

2.2 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren of St. Saviour of the Minister for Housing regarding States tenants wishing to buy the properties in which they reside:

Would the Minister agree to send a questionnaire to all States tenants living in the 800 properties which have been identified for sale, in order to ascertain the number of tenants who wish to buy the properties in which they currently reside?

Senator T.J. Le Main (The Minister for Housing):

No, Sir, the question or position does not arise. The property plan does not identify 800 individual properties. It solely promotes the view that up to 800 properties should be purchased by existing tenants, although this figure is now down to 600, as permission has already been given for the 208 properties currently being sold. There are only a few properties that have been identified for sale and these tenants have been advised and are being offered the chance to purchase.

2.2.1 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:

Is the Minister aware that workers from the Housing Department are now starting to measure-up some of the houses for sale and this is now causing further distress and concern? Could he please allay these fears? Thank you.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

My officers have been working with all the residents' associations and tenants' groups and I have not been made aware of any concerns whatsoever. If the Deputy would like to point me in the direction of anybody concerned I am happy to meet with her or any other Member of this Assembly to go and visit personally any people to allay their fears.

2.2.2 Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade:

On a matter of clarification, Sir, may I inform the Housing Minister and the Assembly and the Assistant Housing Minister that the sub-panel that is reviewing the Housing Property Plan is constructing a questionnaire which will be approved by the Statistics Unit and we will be asking the Housing Minister and the Assistant Housing Minister to circulate that on their database to all housing tenants.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

That has been agreed, Sir.

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

Does the Minister not accept that his method of approaching this sale of houses has called distress and concern to many, many tenants?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, Sir, I do not agree with that. In fact, it has raised the hopes of hundreds of people in this Island who are now going to be able to aspire to home ownership. I think that we have a few Members in the Assembly that are trying to be negative all the time but certainly I am aware of one meeting that had been called by 2 Members of this Assembly and nothing has come out of that. So I am unaware that there are any real concerns. I can only say we give categorical assurances that nobody will be disaffected by these plans.

2.2.4 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:

Would the Minister concede that I and other Members of this House are not trying to be negative? I personally support a shared equity scheme but the concern by many Members in the House is purely whether people are still worried. I appreciate there has been lots of reassurance from the

Minister but does he appreciate that there is still concern for many, many States tenants? Thank you.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

If there is concern I am unaware of it because I have said publicly on several occasions, including in the media on several occasions, that if anybody is unsure of the current situation in relation to their homes or tenancies in the Property Plan then I will personally visit, and my Assistant Minister is also to the point of wanting to visit any tenants. We are happy to work with any Members of this Assembly. This is wonderful, great news for Jersey and for the people of Jersey and for home ownership and for tenants. Not only will they have an opportunity to purchase properties but they will also have their homes refurbished to meet modern-day standards. Great news. Anybody concerned still I am happy to meet.

2.2.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister withdraw his proposed lodging of his proposal to enable the Scrutiny Panel concerned to give it adequate time to study his proposals and will he agree to meet the Chairman of that Scrutiny Panel to agree a reasonable way forward in terms of timescale?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The Scrutiny Panel has had the Housing Property Plan since Christmas. We are now into the middle of February and they are still discussing issues on how to go forward. I will be pleading with this Assembly to accept 17th April. We just cannot carry on any longer. We have got serious structural problems on some of our properties and I am assured by Deputy Power that with our co-operation we should be able to achieve the scrutinising of this Property Plan by that time. Although I am going to be leaving early this morning to go to a funeral, I will ask my Assistant Minister to plead with this Assembly that 17th April has given adequate time for a full scrutiny of the Property Plan.

2.2.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Minister meet with the Chair of that Panel to discuss a reasonable way forward instead of trying to bully his way through?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I have met with the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel and his members some time ago and the Scrutiny Chairman and the members know very well that I keep offering all the time to meet with them at any time. In fact, Deputy Power this morning has advised me that he will be contacting me tomorrow again after a meeting and I said I am happy to attend - even tomorrow lunchtime - the meeting that the Scrutiny Panel are holding on this Property Plan. I will make myself available to the Chairman and to members of Scrutiny any time. I want the full support of Scrutiny to be able to go forward with this Plan and I want to work with them. I think they can be hugely beneficial to these proposals, Sir, and I will work with them.