

## **Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 11 April 2000**

[R] signifies that the Member has declared an interest.

### **Questions to the First Secretary**

#### **Impact of Chancellor's Budget Statement on Devolved Matters**

**Q6 Ieuan Wyn Jones:** What discussions has the First Secretary had with the Secretary of State for Wales on the impact of the UK Chancellor's budget statement on devolved matters? (OAQ4689)

**The First Secretary (Rhodri Morgan):** I have discussed the budget statement with the Secretary of State for Wales and we debated the budget announcement in the Chamber on 28 March. Edwina Hart will make a further statement (tomorrow) to explain how the extra £158 million for next year is to be allocated.

#### **Textile Manufacturing Industry in Wales**

**Q7 Owen John Thomas:** Will the First Secretary consider developing a policy within the Assembly to assist the textile manufacturing industry in Wales along the lines of the assistance being offered to the UK car manufacturing industry? (OAQ4696)

**The First Secretary:** I have no such plans. The textile industry is eligible for the full range of Government and Assembly assistance, subject to European Commission state aid restrictions.

#### **Assembly Environment Policy**

**Q8 Rhodri Glyn Thomas:** What discussions has the First Secretary had about the Assembly's environment policy? (OAQ4692)

**The First Secretary:** The Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency Wales and the Forestry Commission produced reports last year on the state of the Welsh environment. We shall review these with the agencies and bring forward a report to the Transport, Planning and Environment Committee for consideration of the priority areas for action given the state of, and pressures on, our water, air and land.

#### **Marina Development in North Wales**

**Q9 Peter Rogers:** Will the First Secretary comment on the Assembly's policies for marina development in north Wales? (OAQ4695)

**The First Secretary:** The Assembly's policies relating to marina development are set out in Planning Guidance (Wales) Planning Policy (First Revision). Policies relating to tourism, sport and recreation are in paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2, but other policies in the document may be relevant in individual cases.

#### **Effect of Implementation of European Regulations on ASPBs**

**Q10 David Davies:** Will the First Secretary make a statement on the effect of implementation of European regulations in Wales on the ability of Assembly sponsored public bodies to directly compete for business with small private companies? (OAQ4702)

**The First Secretary:** Any agreements, business practices and conduct that can have a damaging effect on competition in the UK are outlawed by the Competition Act 1998, which came into force on 1 March

2000. The Act, which is overseen by the Office of Fair Trading, mirrors the behaviour currently prohibited by European Community legislation.

It is a requirement of Community law that EC legislation should be implemented in an effective, timely and proportionate manner. All new regulations, including those that implement EC Directives, are fully evaluated for their impact on business and others in the community.

### **Nuclear Fuels Reprocessing at Sellafield (Implications for Wales)**

**Q11 Jocelyn Davies:** Will the First Secretary report on any talks he has had regarding the implications for Wales of nuclear fuels reprocessing at Sellafield? (OAQ4690)

**The First Secretary:** I hold regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues and the Secretary of State for Wales on a range of issues. My officials liaise regularly with the authorities responsible for regulation of Sellafield, and are consulted about monitoring, by the Food Standards Agency, of fish and other aquatic life around the Welsh coast.

### **Lisbon Summit (Assembly's Policies)**

**Q12 Brian Hancock:** How does the First Secretary propose to ensure that the Assembly's policies reflect the results of the Lisbon summit of European leaders? (OAQ4691)

**The First Secretary:** I refer you to the answer I gave earlier today to Phil Williams on this matter (OAQ4707).

### **Legislative Changes in Westminster (Effect on Assembly Powers)**

**Q13 Gareth Jones:** Will the First Secretary make a statement on any legal advice he has received concerning how proposed legislative changes in Westminster will affect the powers of the Assembly? (OAQ4693)

**The First Secretary:** All Bills state clearly any effect that they have on the Assembly's functions. My predecessor and I have received frequent legal and other advice on Bills affecting Wales, and I will continue to press for all Bills to reflect the needs of Wales and the Assembly.

