

STATES OF JERSEY

Environment Scrutiny Panel

WEDNESDAY, 11th NOVEMBER 2009

Panel:

Deputy P.J. Rondel of St. John (Chairman)
Deputy D.J.A. Wimberley of St. Mary (Vice-Chairman)
Connétable J.M. Réfault of St. Peter
Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier

Witness:

Senator T.J. Le Main

In attendance:

Mr. M. Haden (Scrutiny Officer)
Mr. M. Orbell (Scrutiny Officer)

Deputy P.J. Rondel of St. John (Chairman):

Good afternoon, Senator. The purpose of this meeting is that you are going to hopefully give us a resume of your report and proposition, your amendment. Before we start, I would like for each member around the table to give their name because it is all being taped. You have also been shown a sheet of what actually happens and you will not be liable for anything you say because you have immunity. Anyway, I am Deputy Phil Rondel, Chairman of the Environment Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy D.J.A. Wimberley of St. Mary:

Deputy Wimberley, Vice-Chairman.

Mr. M. Haden:

Mike Haden, Scrutiny Officer.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am Terry Le Main, Senator, States of Jersey.

Mr. M. Orbell:

Malcolm Orbell, Scrutiny Officer.

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

Paul Le Claire, Deputy.

Connétable J.M. Réfault of St. Peter:

John Réfault, Constable.

The Deputy of St. John:

Thank you. Could you please give us a resume of your report and proposition and then we will put some questions to you.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes. The amendment I am proposing I think goes much further than what is being proposed by the Treasury Minister. It is my view that ... I have 2 aims here: (a) I need some kind of funding somewhere along the line that is going to provide in 2011 a town Hoppa service. I mean a proper funded Hoppa service which we have been putting off for a number of years as not able to be funded. The second thing is that I think that my proposal will give an opportunity for people to get rid of large vehicles and will encourage people to use and to downsize into smaller vehicles. As you see, there is something like about 3,500 vehicles over 3 litre in the Island at the moment. Maybe not all of them are on the road, but the majority of them are on the road, and every day I see the big gas guzzlers driving up and down and often with one or 2 people in it and that is all. My view is that I think that to further penalise the elderly at this time when a lot of the elderly, particularly where I live around home, are driving the very smallest cars they can afford, the smallest cubic capacity, and nearly all of them ... I am the only one in my row of houses that has a big car. All the rest of them are running little 1,000 cc vehicles. I think this gives a real opportunity, in my view, to make a change. 3p on a litre of fuel is not going to bother anyone, absolute waste of time. The V.E.D. (vehicle emissions duty) as proposed on the actual registration of a vehicle, which will raise, apparently, £2 million a year - I wonder - this proposal is ongoing. This would be able to be ... the funding out of this should be put aside for environmental issues. I listened again the other day, the recycling officer complaining that he has no money. He could with extra money further increase the recycling in this Island. So, this kind of scheme, the polluters in the Island will make a real contribution, in my view paying towards a town Hoppa bus service, perhaps an increased bus service in certain areas, perhaps an increase in main drains in certain areas where the current systems are polluting water streams and running into fields in certain areas, where there is a high level of yellow soil, of clay, where the soakaways are not working properly. It also gives an opportunity for Deputy Carolyn Labey's cycle route scheme which could be achieved over a period of years working from St. Helier. I am not rather keen on the idea of working Gorey towards St. Helier. I think it should be the other way round; it should be St. Helier working outwards. So immediately a system is in use wherever it starts or ends. So, really, I have opposed the Treasury Minister and the Council of Ministers on this subject. It is all very well opposing something, but you have to find ... there must be something put in place that will fund as well as having an onward spend at the end. So, that is the basis of my plans. I think it can really ... I think in 3, 4 or 5 years' time, 5 or 6 years' time, it could really make some changes and you could turn the screws on this at any time.

The Deputy of St. John:

In your draft report that the Panel have seen, there is reference to taxing the polluting offenders to change behaviour, those who by choice drive larger

vehicles. Do you accept that many people have little choice as to the size of the vehicle they drive because of the family numbers, for example?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, I do not think that is correct. I do not think that is correct. I have been in the motor trade and that is a nonsense always being given for safety and they have 3 or 4 children. My daughter with her 3 youngsters did not have a big gas guzzler like that. No, I do not agree with that at all. It is an excuse being used all the time.

