

2.7 Deputy D.J.A. Wimberley of St. Mary of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding the New Scientist articles circulated to all Members recently about a sustainable, ecological economy:

Will the Minister confirm whether he has read the *New Scientist* articles circulated to all Members recently about a sustainable, ecological economy and, if so, will he inform the Assembly what steps, if any, are being taken to ensure that students leaving school have a good understanding of the linked issues of peak oil, climate change and sustainability in general, and are prepared to cope with this changing world?

Deputy J.G. Reed of St. Ouen (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

I can confirm that I have read some of the articles in the 18th October edition of the *New Scientist* published in 2008. I also wish to advise the Assembly that regardless of my personal knowledge in this area, all pupils in our schools study science up to the age of 16 and the G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) science syllabus includes topics surrounding ecological and environmental issues. Students are not only expected to understand the serious issues facing the planet, they are also assessed on their ability to evaluate a range of economic and environmental considerations and solutions. As part of this process, students are asked to explore the issues of sustainable development which involves balancing economic development, maintenance of standard of living and respect for the environment. In addition, over the last couple of years, the Departments of Environment and Education, Sport and Culture in partnership with other organisations and interest groups have specifically focussed on these issues by involving pupils of all primary and secondary schools in Jersey Environment Week. Our young people will be the future guardians of this Island and as such my department aims to do what it can to promote the importance of environmental education within the school curriculum.

2.7.1 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Will the Minister ensure that all views on all sides of the argument relating to the controversial matters are given to the students so that they can have a balanced view of the problems that are faced?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am led to believe that the current curriculum allows that to happen.

2.7.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

In the light of the previous question, does the Minister believe that creationism should be taught in science lessons?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

He will have to explain to me what creationism is, I think.

2.7.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

I also wanted to follow up the previous question to ask the Minister whether he believes that there should be specific awareness taught to our students of the folly of climate change denial.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I think that we deny our students the ability to think for themselves if we suggest that they are in denial.

2.7.4 Senator S. Syvret:

To follow on from the previous supplementary question, will the Minister assure the Assembly that the science curriculum in his schools where it does teach these subjects does use the consensus of scientific opinion, which I know that the Senator does not like, so let us call it by its correct term: the meta-analysis of variance scientific studies. Will he also say what actual direct preparation is being given to students in schools in connection with the impending end of the hydrocarbon economy and lifestyle?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

The second part is rather a detailed question which I am unable to answer. However, I am quite prepared to enter into dialogue with the Senator to ensure that I can provide that information.

2.7.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can the Minister confirm that the classes will be taught the link between rampant economic growth and the damage it causes to our environment both locally and globally? Can he also give an undertaking that they will be taught the real meaning of the word “sustainability”? Perhaps they can come back once they have learnt it to tell us about it.

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Again, I believe that we are already addressing all the issues that the Deputy raises.

2.7.6 The Deputy of St. Mary:

Yes. I welcome the Minister’s apparent commitment to this topic but I am a little bit concerned about the depth of the preparation of, particularly, the teachers in this area. These are, as we have just seen from the various supplementaries, quite complicated areas and I would like to ask the Minister whether any progress is being made with the appointment of specific advisers for global education, both on the development side, as in sustainable development of less developed countries, and also on the environmental side. I would remind him that there was a full job description drawn up 3 years or so ago for an environmental adviser for States education and nothing happened, and so I would welcome his comments on this and ask whether he is committed to those 2 advisers being in place soon?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I am sure I can speak for my department when I say that we are mindful of development, both now and in the past, regarding environmental matters. It is something I am sure that our teachers who are obviously educating our youngsters take into account when encouraging our students to consider environmental matters. I am rather disappointed that the Deputy has chosen to question myself, a relative third party, rather than contact the department and find out for himself how our curriculum is constructed.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Well, I think that merits some kind of rejoinder. I knew from previous experience at the One World Group about this environmental adviser post and it vanished from the radar. I was just asking the Minister whether he thought that we should get on and have advice in this area for teachers.