

#### **4. Questions to Ministers without notice – Chief Minister**

##### **The Bailiff:**

That completes the first question period. We now come to the second question period, and I invite questions of the Chief Minister.

##### **4.1 Senator J.L. Perchard (of the Chief Minister):**

Is the Chief Minister satisfied with the efforts made of late by the Minister of Transport and Technical Services to find an alternative site to that of La Collette for the composting of green waste?

##### **Senator F.H. Walker (Chief Minister):**

Yes. [Laughter].

##### **4.2 Senator J.L. Perchard:**

Does the Chief Minister have a personal view with regards to the proposal to locate a large composting facility at La Collette? If so, would he share it with Members?

##### **Senator F.H. Walker:**

The Chief Minister is in the position, I think, of most other Members, and as the Minister for Transport and Technical Services announced last week, awaiting further work on the issue. I have no problem with a large composting site at La Collette providing it is enclosed as planned and providing it conforms to latest modern standards. But if there are better solutions, then clearly these have to be taken on board.

##### **4.3 Deputy S. Pitman:**

Prominent political figures, including the Chief Minister himself, I believe, have claimed that ministerial government would be more democratic than committee government. A symbol of democracy is the enabling of the people to vote for its leader. Does the chief agree that the people of this Island should be able to vote for their Chief Minister and will he support any moves towards working towards a more democratic government in this way?

##### **Senator F.H. Walker:**

No, and no.

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

If one of the Ministers were censured by the States Assembly, would the Chief Minister expect him to resign?

##### **Senator F.H. Walker:**

I think that would depend on the circumstances, but in all probability, yes.

##### **4.5 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren of St. Saviour:**

Does the Chief Minister agree that the continuing inequity in residency rules for entitled persons, licensed J category employees and registered employees will only continue the present social inequality and division within our community?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

No, Sir, I do not. I believe that the policies adopted by this House in the Migration Strategy last year will assist in that respect. Having said that, it is not the total answer; there is no doubt about that. I believe it is a step forward, but we do need to give and we are giving greater consideration to divisions in the community. The Council of Ministers have set up a very high-level social policy strategy group, and one of its main aims is to address divisions in our society. We take it as a major priority.

**4.6 Senator L. Norman:**

How does the Chief Minister reconcile the promise he made during the introductory comment of Strategic Plan that no new taxes, as already agreed, would be introduced during the life of the plan, with the threat to introduce a new tax on fuel used by leisure craft?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

I said that there would be no new taxes introduced other than in the fiscal strategy. The fiscal strategy very clearly talked about environmental taxes. However, having said that, when it comes to taxes on marine fuel, I am conflicted and therefore cannot take the debate on that any further.

**4.7 Senator L. Norman:**

As the Minister is concerned about the environmental taxes, could he say why aircraft fuel has not been included in the consultation exercise?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

There are good reasons why aircraft fuel is not included in the consultation exercise. This is an argument that has some way to run, and the House heard earlier from the Economic Development Minister in this context. So I do believe it would be wrong of me to comment further on this particular aspect.

**4.8 The Deputy of St. John:**

Can I ask the Chief Minister if he is aware of the national press coverage at the weekend given to continued concerns expressed by business groups about the draconian Extradition Act? Furthermore, has the Minister yet received a response from the Attorney General to my question posed some 5 weeks ago asking whether Jersey will consider review of the current extradition laws?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

Yes, Sir, I have, and I owe the Deputy an apology. I could and should have got the answer from the Attorney General to him before now, but I do undertake to do so within the next couple of days.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

If the Minister would like to see the press articles, I have them.

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

There is continuing frustration by the group who have stamped in their passport an inability to live or work in the European Union (EU). While, in some people's eyes, this is a diminishing group, they feel very sore about this. Has the Minister taken any sounding with the British Government or the European Union to see, short of unscrambling Protocol 3, to see whether a greater sense of justice can be brought into this particular situation?

#### **Senator F.H. Walker:**

No, I have not and I am very reluctant to do so. In reality, we have debated this matter or certainly discussed in question time this matter on the floor of the House before. In reality, it is more a problem of perception than a problem of reality in terms of whether or not people subject to that statement in their passport can work in the European Union. I believe Members are well aware of a number of people who have done that or are doing that and the problem is not so great. Given all the other major issues that we are constantly discussing and negotiating with the UK Government and the EU, I do not believe, frankly, that this is a sufficiently important issue to raise at this time.

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

Is the Minister suggesting that when people present their documents that somehow, by a slight of hand, they do not have to admit their actual status within a country such as France? Is that what he is suggesting?

#### **Senator F.H. Walker:**

I am suggesting nothing of the sort. I am merely suggesting that Jersey people who have that statement in their passport have successfully and are continuing to successfully work in the European Union. Therefore, the disadvantage to them is more perception than reality.

