

### **3.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

What progress has been made in securing ferry services on the southern route for the coming tourist season, and what consideration, if any, has been given to reviewing the 'open seas' policy followed by the former Economic Development Committee as recommended in the OXERA report, dated July 2004, regarding the viability of ferry services?

### **Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

I thought I had given up the poisoned chalice, Sir. **[Laughter]** I answered a number of questions at the emergency question that was laid at the last sitting and since then I can inform the Assembly that there has been a number of actions and developments. I repeat that it is important to get this issue right. The sea links of Jersey are absolutely vital. Before the Christmas break I met both the senior management of Condor and Sogestran. I got out of the meetings with Condor various assurances on service and prices, and following an informative meeting with the newly appointed Managing Director of Emeraude and the Sogestran Finance Director, I set a deadline for the end of January for Sogestran to report to me on their future intentions. I can also say that yesterday I spoke on the telephone with Monsieur Jean Paul Jerome, the Managing Director of Emeraude - the newly appointed one - and the news was encouraging. He explained that Sogestran remained committed to the Island, that there is an affection for Emeraude within the Island and that they are making strenuous efforts to return to the route. They explained that various lessons have been learnt from the experience of the last couple of years. They have carried out market reviews and various options are in the process of being discussed with their Board in France. I can say for my part that my department will do all we can to secure their return to the route on a level playing field basis. At the same time I recognise - and I think we all must - the continuing service on the route by Condor. I advised the States of our intention to make a decision on the future policy for sea transport by the end of February. This remains the timetable. I will be asking the Council of Ministers to consider this matter at its meeting on 9th February and we will be publishing our intentions shortly after. I have also arranged the meeting with my Guernsey counterpart on this matter - and his officials - on 23rd January, and I have also sought advice from the Law Officers, OXERA, JCRA and the Harbours Department. I am also very happy to discuss the matter with the Scrutiny Panel whose interest in this whole subject I certainly welcome. I think that is all I will say at the moment.