed bids have been made through the Government Plan process to have funding for sustainable transport measures but we have not been able to achieve this. So what I would say is that, in recognition of this, we need to reprioritise funding through the Climate Emergency Fund in recognition of the fact that the total picture that we had imagined would be in place, in other words, that we would have a Sustainable Transport Policy

funded through the Government Plan, and the Climate Emergency Fund to fund those specific measures that Members voted for in the Carbon Neutral Roadmap.

[12:45]

We have to recognise that we have not been able to achieve the funding through the Government Plan for sustainable transport and therefore we need to reprofile the spending that we do through the Climate Emergency Fund and direct it much more to sustainable transport. So that is the commitment that I make, and I and Deputy Jeune are both working on this already. This has already been sort of acknowledged behind the scenes, if you like, and that is work that we have asked officers to start doing, to work out how we can do that reprioritisation and so on. We will probably need to come back to the Assembly since it does involve potentially changing policies that were within the carbon neutral roadmap. There may be some flexibility. We have not yet, as I say, done the work to work exactly how we will achieve that.

The Bailiff:

Deputy, if I could interrupt you just for a moment. Could you indicate how much longer you think you may have to speak on this topic? The reason I say so is that, firstly, we are in the period that Standing Orders require that I raise the question of the adjournment, and secondly, we already have fixed the photograph of the Chamber to take place at 12.45 p.m. with all the Members in it for the website. If it is a matter you will be finished very quickly then I think you could continue; but if you have a good few minutes more you may need to continue after the adjournment.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I am sorry, Sir, I am not able to see the clock here, so I have about a minute to go.

The Bailiff:

That is quite all right, you are well within your time.

Deputy J. Renouf:

If Members can bear with me for a minute then I will finish.

The Bailiff:

Very well, please continue.

Deputy J. Renouf:

I agree with the Constable of St. Helier, we do need to do that shift; we already planning to do it and now he is in the Ministerial team he will be involved in doing that. But what I would say, in terms of this amendment in front of us, we already subsidise public transport to the tune of millions of pounds. We have to maintain within the spending profiles that we have the priority being to use the Climate Emergency Fund on the highest priority of the sustainable transport hierarchy which is - as the Constable of St. Helier pointed out - active travel. Therefore, I think it would be wrong to take money from this to weaken the economic model of the bus service and take it away from something that is a higher priority for our spending. On that basis I do urge Members to reject this amendment.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

Sir, before I propose the adjournment may I ask the Assembly to reconsider its decision of this morning, given the excellent progress that we have made this morning, and agree to rise this evening at 6.00 p.m. as previously agreed and return tomorrow.

The Bailiff:

You make that proposition, do you, Chief Minister?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I do.

The Bailiff:

That has been proposed, is that seconded to finish at 6.00 p.m.? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on that?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I think the only problem is we may make such good progress that we do not need to come back tomorrow and we might wish to sit for an extra 2 hours so that we do not come back tomorrow. I do not know at what point we will know that.

The Bailiff:

Well, Members can of course adopt the proposition and the proposition could always be revisited, or Members can reject the proposition and the timing can always be revisited, as we know, closer to the time. It is just a question of which way Members wish to go. It is not one of those things that we do not allow a debate in the preceding 3 months. Does any other Member wish to speak on that proposition, the proposition is we now adjourn at 6.00 p.m. and return tomorrow morning? If no other Member wishes to speak then those in favour of adopting the position kindly show. Those against? It is entirely unclear to me which has it, therefore, we will call for the appel. A vote pour means that we at this point have decided to adjourn at 6.00 pm and return tomorrow morning. A vote contre is to the effect that we will continue until 8.00 p.m. this evening or have finished, whichever is the sooner. Given the conversation - I hesitate to do so because the proposition has been duly made and duly seconded - but I wonder if this vote might be taken immediately after the luncheon adjournment and people can then discuss over the lunch hour what they think the right thing to do might be. Would you be amenable to that, Chief Minister?

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I would be pleased to make a summing up speech if required.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Sir, could I advise the Assembly I will be joining on Teams this afternoon due to the school closures.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much indeed, Deputy. In which case that seems to have general agreement. We will treat this then adjourned and the vote to be taken immediately after and the Chief Minister will be in a position to sum up if she wishes, or any Member to speak in that matter if the discussions over the lunch hour give a reason to do so. The vote can be taken then as to what we do for the rest of the afternoon.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Can I remind Members that we did agree that we would have a shortened lunch hour today so we should be back at 2.00 p.m.

The Bailiff:

Indeed. I am going to ask Members to remain in the Assembly now. I will not retire myself because we have a photograph to be taken, and then thereafter we will adjourn but we will resume at 2.00 p.m.

[12.51]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:00]

The Bailiff:

I am asked to remind Members about no water glasses being brought into the Chamber because we had a breakage before the adjournment and if it had gone all over the electronics that would not have been a good thing, so if I could just remind Members that is part of Standing Orders. We are discussing at this point what the timing for our close should be this evening. The Chief Minister has made a proposition that we should revert from the 8.00 p.m. previously decided to 6.00 p.m. and if necessary continue tomorrow. Before I call upon the Chief Minister to respond to the points that have been made does any other Member wish to speak on that particular issue?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I would just like to make the point that several Connétables have a degree of obligation to attend in the Royal Court at 10.00 a.m. so I think many of us would be grateful to get the business of the day out of the way if at all possible up until 8.00 p.m.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thought we had extended today, but finishing at 6.00 p.m. tomorrow, this is the Government Plan, it is the most important debate of the year. It sets the funding and everything else for the entire year, and I think that people need to debate it properly. We knew about this for some time. We knew we were coming to the Friday weeks ago and I do not think we should try and curtail debate. I know we have this constant thing about: "Why are people talking for so long?" Because this is our democracy and we were elected to represent in this Chamber. It may be an inconvenience to come back perhaps but I think we need to give it the time that it deserves and not try and quell debate on the Government Plan as a whole, because it is such an important document that we either will or will not put our names to.

Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement:

We did decide to start on Monday instead of Tuesday to allow us to finish the sitting on Friday, and I do not think we should be aiming to try and finish before to free us a day, so I think it would be better that we all had a clear mind and trust we will be quick and finish by 6.00 p.m. today.

Deputy M.R. Scott:

I agree with Deputy Curtis and would point out it would also give the Deputies of St. Brelade an opportunity to attend the twinning dinner.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the proposition? If no other Member wishes to speak then I close the debate and call on the Chief Minister to respond.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I thank those who have contributed succinctly to this brief debate. I brought the proposition because I feel it is important that we give early warning not just to Members of the Assembly but to those who very kindly assist us in meeting, and I believe it is important that we give them due consideration to our decisions to work into the evening and due time to prepare for that. People have caring responsibilities, there are parents here today who have children who are unable to attend school because of the industrial action that is taking place unfortunately. Therefore, I ask Members to consider not only the obligations that they have outside of this Assembly - I know there are many festive arrangements this evening - but also for those of others who make sure that we are able to

meet in this Assembly and organise all that goes on around it. So we thank them all, respect all of their efforts to assisting us throughout the year as well as through this week, and I propose the motion.

The Bailiff:

As it was not clearly identified on the last occasion I think we should put this to the appel. I invite any Members not in the Chamber to return to their seats. A vote pour means that we will then adjourn at 6.00 p.m. with a view, if we have not concluded business, to resuming on Friday. A vote contre means we will continue as presently agreed to 8.00 p.m. Very well, I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The proposition has been carried: 21 votes pour, 19 votes contre.

Pour: 21		Contre: 19		Abstain: 0
Connétable of St. Peter		Connétable of St. Brelade		
Connétable of St. Clement		Connétable of Trinity		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Connétable of St. Martin		
Deputy G.P. Southern		Connétable of Grouville		
Deputy S.M. Ahier		Connétable of St. Mary		
Deputy R.J. Ward		Connétable of St. Saviour		
Deputy C.S. Alves		Deputy S.G. Luce		
Deputy I.J. Gorst		Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
Deputy L.J. Farnham		Deputy K.F. Morel		
Deputy K.L. Moore		Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat		
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
Deputy D.J. Warr		Deputy T.A. Coles		
Deputy H.M. Miles		Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Deputy M.R. Scott		Deputy R.E. Binet		
Deputy J. Renouf		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
Deputy C.D. Curtis		Deputy A. Howell		
Deputy M.E. Millar		Deputy B. Ward		
Deputy M.R. Ferey		Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		
Deputy R.S. Kovacs		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				

Very well, we now resume the debate on the eighth amendment. The last speaker was Deputy Renouf. Does any other Member wish to speak on this amendment?

1.7.10 Deputy H. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

I want to be brief, and maybe this feeds into the next discussion too. First of all I wanted to thank Deputy Ward for his persistence for having a scheme for youngsters to have the AvanchiCard. My 12 year-old has just been granted one and he is using it very freely the last 3 days. I do not know where he is on the Island but I am sure he is having great fun. So I want to thank him very much but I just wanted to remind Members that the funding where this is coming from and why this was specifically on electric vehicles - and what we are talking about is not just cars, it is electric bikes, mopeds, vans for businesses as well - is because the Carbon Neutral Roadmap and the commitment that the last States Assembly made, and this Assembly through the common strategic priorities have said we need to reduce our missions. The big one is 68 per cent by 2030; 2030 is not very far away, in fact my son will be leaving school and graduating in 2030 so it is not very long he will see the next

few years in secondary school. By that time we need to have reduced our emissions by 68 per cent. The biggest chunk of that is with vehicle emissions. This funding line is the only way at the moment that we can nudge those who have fossil fuel cars to find alternatives, whether that is through electric vehicles but also mopeds, and also for businesses if they want to also make that change, that they can also do the change through the van. It is a small subsidy to help overcome that initial cost to be able to bring especially second-hand vehicles on to the Island to start preparing the market for the big changes that we are going to have to make and, as Deputy Renouf said, we are seeing those changes. Of course with this proposition and with the next one as well, though absolutely I see the importance of them from the sustainable transport hierarchy, and I agree that there needs to be a wider look at the strategy because it is about frequency as much about who is using the buses ... but at the same time I wanted to remind the States Assembly that when we are looking at our reduction in emissions in the next few years, and you will be calling on the Government to have made those reductions as well and seeing the progress, that one of the biggest is around fossil fuel cars. If we are not making those reductions I just wanted to remind that part of the strategy was to encourage people to move to electric vehicles of all types. So I just wanted to put that on record.

1.7.11 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The previous speaker used the word “nudge” on this when referring to trying to get people to get rid of their fossil-fuel powered cars and move on to electric vehicles, but I think the exact same argument can be made for this proposition in terms of young people’s behaviour and expectations when it comes to travel, and making it more part of their culture growing up that bus travel is the default form of travel rather than personal vehicle usage for journeys that could very well be done by bus perfectly conveniently otherwise. The Avanchi18 bus pass has quite obviously been a huge success; I do not think any reasonable person could doubt that, even though it was achieved as part of a long uphill struggle that Deputy Ward led, eventually getting it secured as a pilot and then obviously it got made permanent afterwards. Who could possibly have not wanted it to be permanent after seeing the success that it was? Extending that to those young adult years where many of those young people ... some who are already students will still be covered anyway but those who start working or enter that part of their life, to be able to maintain this for them, having had it when they were children, will have it still be part of their culture as they grow into adulthood used to getting buses rather than just expecting to conduct every journey in a personal fossil fuel powered vehicle. I do think that there are perfectly legitimate criticisms to be made of the subsidy for electric vehicles and the lack of safeguards that there are in that scheme to get the best use of money out of it. For example, we are giving public money to relatively affluent people to buy what could be their second or third vehicle and get a discount on it, while maintaining their old vehicle. Or they may be selling on that fossil fuel vehicle to someone else rather than scrapping it, and so that vehicle still plays a part in the carbon emissions in Jersey. So there is a reason that that scheme in particular has irked some people because of not viewing it as proper value for money and targeted in the way that it otherwise could be to get the maximum impact, but this amendment from Deputy Ward helps nudge those younger people into using buses more frequently as the default method of travel and something that we hope they will continue for the rest of their lives. In doing so I think Deputy Ward is on the right track so I will support it.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on this amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Ward to respond.

1.7.12 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thank everyone for contributing. It is a shame we had the break because it was all clear in my mind and now I have to read my notes and, as I have said before, my handwriting is really not very good at all, so if I miss something out it is because I did not focus well enough at school on my handwriting.

Deputy Gorst has suggested the teacher was not paid enough; well, nothing changes, so let us move on. I thank the Deputy for that. Let us move forward now. I am not entirely sure where to start. The Constable of St. Helier is not in here which is a shame because I wanted to address him. I will wait; he might appear. Deputy Binet, we have heard these stories before. I got the comments papers; I had to be very careful that I was reading the right comments paper for the right amendment because they are almost identical. They are cut and pasters. The same tired arguments with points that are irrelevant. This is about extending a pass to 21 years old, and let me start off by making it clear, I would suggest not a single one of those 21 year-olds is going to have the money - unless they are very lucky - to buy an E.V. car and get the subsidy. So the E.V. subsidy is not going to address those young people at all. That is not going to change their behaviour. But they would have had years of being given access to the bus transport system, and it is working. The example I will give you, which is a really pleasant example I experienced myself, I was going up to the airport on the bus because the bus goes past the end of my road, really good. We were sat on the bottom of the 15 bus, great route, and we stopped by Les Quennevais and off got an entire football team, with the substitutes, and when I looked at that I thought: "This is working." How many car journeys were saved through them taking that bus, and that nudge for them to take that bus is because they were enabled by this Assembly to get cheap - and it is not free, I will say to Deputy Binet, you have to pay £20 a year and that £20 is still a payment to the bus company - and it works. Now we have full-time students as well, that was recognised last time, but there is a gap. There is a section of our community who may not be a full-time student but have started work, and they have got a tough enough time as it is finding accommodation, paying rent, the expenses of everything that is going on.

