

3. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Transport and Technical Services

The Bailiff:

The bell now goes on questions with notice. We now come to questions without notice. The first question period is the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and I call on Senator Le Main.

3.1 Senator T.J. Le Main:

Can the Minister please inform Members if he is concerned at the continued lack of annual testing of large commercial lorries, *et cetera*, which are often old adapted commercial vehicles imported into Jersey because of width restrictions in Jersey? Is the Minister concerned with the amount of prosecutions, now a regular occurrence? When will he bring in an annual test on large commercials and bring in a commercial operator's licence scheme so that these large vehicles can be controlled?

The Connétable of St. Brelade (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

I did in fact partly answer that question earlier on and alluded to the fact that the department are working on developing a testing process for commercial vehicles, and we will continue to do that. I cannot give the Senator a timescale at the moment but I shall do and just agree with him that I am keen to get this process in place.

3.2 Connétable J. Gallichan of St. Mary:

Further to concerns I have raised several times in this Chamber, has the Minister made any progress so far in providing safe refuges at bus stops on busy roads where there is no pavement?

The Bailiff:

Connétable, I am sorry, we appear not to be quorate. Can I invite Members to return to the Assembly.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Sir, it has become a question with notice.

The Bailiff:

Very well; Greffier, will you call the roll, please? Sorry, it is not a question of calling the roll any longer. It is now a question of opening the voting. I ask the Greffier to open the voting so Members can record their presence. I will ask the Greffier to close the voting. We are still not quorate.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I did not hear the call.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Neither did I, Sir, and I have been here all the time.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I have been here all the time and I was expecting the roll call. I was sitting here.

The Bailiff:

The Standing Order has been changed, Senator, and the position now is that the Greffier opens the voting buttons to ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I never heard him.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I concur. I feel rather aggrieved about it. I have not left the Chamber all morning and I never heard anyone say: "Press a button". It may well have been said but I did not hear it.

The Bailiff:

Standing Order 56 says that if the Presiding Officer, having allowed such time as he considers reasonable for elected Members to return to the Chamber, believes the States remain inquorate he shall ask the Greffier to take the roll using the electronic voting system unless it is unavailable. That is what I did. The roll has been taken and the States, at the time of taking that roll, were inquorate: 24 persons having indicated they were present. The Presiding Officer is then, under Standing Order 56(3), required to suspend the meeting to a specified time later on the same day, suspend the meeting to a continuation day specified by the Presiding Officer or close the meeting. I, therefore, rule that I will suspend the meeting for 10 seconds as I see that enough Members have now returned to the Chamber.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Sir, can I just make a point ...

The Bailiff:

The meeting is suspended, Deputy.

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

Sir, could I suggest, because there certainly were 2 Members who were present at the time who I could observe - one was the Deputy of St. Martin and the other one was Senator Le Main - that it somehow be noted that, although they did not press the buzzer at the time, they were present and had been. It seems to me only fair to them, if I may say so.

The Bailiff:

Well, there you are. The matter is now on the record from Senator Le Marquand and no doubt the presence of the Deputy of St. Martin and Senator Le Main has been noted in Hansard. At all events, we are now quorate and we now can continue.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Sir, before we move on, I did not hear the Deputy Greffier and I would ask, even yourself, if the voices could be raised. There was murmuring around the Chamber. I did not hear being asked to press a button and it is just a request maybe for the future. Thank you, Sir.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Thank you, Sir. I will start again if you do not mind. Further to concerns that I have raised several times in the Chamber already, has the Minister made any progress in providing safe refuges at bus stops on busy roads where there is no pavement? If not, what is impeding him?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The department is working to get a roll-out programme of bus shelters in place throughout the Island and some 6 have appeared in the last few months to achieve that. I know the Constable has a concern over a bus stop in St. Peter's Valley, and I can assure her that my department are looking into how they can overcome this situation. But it has to be borne in mind: very often there are land ownership issues which have a bearing on these situations and it is a question of, very often, negotiating with adjacent landowners to achieve a result.

3.2.1 The Connétable of St. Mary:

Could I just have a supplementary on that? Does the Minister understand that I am not talking about bus shelters? I am talking about the more basic provision of a safe place to stand.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I understand that. In fact, there is a similar situation in St. Clement that was brought to my attention by the Connétable of St. Clement.