#### **4.11 The Connétable of St. Helier:**

Would the Chief Minister join with me in commending the Minister of Home Affairs for the proactive and professional way in which the police dealt with the disturbances on Saturday after the World Cup game? Would he further agree with me that the Honorary Police also performed a major role? Finally, would he agree with me that the actions of a small minority of individuals (not just young people because we know that older people were involved) should be deplored by this House and all steps possible should be taken to bring them to justice?

#### **Senator F.H. Walker:**

I could not agree more with all those statements. I think I have made my views clear through the media to the public about the behaviour of the limited number of people and expressed the view that if found guilty, the courts will deal with them very severely. I maintain that position. I do absolutely applaud, I think, the excellent work done by both the States Police and the Honorary Police in preventing what could have been a very much nastier situation. I have, in fact, already conveyed my thanks and congratulations to Chief Inspector Sean Duval and to the Home Affairs Minister [Approbation].

#### **4.12 Deputy S. Power:**

The Chief Minister may remember that I have expressed concerns about the future loss of the Esplanade car park. It is an 875-unit car park and it has major ramifications for the 5 western

parishes. Can the Chief Minister show the Assembly that he will work with the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and the Minister for Planning to find a similar replacement capacity car park and keep the Assembly informed as the project evolves?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

This is very much within the remit of both the Planning Minister and the Transport and Technical Services Minister who, I am sure, will keep the Deputy and the House fully advised. Of course, there is every intention to provide alternative parking to that lost during and following the development of the Esplanade car park. I have no doubt that Members will be kept well-informed.

#### **4.13 The Deputy of Grouville:**

It was to take up on Deputy Le Hérisier's question about the discrimination against Jersey people with the stamp in our passports. I am one of those people who have the stamp in my passport and I have never had any problem with it, I have to say. I would like Protocol 3 and the Chief Minister's Department to look at Protocol 3 to turn that on its head to see if we could use the stamp in our passport, the discrimination against Jersey people, to set up some form of border controls for undesirables.

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

No. Interesting suggestion though it is, I do not believe that that is workable at all. As for seeking to renegotiate Protocol 3, I would caution against any such move, certainly at this juncture. Protocol 3 carries quite a significant number of advantages to Jersey as well as some disadvantages. Of course, if we seek to negotiate the entire protocol, we may well lose the advantages at the same time as we might gain on one or 2 other areas. I think that is something that should be approached with enormous caution.

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

Following figures released by his Housing Minister earlier today, does the Chief Minister accept that with J categories becoming 60 per cent non-time-limited, this will result in between 150 and 160 individuals being given non-time-limited J categories, permission to work and live in Jersey and, with their dependents, this will amount to some 400 people per year coming to the Island with non-time-limited permission to live and work here?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

As the Housing Minister, I think, said, the Deputy clearly fails to understand the situation. The fact is that non-time-limited J category employees will continue and their families will continue to live in the same type of property (J category property), as current J category employees do. The only difference is that we will keep individuals' expertise longer, rather than having to terminate contracts and employ new people every 3 years or every 5 years. It is a real benefit to Jersey. The Deputy's suggestion that it will add to the population is quite wrong.

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

Does the Chief Minister not accept that the granting of non-time-limited J categories makes it more likely that people will stay here for 10 years, gain qualification and ultimately retire here, while fresh J categories have to be imported to do the work, thus increasing the population?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

No, and if that was to happen, it would be in very limited numbers indeed. Again, I say the Deputy's insistence that this policy will lead to considerable increase in numbers is just not correct.

**4.16 Deputy A. Breckon:**

I seek an answer from the Chief Minister about the quality of some information in regard to what statistics the Chief Minister has regarding the age ranges and gender of the working population.

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

The statistics I have about the age ranges and gender of the population are, I think, available and have been made available to all States Members. They surely are part of a recent release from the Statistics Unit.

**4.17 Deputy A. Breckon:**

If that is the case, could the Minister circulate copies because it is, I believe, significant for a number of forward planning issues? If he is able to produce them, then I would be pleased to receive them because so far I have hit a brick wall.

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

I am surprised to hear that but, certainly, I will look at that. I will work on that, and I will provide the Deputy with all the information that is available.

**4.18 Senator J.L. Perchard:**

I am delighted to come back towards the end. The Chief Minister seems a little more chatty now **[Laughter]**. Will the Chief Minister agree to undertake a study to examine the benefits and disadvantages of Jersey moving to central European time and to produce a report for public consultation that includes comments from each of his Ministers on the effect such a move may have on their departmental activities and responsibilities?

**Senator F.H. Walker:**

Yes. **[Laughter]**.