[14:15]

This is a tiny little help, (1) a help towards lowering the cost of those young people if they want to travel to work and start their careers, (2) that is the nudge. It is not the nudge, that has happened up to the age of 18, this is helping them again on to the bus and changing behaviour. Cultural change. I am sure we can look up evidence of just about anywhere - and I will go through some of that, that was mentioned - to say that if you change your behaviour, I think it is 2 years before you change your behaviour for good. That is why I am not as fit as I should be because I never persist, but there we go. Deputy Binet, the Minister, liked to quote places like Tallinn in Estonia, I believe - I hope I have got that right otherwise I will embarrass myself - it is a much larger place than Jersey, it is in central Europe. We are a specific small Island 9 by 5 where we should have a bus system that is absolutely usable and accessible. If we are genuinely going to change car use we have to give genuine reasons for people to get out of their car and not use it. It is okay for us to say: "Well, young people should be walking or cycling." Two things: get a teenager to walk, good luck; second thing, get a 21 year-old to walk, good luck. I have been through both of those experiences and you end up driving because it is easier. Or, as so many parents can now say on this Island, "I am not taking you, get the bus, you have got a bus pass." It works. This extends so that we do not fall off the cliff at the age of 18 when you leave, which is a bit of a double whammy. You are not a full-time student, you are going out to work, but now you are going to pay more. Although, if we do look at the next one coming along, which is an even better one, we can solve that as well. I would say to Deputy Binet, this argument, this red herring about there are not enough buses, and I would say to any of you who say there are not enough buses, we have been told in this Assembly for the last year, 2 years, 3 years, I do not know how long now, but they are renegotiating the bus contract and it is going to be much better when we do that. But we have not renegotiated that bus contract yet, but it is still going. What are we renegotiating? A bus contract which means we cannot put these pluses in place for young people to change their behaviour because you are not going to supply us enough buses. Many of you have been in business and run businesses, would you really take a contract that cannot supply the needs that you want? Of course you would not. What are they doing negotiating this contract? As for subsidies, I can only guess the level of subsidy, I know it is a minimum of £4.5 million and what it goes up to I do not know, £6 million, £7 million; it is commercially sensitive. So when the Minister

says: "But we cannot be subsidising the buses." We are already doing it, but we are not getting back what we need to change behaviour and enable less cars to be off the road. As for the E.V. project, I have an electric car; I did not use the E.V. subsidy - I hope the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* print that - I did not use the E.V. subsidy because I did not think it was right to, and also it was an interest-free credit deal, it was a great deal. As interest rates go up my deal got better and better. I scrapped a car but I do not believe many people will. If I was to buy another E.V. then the car that we have that we use as a runaround for all sorts of other things, we load up with loads of junk, my daughter would take it and it would be an extra car on the road, as well as the E.V., and I guarantee this, she certainly would not be putting biofuel in it; indeed she never puts any fuel in it. I wanted to get that on Hansard for the record. But it simply does not happen. So this E.V. subsidy is really poorly targeted, I am afraid. I know it is meant well, it looks great on paper and when you sit around with a load of officers who say: "Okay, let us look at all the research" you can get whatever you want from it. As for the E.V. bikes the uptake was poor. The E.V. cars coming on Island, the uptake is poor, and we are giving up to £3,500 to somebody to buy a car which is around £25,000, £28,000, £30,000, any advance on £30,000? I am sorry, but it is unnecessary. Whereas this money can be targeted towards a group in our society who will change their behaviour and may decide: "Do you know what, I am going to pressure in the future to keep this going and I am going to use public transport." There is additional movement that comes from public transport, you do walk to the bus stop, you do use it that way. I would say to the Constable of St. Helier, whose opinion has changed within a couple of weeks; I am not sure why, I do not know what has happened in his life to make that happen, but it has certainly changed. He was talking to me just the other week about how he would support this and it is a really good idea. That has changed, okay, fine, we all change - well, I do not but others do change - your mind on these things. But what about then nighttime economy in St. Helier? If we can reduce the number of cars coming into St. Helier because more people are using public transport then what happens is it is easier to park for the people who live in St. Helier, and more people may stay after work so they can go out for a drink and enjoy our social events in central St. Helier. We are talking about developing the market. Now, how is that going to happen? Increasing parking? It is enough already. We have to make these decisions. This early decision, up to the age of 21, young people, get them in town enjoying their social life, let us give them something they can enjoy for once rather than taxing them to the hilt, charging them more and more for the money that they have and rents they cannot afford. I would like to thank the Constable of St. Martin and Deputy Le Hegarat; basically they got it. They understand what we are talking about here. It is about cultural change. It is about enabling young people and saying to them: "We want you to do this" and we are not going to say to them: "Do as I say." We are going to say: "Here is a way to do it. There you go, you have got no excuse." From years of dealing with young people that is what you have to do if you are going to change their behaviour. You have to give them a reason to do it. I would also say to the Constable of St. Helier when he talks about the strategy for active travel, there was £1.4 million put aside for active travel in the plan last year. I brought it, the Constable did not bring it, the Future Groups did not bring it and the Constable has been on that and he has not included us Deputies. I brought that and there is still lots of that money left so the first thing he could do, as Assistant Chief Minister, is start to spend that money appropriately. That would be a really good idea. So he can support this and have his money for active transport; he might get some cars off the road and might encourage that. As for a strategy, we have had more strategies than General MacArthur. We have had more strategies than anyone on transport. I have got to say, one of the few things that has actually taken any effect is the bus passes that we fought for and fought for and fought for. Very little else has. We just have paper documents and forests of documentation, although now they have been digitised and it probably cost us £500,000 to digitise them, but there you go. Deputy Renouf, I thank him for his speech, although it was rather long. He talked about £800,000 being spent on E.V. cars; I did not quite get it, I am not sure where the money is, it is very difficult to pick it out. That is an enormous amount of money being spent on a project has no guarantee that we are taking any other cars off the road, has no guarantee we are lowering traffic, has no guarantee at all that those cars just

are not staying in a garage because they have been bought with a subsidy, has no guarantee at all that they are even being used in the way that we have said or they are not additional cars being bought for a family, as I have said, so the other more polluting car can be used. When young people get to the age of 21 they might buy a car but they are not going to buy a new E.V., they are not going to buy a top of the range car, they are going to be a second-hand, third-hand, fourth-hand ... a Ford Escort was my first ever car, and a Ford Fiesta I bought over here, which I knew I had to get rid of because I stopped at the traffic lights and the lights fell out. That is the quality of that. We still do not have M.O.T. (Ministry of Transport) to deal with that properly, and that is what is going to have to happen, whereas this project says to young people: "You might not need to travel that quick." I will give an example - and I am going to take my time summing up, let us enjoy it. I was in one of the secondary schools recently talking to about 33 sixth form students, and we do this as part of the groups whose name I have forgotten, and I am not going to look at Deputy Alves because she is going to kill me for forgetting the name. We go in there and we try and talk about politics and so on, and we started talking about what projects are going on, and obviously they say: "What is it that you actually do?" and you desperately search around for something that you can say you talk about. The Government Plan is coming up and I talked about some of the things that were coming to the Government Plan and I said: "Well, I am trying to extend the bus passes to 21." One of the comments from one of the young people there, a really considered comment, was: "Actually, that is quite a good idea because you start driving around that age and some people are not really that confident driving, and perhaps they will have an option to not drive as much until they get their confidence built up." It was a subtle, tiny little thing that I had not thought of that young people had thought of. That is the reason why we need to listen and respect young people and give them opportunity rather than just dismiss them. Deputy Jeune, same line as Deputy Renouf, at least there is some unity in the Council of Ministers there. A small subsidy; I do not think this is a small subsidy for E.V. cars. It is a large subsidy. It is a lot of taxpayer money directed in the wrong way. It may be a small proportion of the price of the car. This nudge theory, I am sorry, but I think we have to be very questioning of that. If somebody is going to buy a new car ... I bought an electric car because we needed to do something, we got a good deal and it meant I could get rid of a diesel car. I felt better about myself, I had that wonderful moment saying: "I am such a saviour of the universe." Obviously I am not but you have that little moment. That is one of the reasons that drives it. Deputy Mézec was right; it changes behaviour. A good point re scrappage, there was no scrappage system with the E.V. car scheme and that is one of the biggest problems. So talking about this amendment, and I will finish here and then I hope people can vote in favour of this, there is a good point about skatepark facilities, for example, and transport yourself out of there. We need to look at the future. What is the future? We keep saying: "This has to be funded into the future." So what is the option? We stop? We have a lot more buses but that people do the calculations and say: "It is cheaper for me to drive, so I will drive" which is what happens now. Unless we incentivise this on this small Island our roads are going to be packed. They may be packed with half electric cars soon, but you are still going to have a traffic jam. This is about using public transport because it is optimum. Yes, there are issues. If you can get into town but you cannot get back after 6.00 p.m. that is an issue for the bus company and the contracts we are doing; it is nothing to do with providing this pass. I will finish by saying this: if it is so popular that people are complaining that there is not a bus to use, that is a sign of the success, that is why we should extend that and I urge Members to support something today that is positive for the young people of this Island and positive for the environment. I thank everyone and ask for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on amendment 8. I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been defeated: 16 votes pour, 28 votes contre, one abstention.

Pour: 16	Contre: 28	Abstain: 1
Connétable of St. Martin	Connétable of St. Helier	Deputy M.R. Scott
Connétable of St. Mary	Connétable of St. Brelade	
Deputy G.P. Southern	Connétable of Trinity	
Deputy M. Tadier	Connétable of St. Peter	
Deputy S.G. Luce	Connétable of St. Clement	
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat	Connétable of Grouville	
Deputy R.J. Ward	Connétable of St. Ouen	
Deputy C.S. Alves	Connétable of St. Saviour	
Deputy L.J. Farnham	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	
Deputy S.Y. Mézec	Deputy K.F. Morel	
Deputy T.A. Coles	Deputy S.M. Ahier	
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée	Deputy I. Gardiner (H)	
Deputy C.D. Curtis	Deputy I.J. Gorst	
Deputy L.V. Feltham	Deputy K.L. Moore	
Deputy R.S. Kovacs	Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache	
Deputy B. Ward	Deputy D.J. Warr	
	Deputy H.M. Miles	
	Deputy J. Renouf	
	Deputy R.E. Binet	
	Deputy H.L. Jeune	
	Deputy M.E. Millar	
	Deputy A. Howell	
	Deputy T.J.A. Binet	
	Deputy M.R. Ferey	
	Deputy A.F. Curtis	
	Deputy K.M. Wilson	
	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson	
	Deputy M.B. Andrews	

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Those Members voting pour: the Connétables of St. Martin and St. Mary; Deputies Southern, Tadier, Luce, Le Hegarat, Rob Ward, Alves, Farnham, Mézec, Coles, Porée, Catherine Curtis, Feltham, Kovacs and Barbara Ward.

1.8 Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023): ninth amendment (P.72/2023 Amd.(9)) - Subsidised Annual Bus Pass

The Bailiff:

The final amendment to be debated before we resume with the Government Plan is that of Deputy Ward, the ninth amendment, and I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Page 3, paragraph (1) - After the words "Appendix 3 to the Report" insert the words - " , except that, on page 91, after the words 'previously agreed increases in fuel duty.' should be inserted the words "£1,000,000 of the funding allocated from the Climate Emergency Fund to the 2022-2025 Carbon Neutral Roadmap budget will be moved from the TR1 Policy subsidising electric vehicles and e-bikes to finance a trial scheme to subsidise AvanchiCard Annual Unlimited bus passes, by - (i) covering £295 of the total cost of £495 per annual bus pass; and (ii) offering these subsidised bus passes to the public in tranches of 1,000; such trial to commence on 1st January 2024 and to be reviewed after 6 months to assess the extent of uptake."

[14:30]

1.8.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

This is perhaps the most important change to our travel we have discussed for some time. We have been through the argument over E.V.s and I am going to go through it again. This is a very expensive, undirected subsidy for people who do not need this subsidy to buy a car. The amendment is more accessible to a much wider range of the population and subsequently a better use of the limited resources that we have. From the comments paper, which I do not think is very good, there are just 152 annual bus passes issued by the bus company. This amendment provides the ability to provide tranches of 1,000 subsidised bus passes at a cost of £295 from the fund and every person who wants to buy one would have to spend £200 themselves. That takes the cost of travel to around 50 pence per day. That is important because you provide a year's bus pass. When you look at monthly bus passes, people are buying monthly bus passes for a couple of months at a time and then not using them at all, so their transport use for public transport they want to use is sporadic and not consistent. Where are they going to after that? Probably the car, probably into a traffic jam, probably into the centre of St. Helier to fill our carparks. This is an opportunity to say to the wider public, as a trial, reviewed in 6 months to see if there is uptake of this - something that is not happening with other schemes - and say to people: "You can buy a bus pass." I am not going to go on for a long time because I promised I would not. It is targeted, it is specific, a much-needed change that can impact positively to change travel behaviour in all adults. The change provides a regular and trackable income for the bus company. A regular and trackable income for the bus company. The bus company still receives the full amount of a yearly bus pass and they know how many people are travelling. That makes it easier to specify which sort of buses we want, when we want them and where we want them. It is a much more intelligent way to do it. It also allows us to look at travel patterns so the bus company has the best opportunity to provide the best service. I am not going to say any more now because I know we are going to have the debate, so I look forward to hearing the same arguments but we will see how we go. I ask Members to be brief in their comments again and I make the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

1.8.2 Deputy T.A. Coles:

I resisted speaking on the first one, knowing the second amendment by Deputy Ward was coming, and it sort of all stems around the same thing of where we are looking to reduce our Island's carbon emissions. I did find it interesting listening to the last debate. We have worried about our local class 1 and 2 emissions from vehicles on the road but we seem to always forget about our class 3, which is where these E.V. cars and electric bikes and all that are all made somewhere else in the world.

