

20.09.22

**17 The Connétable of St. Helier of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding free swab testing for passengers at Jersey ports (OQ.237/2020):**

Will the Minister undertake to support the tourism industry by taking such steps as are necessary to ensure that swab testing for passengers arriving at Jersey's ports remains free?

**Senator L.J. Farnham (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):**

A comprehensive on arrival P.C.R. (polymerase chain reaction) testing programme, as Members will know, is an important part of the safer travel arrangements and represents a considerable commitment by the taxpayer to maintain Jersey as a holiday destination to support a number of sectors within our economy including tourism. So at this stage I certainly would not support the introduction of charges for the testing as we have seen in other jurisdictions, for example Iceland, where they did introduce a charge for the test this could cause a sharp drop in passenger numbers to the overall detriment of our community. Our Island is successfully containing the spread of the virus and the travel is helping to support Islanders, businesses and the visitor economy, albeit it at a significantly reduced rate. I would say that it might not be sustainable to continue the full cost of testing indefinitely, but I certainly would not support any changes to the current arrangement until such time as we were being vaccinated and we saw a lot more confidence from the airlines and a lot more security for the airlines and the shipping companies as they make a global recovery. So right now I intend to continue to throw my support behind the current arrangement and support not just tourism but all Islanders with the safer travel policy.

**4.17.1 The Connétable of St. Helier:**

I am sure the tourism industry, hospitality and other sectors will be very relieved to hear the Minister's words. Could I just ask the Minister to pass on my thanks, and I am sure the Assembly's thanks, to all of those staff who work so hard at the ports to provide a testing service which has already won national regard and is frequently referred to in national media.

**Senator L.J. Farnham:**

Yes, I certainly will, thank you.