

## **2.8 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Central Market opening hours:**

Are there any plans in the near future to extend the opening hours of the Central Market?

### **Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):**

I thank the Deputy for his concise question and in the spirit of being brief and to the point my answer is as follows: no. Thank you, Sir. [Laughter]

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

Given this has been a contentious issue previously, what discussions are taking place away from the public gaze?

### **Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

At the moment, Sir, I would say that Property Holdings has only relatively recently taken over control of the markets and, indeed, I am - on my rather long "to do" list - intending to visit the Market some time during the next few months. I am happy to speak to the leaseholders and the traders, in an official capacity, rather than to purchase something, Sir. I am obviously happy to speak to the leaseholders and see what their views are on extended opening hours, but I think one would very much have to speak to the people operating the businesses in the premises first before we start even considering the matter.

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

Would the Assistant Minister confirm that there is a viable leaseholders' group with whom he is able to negotiate and discuss these issues, and will he be commencing these negotiations or discussions as soon as possible?

### **Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

I am unaware of any particular pressure to amend the opening hours in the markets. My understanding is that there is a group - the leaseholders - who one can deal with as a body and, as I said, unaware of any particular pressures, we will meet with them at some point and discuss matters. I would add, Sir, I know the Deputy is very keen, for example, on the Thursday afternoon closure, but at the moment it does allow cleaning and minor maintenance to be carried out during a working week. If the market was opened on a full opening hour basis that is work that would probably have to be done out-of-hours.

### **2.8.3 Deputy K.C. Lewis:**

I think we are all very well aware, Sir, that all small businesses in Jersey are under tremendous pressure. If all the leaseholders were in agreement that they should open on a Thursday afternoon, I think this would be an excellent idea. Does the Minister not agree?

### **Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

If they were all in agreement, I probably would, Sir. My understanding is that they have been consulted about this from time-to-time. Most recently it was in regard to opening on the Sunday before Christmas last year. The majority so far have preferred to maintain existing arrangements. The other matter, of course, is to do with security. While it is open - the Fish Market - it is possible to barricade off, for example, one end of the market so that the restaurant at the end can be open. In the Central Market it is somewhat more difficult and you basically have to have either everyone open or everyone closed. It is very difficult to have certain stallholders open and certain closed because of the public access that is there, Sir.