They then get the class 1 or 2 contributions and we pick up a little bit of the class 3. It is very broad how they count our carbon emissions and not count our carbon emissions. But as Deputy Ward said previously, we are not going to see a reduction in cars on the road unless we do something proper and really generally encourage people out of their cars. It is interesting, we received a news release a while ago about the sustainable transport policy highlighted with the fact that it says 68 per cent of people who live and work in St. Helier walk to work; 68 percent, that is a good number. But of course that also means 32 per cent of people that live and work within St. Helier use some other form of transport. This does not say whether it is a bus or whether it is their own car, but the TownLink service around town, unless you are a pensioner, is not commercially viable for a lot of individuals to just hop on and hop off because unless you have an AvanchiCard, an unlimited annual pass or an unlimited monthly pass, it costs you £2 a journey for a short jaunt around town. Now, for a lot of people who have mobility issues they will think: "I will just get my car, I have got it, I have got the space, I can just hop in my car and I can park and then I can drive it back." It seems such a wasted journey, whereas more access to the unlimited AvanchiCard at a discounted rate might encourage more people to change those habits. This is what we are encouraging is the change of habits. So people then will go: "I can just tap and go, tap and go." You go to London with a contactless card, you can hop on and off public transport all day and depending which zone you go in and out of it does not cost you more than £3.50 for an entire day's worth of travel. So this kind of unlimited AvanchiCard is very, very good value for money. However, we have to change the habit to get people to start using it. I think it is very, very clever the way that Deputy Ward proposes that the end user would have to pay £200 of their own money because I fell for this trap. I just bought myself a gym membership because the gym that I have now joined offered me a discounted membership from £500 to £300 for a year and so I have signed up and I am now dedicating myself, even during this day sitting people may have seen me running out of the back door because I had an hour and a half to get to the gym, have a workout, have a shower and get back. Because when people contribute some of their own money it really does make them think about what they are doing and the changes they can make. I hope that when my year's membership comes to an end and maybe that deal is back on and I will sign up again, or I will end up paying full price, but my habits will have changed. I will be back and doing something that is good for me, and in this sense it will be good to have people on the bus and doing something that is good for the environment, it will reduce traffic on the road, it will make people then who do not want to catch the bus feel safer in cycling. Let us say 1,000 for one of these, how many car journeys is that? How much traffic is that coming along St. Aubin's Road in the morning from St. Brelade where the traffic is probably the worst? Going past schools? It will cut the emissions in and around schools because some people who did not need to take their car because they have put £200 of their own money and will incentivise them to start seeing that catching the bus can work. I have changed my practices in the last 6 months because a change in my own circumstances meant that now I can carshare with my wife into work, but she finishes at a different time because she is self-employed and works late into the evenings, so that means on the days we come in together I go home on the bus now, unless the Connétable of Grouville gives me a lift as he picks me up at a bus stop on his way home. In his E.V. vehicle; there are no emissions coming from the Constable of Grouville, not yet anyway. But you have to take conscious efforts to make a change in practice, and sometimes just a little incentive to nudge you on your way or kick you in the right direction is what we need to do. I feel this will benefit us in the long run and reduce congestion. Not everybody who drives an E.V. car is safe in the same way that we seem to think that if more people are in E.V. cars then they are safer, will that encourage more people to cycle? It does not, it is still congestion, it is still vehicles on the road and it is still one person in a car taking up space. So I urge Members to support this, let people contribute some of their own money but let us help them with the initiative and move this forward.

1.8.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I know that Members will feel that a lot of the arguments to be made here are similar to the ones made in the previous debate but I do not think they are entirely similar. Of course one I forgot to make in the previous debate, partly because I was only speaking to make sure that other people had the opportunity to speak, was about the efficacy of the current scheme we have got. This is one where I think the current Council of Ministers can and should have a bit of humility and put their hands up and say: "Look, we were trying something out here, we had a pot of money from the Climate Change Fund which we thought we would just give to the middle classes in Jersey to help them buy some electric cars and electric bikes, but actually we realised we have got that wrong, it is not being taken up to the extent we thought and it is also targeting the wrong people here. So we are going to roll back on that and we are going to put it to the people that we really want to effect change with and that is ultimately getting people out of their cars." I saw this great cartoon sketch a few months back and it showed a vehicle on the road and it had all the negative effects that that vehicle had. I will not list them all but one of them was the fact that you get collisions with cars, people get run over by cars, that there is rubber pollution from the tyres, that the manufacturer of the cars is in itself polluting, and the only one single difference is that it does not have an exhaust pipe. But all of the other issues that you get, congestion, traffic jams, and parking issues, all of those things you still get with electric vehicles. Even before the scheme came in - I apologise if I have said this before, I may have said it outside the Assembly, I am not sure if I have said it inside - a wealthy neighbour of mine said to me: "I am thinking of getting an electric vehicle but my son has told me not to do it quite yet because there is a subsidy scheme coming in so I am going to wait a few months." In fact he saw that in the *J.E.P.* a couple of days later so he said: "I am not going to buy an electric vehicle now." He has got lots of money to do it, he wanted to do it, he had already made the decision economically and from an ecological point of view that that is the behaviour he wanted to do, but why would he not do it if he was going to be £3,000 richer? He did not get rich by being stupid, and if the Government are handing out £3,000 to people who do not need it he is going to say: "Thank you very much, I will stick that in the pocket and I could buy all of my kids a full bus pass for the year and still have maybe £2,000 for that." That is the irony of this thing. So this is well-targeted and I can really testify to Deputy Coles words there about building a habit. It does not take long to build habits and it is even better if they are good habits. A long time ago I realised that you could get an AvanchiCard and I got myself a pay as you go AvanchiCard because I realised that you save 25 pence with every journey. Better than paying on your debit card and even better than paying cash, which is more expensive. But that did not really change my behaviour because I just would keep that in my wallet and I would still mostly take my petrol moped. I would sometimes get a lift in with my wife or I would take the car if she was cycling to work, and it was most convenient for me. I would just leave exactly when I wanted to, I would get my free parking when I came to town, whether that was for the car or for the moped. If I am doing it, there will be other people working in different industries who have got access to free parking and it will be a financial calculation for them, not just an ecological one, in those decisions that they are making. So I think this incentive, which is really bringing it down to an affordable amount, especially for people who might be what I would call the opposite of fair-weather bus users, they only tend to use the bus when it is not very nice weather, they may have other methods of transport from April to October when it is largely sunny, when it is largely not raining, but when the wind and the wet comes in they want to use the bus. It might incentivise them to make that full purchase for the year which only costs them £200, but they are still paying for it, that is the point; it is still money that they are given. So what I did is I invested in a monthly AvanchiCard and it has got the beauty of me not needing to worry where I get on the bus, where I get off the bus, and to plan my day. So if I am coming to town or I am coming back home from town I know exactly what time my bus is. I was saying to someone the other day, unusually I had access to the car for one day but I was still in the routine of looking at my watch. It was coming up to 5.20 p.m. and I was sitting in the computer room in the States. It was about 5.10 p.m. and I

thought: “I had better get ready because I have got to get on the bus.” Then I realised I did not need to, I could stay another 25 minutes. When I am on the bus I have realised that there is a community on that bus because it does not take you long to realise you know who is going to get on at the next stop, you know who is going to get off at these stops, you know when the seats are going to become available and you can sit down after 10 minutes of riding the bus up wherever it is you are going. Sometimes you do not see that person on the bus and you wonder: “I wonder where that person is today.” Then the next time you see them on the bus you say: “Are you okay?” and they say: “No, I have just been a bit ill” and you strike up those conversations. The last point, there is not an argument between pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. These things are very fluid. I like to say that a bus user is just a pedestrian who is having a rest. Sometimes I will deliberately get off the bus a little bit early because I want to stop at my local shop which I know is only 5 minutes down the road, and then I will go to the shop and then I will walk back. If you are in a car you will not do that, you will plan to get as close to the shop as you can and then you will get back in your car, and you will not be meeting the same people that you do because of that. I would say that the advantages of this scheme here get the right balance between the cost that the user needs to be pay between the behaviour change that we want to see, and it also has all those other fringe benefits which I think we all want to see about placemaking and more cohesive community in Jersey. So I do ask Members who might not have supported the last proposal to certainly consider supporting this one. It is a different beast in nature; it is not about free bus travel, it is about subsidising bus travel. The last point I would make is it does not mean we have a perfect bus system. I think we have got a very good bus service. The most important thing is that it is very reliable.

[14:45]

I have only really seen one bus come late in the last year when I have been using it. The gripes that I do have, which I think this proposition may help with in the longer term, is the fact that there needs to be more buses, even to the country destinations around the peak times because they do get very full in the mornings and in the evenings. We need to think about better bus stops because the bus stop that I use I have nearly had my head knocked off a couple of times because there is no layby, there is no bus stop, and the bus is reluctant to go on the other side of the road so I get a bus passing me like that. If I am scared by that I am sure a lot of other members of the public using the bus would be scared by that. When we encourage more people to use the buses the demand for a better bus service will necessarily follow, whether it is for more frequency, better connectivity to Trinity, fully agree with that. Trinity has got a really good bus route to the zoo if you want to get the 23, you can get to the zoo after 11.00 p.m. But if you do not live around the zoo and you live in the main part of Trinity that is not much good to you, so I do sympathise with the Constable of Trinity. What I would say to him is that by voting for this proposition you will put pressure on the Minister for Transport and you will also give the necessary encouragement and extra funding to LibertyBus to reinvest in the service and create those better links where there are currently lacunas in the system. But it is not a reason in itself to vote against it.

1.8.4 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I am afraid Deputy Tadier is simply wrong. His last 2 points seem to me to be missing the point, that if we spend this money in this subsidy that is being requested the Constable of Trinity is less likely to see a bus strategy emerging with money to spend on a late bus to Trinity. Equally, Deputy Coles talked about the problems with the TownLink bus service and as a regular user of it, which is a shocking admission given where I live in Val Plaisant, down to the States building, I can be here on the bus about the same time it takes to walk, which in itself indicates something I think. But there are problems with the TownLink. We do not always know when it is coming and it is far too expensive for someone who has not reached the magic age of 65 and can hop on it and off it for nothing. The TownLink service needs improvement, but the best way to improve it is not to spend this money on the subsidy but to leave the Minister for Infrastructure with the money he needs to

improve the bus service in a way that will benefit all the Parishes and all the Constable's Parishes. This after all, like so many amendments to the Government Plan, is a matter of confidence. Do we have confidence in the Minister for Infrastructure to improve the transport system. If you had asked me that question a couple of years ago, in fact any time in the last 20 years, I would have to have said no because I am afraid, with all due respect to some present Members who have had that portfolio, we have not seen much progress. We have not seen many practical improvements. But I do have confidence in the current Minister to make radical and timely improvements in the bus service and I would rather he has a full pot of money to do that with rather than us deciding that he is going to have to spend part of it on a particular subsidy. Of course what has changed since the last debate on Deputy Ward's previous proposition, and I join others in commending him for his support of the bus service, particularly for young people, but what has changed since the last debate is the Minister has come online and he has agreed to reprioritise some of that money in the Climate Change Fund that would have gone for electric vehicle subsidy. I am heartened by that and I think that is another reason why we should allow the Minister for the Environment, the Minister for Infrastructure, and I will certainly be pushing behind the scenes, we should allow them to get on with it and to make these dramatic improvements in active travel in our Island that we all want to see. So I will not be supporting the amendment, thank you.

1.8.5 Deputy T. Binet:

I thought it might be an appropriate point to come in after the Constable and I would like to thank him for that vote of confidence in the work that is going on. Furthermore, I would like to thank Members very sincerely for the previous vote. Over the lunch hour I was trying to think about how I felt and while I was talking I felt like a man trying to give away fruit and veg outside of a pub at closing time when I am standing next to Deputy Ward with Dom Perignon wrapped in £50 notes being given away to everybody, and I honestly did not think anybody was going to take any notice of what I had to say in my little speech. I am afraid I am not the ...

The Bailiff:

We seem to have lost you, Deputy. Deputy Binet?

Deputy T. Binet:

Apologies, Sir. It is one of the drawbacks of working from home and I have completely lost my thread. I was just thanking everybody for listening to the facts, because it took me a little while to put that together and I would just ask the Assembly if there was something to be gained by taking the easy option why would I not have done that myself? I would make myself very popular by giving everything away free, but that is not the way things need to be done. I am just very grateful and I hope the people take the same approach to this amendment as well.

1.8.6 Deputy J. Renouf:

I shall take on board the kind advice from Deputy Ward and make this speech much shorter. Just to clarify a couple of points that people keep making, about the E.V. subsidy and so on. There is no scrappage scheme, people have pointed out. There is no scrappage scheme accompanying the E.V. scheme and that is for a very good reason. It was originally in the Carbon Neutral Roadmap but the States voted to remove it. It was removed from the Carbon Neutral Roadmap following a vote in the Assembly, so if we had done a scrappage scheme we would have been acting against the will of the Assembly. I would like to also remind Members that Deputy Tadier, Deputy Ward and the other members of our Reform Jersey who were in the Assembly did vote for that Carbon Neutral Roadmap, which did include policy TR1, which did include the E.V. incentive. I do not think it could be argued either that it snuck by them without them noticing, because Deputy Ward successfully amended that particular policy. The point I tried to make in my previous speech was that we need a full spectrum approach to decarbonisation. That is the aim of the Climate Emergency Fund, it is to fund

decarbonisation and E.V.s and e-bikes I submit are a part of that, but not the whole part. There is something else to put into the balance, which I mentioned but which I would like to briefly elaborate on, namely that we had hoped when we launched the E.V. incentive and the e-bike incentive that they would be counterbalanced, if you like, by funding for the Sustainable Transport Policy. We had hoped to secure funding for the Sustainable Transport Policy, but that has not happened over 2 Government Plans now. We have to face that reality and so, as I said in my last speech, I do recognise the need for a change of direction, given that we have not been able to secure funding for the sustainable transport; so I do want to be clear. I want to redirect money from the E.V. and e-bike incentives to sustainable transport, because there is no other plausible government revenue source that is going to go towards sustainable transport over the next few years. I do agree with those who say that we have talked for too long about sustainable transport without acting. As I say, the aim was that that should have been counterbalanced by money for the Sustainable Transport Policy but we have to face the fact that within tight spending rounds we do not always get what we want, and I think it is clear that people feel that there is money available through a different mechanism, i.e., the Climate Emergency Fund, and that that is what we should do. That is why I will now be intending to work with the Minister for Infrastructure, with the Constable of St. Helier, and with others who have interest in this area to give effect to that desire. I cannot say exactly how it will work out yet, because it is work that we recognise the need for now, knowing that we have not got the funding we would have ideally liked for a Sustainable Transport Policy. The aim is to use the Climate Emergency Fund more for that purpose, and therefore I do not feel that it should be used in the way that Deputy Ward is suggesting in this amendment to subsidise bus passes. I think it is quite interesting. My one take on this, looking at the figures around bus passes, is that we do have a very successful take-up of weekly and monthly bus passes - as far as I can see very successful figures for those - and I think 6,600 4-weekly and one-weekly travel passes in circulation. It does not seem to me that price is the particular barrier for bus passes. They are taken up by people possibly using 4-weekly and one-weekly ones because it is more flexible and more likely reflects the way they are likely to use the bus, so I do feel that if we start subsidising annual bus passes in this way that we do risk subsidising the number of people who already use them, rather than incentivising new users. There are 2 reasons there why I think we should not support this amendment. One is because I do not support the source of funding, but also I do not think it is a good use of money in terms of trying to achieve the objective that the Deputy is trying to achieve. Members will no doubt be delighted that I will leave it there.

