

21.11.23

7 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade of the Minister for External Relations and Financial Services regarding the support of the British Government for Jersey's fishing industry (OQ.237/2021):

Further to the recent meeting with the U.K.'s (United Kingdom) Prime Minister, will the Minister state whether the Government was advised that the British Government supports Jersey's fishing industry and, if so, whether that advice includes how the British Government would demonstrate that support?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Minister for External Relations and Financial Services):

As the Connétable is aware, the U.K. Government is ultimately responsible for discussions with the European Commission, the implementation of the U.K.-E.U. (European Union) Trade and Co-operation Agreement. During the recent meeting to which the Connétable refers, the Prime Minister reaffirmed his support for Jersey's approach to licensing French fishing vessels which has been reasonable and fully in line with the T.C.A. (Trade and Co-operation Agreement). The Prime Minister noted that both the U.K. and Jersey were issuing licences on the basis of evidence of historic fishing activity as required by the T.C.A. The U.K. Government continues to support Jersey through its discussions with the European Commission with direct involvement of Jersey officials as Jersey works to implement in good faith the T.C.A.'s provisions on fisheries and other matters.

4.7.1 The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Jersey fishing fleet is somewhat despondent over the manner in which our Government has handled the Brexit arrangements with regard to fishing. While I appreciate the sensitive nature of the negotiations, could the Minister give fishermen in Jersey some justification why they should continue to invest in the industry and not take up knitting, as was the case in time past in the 18th century?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I cannot comment on the economic viability of knitting, perhaps the Connétable can. I fully understand, as does the Minister for the Environment - who is in virtually daily, certainly weekly, contact with the fishing industry - the difficulties that they are experiencing on a daily basis, both his officers and my officers are constantly working to support. But, of course, the industry does not stand united in what its primary aim is out of the Brexit deal. It cannot be a surprise that the implementation of a changed arrangement, which is very much in Jersey's benefit and is to the benefit of a more sustainable fishing industry here in Jersey into the future, would be smoothly implemented and implemented in a timely manner. But it is important that we continue to implement the deal fairly, appropriately and pragmatically because it is ultimately in the interests of the Jersey fishing fleet to do so. We will then have a sustainable fishery into the future. That means that the Jersey Minister for the Environment will be the one issuing licences. That is right and appropriate. He will be the one taking measures around sustainability, that is right and appropriate, but it is going to take time. As it takes time the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture stands ready and has again this week put more funds aside to support industry where necessary.