The Deputy of St. John:

Similarly, later on you make further reference in the timing being right to try and rid the Island of the huge gas guzzlers, as we have already said. Now, do you think that the proposal is primarily as an environmental tax as a means to raising revenue, or as a means of getting large vehicles off the road?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, it is a means of getting the rubbish large vehicles off the road. There is a huge amount of rubbish, stuff that if there was a £250 annual charge on would not be on the road. I see them come from Le Squez and Les Marais and what have you, and I see huge ... in fact, a chap picked me up at the bus stop the other day with the biggest heap of rubbish you have ever seen, and took me into town in it. On the way he stopped at Georgetown Garage and he put £2 worth of fuel in it, okay, and went to get his electricity card charged up. Now, that thing was puffing and blowing like you have never seen. My view is that it will certainly make some improvement. It is not going to get rid of probably half of them because people who have plenty of money are going to go out and spend £60,000, £70,000, £80,000 ...

The Deputy of St. Mary:

So, wait a minute, you are saying that the big vehicles over 3,000 cc, for the sake of argument, on this banding, some will be discouraged by this measure and some will not?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, absolutely, because those who have plenty of money are not going to worry about putting £250 towards an annual tax, environmental tax. But a lot of them, a lot of the older stuff on the roads, people will not pay that £250.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

But wait a minute, the older ones, the rubbish ones, like you described so beautifully, are the ones that are doing the polluting, and you say the polluters will make a real contribution?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, they all pollute.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

No, because the rubbish one will emit more pollution than the latest ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

It will drive the rubbish ones off the road. It will take them off the road.

The Deputy of St. John:

Right, okay.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

It will take them off the road because people will say: "I have this 3-litre old Mitsubishi" or a transit van, and they will say: "Oh, well, it is going to cost me £250, the thing is only worth £200 or £300, I am going to get rid of it..."

The Deputy of St. Mary:

So it is not a campaign to get the large gas guzzlers off the road, it is a campaign to get the large old rubbish - in brackets - gas guzzlers off the road?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Absolutely.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

So people with large gas guzzlers will still ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

That is the main aim, and the remainder that decide that they have plenty of money or they can afford to run a large gas guzzler will pay an annual tax towards environmental policies.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Terry, can I just take you back to the closing comment you made as you were delivering your very eloquent speech there. You said you opposed the Council of Ministers with your plan. Why did you decide to do that?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Because I felt that what the Treasury Minister is proposing, a V.E.D. on registration, will not encourage people on a yearly basis to get rid of old stuff, large stuff. It will not. Because it is a V.E.D. on registration only. Mine is an annual one. So every year the owners will have to pay an annual fee as an environmental policy fee payment towards improving the roads, perhaps maintaining a decent bus service, increasing it and what have you.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

In saying that, do you think that the funds raised should be hypothecated just for environmental initiatives?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, mine are environmental. Mine are solely environmental issues to be decided by the Treasury Minister or whoever.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

It was interesting when you started this presentation that you said the Treasury Minister was supportive of this and perhaps maybe this Panel should take this. Your two aims, it seems, are to reduce the amount of bad polluters on the road and also to provide a town Hoppa service, which obviously a lot of people are in support of a town Hoppa service and we have not got the money for it. So, if this Panel was to take this proposal and deliver on getting rid of rubbish and instituting a town Hoppa service ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

And, if I may say, perhaps improve the recycling initiatives being undertaken which is now under-funded by T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services). That is a very important one as well.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Because you said you have spoken to the Treasury Minister and he would support this, would he then drop his own proposals and ...?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, he would.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

So, we will shelve his and take forward this, and we would have a Hoppa service in town?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

We would have a Hoppa service with my scheme in 2011, not before.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Can I just ask one other question because I am quite interested in seeing some of the buses I have seen around in different cities ... especially in Moscow and places like that, you see these small mini-buses that can hold 10, 12, 14 people. They cruise up and down and people pay a little bit more to get on them, but because of their availability they provide a much greater use of public transport. People do not use cars because of the fact that these little mini-buses are going around. Do you see a town Hoppa service as being as we have had before, the big buses labouring through town, or do you think some investigations into these small mini-bus type services could deliver?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I do not really have a view on that, Paul. The issue is that ... my view is that there are parts of St. Helier heavily, densely populated right up to Mont Cochon and in the surroundings. I have written to the Co-op, I have written to Checkers and all of them, asking their views, Age Concern, and I have had replies from Age Concern. All see it as a huge public benefit in moving people around the town areas without people bringing cars into St. Helier.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I am quite keen on getting rid of the polluting vehicles from town and instituting a Hoppa service, and I am quite interested to hear that the Treasury