1.8.7 Connétable K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:

I would like to support this, but I am afraid I cannot. It is obviously very well-intended. The bus contract is up for renewal and I wish the Minister for Infrastructure well because I know negotiations are probably underway by now. They are an exceptionally good company that we have at the moment and, as I say, I wish everybody well. I cannot finish without referring to my colleague behind me. We had a bad rockfall at the top end of town a few years ago and the Constable did send me a very nice letter and I thought: "I am going to frame that. There will not be another one", which there has not, and I will bring it in tomorrow to show Members. Jersey's answer to Victor Meldrew. I did give the Constable a lift the other day because I did not want him to wait too long for a bus in the rain, but there you go. I will leave it there. I would like to support this but unfortunately I cannot, but I am sure it is well-intended.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on this amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak on the amendment then I close the debate and call upon Deputy Ward to respond.

1.8.8 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I had a terrible moment of déjà vu there. We have gone back a few years, because we are going backwards, let us be honest. I think I have heard that story before, from the Constable of St. Saviour.

I had heard the Constable of St. Helier's views before, although they have been different a few times, different every time, depending on what position he takes up. That is a really sad thing to be. I find that unfortunate because this is something that will directly improve St. Helier. This is targeted. This is targeted to a specific group, not to people who can afford an E.V. and it is very interesting to hear the Minister for the Environment say that he is going to work with the Minister for Infrastructure in the coming months and make money for the Sustainable Transport Policy because there is not any money for the Sustainable Transport Policy. But at the same time he is going to vote against something that puts money towards sustainable transport from a project that is not working and is misdirected and not targeted. He cannot do that. There is no logic to the arguments there. I am tempted to say that we do not even know who we will have as Minister for Infrastructure or Government from January onwards, to be quite frank. So I think any promises as to what is going to happen in the future, and again it is always in the future ... I am getting déjà vu again. I can remember, looking back, talking about buses about 5 years ago and saying nothing happens. We just talk and talk and talk and then when a reasoned, intelligent, targeted, funded, costed, specific, time-specific, testing policy comes forward, an amendment, we go leaping around looking for red herrings for reasons that they cannot support it. All the people in this Assembly, the Deputies, who claim to be independent then take a party line with Government using a debate that is absolutely illogical. If you vote against this you are saying to the public: "I want to give money to people so they can buy an E.V., which is around £30,000 and I am quite happy to waive £3,500 per car" to give to them, give that away, taxpayers' money: "There you go, enjoy yourself, knock yourself out." We have no idea what it is doing, but they are not willing to donate £295 to up to 1,000 people to say: "You have greater access to our transport system."

[15:00]

The arguments are we might need more buses. What is the next argument? If there is a Sustainable Transport Policy and people start walking we might need more pavements. We might need more air for people because they are breathing deeper. What is the argument coming? I can see those red herring arguments coming along and we have for too long in this Assembly listened to these irrelevant, misguided, misplaced, inaccurate arguments against policy that could have changed the lives of people on this Island. For £295,000 you can impact on 1,000 people's travel habits. That is a bargain. They are paying £200 themselves. They have to buy into this. But many of you are not even listening to the argument. You are not even considering the argument, because you have been told what to do. You have to now go and speak to your constituents and say: "I would rather ..."

The Bailiff:

Through the Chair, please.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, Sir. My apologies, Sir. It has been a long week. I do apologise. I am usually quite okay at that, and I quite like it. You have got to go and say to your constituents: "I do not want you to have this subsidy even though you have absolutely no access to an electric car and you will never be part of that subsidy. You do not have a chance because you cannot come up with the other £24,000 needed, so that is not for you. Now, you may use a bus pass where you have to pay £200 a year, but I am not subsidising that for you because I do not think that is the way our Sustainable Transport Policy should go." Then when they ask the question: "What is our Sustainable Transport Policy?" you can answer: "Oh well, we do not have one." But they can say it is safe in the hands of the Minister for Infrastructure and the new Assistant Chief Minister. Do not worry. Even though we have seen nothing before, and there is a lot of hope for the future, we can do that. I hope you have that discussion with your constituents.

The Bailiff:

“I hope the Members have that discussion.”

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, Sir. I hope Deputies have that discussion with their constituents because I am going to have that discussion and I will say: “I wanted you to have the subsidy so you can travel cheaper.” Those people who get up early in the morning and might be travelling out for their first job of the day who use public transport, we could have taken the cost of their transport down to £200 a year, 50 pence a day, targeted towards a section of our population who need it most, but we are not going to do that today because of the same old tired, untested, unreasoned, illogical, and, to be quite frank, unevicenced arguments that have been thrown at this Assembly for too long. It is tiresome. It is tiresome when people come in here and not enter into a debate that they say they are elected to do. I want you to have that conversation with your constituents. I also want to say ... there are some other points just to finish off. The town hopper will not work unless it is subsidised and it is either free or people can get access to a pass. It is not worth £2-something for a short journey, therefore people are more likely to take their car, and it is short journeys that are the problem for us. If you are driving across the Island it may always be, particularly if you have some sort of disability or some sort of access issue, that you are going to need to bring a car in some form, and we have to address that later on. For short journeys out from First Tower, out from St. Clement, areas around there, people tend to bring their car because the bus is more expensive, effectively nearly £5 return, so you may as well bring your car, park for a couple of hours and go home. If you have invested in a bus pass that has been subsidised by Government you are much more likely to not do that. It is those journeys that we can impact upon for St. Helier. I am so disappointed that the Constable of St. Helier is not supporting St. Helier in this way. This provides a consistent income for the bus company. It could provide £495,000 of income with the combination of the subsidy and what people are buying for their bus pass per 1,000 people. Now, if you get 10,000 people using a bus pass in that way, if it becomes successful and is extended, that is £4.9 million for a bus company. We are getting the change of behaviour that we want and there is the investment that can be made. That makes economic sense. But no, this Assembly instead will listen to unreasoned, unevicenced, illogical arguments in order to just dismiss something. Family travel becomes an affordable option. I have a vision. I was told by the last Chief Minister that I was obsessed with buses. That is not fair. I did invite him for a bus journey after that but there you go. But I have a vision. It is a family. It is a lovely vision. It is a family where the 2 adults have their £200 bus pass and the children have their £10 bus pass and they travel together on the bus around the Island enjoying our beautiful Island without taking their car. Perhaps the Constable of St. Helier can join me in that vision of his country park, where he will not have to build a huge car park to go with it, but it will have a bus transport system that people use to go to the park and enjoy it. That is another thing that has been suggested but now has not happened. There are benefits to this for families and we are dismissing this out of hand, if we are not careful, and it is a mistake. There has been a lot of talk about park-and-ride schemes, so you park on the outskirts of town somewhere and drive in. Now, you are either going to have to provide a subsidised journey, ironically, or if these passes already exist people are more likely to park their car, use their bus pass, and get into town and back. This is part of an integrated system and what we are doing yet again with our transport policy is saying that we have got to come up with every single aspect of it before we start, and we do nothing, as opposed to making the step. This is a trial for 6 months. If it does not work we can come back and say it has not worked, nobody has taken it up and I will stand up and say: “That is a shame. I thought it was a really good idea.” It is as simple as that, and then you can put the money into something else, I do not know, electric scooters. Let us not bring that one up. This is money that has already been spent. The Minister keeps talking about from the Minister for Infrastructure’s budget. It is not from the Minister for Infrastructure’s budget. It is from the Climate Emergency Fund. Just like earlier with graphs, cannot read a graph, Ministers cannot understand where the money is coming from. Please, if you are going to argue with something, use

the correct argument. If this was a debating society you would lose. I for one am tired of winning the debate and winning the argument and then losing the vote. I am tired of it, so this time I want to say to people you need to really think about why you are voting against this. Not the red herrings, not the unevicenced stuff. Let us think about the benefits of this for so many people on this Island, 1,000 people at a time, and see what change that could make in our transport around the Island and what benefits that could bring for the traffic levels around the Island and for us all. You may even want to spend £200 on a pass yourself. I urge Members to vote for something and finish this debate with a positive. Finish these 5 days with something positive to go away with, so we can go and stand outside and say: “We have made one change for people. You have got cheaper transport around this Island if you want to pay your part of it.” I urge Members to vote for this and I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on the ninth amendment. I ask the Greffier to open the voting and Members to vote. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their vote then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been defeated: 17 votes pour, 29 votes contre, no abstentions.

Pour: 17	Contre: 29	Abstain: 0
Connétable of St. Martin	Connétable of St. Helier	
Connétable of Grouville	Connétable of St. Brelade	
Connétable of St. Mary	Connétable of Trinity	
Deputy G.P. Southern	Connétable of St. Peter	
Deputy M. Tadier	Connétable of St. Clement	
Deputy S.G. Luce	Connétable of St. Ouen	
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat	Connétable of St. Saviour	
Deputy R.J. Ward	Deputy C.F. Labey	
Deputy C.S. Alves	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	
Deputy L.J. Farnham	Deputy K.F. Morel	
Deputy S.Y. Mézec	Deputy S.M. Ahier	
Deputy T.A. Coles	Deputy I. Gardiner (H)	
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée	Deputy I.J. Gorst	
Deputy C.D. Curtis	Deputy K.L. Moore	
Deputy L.V. Feltham	Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache	
Deputy R.S. Kovacs	Deputy D.J. Warr	
Deputy M.B. Andrews	Deputy H.M. Miles	
	Deputy M.R. Scott	
	Deputy J. Renouf	
	Deputy R.E. Binet	
	Deputy H.L. Jeune	
	Deputy M.E. Millar	
	Deputy A. Howell	
	Deputy T.J.A. Binet	

	Deputy M.R. Ferey		
	Deputy A.F. Curtis		
	Deputy B. Ward		
	Deputy K.M. Wilson		
	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Those Members voting pour: the Connétables of St. Martin, Grouville and St. Mary, Deputies Southern, Tadier, Luce, Le Hegarat, Rob Ward, Alves, Farnham, Mézec, Coles, Ferey, Catherine Curtis, Feltham, Kovacs and Andrews.

1.9 Proposed Government Plan 2024-2027 (P.72/2023) - as amended - resumption

The Bailiff:

We now have dealt with all the amendments and we resume debate on the Government Plan.

1.9.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

When the Government Plan was first lodged it was described as boring, but 4½ days into this debate who could possibly maintain such a position? Looking at the Government Plan, the opening pages to it, it is very striking how little in the way of bright ideas this Government have to take Jersey forward, and so I am going to go through some of them. In the Government Plan 2024-27 delivering on our priorities page, that is page 5, it lists through the strategic priorities and then begins to list measures next to them. I want to highlight some of them, I think, to show how out of place they are in this Government Plan. Housing and cost of living, one of the points it raises is: “Increasing the rate of home ownership with £10 million of government support.” Not this Government Plan. That was several Government Plans ago. Next is: “Improving standards of rental properties through the new landlord licensing scheme.” That is a licensing scheme, not a registration scheme, the Minister for Housing and Communities may be interested to know. Again, not this Government Plan. Something that has been on the table for a substantial amount of time. Next, we are going to economy and skills. It talks about: “Implementing a new economic strategy which will help ensure Islanders enjoy the same standard of living in 2040 as they do today.” Wow, what a high aspiration to say that in the next 17 years things are not going to get any better. I wonder how they managed to let that one slip, although credit when that economic strategy document did come out, they found a very different form of words and a better form of words on that and hopefully that has superseded this document. Children and families, it refers to: “£2.6 million new funding for front line services to support children and young people.” That excludes teachers, quite clearly, who are going to be subjected to continued pay freezes over years. Ageing population: “Reinstating £57 million government funding to the Social Security Fund to support the state pension.” Well, they are now, after suffering a defeat on that, that they opposed. Health and well-being: “Continued funding for reduced G.P. fees funded from the Health Insurance Fund.” Something delivered in the defeat of the last Government Plan and not a unique thing in this plan itself. Again, the next one: “Focus on recruitment and retention of front line staff in health and education.” I mean, it is almost laughable, is it not? Environment: “Responding to the climate emergency through initiatives such as the e-bike scheme and low carbon heating incentive.” Again, something originating well before this Government Plan document itself: “Speeding up Jersey’s transition to electric vehicles through the electric vehicle purchase scheme.” Again, preceding this plan. Lastly, under community: “Dedicating 1 per cent of government spending to Arts, Heritage and Culture.” Again, a preceding Government Plan that achieved that, not this one. If there were bright ideas on how to take Jersey forward you would think that page would have been packed full of them, but instead they recycle

ideas and policies from previous Governments and previous Government Plans on this page because they do not have enough bright ideas to fill the page themselves. We ought to be clear about the situation Jersey faces when deciding whether this Government Plan is set up to meet those challenges. We know that we are facing a prolonged freeze in real terms of living standards. That in fairness predates this Government. That has been going on for a decade now. When asking the Chief Minister what in this plan specifically would help reduce income inequality she referred to the raising of tax allowances and, when pushed on that, the Chief Minister, and we have had this in the Assembly a couple of times, does not seem to realise that raising tax allowances does not make the poorest people in Jersey better off, because they are already beneath the tax thresholds. Their tax cannot be lowered anymore and increasing allowances in terms of monetary value the people who would most benefit from that are the people who are at the upper end of marginal relief. If there were something to help reduce income inequality that would have been in this plan but it is not highlighted in it. We have in recent weeks seen the statistics from Statistics Jersey about people leaving Jersey who showed, and this was very different to the trend there was previously but in the 2 most recent years, around 900 locally qualified people per year had left. If that becomes a trend this Island is doomed because we will see more and more of our bright and talented young people seeking lives elsewhere. That is an emergency and something that has to be reversed. We know that the biggest thing that could be done to help reverse it would be to resolve Jersey's housing crisis, which we know is the number one biggest contributory factor for causing people to live in poverty.

