

7.11 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding why traffic was not redirected around the north and east of Mount Bingham in order to alleviate traffic congestion caused by the recent rock-fall:

Would the Minister explain why his department is not redirecting traffic around the north and east of Mount Bingham in order to alleviate traffic congestion caused by the recent rock-fall?

Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Transport and Technical Services):

On the weekend of 14th and 15th September the Parish of St. Helier were carrying out work on Mount Bingham rock face when they discovered that areas of the rock-face were in danger of collapsing on to the road below. In conjunction with the Transport and Technical Services Department, the road was immediately closed. Diversion signage has been in place for these works to be carried out. The Parish of St. Helier commissioned a geotechnical engineer, who came to the site on Tuesday, 17th September, and inspected the rock-face and confirmed that the road must remain closed until emergency works had been carried out. At this point, the Parish's contractor put out improved signage to assist in diverting traffic away from the area. The Parish consultant has advised that the emergency works will take 4 weeks to complete, during which time the road will need to remain closed at all times. However, after the 4 weeks, once the initial emergency works have been completed, one lane will be able to be opened and the remaining stabilisation works will be completed with one lane closure. Now the full extent of the road-closure is known, the Parish's contractor is providing further advance-warning signage. To answer the Deputy's first part of the question, the Jersey Electricity Company were working on the Normandie 3 cable at the top of South Hill.

7.11.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I am not quite sure why the Minister for Transport and Technical Services spent 3 minutes not answering the question and did not really cover it in the last sentence. My understanding is that the rerouting around by the gym and down the eastern face of Mount Bingham is not possible at the present time because the J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company) are laying a cable. Could the Minister for Transport and Technical Services advise how long that section of the road will be closed? Because it would certainly alleviate traffic if it could go down behind Mount Bingham while that rock-face is being stabilised. Does he know how long the J.E.C. will be doing that trench-work and is it not possible that one lane could be open?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

No. The work around the top of the South Hill there and down the side of Mount Bingham is estimated to take 4 weeks.

7.11.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

After a conversation with the Minister's department, it had been suggested the possibility of allowing traffic to use the emergency road that was created for the emergency services through La Collette. Could the Minister state why that option has not been taken up?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, the road, if you look the other way, comes from Green Street along what is the Esplanade, then turns left and goes out along the peninsula to the rear of the Energy from Waste plant and the fuel farm, which would be totally unsuitable for major traffic.

7.11.3 The Connétable of St. John:

That very road that the Minister for Transport and Technical Services is referring to, when I emailed him a week or so ago recommending the use of that, he did not say that it was totally unsuitable for traffic. Would it be suitable, as it is a road, for alleviating some of the pressure by putting it one-way at peak periods of the day, morning and evening, to try and alleviate some of

the problems we are having? Would that not be possible if he worked with the Parish of St. Helier?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

We are working with the Parish of St. Helier to alleviate all problems. There were 2 questions. One was for use of the cycle track, which would not be appropriate, and the other one was the use of the emergency relief road, but which also would not be suitable because it comes out to the rear of the fuel farm.

7.11.4 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:

Would the Minister for Transport and Technical Services agree with me that the relevant authorities have moved with impressive speed to alleviate these problems given that a geotechnical design has been finalised, planning approval to proceed with emergency work has been granted, and a contractor has been mobilised and commenced the contract, and that this is almost unprecedented to have such a major piece of engineering works undertaken so quickly? Would he agree to pass on my thanks to his officers?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, and I thank the Constable of St. Helier for his kind words. Yes, this is unprecedented. It has been all shoulders-to-the-wheel to get this sorted and all departments have worked very well together. I think we are missing something in the sense that there is I think 3,000 tonnes of rock have come down so far. This is a good news story in the sense that no one was killed and no one was injured. It is a major inconvenience, though, which we are trying to alleviate.

[14:30]

7.11.5 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

With that amount of rock, no doubt the Minister for Transport and Technical Services will be able to use it for his new reclamation site. The media was telling us at one stage that the road could very well be closed until Christmas. I presume and hope that is not the case. Could the Minister for Transport and Technical Services advise us of the most likely date when it will be possible to allow traffic, albeit perhaps on one lane?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, certainly. My officers are working very closely with other agencies. We are working with the Parish of St. Helier to get Mount Bingham sorted and we are also working closely with the J.E.C. to put on extra gangs, especially down the other side of Mount Bingham, to be in and out as soon as possible. But we will, all being well, we are pushing very hard to get at least one lane open within 4 weeks.