

2.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture regarding formal channels for the education and training needs of the finance industry:

Would the Minister outline what formal channels, if any, exist at a policy level so that the Minister and his department are apprised of the education and training needs of the finance industry?

Senator M.E. Vibert (The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

The governing body of Highlands College, which is the main provider of further education and training in the Island, provides the main formal link between the finance industry and the Minister and the Department for Education, Sport and Culture. One of the main purposes of the governing body is to advise on policy development and the nature of provision made by the college. A number of leading members of the finance industry are governors. The Chairman is the senior partner of Moore Stephens and a board member of Jersey Finance Limited. The Vice-Chairman is Deputy Director-General of the Financial Services Commission. Other members of the governing body who hold key positions in the finance industry are the retiring Chief Executive of Jersey Finance Limited, the Manager of Banking Regulation with the Financial Services Commission, the Managing Director of UBS Jersey and former Chairman of the Jersey Bankers Association, and the Managing Director of Citibank and a member of the Jersey Bankers Association. In addition, the governing body has a sub-committee, the Jersey Business School Executive, chaired by the Chairman of Governors, which considers finance industry training needs and reports to the main board. The Education, Sport and Culture Department and Highlands College were also members of the steering group of the Economic Development Department's research project into training needs of the finance industry carried out in 2004, and we look forward to working closely with the education and training committee to be established by Jersey Finance Limited, which will provide a further forum for discussing future training policy and training requirements. The finance industry has also been represented on policy reviews undertaken by Education, Sport and Culture. Thus, for example, the retiring member of Jersey Finance Limited was a member of the working group which reviewed the 14-19 curriculum and was also one of the members of the finance industry community consulted during the preparation of the Higher Education Review.

2.6.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Notwithstanding the eminent people who are involved with the process, would the Minister outline what the contact has been with people such as the director and the assistant directors with the finance industry and whether a Member such as myself could access relevant policy papers that have emanated from meetings?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Notwithstanding the facts, Sir, that I have just outlined, yes, we have as much contact as possible. I do not wish to say anything to the Deputy, but it would be unusual (if my understanding is correct that the Deputy is actually employed at times by the college) to have access to personal papers. If he is not, any papers that are in the public domain, of course as a States Member he is absolutely entitled to and I will also make any papers that he wishes available to him. We endeavour to be as open as possible and certainly we endeavour to involve the finance industry in our training needs as much as possible, as I outlined, through the involvement of the eminent

people involved in the finance industry, in Highlands, and also in all the reviews we have carried out on further and higher education.

2.6.2 Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. John:

Would the Minister consider it appropriate to also seek to better inform teaching staff - in particular careers teachers - as to the opportunities that exist for careers in the finance industry and seek to dispel opinion among some teaching staff that students have somehow failed should they choose a career in the finance industry?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I would hope very much, Sir, that the last comment that teachers would think someone has failed if they went into the finance industry is an urban myth rather than reality. In fact, all our careers teachers have close connections with the finance industry and receive training and information on what is on offer in the finance industry. We also hold careers fairs. I think one of the problems that the Deputy might be referring to for why there may be a reluctance of some young people to take up a career in the finance industry is perhaps the comments that have been made in this House and by States Members outside of this House decrying the finance industry on occasions and giving the impression that it is not welcome in Jersey. Well, our message is it is welcome. It provides the majority of Jersey's income. It provides the money for the majority of Jersey's important public services, and we want to be able to provide as many young people as possible to have a good career in it.

2.6.3 Deputy S.C. Ferguson of St. Brelade:

Given this wonderful panoply of luminaries, all apparently discussing the education aspects of going into the finance industry, I wonder if the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture would like to conduct a review to investigate why the finance industry is still complaining that our students are missing a number of skills in their employment?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Most industries would want to employ people who are completely prepared for the purpose when they come out of school. Unfortunately, that is not always possible. I am sorry that some people in the finance industry have expressed a view that they would like our pupils to be better prepared for the jobs they have on offer. I heard Deputy Le Hérisier give an interview on the radio this morning on this very subject saying we accepted that education did have another purpose rather than turning out just people to work in any particular industry. We are recognised now as one of the world leaders in the provision of critical skills in our education system, which is working through our current education system, which is designed to provide the very skills that the industry in Jersey have been asking for. Those skills include things such as being able to get on with people, being able to solve problems, being able to work in teams, and certainly the emphasis in our education system at the moment is preparing young people for lifelong learning and providing them with their skills. I very much hope that emphasis, which has been recognised nationally and internationally now as a world leader, will reduce comments in the future and reduce the concerns that people have that perhaps our young people could be better prepared.

2.6.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister accept that the recent plan for growth in the finance sector has shifted the burden for training from the industry itself to his already very stretched educational budget?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I certainly think there is a great emphasis on our service to provide better training, and we are working very closely with the finance industry and with the Minister for Economic Development and the Council of Ministers to improve that. I would encourage not just the finance industry but every industry to invest in training because it is an investment in their own future. Certainly, we have seen developments in the not distant past, in fact very new developments, where, for example, at Haulieu we are now offering a trust qualification in connection with one of the industry bodies that young people can take at the school, which is an example of exactly how we are providing what the finance industry have asked us to provide. Yes, it is important we work in partnership and that the industries concerned recognise their need to resource the training as well as ours.

2.6.5 Deputy J.J. Huet of St. Helier:

Would the Minister confirm that with the Trident Project a lot of our youngsters are going and experimenting, trying out banking and trust work? Would he also tell us what the finance industry are doing to work with his department? In other words, what training can they offer or are they attempting to work with him?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

The Deputy mentions Trident, which is an excellent example of where young people receive on the job experience in various jobs, including a lot in the finance industry. We also have a Young Enterprise. We also have a number of other projects going on which give young people the opportunity to experience the world of work. I pay credit to the finance industry, many of whose members as I listed from the Highlands College Board of Governors give their time freely to help us and improve our training and give their knowledge and skills to us. We are very grateful for that. We are working very closely with them. We will be working even more closely in future. We are closely involved with them in the 14-19 Review of the curriculum and also in the Higher Education Review. We have recently set up the Cass Business School with talk of setting up a business school on the Waterfront. We are talking about offering more courses at Highlands, but we need to work together to ensure what we are offering is good educationally and good for the industry.

2.6.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the Minister give an assurance that notwithstanding the excellent initiatives which are already in existence he will examine the relationships at the highest level within his department and the finance industry to ensure that there is a good 2-way flow of communication and information?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I believe I have shown and demonstrated that there is already an excellent flow, but of course we can always do better and we will examine it again and try to do better. Any suggestions the Deputy has on how it can be further improved will be welcome and received with open arms.