[15:15]

In this Government Plan there is a line that refers to subsidising social housing, and I am so angry to see that line in there because in Jersey we do not subsidise social housing. Social housing subsidises the Government because we get a £30 million return from Andium Homes but the benefits that we pay to the tenants of Andium Homes is only £20 million, so it is social housing tenants who are subsidising Government, not the other way round. When we look at the debate we have had this week on some of the initiatives that could be done further to help relieve that crisis and help more young people into home ownership we get told: "No, we cannot abolish interest relief on buy-to-let mortgages without having not just a review but a review and a consultation" and delay that by another year anyway. So much for the relentless focus there. We cannot divert the funding from the stamp duty surcharge on buy-to-let investment properties into the first-time buyer fund because that might upset the market. I mean the market is pretty upset as it is already. An extra £2 million to support first-time buyers would apparently be a negative thing. It would be almost laughable if it were not so upsetting. We continue to see ourselves in a position where we are being asked on the one hand to maintain real-terms pay cuts to all our public servants as it happens, but particularly those teachers who are raising with us the great difficulties they think their profession is facing. There is no money for that, but we are asked to provide another £52 million to proceed with the new healthcare facilities, £52 million that is, which is not involving building the thing. It is more preparatory work for it, after successive Governments and States Assemblies have already wasted over £100 million and they will not even tell us the full details of their plans in that regard, including how much they think they are going to spend on the programme as a whole. We have seen from comments back to Scrutiny today that they still do not intend to do that. If you want to spend large amounts of money on those things or not spend money on some of the things that many of us think ought to be prioritised perhaps we could all at least agree that finding genuine savings and efficiencies in Government, which we all know is desperately needed and which we all know there are areas that spend lots of money that we cannot immediately identify as being justifiable, instead the Government come up with targets for savings in their value-for-money programme without being able to substantiate a single penny of it to give us confidence that it will lead to genuine savings rather than end up putting pressure on Government Departments to make cutbacks. Many parts of this plan feel like a work of fiction, that when we come together a year from now will not really resemble the experience we have had in that time. How many of these s will be stuck to? How many of those proposed savings will genuinely

be made and how many problems will we see having mounted in that time that we will have to resolve then as well? On that basis, and here is the shocker, I do not think I will vote for this Government Plan. I am sure Members are really shocked to hear that. In particular, I would hope and I may well be being optimistic here, that the Government would be prepared to take some of these in different parts, not just for my benefit, but they ought to out of decency take part (b) separate, because part (b) refers to a new tax, it refers to giving them the ability to go away and do work on a new tax, which if Members are forced to vote for in the grand scheme of the package of Government Plan proposals even though Members may themselves not desire that part, we may be sending the Government off to do lots of work only to have them fall at the last hurdle when they come back to this Assembly. I certainly would not support part (b) in any shape or form and in fact even if the amendment I brought to it had been accepted because underpinning part (b) and their desire to introduce a waste disposal tax is an acknowledgement, and they know this deep down inside, that Jersey's tax and spend model is broken. They are not raising the revenue they need to provide the services that they know they need to provide. They are too scared to tamper with the headline income tax rates because of the delusions they have about it is important to Jersey's reputation, so instead we get stealth taxes, stealth charges and vague commitments or statements in the Government Plan about those future revenue raising measures, whether it is a waste disposal tax, which they cannot tell us a single detail about the shape or form it will take or who will end up paying it and what amounts they will be paying on it, or the commitment they are prepared to make to relax some people who may have concerns about it. They are not prepared to do that. There is the revenue to be raised for sustainable health funding which, on the floor of this Assembly on multiple occasions we have asked Ministers to rule out regressive health charging policies because we know that it is those with the lowest incomes that often have the most difficult time with their health outcomes and greater financial pressure on them will exacerbate that for them and we get no guarantees in that regard either and so can have no confidence that we will not end up in a situation soon like the 2014-18 Ian Gorst-led austerity Government, which attempted to bring those regressive taxes forward. We find ourselves with a Government Plan we are being asked to support now that lacks any coherent vision for solving the big crises that Jersey faces, which has virtually nothing to say on the number one crisis facing the Island, which is the housing crisis, apart from one referral to something that was secured several years ago. It contains at its heart a refusal to accept what every right-thinking person knows, which is that our spending model and our taxing model do not go together and are not working properly. I think that it is time that Jersey had a genuinely better way, not the sham that we have right now, which has claimed to be a better way but has turned out to be more of the same. I suggest to Members that they vote against this Government Plan and send them back to the drawing board.

1.9.2 Deputy M.R. Scott:

I would again like to thank the Council of Ministers for accepting the Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel's amendments that have led to the freeze of fuel duty and partially accepting the freeze, in other words to not increase as much the alcohol duty. Overall, though, I do feel that this is another plan that is basically about taxing more, putting more costs on industry, despite the difficulties that they are facing in terms of so many inflationary costs. I do believe that the Government should be considering much more how they themselves can contribute to this inflation. I believe many people would be disappointed in terms of that general kind of philosophy about, well, let us spend more and get some more tax. I do agree with a lot that Deputy Mézec said and I think coming back to when he was looking at the part of the Government Plan that was talking about delivering on priorities again it mentioned supporting technological innovation through the Impact Jersey scheme. We have not really seen much apart from supporting a search operation and very minor things in that respect. I suppose a lot more might be being promised but I would be interested to see how that does improve economic productivity. It also referred to this new investment in the rural marine sector. As we know, a lot more has gone in that area now as a result of Deputy Luce's proposition and I hope he can accept that is a positive in that respect. It also mentions implementing

a new economic strategy, which will help ensure Islanders enjoy the same standard of living in 2040 as they do today. Well, that is a really big promise, but it is going to be very difficult to deliver when so many people seem to be leaving the Island because of increased housing costs and because of cost of living. In terms of this new sustainable economic strategy that we have seen published in the course of the year there is still a lot more to be done, not least that we have had this *Barriers to Business* piece of work and it is saying these things. There is too much in the way of regulation that is causing a problem for businesses. Indeed, in terms of ideas about really boosting the economy, a key feature seems to be selling rights over the seabed and I do not really feel that is so much increasing economic productivity as selling a major asset. The value for money, it is incredibly disappointing not to see some really constructive work not to have taken place this year. The only one we saw was this deep dive review into Jersey Sport, which I would not have thought was the biggest priority in terms of all the arm's length organisations, all the States-owned entities where we might question, are they really being held to account? As I mentioned in another speech, there are certain recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General that have not been implemented, particularly in the case of things like arm's length organisations, which the Comptroller herself said would drive value for money and instead we see: "Oh, we are going to cut here and there" and no real kind of proper plan that reflects those recommendations. I really would urge the Council of Ministers to get on with it. We do not have much time in this States Assembly. Indeed, another issue that does not seem to have been addressed yet is the growth of the public sector. Again, that causes problems for the private sector insofar as it needs staff too. When you do have jobs being offered, £74,000 for what seems to be not greatly productive roles, then again that causes a lot of disgruntlement within the community that basically generates the taxes that fund all this public spending. In that respect, perhaps it really is time in the forthcoming year to hear a bit more about what are they doing to really improve the pay structure so that we can have less in the way of obstacles in terms of having people within Government who can really show that they can deliver. Even asking these delivery arms that we have to have why they are there. You need to have people able to properly oversee them but also to be able to give some joined-up policies so that they are not just almost like acting in accordance with policies of 10 years ago. This needs to be done if the Council of Ministers truly want joined-up thinking. So I can see a reason for supporting this Government Plan in terms of the improved ... another thing I will also mention is in terms of the alcohol duty I did not even see that curbing excessive drinking was even mentioned in the health policy but, hey, that seems to be a new point now. In terms of the Government Plan I can see a reason to support it in terms of the increased help for farmers and the fishing communities. I agree with Deputy Mézec, I would like to see part (b) separately debated in terms of these liquid waste charges. It does cause a lot of concern about more ways of taxing people, and I will leave it there.

[15:30]

1.9.3 Deputy L.J. Farnham:

It has been a busy week and I am sure we all hope, being optimists, we could perhaps stand a chance of finishing today. It has been a bit of a blur. I got home yesterday evening just in time to catch the news headlines from the other room and I heard them say: "Lyndon takes the top job after vote of no confidence" **[Laughter]** and I must have been dozing or something yesterday, but I did have to pinch myself. Also, it has been noted that some concerns, some Members, have been commenting on my voting pattern and I have to say it is a little concerning but also I find rather a compliment that Reform Jersey seem to be following my voting quite a lot these days and I thank them for that. On a more serious note, I want to talk very briefly, and I have to mention the hospital in slightly more detail than Deputy Mézec did and I know he chairs the hospital panel, because this is ... and I make no apology for bringing it up again, because this is, in my opinion, the most important issue we are dealing with and probably this Assembly will deal with for decades to come. I think the first area of concern is the fact that ... and I am not criticising the Ministers but the first area for concern is the relationship between the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for Health and Social Services

does not seem to be working properly, which is a great shame. We have the Minister responsible for the most important and potentially costly project we will ever do, we are ever going to do in the foreseeable future, not really working collaboratively with the Minister for Health and Social Services who runs the service. I really would like to see that change if possible. The allegations of money being wasted by previous Governments; well, I maintain the money spent by the previous Government has not all been wasted but some of it has, or might have been, simply because this Government essentially have pretty much cancelled the project, whereas the previous Government every step of the way came to this Assembly quite properly and sought the Assembly's permission to proceed. I think to make an informed decision moving forward we do need to have an evaluation and a comparison of costs, not just capital costs, because unfortunately I believe the capital cost difference, and I think it will be significant. I believe the price band of the new health facilities, if the Government are going to be honest about it, and I know the Minister for Infrastructure is an honest and direct politician, and I think he will be in due course, it is going to cost in the region of £1.5 billion if they do everything they want to do. The capital cost I think will pale into insignificance compared to the financing cost. Now, we missed the boat on being able to borrow at a lower interest rate. There is nothing really we can do about that but Members must be aware that whatever we build, wherever we build it, is going to cost significantly more in the short to medium term at least because of the high interest rates, but as the Minister for Treasury and Resources will say hopefully over the period of a 30 or 40-year loan perhaps later on down the road we might get some of that back as interest rates change. Of course, it is not all about cost and I want to make this absolutely clear, it is more about clinical and medical outcomes. It is about delivering the most efficient health service for the money. I think to make an informed decision on further spending I urge the Government to come back with a proper comparison of what we had albeit adjusted if changes need to be made internally so at that time we can make a proper decision. The Government Plan itself does not really contain anything new. I do not think it has evolved too much, only insofar as we have seen expenditure forecast to increase by the best part of 30 per cent over the 4-year span of the Budget and I still maintain that we are not prioritising our spending properly. We are not focusing on what I believe should be the key areas of maintaining a solid and strong society: health. I do not believe our health budget is enough given the advances in medicine and the life expectancy increases in the new types of treatments available. Education, I think we have seen by the challenges we are having now that perhaps we are not focusing on that as much as we should do. Law and order, as I said before, the Minister for Home Affairs is in a difficult position and has had to table a Budget that could force cuts in front line policing. The infrastructure, we need a lot of work on our infrastructure and public realm and it is hard to believe that an Island of this size and prosperity still has Islanders using boreholes and not having mains drains and all of the issues that come with that. We have potential new taxes on the horizon with waste charges. We have a Cabinet Office, and I know we might be making a little bit of political mileage out of this but when you look at how the Chief Minister's Department has evolved into a Cabinet Office, I am not sure many Islanders understand or fully support it, because there is an £80 million cost ... there is a huge ongoing cost in I.T. and yet I still cannot get a printout from the printer downstairs and Deputy Renouf of St. Brelade is having to wait for a delay to get a signal through on the P.C. (personal computer) here to speak. I make light of it but it is that sort of expenditure and other sorts of expenditure that seems to be given precedence over the essential aspects of running the community, the community that we used to have in Jersey. Growing up in Jersey, I remember my parents and my grandparents boasting about what a fantastic health service we had, what brilliant education we had, how good our roads were and so forth. We have not kept up. I am not saying what we have got now is not good, because it is good. We can still be proud of this small Island but we could do better and we must always aim to do better. As much as being critical, I am urging the Government to have a rethink over the year ahead and look at how funds are prioritised. We appear to have a divided Council of Ministers with different factions emerging. I do hope this can be resolved and I genuinely wish the Chief Minister well with sorting this out. It is a difficult job and we are not an easy bunch of people to deal with at the best of times

but we are, I believe, all well-intentioned, we are all here for the right reasons and we all want to do the best for our Island. I urge Ministers to sort out their differences and work in the interests of all Islanders. We do not want to see a vote of no confidence here. There are rumours about. We do not want to see this Assembly having to debate that. We do not want to be in a position where we have to back them or sack them, but that could happen if the Council of Ministers does not work as more of a team under the leadership of the Chief Minister. I genuinely wish them well with sorting that out because it is in the interests of all Islanders. There have been some wins in this but the additional cost for the health facilities is still concerning, the potential new taxes for waste charges, the unwanted and unnecessary increase in duty, which might not be the reason for some hospitality businesses going but for many it will be the straw that breaks the camel's back, and I think we have made a mistake on that. Regrettably, I do not think I will be supporting this Government Plan and I do hope that the Government will take on board some of the comments made, not just by myself but by all of the Members. I will leave it there.

1.9.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

The first thing I would like to do, even though I am speaking from an opposition point of view as a de facto member of the de facto opposition party, Government in waiting, I think it is important to acknowledge the hard work of our officers and the Government's officers that has gone into preparing this. [**Approbation**] Not just the hard work that they have prepared but the fact they have had to sit by the radio and listen to 4 days of what has been a very exciting debate, I am sure they will agree, which they helped prepare some for and some against the propositions as well. That is all part of the democratic process. That has been said now. I am sure the Chief Minister will echo those words when she sums up, in her own way. I want to focus on something very specific that was not raised during the main debates. We had a lot of focus on alcohol duty, we had extended debates on it. We also did not have quite the debate we might have expected ...

The Bailiff:

If you could pause, Deputy. I am not sure we are quorate. We are not quorate in the Chamber. Could you check whether we have Members online? There are 3 online. We are just about quorate. Please continue.