3.3 Deputy J.A. Hilton of St. Helier:

It is my understanding that a commitment was given by the Minister and the department to cover the sewer pits in Bellozanne Valley. Is the Minister able to tell the House what, if any, work has been carried out in this regard?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I thank the Deputy for her question. Indeed, the department is working hard on the liquid waste strategy to achieve the commitments we have made as a result of monies being allocated in the last Business Plan led by Deputy Fox. I think 2 of the settlement tanks have been covered; others will be. One of the main areas that the department is striving to overcome is the moving of the digesters into the site at Bellozanne Valley and this will achieve the reduction in odours which I know not only the residents but their supporting Deputies would like to see in place.

3.4 Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:

Could the Minister advise when he expects to be in a position to lodge an amendment to the Road Traffic (Disabled Persons - Badges for Motor Vehicles) (Jersey) Order in order to bring into effect the changes approved in P.112 debated by the States on 28th September 2010?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That work is in progress with the department. I cannot give the Deputy a timescale at the moment but I shall consult and pass the information on.

3.5 Senator J.L. Perchard:

Will the Minister inform the Parish Connétables that his department wishes each Parish to offer their parishioners a kerbside collection scheme, at least for tins and cans, and will he consider introducing a waste disposal charge to those Parishes who make no attempt to separate tins and cans from their waste?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Many of the Parishes, already offering a kerbside collection, do in fact have an offering for the separation of metal packaging. There are other Parishes yet to come into the kerbside recycling scheme and my Parish of St. Brelade is one of those. A lot of these areas are subject to contractual arrangements in place and, I have to say, certainly at St. Brelade those discussions with regard to the development of kerbside recycling collections is taking place at present, and clearly I am keen for that to be in position. With regard to the other Parishes, I have no doubt that they are equally enthusiastic to develop schemes and doubtless by the end of the year I think we will probably see most Parishes doing a similar sort of thing.

3.5.1 Senator J.L. Perchard:

Can I ask a supplementary of the Minister? While it was a very interesting “state of the nation” response, will the Minister be proactive in making this happen?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes. As I alluded to earlier on, I can only do it within the contractual arrangements that the Parishes have with their various contractors, which do vary. But I take the Senator’s point that it is essential that we try and pull the tin cans out of the rubbish stream before they get to the incinerator and that is something the department is extremely keen to do.

3.6 Deputy A.E. Jeune:

There has been work being carried out on the Esplanade between the Grand Hotel and Gloucester Street and I noted last evening that they were beavering away when I came past at 8.30 p.m. and was delighted to see them sweeping up at 7.00 a.m., clearly ahead of the heavy traffic coming into town. Can the Minister please advise as to whether this was done within the timeframe that was set for this work to be done? If it was done earlier, would he please compliment those who did it?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The works taking place on the Esplanade/Gloucester Street are part of the Jersey Electricity Company's link from the substation at the airport through to the substation at South Hill. Works are, I think, being progressed efficiently. My department has been in constant liaison with the J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company) to ensure that that takes place with the minimum of disruption to the public. Having said that, working in an area where there are thousands of vehicles passing daily, there will inevitably be consequences, as there will be to those residents in adjacent properties. My department and the J.E.C. regret the inconvenience but hopefully, as the Deputy has pointed out, it is being satisfactorily undertaken.

3.7 Deputy M. Tadier:

I had the pleasure of using one of the new Connex buses with its extra leg room, which is most welcome. But going up St. Aubin's Hill when 2 buses met, one of the buses was obliged to mount the pavement for the other bus to get through because both of them were over the white line. When the paving ends up crumbling and needs to be replaced, who will be responsible for paying for that?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Inevitably, if there are any pavement works to be done on main roads, it will be down to my department to cover that. If I can just pick up the point the Deputy makes. There is a compromise to be had between running smaller vehicles compliant with the 7 foot 6 inch road restrictions in place or allowing exemptions for these slightly wider buses and the added comfort. I would not like to see us progress to the situation which arises in Guernsey where there is constant driving on the pavements but there are occasional pinch-points, and I suspect I know the area to which the Deputy alludes. These are areas where drivers will, wherever possible, not mount the pavement, but circumstances sometimes dictate otherwise.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Supplementary. If a car driver has to mount ...

The Bailiff:

No. Thank you, Deputy Tadier. We are moving on.

3.8 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

Could I ask the Minister when the new incinerator will be functioning and when the old one will cease functioning?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I have not got a finite time but, in broad terms, towards the end of the summer. As soon as the official handover and testing period has been completed and my department is satisfied with the performance of the new plant we will officially accept it. So I would rather not specify a date until I have got that information to hand and we are fully content with the processes. Once that has taken place we will proceed with the removal of the existing plant. Whether we just take down the chimney or whether we take down the whole plant is yet to be agreed, but it will be decommissioned very soon thereafter.