

3.2 The Deputy Bailiff:

Any supplementary questions? If not, we will move on to question 2. Senator Norman will ask a question of the Minister for Economic Development.

Senator L. Norman:

What action, if any, is the Minister proposing to take to ensure that the agreement made between the States of Jersey and the States of Guernsey on 26 August 2004 to give equitable access to Channel Island waters for local fishermen is implemented without further delay?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Economic Development): The Senator may know that following the meeting he attended in Guernsey in November, a letter was received by the Chief Minister, Senator Walker, from his opposite number in Guernsey. This letter sets out how Guernsey wishes to proceed with the reference to the agreement - the Vanguard Agreement - referred to in the Senator's question. It is clear that the fundamental principles of the Vanguard Agreement remain valid but common ground needs to be found on the type and numbers of access licenses that each side would like implemented. I am in discussions with the Chief Minister about the reply that the Jersey government will make to Guernsey. That letter will press firmly for the re-establishment of access for those Jersey fishermen that have previously fished in waters around Guernsey but who are now excluded. I am in the process also of establishing contact with my opposite number in Guernsey and for the sake of the Jersey fishing industry I will pursue this question of access as vigorously as I am able.

3.2.1 Deputy R.G. Le Herissier of St. Saviour:

Could the Minister inform us whether the approaches taken are likely to unblock this major diplomatic problem that we have had for a couple of years?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I do not have a crystal ball. What I do have is a firm view that this matter must be resolved in the earliest possible course, and I agree with the underlying sentiment that the Deputy makes, that this is a problem in the whole arrangement of business between Jersey and Guernsey. It runs very deep and we must work to resolve these matters to the satisfaction of our Jersey fishermen and, I hope, to the satisfaction of the Jersey authorities too. We will do our best but this is not easy.

3.2.2 Senator L. Norman:

Could I just ask if the Minister is committed to the agreement inasmuch as towards the number of Jersey registered vessels which were agreed by the appropriate Guernsey Minister that should be allowed to have licenses to fish in Guernsey waters? Or is he planning to reduce the number that was agreed in 2004?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

The Senator has a much deeper understanding and a long-standing set of information on this issue than I do, but certainly I have been briefed in-depth about this issue of the number of boats that were negotiated at the time of the Vanguard Agreement, and I see no reason to change Jersey's position from that. That is the negotiating position that we start with. The Chief Minister has indicated that I am to lead the negotiations with Guernsey on this but I will be keeping him and the Council of Ministers... and

drawing on the experience of other Members such as Senator Norman, to assist me in this difficult issue and resolution. But, no, the position has not changed.

Senator L. Norman:

I am grateful to the Minister and assure him of my support to ensure that the Vanguard Agreement, as he calls it, is implemented in its entirety, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

The question was ...?

Senator L. Norman:

I was just being decent and respectful to the Minister, Sir.