

2.3 Deputy S. Power of St. Brelade of the Minister for Economic Development regarding comparative figures in 2006 for the total number of passengers arriving by sea from the United Kingdom and from France during the 3-month period February to April 2005:

Would the Minister inform Members how the total number of passengers arriving by sea from the United Kingdom and from France during the last 3 months compares to the same period in 2005, and would he inform Members what steps, if any, he is taking to stop the decline in Jersey's sea routes?

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

Deputy Maclean has responsibility for harbours and airport and I would ask that he be rapporteur.

The Bailiff:

Very well. Assistant Minister.

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean (Assistant Minister for Economic Development):

For the period from January to April 2006, sea arrivals from the U.K. were down 17 per cent, while arrivals from France were down by approximately 8 per cent, compared to 2005. But, as a matter of further interest, if we compare 2006 figures to the same period in 2004, this shows that U.K. routes, although down 16 per cent, France was up by 2 per cent, despite the regrettable loss of the Emeraude service last December. Members will be aware that statistics covering short periods of time can be misleading and are of strictly limited commercial relevance. In order to secure and develop Jersey sea routes, my department continues to work with all operators. This includes marketing and advertising support and the introduction of incentives such as reduced harbour dues for new routes. All operators will shortly be able to benefit from a new incentive to encourage a daytrip market, which is especially valuable to the economy. Further details of the extensive activities which have been undertaken in France in support of ferry operations were given in my response to Constable Crowcroft's oral question on 14th March. Thank you.

2.3.1 Deputy S. Power:

For the sake of clarification, Sir, could I ask the Assistant Minister if he sees a correlation on the decline between passengers not using some of those routes and a boycott? Can I also seek clarification from the Minister that, on month-on-month statistics between 2006 and 2005 - particularly March - it shows a decline of 43.1 per cent on the U.K. route and 32.5 per cent on the continental route?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

I am afraid I see no instance of boycott at all in the statistics. As I have said, it is quite interesting to see that in fact, based on 2004 figures, the French market was 2 per cent up. The U.K. market statistics are fairly level over the period 2004 and 2005. As far as looking at individual months, during any year you will see fluctuations depending on demand, season, occasions like Easter and so on. So identifying one

particular month, as I have said a moment ago, is of no particular relevance. Thank you.

2.3.2 Deputy A. Breckon of St. Saviour:

Sir, the question you asked about the total number of passengers: I have heard a lot of percentages but I have not heard any other figures. I wondered if the Assistant Minister could tell the House if the figures are easily available and, if so, where from and, if not, why not.

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

Yes, the figures are very easily available. They are on the Jersey Tourism website at the present time. In terms of actual numbers, if the Deputy would be interested, in 2006 for the period January to April 40,779 arrivals and, from the U.K., 14,987.

2.3.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour:

Is it the Assistant Minister's considered view that the rationale for allowing open seas to France for the operator on the U.K. route has ended up with a strengthening of the U.K. portion of the route?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

I do not think the U.K. portion of the route has strengthened particularly. The figures seem to indicate that, in fact, the numbers are fairly similar to what they were previously.

2.3.4 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement:

Does the Assistant Minister agree that proper and understandable timetables are a virtue when it comes to encouraging casual travellers? Would he ensure that they do in fact exist? Would he also agree that there is a disincentive for local people to travel, given the disparity between the charges from here to the U.K. compared with from the U.K. to here?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

Yes, I thoroughly agree with the Deputy in connection with timetables. In fact, fairly recently comprehensive timetables were published in a document which was inserted in the *Jersey Evening Post*. We have received also assurances from Condor that they will be keeping regular updates on their website of timetables and issuing written and printed timetables, which in fact are available for both the northern and southern routes as I speak. With regard to disincentivising members of the Jersey public from travelling, although there are some differentials, they are obviously market-led. The U.K. is a very large catchment area. It is very competitive with a number of different routes and obviously we have got to be very careful - or certainly the operators have got to be very careful - in how they market. So you will find in certain instances different price differentials, which are purely market-driven. Jersey is still, in my opinion, reasonably competitive, as far as sea travel is concerned from a cost perspective and that is proven by the figures, which are fairly stable.

2.3.5 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Will the Assistant Minister not agree that if it costs, for argument's sake, £300 to travel from the United Kingdom to Jersey and back again with a car and a couple of adults, but twice the amount to go the other way round, then in fact the travelling public of Jersey are subsidising the travelling public from the U.K.?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

No, I would not necessarily agree with that. As I said a moment ago, as far as I am concerned, it is market-driven. There is a very large catchment area in the U.K. and there is not from the Channel Islands and specifically from Jersey. Clearly, we are concerned with having sustainable sea routes. We are concerned with an operator that is going to be financially viable. We are also very concerned that the fares charged are fair and reasonable in present market conditions and we are working towards ensuring that that is the case. If necessary, as has previously been mentioned, the likes of the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (JCRA) will in fact be brought to bear on the issue of pricing.

2.3.6 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

Perhaps I could ask the Assistant Minister when the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority will be examining the pricing structures and when we would expect to have a result of their deliberations?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

The JCRA at the moment is in the early stages of being contacted with regard to this issue. It is a complex issue relating to sea routes in total with regard to service level agreements, which are in the draft stage. It would be later on this year before we believe that it would be appropriate for them to look more closely at the pricing issue.

2.3.7 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Could the Minister define for me what the "early stages of being contacted" means? Have they been contacted or not?

Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:

Yes, we have spoken to them in principle about looking at pricing structures for sea routes.