

2.5 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding grants for Sea Cadets and Air Cadets:

Would the Minister inform Members whether or not it is her intention to reduce or remove altogether the grants made for the Sea and Air Cadets, possibly jeopardising the running of these organisations and, if so, will she undertake to reverse this decision so that no such cuts will be made?

Senator W. Kinnard (The Minister for Home Affairs):

It is not my intention to reduce or remove the grants.

2.5.1 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondre of St. Lawrence:

I thank the Minister for her reply to my question submitted on 2nd January. Just a few weeks ago, I, myself, Sir, was attending TS Jersey up at Fort Regent and I was honoured to be invited by the Commanding Officer to present the awards to some of these hard working and dedicated cadets. Sir, I would like to ask the Minister if she has the intention of continuing to support the cadets beyond next year, as these Air and Sea Cadets are a credit to Jersey?

Senator W. Kinnard:

I would agree with the sentiment that not just the Sea Cadets but also the Air Cadets and indeed the Victoria College CCF (Combined Cadet Force) are all supported by Home Affairs and we consider they are of a great value to our community. However, Sir, in these difficult funding situations that the States finds themselves in, I cannot guarantee future funding into future years. It has to be a matter that is prioritised on a year-by-year basis. We give £10,000 currently to each of those organisations and I would hope that we would be able to continue to do so, but it would be financially irresponsible of me to make commitments into the future that I would then perhaps not be able to fulfil. The 3 organisations have always been aware of the situation. They have certainly been aware of the situation since last June and I think that we have a way of working together that suits us quite well. Thank you, Sir.

2.5.2 Deputy J.B. Fox:

I wonder if the Minister could give assurance to the House that if there is ever occasion in the future that she would be required to consider withdrawing such grants of this important nature that she would consider or indeed take it to the Council of Ministers to see whether in fact there was another way around the issue before making a decision and then having to or being able to withdraw the decision? Thank you.

Senator W. Kinnard:

Yes, it would have been a matter that I would have taken to the Council of Ministers had I found myself in a position where I would have had to withdraw the grants, because it was not something that I wanted to do. It is unfortunate that all the funding has fallen on to Home Affairs because in fact it was the Education Committee that withdrew their share of funding to these organisations some years ago. So, it is unfortunate that these organisations have to rely on Home Affairs alone.

2.5.3 Deputy S.C. Ferguson:

Does the Minister not realise that by funding these particular organisations, she cuts down the amount of work that the police may well have to do in the future because of the standards, ethics and discipline that these organisations impose?

Senator W. Kinnard:

Yes, Sir, I do not need any convincing of that but the priority for the Department of Home Affairs must be to ensure the ongoing provision of frontline services, and while I fully support the opportunities that are provided by all of these organisations to young people, the Home Affairs responsibility is first to the needs of the Island as a whole and that must take priority. I share the

sentiments that are expressed around the Chamber about these organisations and clearly I am pleased to be able to continue to support them into 2007.

2.5.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérisier:

Would the Minister not acknowledge that put against the vast staffing costs of the States and of the department she runs, that the expenditure of £10,000 represents enormous value for money and the public will see this as yet another attack upon the principle of honorary service? Thank you, Sir.

Senator W. Kinnard:

It is £30,000 because it is 3 organisations and they were treated in exactly the same manner. What the Members must realise, Sir, is that the Home Affairs budget has been under severe strain particularly in 2006. In fact, with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme - a commitment which was entered into by the States - overrunning severely by some £320,000, Members must realise that when severe budgetary pressures are on we have to make very difficult and hard decisions and this was not a decision I would have liked to have taken. It was certainly not one I would have taken lightly but, Sir, again I have to state that when we are dealing with frontline services that are to do with the protection of the whole of the Island that must take priority. But, again, I think £30,000 is money well spent on 3 organisations and I have done everything I can to protect their position.

2.5.5 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I congratulate the Minister on finding the money but it seems I will need to reappear next year and pursue the Minister again, but at twice the price I think this would be an absolute bargain. Does the Minister not agree?

Senator W. Kinnard:

I think it is good value for money at the price that it is. Thank you, Sir.