### **Development of Assembly Environment Policy**

**Q14 Elin Jones:** What discussions has the First Secretary had concerning the development of the Assembly's environment policy (OAQ4701)

**The First Secretary:** I refer you to the answer I gave to Rhodri Glyn Thomas on 11 April (OAQ4692).

### **Inward Investment in Wales**

**Q15 John Griffiths:** How will Wales's enhanced representation in Europe directly relate to encouraging inward investment in Wales? (OAQ4705)

**The First Secretary:** Crucial to our doing well in inward investment markets is the recognition in those markets that Wales exists as a separate, modern, dynamic and forward thinking entity where businesses of all types can succeed. Formal representation of the Assembly in Brussels, through the appointment of Des Clifford, will help underline that image among potential inward investors, and raise significantly the profile of Wales in Europe more generally.

### **Nuclear Fuels Reprocessing at Sellafield (Effect on Wales)**

**Q16 David Lloyd:** Will the First Secretary order an inquiry into the reprocessing of nuclear fuels in Sellafield and its effect on Wales? (OAQ4706)

**The First Secretary:** Regulation of Sellafield is a matter for the UK Government. I could justify an Assembly inquiry only if satisfied that there were important issues specifically affecting Wales. Routine monitoring by the Food Standards Agency and its predecessors shows no effects specific to Wales.

### **Assembly's Policy Unit**

**Q17 David Melding:** Will the First Secretary make a statement on the work of the Assembly's policy unit with regard to its role in policy development? (OAQ4697) *Withdrawn.*

### **Efforts to Encourage Accountability and Transparency**

**Q18 Janet Ryder:** Will the First Secretary make a statement on the Assembly's efforts to encourage accountability and transparency? (OAQ4699)

**The First Secretary:** I set out my approach to increasing the openness of the Assembly in my statement on 21 March. This will be reinforced by the proposals for accounting for performance which are set out in the corporate plan, 'A Better Wales', debated in the Assembly last week.

### **Meeting with Chief Secretary to the Treasury**

**Q19 Jonathan Morgan:** When did the First Secretary last meet the Chief Secretary to the Treasury? (OAQ4703) *Withdrawn.*

### **Efforts to Encourage Equality of Opportunity**

**Q20 Janet Davies:** Will the First Secretary make a statement on the Assembly's efforts to encourage equality of opportunity? (OAQ4698)

**The First Secretary:** The Assembly's Equal Opportunities Committee is leading the way in promoting equality of opportunity for all the people of Wales and it is the Committee's job to audit the Assembly's performance. At its next meeting, it will consider the results of a survey into the extent to which equality of opportunity, in respect of race, gender and disability, is being taken into consideration in the Assembly's business and functions.

The Assembly is actively taking forward the recommendations of the report of the Disability Rights taskforce and undertaking a Wales-wide exercise to address the findings of the 'Listening to Women' exercise. In addition, the Committee is scrutinising the implementation of the recommendations of the MacPherson report into the death of Stephen Lawrence. It will be examine the way public bodies take equal opportunities into account and look at how public appointments can be made more representative of the communities they serve.

### **BAE Systems in North Wales**

**Q21 Christine Humphreys:** Will the First Secretary reconsider his decision not to award a £25 million grant to BAE Systems in north Wales? (OAQ4694) [R]

**The First Secretary:** No. I gave BAE Systems' application careful consideration and came to the firm conclusion that it did not satisfy the regional selective assistance grant scheme criteria.

**Promotion of the Image and Culture of Wales (Objective 1)**

**Q22 Nick Bourne:** Will the First Secretary indicate how he hopes to promote Welsh culture and the image of Wales through Objective 1 funding? (OAQ4710)

**The First Secretary:** Projects requesting support under the Objective 1 programme will need to conform with the objectives and priorities of the programme. We are encouraging cultural bodies sponsored by the Assembly to investigate the opportunities presented by Objective 1. Applications for Objective 1 funding for projects that will promote the culture and image of Wales will be judged, like others, in terms of their capacity to meet the principal purpose of the programme, which is to promote the economic and social regeneration of the Objective 1 area.