

3.6 Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services regarding amendments to the current Motor Traffic (Third Party Insurance) (Jersey) Law 1948 relating to driving an uninsured vehicle:

Can the Minister advise whether consideration has ever been given to amending the current Road Traffic (Third-Party Insurance) (Jersey) Law 1948, so that uninsured drivers are not only prosecuted for driving an uninsured vehicle but that the uninsured vehicle that is driven on Jersey roads can be impounded and immediately scrapped and if not, why not?

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

I can advise that my department has considered this possibility of introducing such measures in the past. However, it was apparent that in addition to the necessary law changes, the infrastructure and immediate police access to the insurance database required to support such measures was lacking.

3.6.1 Deputy S. Power:

Does the Minister not regard the issue of uninsured vehicles as a major problem on Island roads, and has he ever had discussions with other Ministers on the Council of Ministers to bring forward a simple procedure so that the person driving the uninsured vehicle can have that vehicle impounded straightaway?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I have not had the discussion, but we do have an advantage over the U.K. inasmuch as we have the Insurance Windscreen Disc, which is instantly verifiable. We do not have access to the U.K. insurance database, which would be a major problem.

3.6.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister agree while impounding an uninsured vehicle may be a wise thing to do that it is not ecologically sound to immediately scrap a perfectly good working car, and that it is not the car's fault if it was being driven by an uninsured driver?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I can hardly argue with that one but cars are regularly impounded by States of Jersey Police and in the Parish Honorary Police for various infractions, and I believe that would be sufficient.

3.6.3 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier:

Is it not about time as well, that the Minister looked at the actual fine for uninsured drivers which is, for some of the damage they can do, a pittance, and this might be another way, a subtler way and a fairer way of making sure people do get insurance as somehow they would have to pay in the end?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I would agree with that entirely, but believe that would be a matter for my colleague, the Minister for Home Affairs.

3.6.4 Deputy S. Power:

I have to say that I do believe that this is an issue, and I do believe that the Minister has a solution to deal with uninsured drivers of uninsured vehicles. The Parish system of impounding vehicles is satisfactory. There is therefore a timed ability to find out whether the vehicle being driven by the driver is owned by the driver or whether it is insured by the driver. Would the Minister not agree with me that there is a great deal of time wasted, police officer time and court time, in chasing and prosecuting these people, and a strong disincentive to drive a vehicle such as an uninsured vehicle would work if he brought this forward?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Yes, I believe many of the cars that have collected in Parish pounds are not collected and I believe it may be I think about a 6-week period. I think many of them are indeed scrapped.