Deputy M. Tadier:

With that little break, I am reminded of a digression that I think is loosely related to the Government Plan because we know that there has been under-investment in our front line services. What we have recognised sitting in this Chamber is that you can hear the sirens very loudly going on outside, so there is clearly some activity going on from the blue light brigade. I think if there are any cuts to be made, they could be made in cuts to the decibel levels of those sirens, something I have been meaning to ask the Minister about outside of the Chamber but I thought I would put it on record. Getting back to the very specific point I want to make; we have had lots of talk about the right level of duty on alcohol, on how that might affect both on the one hand drinking levels and the hospitality industry on the other. We probably have not had the level of debate we might have expected a few weeks ago about fuel duty and how that sits in the wider issue of climate change. That seems to have gone under the radar and that will continue to be, I think, an important issue in future because we seem to have agreed to park it because of the cost-of-living crisis but there will be a trade-off at some point in the future when we want to try to get emissions down and change behaviour on that. So it is very much the green taxes and we have got away with it in this debate, but we are not going to get away with it in the future, something just to highlight for future Government Plans. The other point is that I think last year I was slightly frustrated that something I wanted to talk on, which is tobacco, and there was not any debate on it. It is not something I necessarily feel strongly enough to have brought an amendment about but it is contained within part (a), of course, which is the general heads of expenditure. I would like to give Members some food for thought but in particular the Minister for

Health and Social Services some food for thought, as well as the Minister for Treasury and Resources, and ask what is the end game for this scenario. I just had a very brief chat with the Minister for Treasury and Resources when I pointed out the line to him about how much impôts duty is collected on tobacco alone in the Island. Of course the reason I have singled out tobacco is that is one tax that euphemistically the Budget talks about having a 5 per cent escalator on it in terms of the duty. What that means is that there is 5 per cent extra on top of R.P.I. We know R.P.I. is already 10.1 per cent and 5 per cent is being added to that, so tobacco duty on average is going up by 15.9 per cent. There are slightly different rates depending on the type of tobacco but if we are talking about rolling tobacco, packets of tobacco here, your smoker in Jersey - and there are still a few of them left by all accounts - contributing to the coffers will see their tobacco going up by 15.9 per cent. Now, why do I mention that? I am not a smoker, incidentally, and I do not like smoking but I think we have to recognise that in a democracy all kinds of things are permitted. It is legal and it is also taxed, if it is not encouraged that is. The reality of this Budget is that £595,000 extra compared to last year will be generated by tobacco going into the Treasury coffers.

[15:45]

The overall amount of duty from tobacco going into the Budget is £16 million. Now, does that sound like a lot? I thought are those figures right, are we really getting £16 million a year in a small Island from tobacco sales? To put that into context, it is more than the 1 per cent for arts and culture, so it is more than 1 per cent of all the revenue that the Minister is spending on the overall expenditure for Jersey comes from tobacco sales. It is quite remarkable. I am glad that we are not linking the 1 per cent for arts and culture to tobacco sales, incidentally, because we might find that dwindling, or would we? The way that tobacco duty has been predicated year on year is that the amount must stay the same even though the health imperative is that the number of smokers every year must decline, partly because they are dying off and they are not coming back. New smokers are not being replenished in the same terms as the ones who are leaving us, which is good. That is the trend we want, but it means that to retain the same amount of duty every year on tobacco we have to put tobacco up by above inflation. I think that makes sense, but the problem is the question then arises at some point: where does this all end? Your average smoker in Jersey - I do not know what an average smoker is, somebody who is not fully converted to vaping yet or quit altogether, somebody who is a relatively light smoker, might smoke 20 a day, so one packet a day, which is obviously 365 packets a year - is paying £1.38 extra this year on duty. That is over and above the duty they already contribute. That smoker will find themselves £503 worse off a year. It is a bit of a shame because if they gave up smoking they could buy outright a bus pass, if they wanted to, although they could maybe buy a bike as well. Putting that aside, the next question I ask is: how progressive is that tax? We hear a lot about progressive, regressive and neutral taxation. I would like to know what the demographics are of smokers in Jersey. I do not know if we have those figures yet but I would like the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Minister for Health and Social Services to get their heads together at some point in the future because it could well be ... and I have no evidence for this, I am sure smoking is an addiction that afflicts all classes and all economic backgrounds but there is a strong suspicion that it may impact certain demographics more than others. I am very uncomfortable about an above R.P.I. increase on tobacco and if there had been an amendment I would have supported an amendment not to increase that on that simple basis. I will continue with the logic and I will finish shortly, but bearing in mind I did not speak on it last year, take half of my time as an addition on what I might have said last year. The logical position is that in order to get that £16 million year on year, which has also been put into the future Budgets - it is roughly £16 million give or take a few thousand pounds - what happens when there is only one single smoker left in Jersey? When everybody else has either died out or been converted to vaping or quit smoking and you have one single smoker who is smoking, by my calculations the level of duty on a packet of tobacco is going to need to be £2,192 a year for that smoker to pay. That is a little bit much, I think, is it not? This is by today's prices. If all the smokers gave up over the next 364 days before the next Budget

and only one of them was left standing, he or she would be facing, let us round it up to, £2,195 for a packet of tobacco, which I think is a bit steep personally when you could probably just buy a ticket for Condor and buy a 20-pack of duty free on the boat or on a plane and you would get, effectively, a free holiday out of it too. I would like to leave those thoughts with the Minister for Health and Social Services and for Treasury. I think when it comes to the other points, my party leader has already said it. I think there are elements of this that are progressive, there are elements that are not progressive. We have had some amendments here that I think could and should have been adopted, which maybe could and will be adopted in future years; so the proverbial curate's egg I think is the one that comes to mind. I thank Members for indulging me on the specific issue of tobacco. It is not sufficient for me to vote against part (a) in its own right but I think the points needed to be put on record.

1.9.5 Deputy T. Binet:

I know that Members are tired and I certainly will not delay people. I just have 3 points to make, really by way of correction and perhaps unsurprisingly that is in relation to the words of Deputy Farnham. I think we have got to be very careful when we are using words to the Assembly, particularly when the media are listening, and I took note of the words that were mentioned as follows: "The Minister for Infrastructure is not working collaboratively with the Minister for Health and Social Services." I am not sure whether that is what Deputy Farnham particularly meant, he meant to refer to a sometimes-tense relationship, but the words are as he said. I invite Deputy Farnham to look at all of the evidence and I think that is simply not true. I believe I have worked completely collaboratively and in good faith over the last 18 months, so that is the first correction. I think rather dangerously Deputy Farnham has chosen to suggest that the new hospital facilities are going to cost £1.5 billion. He did not have any evidence for that, but I would invite him to get a calculator out and look at the area involved in the acute facility, which is on or around £700 million. If you then add the ambulatory and health village together, I think you will find it is a slightly smaller square area but you also have to bear in mind that the cost per square area for those 2 units will be cheaper than the acute unit, and from his time in office, Deputy Farnham will know that. To suggest, therefore, with those facts in mind, that he suggest to the public £1.5 billion I do not think is a particularly responsible thing to do. I think that perhaps was not the wisest move. Just a minor point that to suggest - and it was not made directly but there was an inference - that we had money at 2 per cent available to us and, as the Deputy well knows, when we came to office the financial climate had changed dramatically and that is why that was not available to us. I do not know why the money was not borrowed by Deputy Farnham but that is a matter for him. That is all I have to say.

1.9.6 The Connétable of St. Martin:

We cannot underestimate the importance of any Government Plan. As I have said in previous speeches in previous debates on previous Government Plans, this is more than just a spending document. This is a document with considerable social impact and it is, above all else, the key statement to Islanders about what the Government of Jersey are and what their ambitions are. I certainly do not envy the difficult choices that must have been made each year as to what to prioritise, what to fund and where to reduce. It is good that the Government of Jersey are seeking to be efficient in their use of public funds and look to help confront the key challenges this Island faces in the housing crisis and the health service, and yet these challenges are more than just numbers on a page. It is about the lives they affect and the need to understand that these are not just questions about services but these are questions about our Island and everyone on it. These questions are going to be central to the remaining years this Assembly has before the next general election. I am grateful to the Council of Ministers accepting my amendment as amended to publish an annual report on the progress made on implementing the recommendations of the report of the Taskforce on Violence Against Women and Girls. I hope the rest of the Assembly will join me in thanking the taskforce for their incredibly hard work in producing this report [**Approbation**] and for not shying away from

showing us just how far we need to go in tackling violence against women and girls in Jersey. We have certainly made progress over the years but we must never forget that we both can and must go further in building a safer, more equal and kinder Island. I hope that the Minister for Home Affairs will ensure that the reports my amendment will bring are comprehensive and provide the detail needed to successfully scrutinise the progress made in implementing the taskforce's recommendations and how they are improving lives in Jersey. If it looks like the Government are falling behind, I will be raising this with the Assembly either through standalone propositions or amendments to future Government Plans. I hope that my fellow Members will be doing the same. The report of the taskforce cannot just be a report supported by further reports buried within a forest reports, as Deputy Ward mentioned earlier. We need to show that this Assembly has made real changes to improve the lives of Islanders, something that every elected representative must do. The words on the pages the Government published must become actions because I must confess that I have spent time feeling as if this Government is by press release. I mean no disrespect to the Chief Minister or her Council of Ministers but this is a mistake the previous Government of Jersey made to its severe detriment, and it needs to be fixed because we cannot build a hospital out of paper. We have all seen the concerns raised about the time spent by the Assembly reflecting on its processes and procedures and composition, but in some cases this is all we have left to debate. If policy and actions are not brought to this Assembly to debate, amend and deliver, this Assembly is left to the Back-Benchers. The Council of Ministers must remember the value of this Assembly and the invaluable support it provides as policymaking. If we want to truly build trust in Government and interest in our Assembly, the Government of Jersey needs to be seen to be bringing propositions to this Assembly to debate for the better of the Island. A focus on statements over the opportunities to properly deliberate within the Chamber makes us, to quote Tears for Fears - one of my favourite bands - "fools to the rules of a government plan". We have 49 Members in this Assembly. The Government need to remember just how much value each and every one of us can bring to helping improve this Island. This ties into my final point, which is the need for us not to lose sight that every one of us in this Assembly wants to build a better Island. Jersey is a wonderful place to live and we need to not only work to preserve and improve what is a truly extraordinary Island but also to enhance the public realm and the benefits it provides. Islanders are much more than just customers and we must never see them as that and this should never be forgotten. We need ambition in what we do. We cannot simply maintain the standard of living, we need to improve it. This means that the very poorest in Jersey should be supported and they must have the same opportunities to succeed in this Island as the very richest. This should never be forgotten. In finishing, I must once again remind this Assembly that we cannot risk undervaluing itself or letting itself become a maligned body that can be cut down and diminished. Our democratic culture must be boosted. We know this but it can never be replaced by managerialism. We should never forget how lucky we are, not only to have our own Parliament where we can discuss these issues and create home-grown solutions in a way that is democratic but allows anyone in our Island to run for election and potentially be elected and serve the communities that form this single Island community. We need to build on this and we need the Government to use the Christmas break to reflect on what they have lost sight of, what they need to refocus on and just how much potential good the Government and the Back-Benchers, us as an Assembly, can do.

1.9.7 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin:

Members will note that the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel did not bring any amendments to this Government Plan but we did issue a comments paper and did a short review. Before I talk about big ticket items, because we really have mentioned some, I just want to say, first, that one of our recommendations was for the Minister for Housing and Communities to make sure that there are enough funds in the Housing Advice Service in the future. Certainly one of the things that has come over to the panel very clearly in reviewing this issue is that very many people look for advice on housing issues and many of them go to independent people when they really could be going

to our own Housing Advice Service. We ask the Minister to prioritise that. I want to come back to the big ticket items, and we really do have some here that we feel Government should be addressing. The first one asks that the Minister for the Environment should work with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to continue to ensure the priorities given to delivering a long-term financial strategy for the Climate Emergency Fund in time for next year's Government Plan.

[16:00]

We go on to say that we would like a more detailed breakdown of the proposed expenditure in that plan on the initiatives to be funded and we want a statement provided of how that specific expenditure is going to achieve value for money. I do not need to remind Members how important climate emergency is and how important it is that we fund the initiatives we are going to take to do our bit to try to reduce carbon emissions. We also speak in our paper about how the Minister for the Environment should work with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, again, to prioritise a longer-term funding solution for the water strategy. This was not included, to our surprise, in this year's Government Plan, but Members need to be under no illusion that in the long-term future - not that long term, by 2030, 2035 - we need to come up with a solution to our Island's water and I am going to say "problem" because we know that potentially in the future we are going to be short of water. Whether we decide on a new reservoir, whether we decide on recycling or whether we decide on increasing the amount of desalinisation we do, that decision needs to be taken in good time because if we do end up going down the road of a new reservoir we know that the lead-in period is probably the best part of 20 years. Decisions about where we go with water, long-term decisions, need to be taken soon to make sure that by the time we get to the crunch point we have already invested and taken measures to make sure we do have enough water on this Island. Another one of our recommendations is about the Minister for Infrastructure prioritising long-term funding solutions for ongoing maintenance and investment in the public estate. It will not surprise Members that we have highlighted this to the Minister and I think it has become clear to him in his short time in office that very many of our buildings and structures are not maintained properly. That is a short-term saving and a long-term expense because, as I think we all know, if you cannot do them properly things start to go away for you and get very much more expensive. Another recommendation for infrastructure is again that that Minister should work with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to prioritise a long-term funding model for waste charging. I know we have discussed that in this Government Plan debate but it is one that needs to be spoken about and one that needs to be decided on. There is a huge amount of expense for the Infrastructure Department moving forward in all sorts of waste streams and they all need to be funded and the Government need to take a really serious look at how those final proposals are going to be brought forward to the Assembly. We would like to see that brought forward in time for next year's debate. Finally, I will just mention potentially that the biggest ticket item, if you like, when it comes to money again is for the Minister for Infrastructure to talk to the Minister for Treasury and Resources to explore the longer-term funding solution or solutions for the numerous coastal adaptation projects identified in the shoreline management plan. We note that several defence projects have been identified in the first edition of this plan and they are going to need constructing by 2040. That may seem a long time to wait but a long-term funding solution has got to be brought forward and one that enables work to start on these projects in sufficient time for them to be completed by that date. These are not small projects that are just a couple of months' work. These are going to be significant pieces of infrastructure that will affect many parts of the south coast. They need to be identified and they need to be decided on and, most importantly, the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Minister for Infrastructure are going to have to come up with ways of funding those. A recurring theme throughout our review has been the need for longer-term financing for a number of key priority workstreams and projects, namely, as I have said, climate emergency, liquid waste charging, the shoreline management plan, the maintenance and investment in the public estate, and I must not forget the water strategy, as I have mentioned. It is understandable that there will always be numerous competing funding priorities across Government. However, a

key underlying concern for my panel is the lack of progress to date in moving forward with longer-term financing strategies for any of these items. The panel intends to keep a watching brief throughout next year and would hope to see further progress made and some longer-term plans presented to this Assembly in time for the debate this time next year. The panel further notes that the F.P.P. in their annual report has also reiterated the need for long-term financing plans for the Climate Emergency Fund. They recommend that consideration be given by Government to the funding strategy of major capital projects over the medium and long term. I think the message is clear from my panel, we will be keeping a very close eye on this. But Government and Governments into the future have to take the bull by the horns and start somewhere. It is always so easy to push these very major and long-term projects down the road and accept that the next Government is going to have to start the work. It is time that on all these projects we took the initiative and started, at the very least, to talk about how we are going to fund them. We very much hope to see some of that funding projections brought into next year's plan.