Minister would drop his proposals in favour of this if we bring it. But I am just wondering what kind of environmental assessment ... have you been to see the Assistant Director for Policy or Rob Duhamel or anybody on this?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I have passed it on to Rob Duhamel but I have not really had a great comment on this at the moment. What I am trying to achieve is to have a funding ... the outline principles if approved would then have to go to whoever afterwards. If the States were to approve this, then we are going to get £5 million or whatever ...

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Is that a year?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

A year. We will get £5 million a year, okay, which then perhaps a States Member Panel or somebody could then ... but I am going to make it quite clear that the town Hoppa service for 2011 is of great importance to the people in St. Helier for moving around. That is my number one priority.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Do you know how much that will cost us, though?

The Deputy of St. John:

Can we let the Senator finish, please?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The cost, the estimated cost, is around £500,000 to have 2 or 3 mini-buses running 6 days a week up until 6.00 p.m. or 7.00 p.m. at night. That is not a Connex estimation, it is a rough estimation given to me by information that I have gathered. That would be a town Hoppa bus service that would run and pick up everywhere every 30 minutes.

The Deputy of St. John:

Can I move on now, please? Advances in emission controls means that many vehicles which might previously have been considered as big polluters - luxury saloons, sizeable executive cars, 4x4s, et cetera - have now achieved remarkable reduction in emissions. Why have you decided to base your amendment on engine sizes, which is a somewhat arbitrary measure, instead of a well-documented emissions figure produced and checked by the Vehicle Certification Agency in the U.K. (United Kingdom)?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, one thing I really cannot understand is the emission thing. It is a highly complicated issue. If you speak to most people, probably in this room, probably Daniel would be the only one that might understand about emissions. Do you understand them?

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

No, I do not.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

That is right. Well, I am just saying that most people do not understand about emissions. I am made aware that there are some large vehicles now on the market that the emissions are as good as a very small ... I felt that my proposal would be a proposal done on cubic capacity, allowing a person to keep a small car, to run a small car, the elderly. It would not penalise them by putting another 3p on a litre of fuel, and the issue was that it would be an annual income for environmental issues. What is proposed by the Treasury Minister is that we are going to continue to sell cars year after year in the kind of style we have been doing for many years with easy credit. Sales of cars are going to drop, in my view, because the credit has affected the ability for some people now to get easy credit to purchase vehicles. I want to see a regular income over every year that can be guaranteed. It is all very well for the Treasury Minister to say that it is £2 million. There is no guarantee that the sales are going to meet that £2 million.

The Deputy of St. John:

So, are you aware that under your proposal anomalies would be created? Small engines but relatively high polluting vehicles will be exempt from the tax, while cars with bigger and cleaner engines will have to pay. Do you want some examples?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am trying to encourage ... yes, I am aware of that, but I am trying to encourage getting big stuff off the roads. This Island does not need the amount of huge, big vehicles on the roads.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

But only big stuff belonging to poor people, not big stuff belonging to rich people because they will keep their big stuff. You said that.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The little old man or the little old lady will still be able to drive without being penalised.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

No, sorry, there is some confusion here. You have said again now that you are trying to get the big vehicles off the road.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The rubbish vehicles.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Ah. But then I said: "No, you are trying to get the big cars, the big vehicles belonging to poor people off the roads, but the big cars belonging to rich people can stay on the roads."

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, I did not say that. You have misunderstood me.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I am putting it to you.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

What I am saying to you is there are a lot of poor people, if you like, running rubbish on the roads with big vehicles. The person that has plenty of money, £250 is not going to worry him at all and he is still going to pay £60,000 or £70,000 for a 4x4. He is not going to bother. He is going to continue running it and there is going to be no way that we are going to be able to drive those into smaller cars because they have the money to buy the big cars, but at least they will be paying a tax towards environmental policies. Now, in the Treasury Minister's proposals there is also the view that they should put up car parking charges in the car parks. Now, I support that, I have to say to you. I think car parking in St. Helier is far too cheap, absolutely ridiculous.

