

3.12 The Connétable of St. John of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding a review of quangos and the use of ‘sponsorship’ to circumvent Treasury directives to reduce public spending:

Following the decision of the Minister for Economic Development to sponsor the Jersey Rugby Club when other sporting clubs have seen their grants from the Jersey Sports Council reduced, will the Minister undertake to review the various quangos that spend taxpayers’ money, and especially the use of sponsorship to circumvent Treasury directives to reduce public spending?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

Sponsorship of the rugby club is of course, as previously answered by the Minister, a matter for the Minister for Economic Development. Departments are responsible for achieving value for money from their funds allocated to them by this Assembly. The Treasury’s role is to ensure proper controls are in place, principally in the form of financial directions and oversight by the Treasurer with accounting officers and these operate correctly. Controls are designed to ensure that value for money for all spending is achieved. Some grants are made by States departments to other organisations. These bodies will have their own governance arrangements too. The ultimate accountability remains with the accounting officer, in this case of the Minister for Economic Development department. These arrangements are across all States departments subject to both external and internal audit as well as oversight by the P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) where they wish. So I have no reason to believe that a review is necessary and indeed, if I may say, I have discussed the matter of the rugby club with the Minister for Economic Development and if I was him, I would have made the same decision. I think it is a good decision and good for Jersey.

3.12.1 The Connétable of St. John:

Back in 2001, £10 million was agreed in this House for a Tourism Development Fund. Can the Minister tell us how much of that money has been spent over the last 11 years, and from records it would appear very little? That being the case, will the Minister review the way he allows this money to be spent, because if the restrictions are so tight that the applicants cannot get to this money, will something be put in place to assist the tourism industry to be able to get to this funding more easily?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I hope the Connétable has had a good summer. I do not know whether or not the summer has dulled his memory a little, because it was this Assembly that of course extended the remit of the T.D.F. to allow exactly what he is asking for. Indeed, that was something that also the Minister responded to himself. I think perhaps if anything after the summer’s event on sporting endeavour and aspiration and the real fantastic environment that has been created by the London 2012 Olympics and all of the Paralympics as well that sporting endeavour, quite apart from the economic benefit, is something that we want to also promote in Jersey. We want to inspire our own generation for sport. We want to have more volunteers in terms of the wonderful Games makers. We want community spirit. We want things that build the nation’s pride, quite apart from the health benefits. I think that he should be supporting what has been I think one of the most fantastic things that has happened in Jersey in terms of the rugby club, quite apart from the Minister’s pure view that this is going to boost tourism, spread our name in towns and cities across the U.K. and bring people to Jersey. It is fantastic, is it not?

3.12.2 The Deputy of St. John:

Could the Minister answer the question, how much of the £10 million invested 10 years ago, or supposed to have been put aside 10 years ago, has been spent?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I did not answer it because we have already been through all of that. I have not got my notes on the T.D.F. in front of me because it was not part of something that was to be answered in the original question and it is not the matter for the Minister to do. He supported 2 parts of sponsorship, as I understand, some from his own budget from Jersey Enterprise, which I thought the Connétable wanted to ask. If he wanted to ask about the T.D.F. matter, then he could do that too. We have previously rehearsed the T.D.F. lots of times. If he wants to have a chat over lunchtime, I am happy to revise the numbers and get them to him, but I think he knows them.

3.12.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

I think we have been subject to another husting speech. Is it not the case that the Minister for Treasury and Resources would find some funding for German in schools if Germany was a significant rugby playing nation?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am sure both the Minister for Economic Development and the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture have those monies. The Treasury is not the repository for all Members, and indeed the Minister for Treasury and Resources own pet projects and things he wants to do, but I think that Germany is very important. I think that German sport is very important, and if there is an economic case to do that, then I am sure the Ministers will want to do that. But there is a serious point, which is that after the summer we should be looking at a sports strategy for Jersey which links both the economic benefit and also the benefit of the legacy of sport as well.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I will take that as a yes.

3.12.4 The Connétable of St. John:

Can the Minister do better, please?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I always get up every morning saying that I have got to do a better day's job than I did yesterday, so yes, if it pleases the Connétable.