

2.10 The Deputy of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the remuneration of the Harbours and Airport Shadow Board:

Can the Minister explain how with payments of £650 for the chair and £450 per day per member for up to 40 days per annum - which equates to a minimum of £26,000 per member - these sums for membership of the Harbour and Airport Shadow Board can be considered to be an honorarium as stated in the advertisement for the position?

[10:45]

Senator A.J.H. Maclean (The Minister for Economic Development):

I agree there is more than one definition, and therefore interpretation, of the term honorarium. The definition used for the purpose of the advertisement to which the Deputy refers is a payment made to an individual for the provision of a service. The advert made it quite clear that membership of the board was to be paid. There was certainly no intention to be misleading by using the term honorarium. For the avoidance of any doubt, the members of the Harbours and Airport Shadow Board are not employees of the States of Jersey, rather they are on a contract-for-services basis to the Economic Development Department.

2.10.1 The Deputy of St. John:

Of the Shadow Board members, could we be told when this idea was conceived to have a board for the Harbours and Airport Committee and could I suggest that possibly it was conceived prior to our current Chief Minister taking office and, if so, could the Minister tell us why, for some months, it has been reported to me that the former Chief Minister had been part of the Shadow Board before we were notified in this House?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I made it quite clear in a statement that I made on 6th July this year that we were looking at changing arrangements for the way in which we manage both the harbour and the airport and I, at that point, made it clear that we were looking to appoint a shadow board. With regard to the second point the Deputy raises about the former Chief Minister, he is right in one respect, the former Chief Minister provided some free time to the Harbours Department with regard to the boat show. The Deputy is aware of that because I have already discussed it with him on more than one occasion.

2.10.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

It is relating to the question of money. I believe the chairman of this particular panel has also received, through his company, something like £90,000 for work done at the airport. Can the Minister confirm that there have been these relationships and do others have financial relationships with the airport?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I can confirm that the airport - and the harbour for that matter - has employed over a number of years different people to provide consultation and consultation services. Indeed the current chairman appointed to this particular Shadow Airport and Harbour Board has worked for the airport in the past and he has received payments for so doing.

2.10.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Unfortunately the Attorney General has had to leave the Chamber but as someone who worked for Education, Sport and Culture, honorariums was a term which we ran into great difficulty with and we had to stop using. I just believe that honorarium being used in that context is completely inappropriate [**Approbation**] and I wondered if the Attorney General could give us some guidance on that. Because I think it is very worrying with these amounts of money involved.

The Bailiff:

No, this is question time to the Minister.

Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Then perhaps he could tell us.

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I will happily give an answer to that. I think I have explained there are a number of different definitions of honorarium, although I take and accept the Deputy's point, there was no intention for this advertisement to be misleading in any shape or form, the rate of payment was clearly stated. On that basis I believe as the process was overseen by the Appointments Commission that it was a fair, open and transparent process.

The Bailiff:

Do you wish a final question, Deputy of St. John?

2.10.4 The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, will the Minister confirm that an honorarium is a payment for which fees are not legally or traditionally required? If that is the case, will these members of the Shadow Board be donating their honorarium to charity?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

The Deputy has used one of the many definitions for this particular term. The answer to the second part of his question is no.

The Bailiff:

Very well, we move to questions 11 which Deputy Le Claire will ask of the Minister for Planning and Environment. Deputy.