The Deputy of St. John:

Can I give you an example, just because it is coming across as if you are doing something for certain people in the Island, old people, et cetera, when, in fact, you might be doing them some harm. See, an Alfa Romeo 159, 8 valve, in fact, does 54.3 combined miles per gallon and is 138 kg of CO2 and you will be charging them £75 per year tax. A Vauxhall Corsa 1.2, 16 valve, which in fact does 46.3 miles per gallon, will produce 146 ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But a 1.2 Corsa is more than 1,200 cc.

The Deputy of St. John:

1.2i.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, but it is over 1,200 cc so it would be in that band as well.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, okay. So, it would not be exempt?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

It would not be exempt.

The Deputy of St. John:

It would not be exempt, all right, okay, but a Mercedes Class 204 saloon, 49.6 combined miles per gallon produces 1.49 kg of CO2 and he would be paying £150 per annum for that vehicle. Now, really, assuming each covers 6,000 miles in a year, Terry, under your amendment in 5 years the Alfa would emit 6.6 tonnes of CO2 and paying £375 in tax; the Vauxhall would emit 7 tonnes and pay absolutely nothing; and the Mercedes would emit 7.1 tonnes and pay £750.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I do not understand that, Philip, so there is no point giving me ... I have just told you before I do not understand vehicle emissions. I understand and know that there are some large vehicles on the market now that are less polluting than some of the small ones, but what I am saying is I want some taxes, environmental taxes, addressed against vehicles. This was the only way that I could see I could do it.

The Deputy of St. John:

Can I come in there? Your background is motor mechanics, motor vehicles?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, no. Well, I was a wheeler dealer, yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

So, therefore, as a motor dealer I would have thought you would have understood these type of ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, we did not have that years ago, Philip, you know that. We never had anything like that years ago. This is all new stuff now.

The Deputy of St. John:

I see, so you have not kept up with your trade?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, not at all. I have been out of the trade for 25 years.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can I go back on this but in a more general way? On your draft report you have: "Every other civilised country surrounding Jersey now has in place an annual vehicle emissions tax", which suggests that you are billing this amendment as a vehicle emissions tax.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, I am not.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Well, why did you put that sentence in? I am just trying to get at the confusion between engine size and emissions because that is the key, is it not?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am not suggesting to put a vehicle emission test at all.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Tax.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

A tax.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

So, sorry, you say here: “We have a real opportunity of changing things for the better environmentally. Every other civilised country surrounding Jersey has in place an annual vehicle emissions tax.” So that suggests to me, reading that, ah, so Terry is putting forward an annual vehicle emissions tax, but it is not.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I will probably have to change that.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You will have to change that, because it is not, it is about engine size only.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am not suggesting that.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You also said in your introductory remarks: “The polluter will make a real contribution” and that is the point the Chairman is making. The polluters will make a real contribution. Now, I would be happy that the polluters make a real contribution in proportion to the amount they pollute. So, if the car stays in the garage, does not even come out at all, once a year or whatever, once a week, then it hardly pollutes at all so it should not necessarily ... but in your solution it gets a whack. It gets whacked whatever the annual tax is.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

It is a ... what words can I use? It is for the ... if you like, “want”. If you want a big car then you are going to have to pay a tax.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

But you are shifting the tax burden to the possession of the vehicle and not to its use, and use is what creates the pollution, leaving aside what happens in the production of making the machine. But you are shifting it from the ownership to the ... sorry, away from use to the ownership.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I agree. I have a 4-litre car that I only use very, very occasionally. I probably do 1,000 miles a year with it, you know.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

It is quite clear to me what you are trying to achieve here is you are trying to reduce the amount of big polluting vehicles on the road so that you can fund a Hoppa service which will be used by those people that were driving them in the first place. You are trying to ... the 2 aims you stated clearly in the beginning was to create a tax on vehicle use so you could fund ...

The Deputy of St. Mary:

No, vehicle size, that is the trouble.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Well, vehicles, I should have said.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I want to reduce ...

