

2.12 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Chief Minister regarding ...

Will the Chief Minister advise what research, if any, has been undertaken into the possible economic consequences of implementing carbon trading and similar exercises and will he assure Members that he will resist pressures from the European Union and the United Kingdom for Jersey to become involved in such schemes?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

As far as I am aware, there has been no research undertaken in Jersey into the possible economic consequences of implementing carbon trading or similar exercises. Any further development of these measures in the European Union, the United Kingdom or worldwide will require careful consideration as to their applicability to Jersey, how the Island should respond and the economic implications of any action.

2.12.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Chief Minister accept the underlying, perhaps the implication of this question or otherwise, that Jersey, as a responsible jurisdiction, should be considering its carbon emissions? I will leave it at that for the first question.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Yes, and it does.

2.12.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Given the Chief Minister's somewhat ambivalent reply and given the fact that Jersey, I understand, wants to keep its independence, why, then, in his written question to Deputy Baudains, number 7, if it is any help to the Minister, does he say that we have an area of work working with the E.U. (European Union) and U.K. to assess Jersey's eligibility to subsidies to generate renewable energy? Does he not know what the cost implications of those are to the average man in the street? Is he really serious about this?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Am I serious about renewable energy? Yes. If I can get some money to develop it that does not affect the Jersey taxpayer or mean that the Jersey taxpayer has to put money into research and the cost of such production, then I will endeavour to do so.

2.12.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

Does the Chief Minister not realise that Government is not the place to be doing research? That is the private sector and private industry and has he not followed what has happened in the U.K. with the subsidies for renewable energy and the cost to the taxpayer which cost, I think, is costing the average household in the U.K. £300 a year? Does the Chief Minister really want that sort of thing over here?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Absolutely not, hence the terms of the answer that I gave in answer to the written question about looking for money elsewhere.

2.12.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Chief Minister, being a positive politician like myself will see opportunity where others see adversity. Does he acknowledge that we need to seize the opportunity for the green revolution and use things like carbon trading low emissions to promote Jersey in one instance as renewable energy and as a tourist destination for short haul holidays which will not cause a legacy of high emissions for tourists? Will he give an undertaking to promote this kind of initiative, even more with the Tourism Department and with the Minister for Economic Development to send out a good message that Jersey is open for green business?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I have never been classed as a revolutionist and I do not think I ever will, other than the quiet one. The Deputy makes a very good point. There must be and we must explore certainly the green energy possibilities that our environment provides for us and, to my mind, the primary one there is tidal. There is no doubt that there are huge costs associated with such development and Senator Ferguson is right to say that that mostly should be undertaken by the private sector but inevitably new technologies changing the way that we work, ensuring that our energy consumption and the use of the energy available to us is changed as we move forward, will require partnership between government and the private sector.

2.12.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Chief Minister accept that many technological advancements from radar to the internet have been funded and started by government and then taken over by private sector when it became a little safer and they saw how it could be developed? Is he not looking forward to government and private sector participation sharing the funding of developments in green energy?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

It is nice to be able to acknowledge that my constant message of partnership working and working together is now being reiterated by the Deputy as well and I agree with him.