1.9.8 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I would like to start by addressing my amendment, which was accepted by Government and I am grateful for that. I am pleased that this will mean that financial support will be made available to families with children with life-limiting or life-threatening illnesses or more complex healthcare needs. This was a clear gap in provision for financial support for these families, who were regularly getting turned away when they went to C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services) and applied for support. I think it is quite sad that a Back-Bencher had to point out this quite obvious gap in provision, and I echo the Constable of St. Martin when she said how important it is that Government also start bringing more propositions to this Assembly during this term of office. Before I leave that, I would like to thank in particular the charities that helped me put that amendment together, so that was C.L.I.C. (Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood) Sargent, Family First and Family Nursing and Homecare, as well as the families that were brave enough to share their stories with me. Moving on, the hospital, I know previous speakers have mentioned this, I am highly concerned that due to the Government's unwillingness to share all of the details that they have available to them about the proposed expenditure on the full programme of the healthcare facilities, we are at real risk, as an Assembly, of having an incomplete programme, that in the future what we may find is that the whole programme, the Assembly may feel is unaffordable. I would urge the Government to share as much information as they have with the Assembly. I was quite disappointed when I read the response to the Future Hospital panel's comments earlier in that the Government does not trust the other Members of the Assembly enough to even share the information with us confidentially. I think that that adds to the risk of the programme and it adds, potentially, to the risk when the Government comes back later in the year to request some more funding, that, potentially, the rest of the Assembly may feel uncomfortable with the amount of money needing to be spent. The hospital has to be one of our priorities. We cannot end up in the situation that previous Assemblies have found themselves in. We cannot end up in a situation where we have yet again failed to provide the hospital facilities that our community so deserves. Another key area - and it is an area of relentless focus for the Government - is housing and I was interested to hear Deputy Luce's comments because I also looked at the growth bid for housing. I would like some comfort from the Chief Minister around the level of support and resource that there is available within this Government Plan for housing policy and housing strategy. Because looking at the figures within the plan and looking at the growth bids, it looks like there may well be more funding available for the economic development strategies that were discussed yesterday than there is for housing policy development and strategy. While I commend the Economic Development team for gaining the money and securing the resources for those important strategies, I do think that we also need to prioritise housing policy so that the Government is able to bring forward action that we so sorely need in this Island around affordable housing. Another question that I have is around how the value-for-money targets will come about. The Minister for Treasury and Resources seems very, very confident that departments will be able to

make these targets, although I have as yet to see a definition or an agreed definition around the value-for-money programme. Again, I would like the Chief Minister in her summing up to address exactly what methods will be used to shore up these particular savings because that is not clear. Further to some comments yesterday, I think you told me when we were discussing the amendment of the Economic and International Development Panel, it is not always clear what the business planning and budgeting process is to other States Members. In fact we get very little information around what comes under the Heads of Expenditure within a Government Plan. When we are looking to make amendments or looking to get some assurance that the services that we hold dear and the services that we want to make sure are well provided for, we do not get that clarity within the current Heads of Expenditure. Sorry, I am having trouble reading my writing now, I should have taken lessons from Deputy Ward. The other thing that has been a bit of a common theme this week is comments from Ministers when they talk about wealthy people leaving the Island if they are asked to pay just a little bit more tax. I would like to think that the leaders of our Island had a bit more faith in our Island than that. I think our Island is a good place to live and the reasons why we may wish to address that tax equality issue is so that we can continue to provide the services that we need for our whole community. It really does sadden me when we have heard this week in several debates our Island's leaders saying that they feel that they have so little faith in our Island as a place to live that people will choose to leave if they have to pay a little bit more tax and, let us face it, these are wealthy people. I just wanted to put that on record. The other thing that I did want to put on record as part of this debate was my concern around Ministers' preparation around amendments to this Government Plan. We saw earlier today that the Minister for Social Security had completely misunderstood what an amendment meant. That Minister was an Assistant Minister for Treasury, so does that mean that the Treasury team had not got together around a table and discussed an amendment to the Government Plan that had an impact on their departments? Did it mean that the Council of Ministers had not got round a table and understood an amendment and discussed as to whether they were going to support that amendment or not? I found that very disappointing. While I am happy that my amendment was accepted, I am in the same position as Deputy Mézec in that if the proposition is taken not in parts and as a whole, I will be in a position where I will be voting against it.

1.9.9 Deputy J. Renouf:

Very briefly, I did want to respond to Deputy Luce and thank him for his comments regarding long-term planning and particularly as it relates to my portfolio, the climate emergency long-term funding, for example. As people have pointed out, we did indeed lose the fuel duty rise this year to respond to the cost-of-living crisis. These things are balances. It was the right decision in the circumstances. But the need to incentivise and move away from carbon-based fuels remains, not just to reduce emissions but also to improve air quality and by improving active travel infrastructure and to also improve public health.

[16:15]

As has been remarked, I think it is a subject to which we will return. As far as the water strategy is concerned, I do regret that we were not able to gain funding this year for it but it does not mean that nothing is going to happen. There are lots of no regrets actions that we can take as part of work that we already do to start advancing work in that area and indeed with Jersey Water, who have work to do to work out what options they have to put more detail on those options and that that can progress anyway. For the record, my very strong preference in terms of the potential for new water resource in the Island is to start treating our wastewater and put it back into our reservoirs, which, I think, that wastewater, effectively, constitutes a new reservoir but of a different form. There is one further point. Accusations have been made of a shortage of new ideas. As we used to say in television, there are no truly new ideas but there are new versions of ideas. There are ideas that get turned into action and there are ideas that map out a better future for the Island. In this context I would draw attention to the wind farm as a proposal that is not referenced particularly in the Government Plan debates that

we have had but absolutely represents ambition for the future, responding through the future economy programme to a need for us to show new economic growth in the Island, to find new sources of economic growth in the Island, to find imaginative new ways of developing the Island's economy, which will give hope, I believe, for the future and for young people in the Island. I do think that we should look at this Government's programme in the round and see that there are good ideas out there, even if they have to be rather grudgingly admitted perhaps sometimes.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much, Deputy. Does any other Member wish to speak on the Government Plan? If no other Member wishes to speak, I close the debate and call upon the Chief Minister to respond.

1.9.10 Deputy K.L. Moore:

This is the second Government Plan of this Assembly and I say of this Assembly because although it is brought by the Government and the Executive, it is an effort of every Member of this Assembly to consider it, to scrutinise it, to read, to learn, understand, challenge, bring amendments, discuss, compromise and come to this end point where after 4 long days in the Chamber we have finalised all of those formal discussions and we are able to vote on this Government Plan. I thank all Members of the Assembly, all officials, both in the Executive, in Scrutiny and in the Greffe, who have worked on bringing us to this point. We are all, as we are in our own community at large, parts of the machine and without those parts the machine does not work. We are all extremely grateful to everyone for their efforts. The Constable of St. Martin referred to the fact that this may be a document but it is not just about numbers on a page. The Constable is quite right, the pages turn into actions. What we have learned in our first 18 months in office is that delivery is difficult. The greatest way to achieve the most is by focusing and by considering very carefully where the greatest impact can be delivered and how that can be achieved. Because we all have a huge list of things that we would like to do but long lists then very rarely are delivered in their entirety. Our ambition is great but the need in this particular Government Plan has been to focus, to provide some stability, to start to correct the wrongs of the legacy that we have encountered, to stabilise our budgets and put us on a strong footing so that we can now move forward with our ambitious plans for the Island. As Deputy Renouf just mentioned with our wind farm opportunity, with our future economy programme, which is the Government's answer to preparing for the demographic challenges that we see ahead of us, by focusing on our desire for economic growth, along with greater productivity, which we see as the way forward for our Island to maintain its successful position, to be able to improve living standards, which we have all acknowledged in debates this week have fallen behind since 2008. It is time now to start rebuilding but to do that we do have to focus, we have to grow our economy, we have to be more productive, we have to deliver a more efficient public service that we can focus on the critical aspects of that; the health, the education and the safety aspects. We have all seen in the past year how incredibly our public services respond to crises. I do not often like to say that I am proud but I am proud of every single person who has stepped up and responded to the various challenges that we have experienced. It is often said and it is a wonderful thing that in Jersey not a lot happens. But this year we have found that a lot has happened. I think that we have demonstrated in our responses how very well-trained the people who work in our public services are, how able they are to respond to the challenges that we have faced and how our community has come together to support each other, to protect each other and with that strength we are now able to look forward. One of the values of our public service is that we are always improving. We have heard the comments, the criticisms and the feedback of Members throughout this week. We take those on board. We listen and we commit to living our value, continuing to improve as we move forward. But we are grateful to Members for their contributions to this Government Plan. As I say, this is an opportunity to stabilise; some may call it boring but we call it investing for now but also for our future. Because if we invest now in correcting our ship, responding to the economic challenges that we find, increasing the amount of money in people's pockets so that they can meet the cost-of-living challenges and that is

what we have done in this Government Plan. Deputy Mézec suggested that we had done nothing for people who do not pay tax because of course those taxpayers who benefit from personal allowances have seen a considerable increase in the changes that we have made through this Government Plan. Please, Deputy, do not also forget that the Minister for Social Security has brought forward increases to the social security benefits. We have for all Islanders helped to put more money in their pockets to help them through these difficult times, and that of course is what we all wish to do. But we also have to deliver and we have a considerable number of items to deliver as a result of this Government Plan. We can progress with our hospital project, which we are absolutely determined to deliver, one that will be appropriate and affordable for the Island. It will have more beds than the previous project. It will improve outcomes for Islanders no doubt but it will be the right solution for our times and our needs. We look forward to delivering upon it. We also have opportunities to improve the public realm, to improve the environment of St. Helier, which is a commitment in our manifesto and it has been well documented in the last 18 months that we will develop the Coronation Greenway through St. Helier, improving the sustainable travel opportunities for those who reside and work and visit St. Helier. It is part of a programme, including we anticipate improvements to Fort Regent finally, something that has for many years been a point of frustration for Islanders. With working with Ports of Jersey hope to see change at La Folie in the coming months and I look forward to that greatly. We have much to deliver and delivery is the focus of this Government. Through our economic strategy, through our financial recovery plan, getting our health spending back under control, finding a way forward to invest where it is needed but containing our costs when it is needed. We will continue in this vein and, with the Assembly's permission, I hope we will progress into the next year where we can build upon the items that we have delivered and we will look forward to delivering yet more and strengthening our Island resources, our Island infrastructure and the well-being of Islanders for now and into the future. Sir, I move the proposition and ask for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sir, it was raised in my speech the prospect of whether any of this could be taken in separate parts.

The Bailiff:

It is a matter for you, Chief Minister, entirely.

Deputy K.L. Moore:

I would like to propose the proposition in its entirety.

The Bailiff:

Very well. The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is on the proposed Government Plan as amended. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The Government Plan has been adopted: 33 votes pour, 13 votes contre, no abstentions.

Pour: 33	Contre: 13	Abstain: 0
Connétable of St. Helier	Deputy G.P. Southern	
Connétable of St. Brelade	Deputy M. Tadier	
Connétable of Trinity	Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat	
Connétable of St. Peter	Deputy R.J. Ward	
Connétable of St. Martin	Deputy C.S. Alves	

Connétable of St. Clement	Deputy L.J. Farnham		
Connétable of Grouville	Deputy S.Y. Mézec		
Connétable of St. Ouen	Deputy T.A. Coles		
Connétable of St. Mary	Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		
Connétable of St. Saviour	Deputy C.D. Curtis		
Deputy C.F. Labey	Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Deputy S.G. Luce	Deputy R.S. Kovacs		
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy K.F. Morel			
Deputy S.M. Ahier			
Deputy I. Gardiner (H)			
Deputy I.J. Gorst			
Deputy K.L. Moore			
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache			
Deputy D.J. Warr			
Deputy H.M. Miles			
Deputy M.R. Scott			
Deputy J. Renouf			
Deputy R.E. Binet			
Deputy H.L. Jeune			
Deputy M.E. Millar			
Deputy A. Howell			
Deputy T.J.A. Binet			
Deputy M.R. Ferey			
Deputy A.F. Curtis			
Deputy B. Ward			
Deputy K.M. Wilson			
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson			

[Approbation]

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Those Members voting contre: Deputies Southern, Tadier, Le Hegarat, Rob Ward, Alves, Farnham, Mézec, Coles, Porée, Catherine Curtis, Feltham, Kovacs and Andrews.

2. Draft Finance (2024 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.91/2023)

The Bailiff:

The next item of public business is the Draft Finance (2024 Budget) (Jersey) Law, P.91, lodged by the Minister for Treasury and Resources. For the purposes of the debate the main responder is the chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel and I ask the Greffier to read the citation.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Draft Finance (2024 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202-. A law to set the standard rate of income tax for 2024 and to implement parts of the Government Plan 2024-2027 by amending the Income Tax (Jersey) Law 1961, the Customs and Excise (Jersey) Law 1999, the Goods and Services Tax (Jersey) Law 2007, the Stamp Duties and Fees (Jersey) Law 1998, the Taxation (Land Transactions) (Jersey) Law 2009, the Taxation (Enveloped Property Transactions) (Jersey) Law 2022 and to make consequential amendments. The States, subject to the sanction of His Most Excellent Majesty in Council, have adopted the following law.

2.1 Deputy I.J. Gorst (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

This gives effect to the decisions that need any change in the Finance Law to the decisions that we have just made in the Government Plan. I propose the principles of those changes in the Finance Law.

The Bailiff:

Are the principles seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on the principles? Those in favour of adopting the principles, kindly show. Those against? The principles are adopted. There are a number of amendments, Minister, brought about as a result of the amendments made. Are you proposing the Articles as amended in Second Reading?

2.2 Deputy I.J. Gorst:

There is one Article which I am not proposing. I propose Articles 1 to 44 as amended as an amendment to Article 25, giving effect to Deputy Coles' amendment.

[16:30]

There is an amendment to Article 37 which deals with the fuel duty and then the alcohol duty amendments are amendments to Articles 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35. I propose 1 to 44 as amended.

The Bailiff:

You propose Articles 1 to 44 as amended. Are those seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on Articles 1 to 44? Those in favour of adopting Articles 1 to 44, kindly show. Those against? They are adopted.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Now I propose Articles 46 to 59.

The Bailiff:

You are not proposing Article 45?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

That is correct, Sir. The Government made an amendment to the Government Plan about net zero duties on planes and that needs to be dealt with in the round.

