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3.9 The Connétable of St. Helier of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the monitoring and improvement of the Island's air quality:

What is being done to monitor the Island's air quality and what steps are being taken to improve it in areas where air quality is poor?

Senator A.K.F. Green (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

I thank the Constable for his question. Generally, Jersey enjoys excellent air quality which is regularly refreshed by our prevailing winds. The principle source of air pollution is motor traffic. Diesel engines are particularly polluting. Air pollution is monitored over 20 locations around the Island for several different pollutants; for example, particulates, nitrogen dioxide and a whole suite of hydrocarbons show all levels to be largely compliant within E.C. (European Community) directive limits. But under certain climatic conditions and for short periods corresponding with rush hour, 2 locations, Georgetown and the Weighbridge area show elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide produced by exhaust in queueing traffic.

3.9.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:

What steps is the Minister taking to improve air quality, the second part of my question, particularly in the areas he mentioned but also one might imagine that Beaumont, during rush hour the traffic is very congested, Longueville and of course the Ring Road? What steps is the Minister taking? Could I add to that, is it possible for members of the public to access information about air quality as they can in many other large towns and cities?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

There are only 2 areas that failed on a couple of occasions last year to meet the E.C. standards and those were the 2 areas that I mentioned before; that is the Weighbridge and tunnel area and Halkett Place. What can I do about it? The only thing we could do is to reduce the use of the motor car or to ban the use of diesel. Those are the only things that would make a difference. I have to say that it was only on a couple of occasions last year, and we have had no failures so far this year, that those 2 sites failed to meet the required level. There are 20 sites that we are monitoring. I am just going to check whether Beaumont is one of them when I sit down briefly in a second, and is this information available publicly. I do not know but I will find out.

3.9.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

At the very end the Minister answered part of my question which is how many monitoring sites there are? I would like to know how many of them are fixed and how many portable units they have and how often they are changed? So if he can explain, first of all, of the 20 sites that he mentioned, have they always been at the same location and does he have a mobile type one so that other locations can be monitored?

The Bailiff:

There is about 5 questions there. Pick your 3 you want to ask the Minister.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Hopefully it will be [Interruption] ... are they fixed or are they mobile and if they are mobile how often are they moved?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

Twenty-two of them are fixed. I do not know if we have a mobile one but I do know that on occasions they do move to monitor a particular area if there has been a complaint or a concern. I think that is the answer to that question.

3.9.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Minister have specific information on the tunnel? We see the signs there saying that: "At peak times air quality in this tunnel is poor." Can we have more information because I suspect that is one of the sites which is probably very dangerous for those using the tunnel?

Senator A.K.F. Green:

We know that the tunnel in virtually most conditions is a problem. We monitor the Weighbridge and tunnel area. As the Deputy said, we have signs warning people that because of the nature and fact that it is a tunnel and cars are queueing in there that it is not wise to expose yourself to those pollutants for long periods of time. We monitor the Weighbridge area and only on 2 occasions, I think, last year from memory, did it fail and that was I think in June and July that it failed to meet the requirements and it was just over the top.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Supplementary. If you are walking through the tunnel ...

The Bailiff:

No. Sorry, Deputy. Final supplementary from Constable ...

3.9.4 The Connétable of St. Helier:

We do know that a lot of the problem the Minister admitted is from diesel engines and presumably badly tuned diesel engines are the worst. Is he encouraging his fellow Ministers to look at some kind of road vehicle worthiness test, particularly in regard to emissions?

Senator Z.A. Cameron:

Excuse me. I would just like to raise the fact that I did put my light on before the supplementary question.

The Bailiff:

You did, Senator, and I did indicate that I was allowing 5 minutes only for each of the last questions to make sure we got through them. I am very sorry that there was not time for your question. Connétable, you have finished your supplementary I think of the Minister.

Senator A.K.F. Green:

I think the question was, was I going to encourage M.O.T.- (Ministry of Transport) type inspections for emissions. That is a matter for the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Infrastructure. I would have thought.