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

So you can create a Hoppa service, thereby reducing usage of vehicles.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes. I want to reduce large vehicles on the road. Not only talking about emissions, they take a lot of room, they take huge parking spaces, there are all sorts of benefits in getting large vehicles off the road and encouraging people to downsize. As the years go by, the older vehicles, the Vauxhall Corsas as Phil talks about, they will change. We will eventually end up with perhaps electrics and what have you, but it is only really the start over a period of years of driving people downwards into smaller vehicles.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Yes, because that is what I am trying to get at. I see that you are trying to achieve a Hoppa bus service that is used by more people, thereby there are less people using vehicles. At the beginning you said that car parking in town is too cheap and there are other things needed in the future. Now, understanding where you are coming from now - and I agree with a lot of those sentiments - as you are moving forwards you said yours is an annual tax. Have you done any numbers or projections in relation to as these get into place and as these people get rid of their vehicles what the fall in the revenue will be?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, you see, the fall in revenue over a period of years will, no doubt, take place over a period of years. I do not think for at least 10 years, but at that time, if people are still wanting to drive big gas guzzlers, you bump up the fees. When you think in England a lorry, a truck, how much does a truck pay tax in the U.K.? £5,000, £6,000 a year? We have nothing like that at all with these huge polluting lorries, the Ronez lorries, all those contractors.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Just moving on, if we can, past consultations have demonstrated that respondents consistently favour a user pays approach to environmental taxes. Do you not agree that charging for fuel used or pollution caused would be a fair means of raising revenue for environmental initiatives rather than imposing an arbitrary tax on ownership?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, I agree that that is a fair way, but I am taking the bull by the horns and I want to put in place monies that are going to make a real difference now, immediately. This is immediate. By 2011 I can have a Hoppa bus service servicing parts of the town and the town that are inaccessible to people at the moment and people are driving into St. Helier and parking. I can provide and assist the further provision of recycling where there is not the money available. There are other initiatives that could take place because you are

going to be guaranteed an annual sum of money from all these vehicles over a period of years. Now, I am not going to disagree with you and Philip over the emissions. What you are saying is absolutely right. But I disagree at this moment that it is going to prove to be beneficial in bringing enough income to make a real difference.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Do you think there is any potential in having a 2-tier pollution tax, one based on the principles you are putting forward, and one also based on the principles being put forward by the Treasury Minister, i.e. you get a user pays element if you put a small element on fuel and you will also get, using your scheme as a basis, another element which discourages people from buying larger vehicles? So, in that way, you are hitting the high fuel user driving the large car in the pocket twice. That is something that you have not discussed with the Treasury Minister, I guess.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I have discussed it with him. He seems to think it is ... it goes on fuel so that the user will pay.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Yes, your figures make it a very attractive proposal, do they not?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I was the one that brought in, when I was running my hire car business, insurance discs. I was the one that had insurance discs of all my cars, when everybody was queuing up, and I was the one that lobbied and lobbied and lobbied and eventually found out that not only was I doing it but southern Ireland were doing it as well and other countries. We brought in insurance discs to get rid of the road tax. But the road tax was a surcharge of 10p put on the fuel in those days to cover the costs of road tax. That was lost a long time ago.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

But that very principle then, and it was a very laudable one which I think no one criticised your initiative there, that actually makes people who do the polluting or the using pay, so people who use the roads more with the bigger vehicles pay more than the people ... and equally, if one puts another ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I do not disagree with that, but I also have to say to you that the people that want to buy big cars will pay £250 a year for the pleasure of it and the person that runs a little 1-litre car will pay nothing.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Right, okay. Thanks.

The Deputy of St. John:

What is the rationale behind the scale of charges you are proposing? For example, why should a small engine vehicle be totally exempt from the tax and why is it not equitable?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Because I think that it will encourage people to buy a little car.

The Deputy of St. John:

So, at the end of the day, we would get no tax at all if everybody had little cars.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

You are going to get £5 million. What are you getting now?

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, no, if there is no tax ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

If you go the Treasury way, you are going to get £2 million.

The Deputy of St. John:

But the small vehicles, there is no tax on the small vehicles, and if everybody went across to small vehicles then there would be no tax coming in.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

But, Philip, they will not go, you know that as well as I do. Are you going to go to a small vehicle?

