

2.2 The Deputy of St. John of the Chief Minister regarding the estimated cost of the recent emergency exercise at Jersey Airport:

Could Members be told the estimated cost of the recent emergency exercise at the airport? What budget was set aside for it, the number of States of Jersey Police officers involved and the cost of their involvement, whether off-duty States Police officers were called in for the exercise and, if so, how many and what were the overtime costs?

Senator T.A. Le Sueur (The Chief Minister):

The emergency planning section of the Chief Minister's Department holds a small annual budget to support States-wide multi-agency training and exercising. The central costs of this exercise, which covered accommodation, equipment purchase, hire charges, welfare, documentation and so on, was in the order of £4,000. Those organisations and departments participating in the exercise met their costs from within their own budgets. Fifty-seven police officers were engaged in the exercise along with police support staff. While not an additional cost to the department's budget the opportunity cost at the time provided by police officers and police support staff is estimated to be in the region of £20,000. The exercise did not require any off-duty States Police officers being called in to participate in the exercise and no overtime payments were made. This was the largest live exercise the Island has ever undertaken and it provided a valuable opportunity for learning which can only strengthen the Island's response in the unfortunate event of a major emergency in the future.

2.2.1 The Deputy of St. John:

I do have some concerns given that we have not really been given a proper breakdown as requested. Given that many Honorary Police were available and, historically, have backed all emergency exercises over many, many years and given considerable time to this Island, when the Chief Minister and his Emergency Planning Officer and committee pulled this exercise together did the Chief Minister not revert to previous exercises which in fact cost closer to £250,000 for this type of exercise, not £25,000 as he has given the figure today. Did he not instruct his Emergency Planning Officer that the Honorary Police officers should be used in the same capacity as the States Police officers?

Senator T.A Le Sueur:

The arrangement for co-ordination between the States of Jersey Police and the Honorary Police was discussed at frequent meetings at which representatives of the Honorary Police were in attendance and a plan was drawn up jointly by these and that plan allowed for and involved the activities of both Honorary Police and States of Jersey Police. The purpose of exercises such as this is to find out what goes right and what goes wrong and to learn from what has gone wrong. Certain matters have gone wrong in this exercise but a lot more went right. But we shall be learning from what went wrong to ensure that in the event of a real emergency we can learn from earlier planning.

2.2.2 The Deputy of St. John:

Can the Chief Minister tell the Members what action he has taken to make sure that the Emergency Planning Officer gets proper training in the events of emergency

planning and also what action he has taken to inform him that our Honorary Police carry the same weight at the States Police?

Senator T.A Le Sueur:

I resent the implication that the Emergency Planning Officer is untrained. The Emergency Planning Officer has had significant training and is working together to co-ordinate all these activities. I believe that the exercise undertaken, which was the largest exercise undertaken, was a comprehensive and well-planned exercise co-ordinated with the help of many organisations including the Honorary Police. Inevitably in these sorts of operations you learn things and that is the important part of doing them, and while I do accept that there are matters to be learned, I do not believe that the situation is as dire as the Deputy would have us believe.

2.2.3 Deputy C.H. Egré of St. Peter:

Would the Chief Minister make available to States Members the lessons learned in order that we can make an objective decision as to whether these exercises are as fruitful as they are being made out to be?

Senator T.A Le Sueur:

The outcome of the exercise was to debrief operations carried out by individuals and collective groups, which will be reported back to the Emergencies Council at their next meeting. The Council will then decide how we can learn from that comprehensive report and to the extent that that needs to be circulated to other people for scrutiny, I would be happy to make that available.

2.2.4 The Very Reverend R.F. Key, B.A., The Dean of Jersey:

Will the Chief Minister accept I serve as a member of the Airport Emergency Planning Committee in my role as Chaplain so I was there at all these conversations, and will he accept that the position I take there that the correct working of the honorary and the paid services of the Island, not simply the police but also the Constables of the Parishes, not only are desirable for the future but proved - and in the fire near the end of the airport some time last year - that that marrying of the official and the honorary systems are essential in the outworking of an emergency?
[Approbation]

Senator T.A Le Sueur:

Absolutely, I pay tribute to the services provided by the Honorary Police of St. Peter and other Parishes in that fire incident, and indeed for the participation that they gave in this particular emergency exercise. It is a matter of record that the Honorary Police and the States of Jersey Police both have a part to play in this. They are both equally valued and equally important and I want to make sure, in particular, that in the event of a real emergency, as happened in that fire situation, all resources are used to their best advantage and that is why we have these exercises, as I say, to learn from them what can go wrong and how they can be improved upon.

2.2.5 The Deputy of St. John:

Could the Chief Minister inform the Members of the qualifications of the E.P.O. (Emergency Planning Officer) that he holds, please?

Senator T.A Le Sueur:

I do not have the professional qualifications to hand because they are not part of the original question, but certainly the Planning Officer has had experience here and in the mainland of previous emergency activities and I believe his qualifications, both in experience and any paper qualifications, are as good as one can expect on this Island and what was done in this emergency exercise was, I believe, a significant improvement on anything we have done in the past. It is far more comprehensive than anything we have done in the past and I believe that far from being critical, we owe a debt of gratitude to the Emergency Planning Officer for the way in which this has been properly co-ordinated.