

7.6 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the current available capacity at First Tower, Bel Royal and Les Quennevais schools:

In June the Minister advised Members that First Tower, Bel Royal, Les Quennevais schools would not be able to cope with the expected demand for places if development permission was approved for the then current application on Fields 848, 851, *et cetera*. Will the Minister state whether the capacity at those schools has increased and advise the current availability?

Senator M.E. Vibert (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

As will be expected, the situation is very similar to the answer I gave to a question asked by the Deputy in June. In terms of current availability, while the total number of pupils in Bel Royal School is currently just over its planned maximum there are 14 places available in specific year groups. That is an increase of 8 available spaces in specific year groups from June. First Tower School: there is space for a further 25 children. It was 27 in June so that is a decrease of 2 spaces. At Les Quennevais they currently have a roll in excess of its planned capacity but there are spaces for 7 children in specific year groups only. It was 6 in June, Sir, that is an increase of one.

7.6.1 Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Supplementary, Sir. Thank you. In view of the acknowledged high density of development in the west of the Island - either proposed, recently completed or near completion - what implications does the Minister foresee for the education infrastructure in that part of the Island?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

We at Education have a statutory duty to provide appropriate education for children of statutory school age and we try, wherever possible, to accommodate children in their nearest school, be that primary or secondary. Where there is not a place within the school for those children in the catchment area we try to place children in the nearest school otherwise and give parents a choice of what availability there is. When we provide information to Planning and Environment on a regular basis on the availability of school places, they take this into account when considering planning applications. When there are major housing developments we will adjust, if necessary, catchment areas for the future so as to provide the best possible fit from the schools available and the places available in those schools with the proximity of children in the area.

7.6.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Given that there is a large number of housing developments occurring over the Island and given the answers which the Minister for Education and Sport and Culture has provided, I wonder if he can give Members an idea as to whether or not there will be a projected surplus or deficit of places within schools overall in Jersey in the next few years and whether or not he has indications to that degree at the moment? Because surely from a planning perspective these things must be understood and it would be helpful for Members to realise whether or not we need more schools.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I can assure that at present we have projected a surplus of places in the primary sector because we have had a bulge of children going through the school that are currently in

the secondary school now, and the upper echelons of the secondary school. Unfortunately the availability of places does not always correspond with the children in a catchment area, which is the problem. But our projections on the current birth rate and the latest figures we have is that in the future, unless there is another bulge in the population in years to come, which has not occurred yet, we will have enough spaces within our primary sector and our secondary sector.