The Deputy of St. John:

I have gone over to a scooter, actually.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I am about to go to a small vehicle. Yes, on your proposal, Terry, what is the incentive for the punter, for the resident of Jersey, when they are considering either buying a second-hand vehicle or buying a new vehicle, to go for a vehicle with less emissions?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, there is not really any incentive apart from the levy that he might not want to pay on a yearly basis.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

No, your levy is on engine size.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

It is, yes.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Well, that is not the same as emissions.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, I know it is not.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Okay, so what I put to you is that you are putting the States in the position of encouraging residents, when they are purchasing a vehicle, to look at the engine size and not at the emissions. So you are encouraging people to be a little bit stupid rather than go for what matters, which is how much pollution comes out of the tail pipe. I do not want to put the States in that position.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Can I say to you that I would not think that one out of 10 people buying a car look at what the emissions are.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

But the whole point is you can use the taxes to create that situation. People now go on "Which Car" and bang, they find the emissions figures.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

What they do is they go out and buy a car they like.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

That as well.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

They do not give a damn about emissions. The average person would not even give a damn about it. You may.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Terry, you are saying that because you can find out the engine size, it is easy to do. All you have to do is change those figures to emissions figures and it is just as easy to do. Then people can look it up. What I am saying is what are we, the States, asking residents to think about? Are we asking them to think about something as arbitrary as engine size or are we asking them to think about emissions? Because that is the goal, is it not?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, that is the question you are asking and it is a question that I suppose will be asked, but as far as I am concerned I have come up with a scheme on my own hoping that I am going to be able to persuade Members that here is an opportunity with my scheme that people that have a car on the road will have to pay a fee, an environmental fee, for the use of that car. The monies I have identified, £5 million worth of cash, will make a real difference on environmental issues for the people of this Island.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Can I ask in relation to ... there is some suggestion that the insurance companies might be willing to collect the money and there is some question about whether or not that would be the case or not.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I am going to leave it to the Treasury Minister to decide that, but in the U.K. the insurance companies collect a premium now and pay to the government now a premium for a fund of some kind. To insurance companies, Jersey is a very, very attractive place to do business because we do not have half the problems of stolen cars and everything they have in the U.K. My view is that when a car's insurance is renewed, the punter would have to pay that to the insurance company as part of the premium and the insurer would pay over.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

I just have one last question because I am quite ... I think a lot of the things that you are suggesting are very laudable and I am very interested in, as I said, getting back to the first thing, where you said the Treasury Minister was going to support this and he would be quite happy for us to take this. Why would you not just want to take it yourself if the Treasury Minister is going to support it? Why is he still pushing his?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am not going to make myself the most popular guy in the world over the ...
[Laughter]

The Deputy of St. John:

He will be quite happy to see the Chairman of the Environment Panel ...
[Laughter]

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I want to see it get through, you see.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Do you not think it would be supportable if the Treasury Minister is willing to scrap his own and support yours? Are you not willing to take it?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes, I am going to take it anyway. I am just saying ...

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

But you are giving us an opportunity to take it?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I will give you an opportunity.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can you just take us, Terry, through the numbers? Going to your last bit: "This tax should raise £5.5 million" less half a million rough administration, so that is £5 million. Then you say: "That would be an extra £0.9 million." So, can you say what you are replacing, you are suggesting to replace ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Hang on, I have not gone through that. I have only just had this back and ...

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Okay, but what are the rough figures? There is £1.5 million ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

And it's the Tax Policy Advisor that has been assisting me on the figures on this.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

But you say in your text that £1.5 million is fuel tax, so does that mean the V.E.D. is the other 2 and a half?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Two million.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You are suggesting to replace both with this?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Ah, right. Okay, so you are coming completely away from the emissions idea, because fuel tax obviously is a tax on emissions, and you are loading a whole lot on to engine size?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

So, do you consider that the environmental taxes could or should be more broadly based rather than directly primarily to the motorist?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

In what way?

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, are you thinking that you want an environmental tax across the base?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

The Strategic Plan has directed the Treasury Minister to have some environmental taxes, £2 million I think, is it? Is it £2 million? £2 million I think it is, if I remember rightly. Daniel, is that right?

