

2.10 The Connétable of Grouville of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the publication of the new Energy Policy Report:

I am sorry, the Minister obviously has not finished answering questions yet. **[Laughter]** Would the Minister for Planning and Environment update the Assembly on the publication date for the new *Energy Policy Report*, please?

Senator F.E. Cohen (The Minister for Planning and Environment):

The final data sets for inclusion in this document are being concluded this week and it is the intention to have a final draft version ready for consideration by the Council of Ministers on 12th April. The draft document will take the form of a green paper, that is, a document setting out information options for discussion. Assuming that the draft document is accepted by the Council of Ministers, it will be released for public consultation before the end of April. Following consultation on this green paper, a further report will be produced - a white paper - which will, in the light of the comments received, firm-up on policy options recommended for adoption and for agreement by the States.

2.10.1 The Connétable of Grouville:

Is the Minister aware that Alderney Renewable Energy and the OpenHydro Group are investing several million euros in installing and deploying tidal turbines in the Alderney Race? I believe that the States of Guernsey already have a stake in this business and I would ask the Minister whether, in fact, he thinks that his department are not really taking it seriously enough and we should be up there and also taking a stake in this business. When it does come into operation it is going to produce extremely cheap and extremely reliable electricity. If we wait around too long, we are not going to be part of it.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am aware of the Constable's interest in tidal power and I have been assured repeatedly by my department that the *Energy Policy Green Paper* will include a comprehensive analysis of tidal power so that he will be fully satisfied that all issues relating to tidal power have been examined. I would say at this stage that I have also been advised by my department - and remember, I am not a scientist and not an expert in this area - that tidal power technology is in its relative infancy and that it may not be economically viable to invest in tidal power for Jersey at the present time.

2.10.2 The Connétable of Grouville:

I hear what the Minister says, Sir, but the fact is that very clever people are putting a lot of money into these tidal power stations. **[Interruption]** There is one in Lynmouth, which is already in operation, and another one which is coming on track for the national grid in Strangford Lough in Northern Ireland. So I would like to ask him if he would reassess the situation in his report and start taking this energy source extremely seriously? It may not be viable today, or economic today, but oil prices are not going to drop and tomorrow they may be very cheap indeed. **[Aside]**

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I agree entirely and have great sympathy for the sentiments expressed by the Constable, and I can assure him that tidal power and its potential will be fully examined in the forthcoming energy policy documents. I think it may also be worthwhile the Constable sitting down with the Director of Environment and myself and discussing the issue, because he is better off to hear the science first-hand rather than from me.

2.10.3 Senator S. Syvret:

I was going to ask when we were planning to send the gun boats in to seize Alderney territory but I do not think that comes under the responsibility of the Environment Minister. Could the Minister say whether he or his department has a kind of general view as to what year global oil production will peak?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

In response to the first part of the Minister's question, unfortunately, I do not have a ship available to me any more because the Minister for Economic Development has taken the Fisheries protection vessel away from me. **[Members: Oh!]** As far as... **[Interruption]** a department view on peak oil production, I am afraid I do not have an answer, but there will be a meeting shortly of the Energy Policy Group, including the Minister, and I am sure he can raise that question with the Director of Environment at that time.

2.10.4 Deputy S.C. Ferguson:

I wonder if the Minister could tell us who he has used as his electrical consultant on tidal power, because I am not sure that anyone, with respect, in his department has the background to be able to comment on this.

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I have absolutely no idea, but I will ask the Director of Environment and I will circulate a response as soon as possible. I think the Director of Environment may be away at the moment, so there may be a few days delay.