

4.15 The Deputy of St. John of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding funding of mains drains and water extensions of the countryside:

Given that over £40 million is to be spent on the economic stimulus package, will the Minister give serious consideration to putting some of this funding into main drains and water extensions into the countryside, particularly into areas where there are currently eroded excavations from Jersey Electricity works such as Les Chenolles in St. John or Sorel?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

As the Deputy, I hope, would know, I have given serious consideration and I am happy to inform him that while I have not been able to apply fiscal stimulus funding for extensions, there are a high number of high priority essential repairs and upgrades for our main sewer network that can meet the test of the 3Ts that have been approved. Over £8 million is being applied for civil infrastructure and a further up to £11 million for maintenance, £2 million specifically for urgent upgrades on the railway walk, St. Peter's Arsenal, Queens Road drains and repairs to the rising main at Rozel. None of these projects would have been funded by the existing capital programme. I know that the Deputy will be disappointed that extensions are not going to be possible but with the limited fiscal stimulus funding available, we have had to make some difficult choices. I would repeat to the Deputy my commitment to work with him and the Minister for T.T.S. so that we can see a reinstatement of the sewer extension programme as soon as possible.

4.15.1 The Deputy of St. John:

Will the Minister give serious consideration to removing the double-whammy or the double-charge where people who live out in the countryside, and have to have their septic tanks emptied, pay twice through their taxes and through the charge where people cannot connect to main drains because this is totally unfair that people who are connected ...

The Bailiff:

Deputy, I am not sure this arises out of your original question which was the fiscal stimulus.

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, it does, Sir. It comes out of the fiscal stimulus because the Minister can quite easily remove the tax or the charge to those people who have not got connection to the main drains and they have to pay twice. They pay through their income tax [Laughter] and they pay on the tanker's sewage charge.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not think the Deputy needs to be reminded of my position on this and, indeed, the position of the Council of Ministers. We want to deal with the Liquid Waste Strategy, we want to put in place foul sewage extensions and we want to put a realistic maintenance and costed maintenance programme for the foul sewer extension. However, we have got to be honest with people and say that, at the moment, without any form of liquid waste charge, it is difficult in order to reach the aspirations that the Deputy wants in terms of extensions. We are going to have an honest debate about the Liquid Waste Strategy and that is going to come to this Assembly in the first

quarter of next year and he, I hope, is going to join a group in developing that strategy.

4.15.2 The Deputy of St. Mary:

I am interested in the Minister's £8 million and £11 million for infrastructure projects and I would like to know from him whether one of the evaluation measures for projects for the fiscal stimulus package is how many jobs you get per £100,000 because these major infrastructure projects sound like not many jobs for a lot of money to me?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am happy to reassure the Deputy. I have been, and the team advising has been extremely tough in relation to this question of local jobs. Every pound of the fiscal stimulus money is designed in order to ensure local jobs for local Islanders over the next few months. Indeed, with the tests that have been put forward and indeed the commitments given by the department sponsoring the work that is going to be carried out, I expect them to deliver that. It is local jobs for this amount of money that is being invested.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I did ask whether one of the evaluation measures was how many jobs per £100,000.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

One of the key criteria is how many people will be kept in work, and I am happy to share with him, and I know that the Corporate Affairs Scrutiny Panel Chairman is announcing a further inquiry to look into the decision tomorrow.

4.15.3 Deputy D.J. De Sousa:

When the Minister has made his final decisions, along with the rest of his colleagues, as to where the stimulus package is going to be spent, will he come back to the House and inform all Members where it is going and how it is being implemented?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

Willingly.

4.15.4 The Deputy of St. John:

Would the Minister be quite happy if people who are not able to connect to mains drains take the approach that the French take and in fact use sewage tankers and dump the sewage on the roads, given that this Island are paying lip service only to those poor people who are paying twice to have their sewage removed?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not think that any Minister should encourage any sort of civil disobedience. What I can say to the Deputy is that I have a table of figures in front of me which sets out the scale of investment that is required to extend our sewage network. It is inevitable in the next months, as we have an honest debate about the comprehensive spending review and we have an honest debate about the level of tax and spending, that some charges for such services may well have to be introduced in the longer term to ensure that we have maintained our infrastructure but also extend it to the parts that the Island needs.