

2.1 Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade of the Minister for Planning and Environment regarding the operation of the fishery protection vessel, the Norman Le Brocq:

In relation to the operation of the Fishery Protection Vessel the Norman Le Brocq, would the Minister inform Members of the operational hours spent at sea in 2004, 2005 and the first 6 months of 2006; the annual operating budget, including crew, maintenance and operating costs and the estimated budget, if any, for essential maintenance for 2006, 2007 and 2008?

Senator F.E. Cohen (Minister for Planning and Environment):

I can inform the House that the operational hours spent at sea by the Norman Le Brocq were as follows. In 2004, 108 days were spent at sea totalling 460 hours, 5,400 miles were logged and 426 boardings were carried out. In 2005, 120 days were spent at sea totalling 501 hours, 5,270 miles were logged and 427 boardings carried out. In the first 6 months of 2006, 41 days were spent at sea totalling 233 hours, 2,260 miles were logged and 79 boardings were carried out. During 2006 13 French fishermen and 2 Jersey fishermen have or will be appearing in court concerning issues that have come to light during the patrols at sea. In 2006 substantial sea time was out of normal working hours. The annual operating budgets for the Norman Le Brocq in the recent 3 years are as follows: 2006, £64,380 out of a total fisheries budget of £373,000; 2007, £65,670 out of a total budget of £380,000; 2008, £67,000 out of a total budget of £388,000. In addition to the essential maintenance, periodic service and refitting will occur. A 10-year refit was completed in the spring of 2006 at a cost of £102,000 funded by the minor capital expenditure budget. Unless there is an unforeseen breakdown we do not envisage any other capital expenditure in the period 2006 to 2008. However, an assessment on replacing the vessel in 2012 will be carried out after 15 years of service.

2.1.1 Deputy S. Power:

The Minister will be aware through complaints and reports to his office, and particularly the Sea Fisheries Inspectorate, of illegal low order fishing, especially ormering around the Ecréhous. Can the Minister ensure that the Norman Le Brocq is sent to investigate these complaints?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I will do my best to ensure that this is carried out and I will report back to Deputy Power informing him of progress shortly.

2.1.2 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

Could the Minister confirm that he considers the present budget for the operation of the Norman Le Brocq sufficient in view of the constant, shall we say, pilfering by the French from our waters and in view of the delicacy of the boundaries with the French fishery?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

The current budget is sufficient assuming there are no unforeseen breakdowns. But currently there is no plan in place to replace the boat, the vessel, which, as I reported a moment ago, is expected to have a life of around 2012. Very clearly provision does need to be made. The vessel carries out very important functions. I have been out on the vessel twice myself and on the second occasion we boarded a number of vessels leading to an arrest on one occasion. It is a very important function if we wish to protect our fisheries and needs proper funding. Presently, however, as I have said, barring unexpected eventualities we have sufficient funds.

2.1.3 Deputy S. Power:

Can the Minister also ensure that the Norman Le Brocq does weekend patrols, especially during spring tides, and can he also ensure that the vessel is used more frequently for night time patrols?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

The operational running of the Norman Le Brocq is left to the experts. I am certainly prepared to undertake to discuss the issue with the relevant department officers and I will report to Deputy Power and inform him of the break down of weekend and night vessel usage.

2.1.4 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

I tried to grasp the answers in the first question but they were quite comprehensive so I did not quite catch the numbers as well as I might have. In any event, I would like to ask; it appeared from the answers that the boardings for this year were 79 which was comparatively low compared to, if one was to take 400 for the other years, could the Minister explain why the numbers appear apparently lower in this year for the number of boardings?

Senator F.E. Cohen:

I am sorry that I rushed them, I was trying to fit it into the allocated 90 seconds, and I will provide them to Deputy Le Claire later on today, and indeed to all other

Members. The figures I gave includes for the first 6 months of 2006 79 boardings; compared to the total of previous years clearly that is significantly less than half, it is approximately a quarter. I am not sure whether this is because the majority of boardings are carried out in the summer. I would expect that is the case but I will find out and report back.