

4.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Fiscal Stimulus Funding for Fort Regent:

Would the Minister advise whether Fort Regent will receive any monies from the Fiscal Stimulus Fund and, if not, why?

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

I do not think that this is a new answer. Quite simply the Fiscal Stimulus Programme does not include a provision for funding relating to Fort Regent because no bid was received for evaluation.

4.3.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister not concede that there is a process in which he has been involved where, in a sense, he has been seeking submissions for this policy and given that these properties are looked after by his own department, is he not surprised that for places like Fort Regent and Rue des Prés, of which I am still receiving complaints, have not been dealt with?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not think that Rue des Prés has got anything to do with fiscal stimulus, but the Deputy has got it in anyway. That is not the subject of the question. In relation to States property generally, the Deputy is aware that there is, as a result of this Assembly's wise decision for fiscal stimulus, millions of pounds being invested in maintenance, in schools, in other States buildings which is not only benefiting the economy but improving maintenance and catching up with infrastructure. Not everything however is possible.

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

Thank you. Would the Minister take this opportunity to state to the Assembly how much of the £44 million still remains in this Stimulus Fund to be spent this year rather than last?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

That is not an easy question to answer in an oral because most of the ... it would be perhaps appropriate to say what is the amount of the £44 million which has not been allocated? There are a number of green and amber lights which are still on the programme, the programme today is fully committed in terms of the spend and I expect that most of that money is going to be spent in the economy during this year, although there are some programmes, such as Advance to Work at Highlands which will continue into next year. But most of the fund is now committed, although final decisions have got to be made.

4.3.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Is the Minister prepared to update the Assembly with those figures?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am happy to do so. I will send an email later to Members.

4.3.4 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier:

Can the Minister inform the House what quantities of the Stimulus Fund have gone to States departments and what quantities have gone to the private sector?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

The vast majority has gone into keeping people in work. There has been no money, in a sense, that has gone into keeping any States departments occupied with work, save for those departments that have received money in order to, for example, employ more teachers at Highlands in order to run the Advance to Work programme, *et cetera*. The majority of the money, while they have all had sponsoring departments have effectively been then gone out to the private sector and most of the money is going into construction projects, maintenance projects of which the vast majority is going to be seen being injected in the economy over the next few months where we have predicted that there would be a continuing downturn in construction and maintenance and other projects.

4.3.5 Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier:

The Minister mentioned he had no bid for Fort Regent. I know he has bids for other schemes, I wonder if he could give us a progress report for example on the Opera House, the Sea Cadets and any other bids that he is considering at the moment.

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I have to say that the Assistant Minister for Education is quite right, there have been a number of bids from Education, including the projects that he mentioned. There have been already significant sums injected in the Highlands projects. There are outstanding decisions which I am expecting to make quite shortly in relation to a capital project at Beaulieu, support for the glass church which is not large, but also I am hoping within the next few days to finalise an agreement with the Opera House in order to make that decision for the long awaited completion of the Opera House. They have done very well in bringing forward their projects. They have been tenacious in pursuing me for a final decision and I hope to make one within the next few days.

4.3.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

I noted the Minister's words with interest that the money from the fiscal stimulus was being used to keep people in work. I am also interested that the Minister thinks it is the role of government to subsidise businesses to keep people in work and so I would ask will this ethos extend to the public sector?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

The public sector is in work and it is a case of ensuring, during the period of an economic downturn, that those employed by private sector companies that would not have projects and work by the private sector be kept in work by additional money from the States. For example, all of the projects that we are doing in maintenance are keeping people in work that otherwise would not be because of the lack of credit, because of the downturn. I do not think the question is in relation to the issue of the public sector and presumably he is referring again to the public sector pay round, but I do not think that is relevant.

4.3.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

A supplementary. In that case, if it is appropriate to use money from the Consolidated Fund to keep people in work in the private sector who might otherwise be unemployed, when the time comes to make cuts in the public sector will the Minister also seek to dig into that fund to keep people in the public sector in work?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

We will have a substantial debate later on in this sitting in relation to the Public Accounts Committee and their proposal for deeper cuts in public spending in 2011 and 2012. My views on this are quite well known, it is that I believe that the economy will be returning to growth in 2011 and 2012 and we will need to withdraw some of the money that we have been putting in the economy, most importantly we need to balance the books of the States Assembly. If there are going to be changes in manpower levels as a result of the savings across the organisation then, of course, we will ensure that every protection and every assistance is given for any individual who is out of work, furthering Advance to Work programmes and the good work that has been done by the Skills Board.

4.3.8 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Notwithstanding the excellent work being undertaken by the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture in between promoting the national anthem in terms of the long term future of the Fort, does the Minister not feel it is rather odd that he wears one hat which has overseen the deterioration of the Fort and he wears another hat where he could well have helped resolved that issue?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

As a regular visitor to the Fort I am well aware of the need for investment and for a proper future for the Fort being established. But I am afraid just simply throwing a few tens of thousands of pounds at the Fort from fiscal stimulus money I do not think is enough in order to find the solution for the Fort. There has been a working party which has been set up, which is designed to design that. When there is a capital project, when there is something to support, we will get behind it and I do not think it is appropriate ... there have been discussions before about the Fort Regent and there is not a fiscal stimulus bid that is shovel-ready to go for the Fort in the short term. Long term, we need to find a solution. I share the Deputy's concern.