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I do not remember that at all, Terry. I brought an amendment which said that we should not make environmental initiatives dependent on environmental taxes and that went through the Strategic Plan. I do not know whether there is a figure for ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, unless I am very mistaken, the Strategic Plan directs the Treasury Minister to put in place some schemes for environmental taxes.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I very much doubt it.

The Deputy of St. John:

Right, okay. Let us move away from that. You have mentioned the Hoppa bus service. You have mentioned nothing about the outlying areas of the Island: St. Ouen, St. John, St. Mary, Rozel.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, because I am not a bus expert. The idea was to raise some money and then afterwards, once the money has been identified, then it would either be T.T.S. or the Parish of St. Helier or otherwise that would dictate out of that fund whether the bus service would be extended to St. John, for instance, or St. Mary or would it only be a Hoppa bus service in St. Helier or it would be partly directed to recycling initiatives, it might be main drains, it might be something else. It would not be ... it is not for me to say that.

The Deputy of St. John:

So, prior to ... well, with this here, have you had consultation ... we know you have not with Planning and Environment, but have you had consultation with T.T.S.?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No. All I have done is, as I have explained to you, I have opposed putting 3p on fuel in the Council of Ministers. I have advised all the Ministers that I was going to come up with this sort of scheme. I have now had meetings with Philip Ozouf and his officers, and Philip Ozouf said that he would be minded to support this because it raises money. If it had not been raising money he would not. I have not had any outline because I do not see any point at this present time. It is not an issue that I think that ... it might not be Connex and T.T.S. that would run it; it may be the Parish of St. Helier. It might be the Parish of St. Helier that will put a scheme together with all the Deputies of the Parish that will work something on that.

The Deputy of St. John:

I am conscious of the time and we have the next ...

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I know it is a bit woolly. You are going to say ... no, you are going to say it is a bit woolly.

The Deputy of St. John:

No, I am not saying it is woolly at all.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I hope you gentlemen will accept that I am trying to find a way through somewhere along the line that I can assist by providing some cash somewhere. I might be wrong, I might get slaughtered with this, and I have to tell you I am not very good on emissions and that and I do not really understand them. I am being honest with you. I am trying to find a way through and I do not think we are doing enough in environmental issues that people are concerned about. Certainly, one of them is recycling, and I heard him on the radio again the other day talking about he could increase it if he had the money and he has not. The objective has been for a number of years that there needs to be an improved Hoppa bus service around St. Helier to stop people driving into the centre of St. Helier with their cars.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

You also, Chairman, said that he had not mentioned anything of the outlying parishes, but he did actually mention the bicycle route that could be supported by this, so there was a mention of some outside parishes, yes.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I would like ... if the States could have ... if I could get approval for this, then I would like the experts ... perhaps Daniel with his environmental hat on, we would all get together and say: "This is what we are going to put the money for."

The Connétable of St. Peter:

Terry, just coming back to your tax again, the tax would tend to have a regressive impact and it would actually impact more on the poor people in the community, whereas the Minister's one on V.E.D. would actually hit the more affluent members of the community because they are buying the new cars and nearly new cars.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, initially it would do. Initially it would do.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

But again, coming on, the same sort of tandem view that I put to you earlier on, is there not an opportunity for you to hold the Minister's hand - metaphorically, of course, I add - with regard to V.E.D. plus your tax?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No, I think that the issue is that Philip is quite enamoured with this, with his officers, with this proposal as an option, as another option.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

I think they are probably enamoured by the money it is going to raise.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

His option does not include a Hoppa service?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

No.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

That really, for me, is one of the slight problems that I have at the moment, because within your report and proposition, or your draft report and proposition, it does not make any reference to hypothecation and the areas that the tax is intended to go towards. So it leaves it open for anyone to dip into that.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I have not, I have just suggested some ideas in it, but I certainly have not directed it and do not want to direct it because it is not for me. It would not be for me to be able to say: "This is what ..." I want States Members to say if there is a pot of money and the environmental benefits will come out of that pot of money and it must go in the best way possible in meeting those objectives. I could be proposing all sorts of things and I would be laughed out of court with it. My objectives environmentally might be totally different to 25 other States Members.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

For example, with hypothecation you could say, for example, that it is to be used totally to support the bus service, including the Hoppa service. If that were to happen, that would actually reduce the impact on T.T.S.'s budget and allow them to spend more of their budget on recycling. So, you see where I am coming from on that.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am not sure on the buses, when they are subsidising the buses ... when they are subsidising the buses at, what, £3 million or £4 million, £5 million.

