

3.6 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier of the Minister for Economic Development regarding review of the senior management group at the Airport:

Given the information contained in the recent statement that the senior management group at the airport consists of 25 persons earning in excess of £70,000 per annum, would the Minister inform Member what steps, if any, are being taken and within what deadlines to review this situation?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Economic Development):

I ask Deputy Maclean, who has responsibility for the airport, to be rapporteur for this item.

The Bailiff:

Yes, rapporteur?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean of St. Helier:

I believe that there may be some confusion caused by the use of the term “senior management group” in this question. Of the 25 persons identified as this group, earning in excess of £70,000 per annum, only 5 form part of the senior management group. 22 are, in fact, involved in technical operations at the airport with the majority being air traffic controllers. The salaries being paid to these individuals is consistent with other airports and takes into account the highly specialised nature of their jobs. In addition, it should be noted that the airport, unlike other businesses, is operational for 16 out of every 24 hours, 7 days a week including holidays. As such, it requires staffing by shifts which understandably increases the specialist staff numbers in order to cover extra hours. Sir, I could assure Deputy Le Hérisier and Members that there is nothing that I hate or dislike more than waste and inefficiency in any business, especially where it involves taxpayers’ money. With this mind, the new Airport Director is currently undertaking a full review of the organisational structure and operation of the airport. This review is being supported by specialists in both fields and is expected to be delivered with recommendations by the end of July.

3.6.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would the Assistant Minister identify the studies that have led him to the conclusion that the 22 non-management people are indeed paid at a comparable level to those at other airports? And secondly, Sir, would he say whether, having started political life out as one of the 7 angry young men, he has undergone a sudden transformation and become a total supporter of the system?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

A very interesting question, Sir. Two very interesting questions, in fact. I will deal with the first one first. With regard to the study of the 22 or the 25 in the group in question, the information has been supplied as part of the initial reports from a consultancy group, who I do not think it appropriate to name at this stage. So, I am very satisfied that in fact the salaries being paid to these individuals are in fact in line with what would be expected in a similar sized airport. With regard to the second question that Deputy Le Hérisier mentions, I have not undertaken a massive transformation or a leap in faith in any particular direction at all. That is why I pointed out that I have been very keen for the Airport Director to undertake the

review, which he is currently doing to ensure that the airport is operated in an efficient manner and that value for money and efficiency is delivered.

3.6.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

It strikes me, Sir, that the Assistant Minister - in the nicest sense - is speaking out of both sides of the mouth. On the one hand, Sir, he is justifying the system. On the other hand, Sir, he is saying he has put an investigation in train to deal with its inefficiencies. What inefficiencies has he noticed?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

I think it would be inappropriate to prejudge the decisions and recommendations that will come from the work that the Airport Director and, in fact, the 2 specialists that have been employed to look at issues surrounding both the operational and staffing aspects of the airport, have done. There are areas that we have identified. The report for that will be available and I will be more than happy to discuss it at the end of July when we expect to have it in full.