The Bailiff:

I beg your pardon, 46 to 59, is it?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

That is correct, Sir, yes, indeed.

The Bailiff:

Are Articles 46 to 59 seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on Articles 46 to 59? Those in favour of adopting those Articles, kindly show. Those against? Do you propose in Third Reading, Minister?

2.3 Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I do, Sir, and as I do so I would like to echo the words of Deputy Tadier and the Chief Minister in thanking all of my officials and the officials across Government who have put in a tremendous amount of work to deliver the Government Plan. I am extremely grateful for their support and without their support we would not be able to have these debates in such an informed and orderly fashion. I am grateful for them. **[Approbation]** I propose the changes to the Finance Law in Third Reading.

The Bailiff:

Are they seconded for Third Reading? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak in Third Reading? Do you call for the appel?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

If I may, Sir, thank you.

The Bailiff:

The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. The vote is the Draft Finance (2024 Budget) (Jersey) Law as amended in Third Reading. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, then I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The law has been adopted in Third Reading: 45 votes pour, no votes contre and no abstentions.

Pour: 45	Contre: 0	Abstain: 0
Connétable of St. Helier		
Connétable of St. Brelade		
Connétable of Trinity		
Connétable of St. Peter		
Connétable of St. Martin		
Connétable of St. Clement		
Connétable of Grouville		
Connétable of St. Ouen		
Connétable of St. Mary		
Connétable of St. Saviour		
Deputy G.P. Southern		
Deputy C.F. Labey		
Deputy M. Tadier		
Deputy S.G. Luce		
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		

Deputy K.F. Morel			
Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat			
Deputy S.M. Ahier			
Deputy R.J. Ward			
Deputy C.S. Alves			
Deputy I. Gardiner (H)			
Deputy I.J. Gorst			
Deputy L.J. Farnham			
Deputy K.L. Moore			
Deputy S.Y. Mézec			
Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache			
Deputy T.A. Coles			
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée			
Deputy D.J. Warr			
Deputy H.M. Miles			
Deputy M.R. Scott			
Deputy J. Renouf			
Deputy C.D. Curtis			
Deputy L.V. Feltham			
Deputy H.L. Jeune			
Deputy M.E. Millar			
Deputy A. Howell			
Deputy T.J.A. Binet			
Deputy M.R. Ferey			
Deputy R.S. Kovacs			
Deputy A.F. Curtis			
Deputy B. Ward			
Deputy K.M. Wilson			
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson			
Deputy M.B. Andrews			

3. Draft Finance (2024 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202- (P.91/2023): Acte Opérateur

The Bailiff:

Very well. Do you move the Acte Opérateur?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Indeed, Sir. I am not sure if it needs to be read or ...

The Bailiff:

Yes, I beg your pardon. I will ask the Greffier to read the citation. Getting ahead of ourselves a little or I am.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Draft Act declaring that the Finance (2024 Budget) (Jersey) Law 202- has immediate effect. The States make this Act under Article 12 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law 2019.

3.1 Deputy I.J. Gorst (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

As Members will know, this has the effect of bringing these items into effect in a timely manner, rather than having to go through the normal Privy Council procedure.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. Is the Act seconded? [**Seconded**] Does any Member wish to speak on the Act? All those in favour of adopting the Act, kindly show. Those against? The Act is adopted. I had to check with the Greffier we had finished everything else because I could not quite believe it. [**Laughter**]

ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Bailiff:

But I think we now move on to the arrangements for future business. The chair of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee).

4. The Connétable of St. Martin (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):

I have been advised that Deputy Scott's proposition, P.75, has been deferred to the February meeting and 2 propositions have been lodged today by Deputies Ferey and Andrews. Both propositions will be listed for debate on 16th January. These propositions, along with P.90, P.92, P.95, P.97, P.98, P.99, P.100 and P.101, are all listed. Therefore, at the moment 10 propositions are listed for debate on Tuesday, 16th January. I would ask Members to keep subsequent days free to be able to meet if necessary. This is the last arrangement of business for 2023 and I wish all Members and all associated with the Assembly a happy, peaceful and productive Christmas and new year. I make the proposition.

The Bailiff:

Do Members agree to arrangement of future business, as proposed by the chair of P.P.C.? Very well.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

5.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

It has been a difficult year for our Island community, beginning as it did with the tragic events of last December, the first anniversaries of which we have recently marked in a moving memorial service in the Town Church. While our lives here in Jersey are fortunate in all sorts of ways, we are not immune to the difficulties caused by extremes of weather due to climate change, with serious flooding and the more recent hurricane causing a great deal of destruction of property and disruption of people's lives, while dozens of Islanders were forced into emergency accommodation. As always, our professional and voluntary teams rose magnificently to these occasions, while individuals have responded with concern and generosity to the challenges caused by extremes of wind and rain, including the loss of so many of the Island's trees. Quite apart from the difficulties we experienced as an Island community, few of us can have been unaffected by the terrible suffering endured around the world, both as a result of natural disasters and of human agency. Most distressing of all the plight of innocent people in the world's war zones, in particular in the Israel/Palestine conflict and in Ukraine. At a time when it is traditional to remember the massacre of the innocents, one of the harsh realities underpinning the Christmas story, our hearts go out at this time to the children who are

suffering now in wars around the world. **[Approbation]** On a much happier note, the community has come together this year to celebrate the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and the Queen, followed by the now customary events marking Liberation Day. The combined festivities were extremely well-devised and managed to the delight of Islanders, as well as showing off our Island home to the many visitors, including visiting dignitaries who joined us. The Constables are grateful to all the volunteers who worked to make the celebrations around the Parishes so successful. **[Approbation]** Especially to the Honorary Police forces whose year-round commitment to their Parishes is incalculable. On behalf of the Constables, I wish you and your family a very happy Christmas and a peaceful new year. We extend our greetings to the Deputy Bailiff and his family, the Greffier and her team, everyone in fact who has presided over the States Assembly this year with such obvious interest, enjoyment and I should add patience. We hope that our Lieutenant Governor and Dr. Kyd have enjoyed their first full year in the Island and wish them a well-earned festive break from their many official duties. We wish the Deputies and their families a relaxing Christmas and new year and the Dean and his family, the Attorney General and Solicitor General and their families, the Judicial Greffe and the Jurats, the ushers and Jan, the Scrutiny officers and everyone else who worked so hard to facilitate the workings of this legislature, not forgetting the Island's media. We send our best wishes to the staff of the Parish Halls who do so much to support the vital work of the parishes, not forgetting our hard-working and supportive partners. In saying this, I am mindful of the fact that some of our number have been bereaved recently and we want them to know that all of us in the Assembly are most sympathetic for their loss. **[Approbation]** The Constables work closely with the emergency services and we wish their officers a very happy Christmas and a restful new year with their families. We acknowledge the vital contribution of everyone who works in health and social care, especially those who will be working in the hospital, the Island's care homes, community centres and Jersey Hospice while we are sitting down in front of a turkey on Monday week. Finally, in a departure from tradition, I hope the Assembly will join me in wishing the compliments of the season to the Members of the States of Deliberation in Guernsey and in hoping that the 2 Bailiwicks of the Channel Islands will be able to work more closely in future. **[Approbation]**

5.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Thank you, Sir, at least I think it is thank you. This is at least one speech where I have the last word **[Laughter]** even though your ...

The Bailiff:

No, you do not. **[Laughter]**

Deputy G.P. Southern:

Even though your words are neutrality itself. My fellow Deputies and Connétables, after 4 days, arduous days, while debating the Government Plan I will try and be brief, which you might feel is worthwhile and I will try and keep the politics out of it. I do not know if I will succeed but we will try. I speak to you as Jersey has weathered one of the worst storms for many years. Fortunately, with no loss of life, thanks to our weather forecasters, our blue light workers and infrastructure workers. **[Approbation]** Currently the army of roofers who are now getting on with repairing our houses. Our glorious autumn weather seems long behind us and we are suffering continued stormy weather, which, as a regular cyclist, I feel it affects me more than many, an example perhaps of those who contribute least to climate change are the ones who most suffer its effects. **[Approbation]** Nevertheless, Jersey seems to me to be a little haven of peace in a troubled world. We have not suffered from the fires, floods and earthquakes that have brought terrible loss of life in other parts of the world. Our problems are nothing compared to the horrendous scenes from Gaza and from Israel that have tended to make us overlook the continued suffering of those in Ukraine, with no end in sight to the war against Putin's Russia. We can do little to alleviate suffering on such a grand scale.

What we can do is work together to make Jersey a greener and happier place for all those who live here. As last year I turn again to Christmases depicted in literature, in particular the opening of *Little Women* and I am reminding them of this that my wife says: “If there had been 3 wise women they would not have got there late to the birth of Jesus because when they get lost they would ask directions.” **[Laughter]** The opening of *Little Women*, set at the time of the American Civil War and the words were: “Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents”, so complains Jo. Yet the girls stoically accept their fate and then willingly sacrifice their Christmas dinner for an even poorer family, an example of kindness and care for others that sets an example for us all to follow. This is the time of year when we do think of others less fortunate than ourselves and I am mindful of the way that many are suffering from rising cost of living and without a commensurate rise in pay. We are even further away from not needing food banks than we were a year ago. The problems of this small Island should be manageable and solvable. No Islander should be cold and hungry this Christmas. **[Approbation]** This is where we must start. But this year has taught us that we should think globally, though what we can do to bring peace, alleviate poverty and halt climate change is a drop in the ocean. But I remind Members that the ocean is made up of lots of drops.

[16:45]

We are a rich Island and particularly we should set an example for others to follow. Maybe we should use our cars less, take fewer long-distance flights or reduce our consumptions, such as the consumption of single-use plastic. Let us this year in particular give careful consideration to our new year’s resolutions and perhaps make them mean something more permanent. With that, it is seasons’ greetings to His Excellency and Dr. Kyd, the Bailiff, the Deputy Bailiff, the Greffier of the States, the Deputy Greffier and Assistant Greffiers, the Dean, the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, the Viscounts and their staff, the ushers and all of the States staff behind the scenes who have enabled States meetings to operate and we wish Jan, in particular, seasons’ greetings. **[Approbation]** In particular, because I am so proud of the things that they do, my focus turns to Scrutiny officers who help and in fact do such a wonderful job enabling us to work at Scrutiny. Seasons’ greetings, happy Christmas one and all. **[Approbation]**

5.3 The Bailiff:

Connétable, Deputy Southern, thank you for your kind words and the expressions of collective good wishes on behalf of the Assembly. I am very happy indeed to have this traditional opportunity to reciprocate them. The difficulty with being the third speaker is that pretty well everything that one might have wanted to say has already been said. Even so - and I know from experience - the liberal view the Assembly takes to the Standing Order against repetition, I may wish to make the odd observation that has already been made. Firstly, I can echo with a full heart the statement of the Chief Minister, the Connétable of St. Helier and Deputy Southern when you state with pride, the pride we can have in our emergency and blue light services and first responders and those who have shown themselves once again in the preceding 12 months or on more than one occasion to be quite magnificent in their support of Islanders in need. We are entirely entitled to be proud of them without any embarrassment at all. We can also be proud of our ability to celebrate and do joyful things, as the Connétable has said, Liberation Day, the Coronation, things around and about that. We are an Island that when we put our mind to it or when we need it live our experience fully, whether it is in adversity or whether it is in joy and celebration; we respond as it is right to do. I am not going to speak for too long. It has been an arduous week and all Members will be justifiably tired and looking forward to a break. The Assembly has worked extremely hard, particularly over the last few days. It is true that a greater familiarity with Standing Orders might have eased the burden a little bit but, by and large, if I may say so, the debates in the Assembly, including the arduous one over the last 2 days, have been enthusiastic and that is a good thing and, with some small exceptions, good-humoured and that is important as well. In reflecting on the business of the Assembly of course it would be wrong not to say that both I and all Members have relied on the Greffier and her team. We

rely on them for their commitment and dedication and I would like to pay tribute to the enormous contribution to the work of the Assembly made by the Greffier, the Deputy Greffier and all of the team at the States Greffe. **[Approbation]** But perhaps I am particularly aware of their contribution because of the amount of assistance I get personally on a regular basis and I am grateful for the level of support and guidance that I receive in the day-to-day functioning of this part of my office. I also would like to mention the ushers, who sit and occasionally pass notes and do the things which are necessary and of course also Jan, who has been mentioned already, they work in the background but they provide invaluable and important support and in small ways and sometimes in big ways make our lives easier and more enjoyable in this building. **[Approbation]** It is traditional at this time of year to mention some statistics. The contribution to the Christmas Charity Appeal through fines has been £100, which is a good thing. The Assembly has met on 33 days in the year, 101 propositions have been lodged, 91 propositions have been debated and they break down as follows: 10 laws, 23 sets of regulations, 6 legislative Acts, 7 appointments, one vote of censure, one vote of no confidence, 5 propositions of government policy, 3 amendments to Standing Orders, 35 independent Members' propositions, one in-committee debate and a partridge in a pear tree. **[Laughter]** They are very interesting statistics and it is interesting perhaps to compare to those of previous years. It is also traditional at this time of the year to talk about new year resolutions and one of mine - and I will have many and I need many - will be to apply Standing Orders with more rigour in the year to come. If one of the new year resolutions of Members could be to read Standing Orders, then that could meet a very happy synergy. But whether you approach this time of year from the point of view of the traditional Christmas story with all the optimism, with all light and the new promise that it brings or simply from the natural human experience of the winter solstice, which itself signalled the beginning of an increased light in the world in a physical sense, this is a time for all of us where we can go still. We can pause and we can reflect and anticipate what is to come. We hold in mind, I hope, those who are less fortunate than ourselves throughout the world and indeed in this Island and they have of course been mentioned and I will not repeat that. But also we keep in mind those among us, among our number, who have suffered bereavement and who, together with others, are facing this time, which should be one of happiness, with sadness and with grief and we hold them very much in our thoughts. But, in any event, whatever your views or whatever your philosophies it is time now, as I have said, to pause and for everyone to take an extremely well-earned rest. No matter what Christmas may mean for each of us I would like for myself and the Deputy Bailiff and on behalf of His Excellency and the Crown officers and for the Dean and the Greffier, the Viscount, the chief officer and all members of their respective teams to thank all Members for your kindness and support and to wish you and your respective families a peaceful and happy Christmas break and an optimism for a joyful 2024. Thank you. **[Approbation]** Is the adjournment proposed? Very well. The Assembly stands adjourned until sometime in 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

[16:53]