The Deputy of St. John:

The final question will come from the Vice-Chairman.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Yes, okay. Terry, I think I and probably we agree with the environmental objective. When you read your ... the things we could do with this money, there is not a disagreement. I have 2 issues. One is, I suppose, the method, which I will come back to with a specific question. The other is whether these objectives should be dependent - and the Constable referred to this - on this or that way of raising the money. If it is important for the States to have a Hoppa bus service and a route to the east of the Island, then we do it. But that is a matter of discussion. The question on the method, when I look at this table that you have in your report and I see that half - in fact, half the money pretty well exactly - comes from small cars, comes from cars between 1,200 to 2,000 cc and a very small slice comes from the big cars, and the gradation of the annual tax is actually quite gradual, and you are taking out all the fuel tax element, I just do not see how this is an anti-pollution measure, which you are suggesting that it is.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, I wonder whether you could assist me, then, as Panel members. I do not have to lodge this before the 20th and I have come to seek your assistance as well. If you are sympathetic to what I am trying to achieve somewhere along the line, then I would welcome some input before I lodge this. You know, get around the table and have some of your views inputted in it. If you think I am a twit, just tell me and I will go away quietly. **[Laughter]** But if you feel that you might have some sympathy for what I am trying to achieve ... do not forget, I have done this on my own.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

We have sympathy with the goal.

The Deputy of St. John:

As a Back-Bencher we have sympathy with Back-Benchers. **[Laughter]**

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I am not a known academic or environmentalist, so I am a practical, down to earth fellow and if you could assist me in the next few days or the next week by coming up with some of your ideas or assisting me, if you are sympathetic to what I am trying to achieve, then I am very happy to incorporate or to work with that.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

From a procedural perspective, could I just ask if you were to lodge your proposition, with or without our assistance or whatever or if we were to take it, because I am quite keen for some of these aims and objectives to go forward, at what level would a Back-Bencher be able to amend that? Because if this was going forward and you were not particularly keen on seeing a hypothecation for buses, I would like to amend it to that.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Any amendments have to be in before the 20th, that is the problem.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

So you could not amend your amendment?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Well, you would have to do it before ... I would have to have it in, lodged, so you could see it, then you could amend it before the 20th.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Do the amendments to the amendments have to be in by the 20th?

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

Anyway, let us move forward because time is moving on. Just before closing, officers, have you got any areas that we have not covered?

Mr. M. Orbell:

No. I think following what the Senator has suggested just now about possibly looking at some of the proposals in more detail, I can ...

The Deputy of St. John:

You can touch base if need be with the Senator.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I hope you do not feel that I am a bit of a twit, but I have had some real difficulties. I have had to spend a lot of hours on that and I know that ... I have even sought the assistance of the Tax Policy Advisor in the Treasury to try and put something together, but what I am trying to do, I am trying to do something that I believe will be of tremendous benefit for a lot of people.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Well, I want to go on record to say, Senator, that I very much appreciate you coming and speaking to us like this and putting this forward on your own. It was me that encouraged the Panel to talk to you, and I am very keen to see people willing to work with others, so I definitely do not think you are a twit at all.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I showed the broad outline of this to the town Deputies. I do not know if I showed it to you.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

No, I did not see that, no.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

I showed it to most of the town Deputies - Deputy Hilton and all those - a long, long time ago; I have been working on this. They were all very, very keen for a town Hoppa bus service. That will make a huge environmental impact in St. Helier.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

We should do these environmental things, that is the thing.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

We are not going to get the money from the Treasury Minister, you know that. We are not going to get the money, so this is my last chance saloon. This is the problem.

The Deputy of St. John:

Senator Le Main, could I thank you for your time this afternoon.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Sorry if I am a bit mixed up, but anyway.

The Deputy of St. John:

No, it has been very constructive, I am sure. It has been helpful to the Panel and we will be in touch with you in due course. On behalf of everyone present, thank you.

Senator T.J. Le Main:

Thank you very much.

The Deputy of St. John:

The meeting is closed in relation to this subject at 3.20 p.m. Terry, thank you.