

Answers to Questions not reached in Plenary 28 January 2003

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

[W] signifies that the question was tabled in Welsh.

Questions to the First Minister

Government Policies (Impact on North Wales)

Q11 Gareth Jones: What impact has the implementation of your Government's policies had upon north Wales? (OAQ21943)

The First Minister (Rhodri Morgan): The Welsh Assembly Government is making a substantial impact in north Wales through the implementation of our policies.

- Students domiciled in north Wales are benefiting from the introduction of the Assembly learning grant.
- The Communities First programme is helping to regenerate deprived areas of north Wales. So far, £5.2 million has been allocated.
- North Wales is benefiting from policies designed to improve health and NHS services in the whole of Wales.
- Labour market conditions in north Wales have improved significantly, the employment rate has increased by over 1.5 per cent.
- Assembly investment grants have had an excellent response from small and medium-sized enterprises throughout north Wales.

Tidal Energy for the Severn Estuary

Q12 Brian Hancock: What discussions has the First Minister had with the Department of Trade and Industry regarding renewal proposals for tidal energy for the Severn estuary? (OAQ21944)

The First Minister: I have held no such discussions.

'Plan For Wales 2001'

Q13 Ieuan Wyn Jones: Will the First Minister make a statement on the progress of fulfilling the promises outlined in the 'Plan for Wales 2001' strategic document? (OAQ21948)

The First Minister: The Welsh Assembly Government is making solid progress towards fulfilling our commitments detailed in 'Plan for Wales 2001'.

Since the progress detailed in my report last October, we have:

- continued our programme of local government modernisation and Communities First, the area-based regeneration initiative targeting many of Wales's most needy communities; and
- continued our considerable progress on achieving the health service targets for 2003-04 outlined in 'Plan for Wales 2001'. For example, we expect to exceed the target for doctors and nurses in training, and have reduced waiting times for cardiac and orthopaedic surgery in line with the targets given.

Equal Opportunities in Wales

Q14 Ann Jones: Will the First Minister make a statement on the measures being taken to promote equal opportunities in Wales? (OAQ21940)

The First Minister: We are currently undertaking a series of initiatives in Wales across the full range of equality strands. These include: public consultation seminars on a single equality body; meetings of the Wales public sector round table on equalities; an equal pay campaign; outreach initiatives to improve our work with disadvantaged groups and communities; the inter-faith council for Wales, disability discrimination seminars and further work, including public consultation on the Assembly's race equality scheme.

Hawliau Deddfu Llawn i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol

C15 Cynog Dafis: A wnaiff y Prif Weinidog ddatganiad ar gael hawliau deddfu llawn i'r Cynulliad Cenedlaethol? (OAQ21949) [W]

Y Prif Weinidog: Sefydlwyd Comisiwn Richard er mwyn ystyried hyd a lled pwerau'r Cynulliad, a bydd hyn yn cynnwys ystyried y ddadl dros roi pwerau deddfwriaethol i'r Cynulliad. Gofynnwyd i'r comisiwn adrodd yn ôl erbyn diwedd 2003.

Full Legislative Rights for the National Assembly

Q15 Cynog Dafis: Would the First Minister make a statement on giving the National Assembly full legislative rights? (OAQ21949) [W]

The First Minister: The Richard Commission has been established to consider the breadth and depth of the Assembly's powers, and this will include consideration of the case for giving the Assembly legislative powers. The commission has been asked to report by the end of 2003.