

2.12 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding a programme for dealing with a possible flu pandemic:

When will the Minister be announcing his definitive decision in respect of a programme for dealing with a possible influenza pandemic?

Senator B.E. Shenton (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

Before submitting a request to the States for further funding, I need to satisfy myself that it is a sound use of public funding. I believe that you would have to question the ability of a Minister that does not ask questions and just does what he is asked. I have asked a number of questions and I am still waiting for a reply. I cannot put a definitive date on when the decision will be made.

2.12.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

While I entirely support the Minister's sentiments of questioning what is going on within his department, particularly with such major issues as this, would he not confirm that given this recommendation came from the highest levels in his department that it is fairly pointless to look for further advice within the department?

Senator B.E. Shenton:

I have not had replies to the questions asked which means obviously that the questions have caused further thought. They relate to the safety of the pandemic vaccine, the supply of the vaccine and also the liability that the States may have in carrying out the vaccination process.