

### **3.5 The Connétable of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding a Tourism grant of £56,000 to the Jersey Rugby Club:**

Further to Economic Development's provision of £75,000 worth of sponsorship to the Jersey Rugby Club before the summer recess, would the Minister confirm whether a further tourism grant of £56,000 has been made and, if so, explain who sanctioned this and whether the grant was supported by the Jersey Sports Council?

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

In June 2012 an infrastructure grant of £56,000 was agreed from the T.D.F. (Tourism Development Fund) as a contribution towards the total cost of construction of a new stand at the Jersey Rugby Club in St. Peter. The decision to support this investment was made by the independent private-sector-led T.D.F. panel. They did not seek advice from the Jersey Sports Council because their remits are separate and distinct. The remit of the T.D.F. is to develop tourism. The remit of the Jersey Sports Council is to develop sport.

#### **3.5.1 The Connétable of St. John:**

Given the Minister's admission that the Sports Council is not involved, will the Minister confirm that a deal has been done with the rugby club over 3 years for something to the tune of approximately £75,000 a year for a 3-year term? Is that correct?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

It is partly correct. Yes, there is an agreement for 3 years with a break at one year based on performance. I think I have said to Members before, we are going to assess the benefits that are derived from this sponsorship package. It is entirely different, of course. There should not be correlation between grants to sports bodies and indeed support to the economy and tourism, which is the purpose of the sponsorship deal. But, yes, there is a break clause based on performance.

#### **3.5.2 The Connétable of St. John:**

Sir, can I follow that up? Given that the Minister, I understand, is a member of the rugby club, is it right - because he has a pecuniary interest here - that the Minister should be answering these questions in the first instance or, in fact, having any influence whatsoever as the Minister for Economic Development who has to finally sanction everything that goes out of States spending? Is it right that he should be in that position and should that not in fact be his Assistant Minister dealing with these particular questions?

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

What is the nature of the pecuniary interest?

#### **The Connétable of St. John:**

Being a member of the club, he is a beneficiary of that club.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

It is an interest that is shared with all the other members of the rugby club. Minister, do you wish to say anything about that?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

It is very difficult to know what to say to that. All I perhaps could add is that I am not currently a member of the club. I was a member of the club last season. I had 2 sons who were members of the academy. Currently that is not the case.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

Are you asking me for a ruling, Connétable?

**The Connétable of St. John:**

Yes, please, Sir.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Very well. I rule that there is nothing wrong with the Minister answering the questions. I do not regard it as a direct financial interest.

**3.5.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Would the Minister not concede that by giving the grant to the rugby club and by, quite rightly, acknowledging its success he has opened the door to other clubs who do an excellent job of promoting tourism and sport at the same time? There is not, as he is suggesting, a line between the 2 in many cases. Therefore, is he encouraging other clubs to apply on the same basis?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

The Deputy is right in many respects. I would be delighted to see other clubs reach the same level of success as the Jersey Rugby Club. I think we need to be clear about one point and that point is the fact that the Jersey Rugby Club achieved the position they are in now, playing at the level that they are now, by themselves, by getting private-sector sponsorship. They have been incredibly successful. What we have done is we have ridden on the coattails of the success of the Jersey Rugby Club in order to derive benefit for the wider economy and I think that is a great thing. I would like to see other clubs be as successful.

**3.5.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Will the Minister accept that there appears to be a lack of joined-up thinking between his department and Education, Sport and Culture? Whilst Education, Sport and Culture is reducing grants to athletics, to football and to other sports, and therefore reducing the opportunities for people arriving in this Island on tour, his department is funding tourism through the Tourism Development Fund where Education, Sport and Culture are reducing tourism through other sports.

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

No, I am afraid I do not agree with the Deputy at all. First of all, the Council of Ministers and indeed the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture and I are very joined up on matters such as this. The Deputy may be interested to know that in fact my understanding is that sports grants in total increased in 2011 over 2010, but I am sure that point can be confirmed later.

[10:15]

**3.5.5 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Would the Minister just remind Members what they are getting in terms of value for money by promoting a very successful rugby team in the U.K. (United Kingdom) and what kind of exposure Jersey Tourism is getting for that? Would he also confirm that, if it was not a rugby team that was doing well but rather a football team that was perhaps in the championship in the U.K., he would also make the same decision even though he has no direct or indirect interest in the football team?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

I do not think the last comment was necessary but, as far as other sports, I think I have made that point. Quite simply, yes; if there is another club in this Island who can reach the same level of success as the Jersey Rugby Club we would like to talk to them. We want to look at the opportunities of ways to promote Jersey in niche markets. What we must remember with the Jersey Rugby Club is they play largely off-season. So we are attracting people to the Island at a time when businesses locally need a boost and they need support and they are getting it. We

have seen already from the Leicester Tigers match, 500 people came to the Island. We know 40 have already booked to come again in January. We know from the Cornish Pirates there were over 400 people. What we also know, which is very important, is that these people are not staying for just one or 2 days, which we initially thought when we were discussing this package. These people are staying for between 3 and 7 days. They are treating Jersey as the most lucrative and exciting destination on the championship round. They are coming here. They are having their holiday or a short break here as well and they are investing in our economy. That is positive. The second part of the question, as far as promotional activity, we are leveraging with the destination where most of the championship clubs come from. So we are advertising those areas and we are driving additional traffic as a result. We have promotional jersey.com on the shirts. There is a range of different packages that are being used to promote the Island as a result of this package.

### **3.5.6 Connétable D.J. Murphy of Grouville:**

The Minister, in fact, has virtually answered what I was going to ask him. I was going to suggest that perhaps the Constable of St. John might like to visit the rugby club when we have a home match here and talk, as I do, to the visiting spectators over here and who are saying that they are really pleased about coming to Jersey. They are happy to come to Jersey and they are planning to bring their families back at a later time.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

Is the Minister not pleased to hear that?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

I am very pleased to hear it, Sir, but I understand and agree with it.

### **3.5.7 The Connétable of St. John:**

Given only a small percentage of the £10 million which was originally agreed to be set aside for the T.D.F. in P.70/2001 has been awarded to the fund since that time, why is it, please, Minister, across the board in tourism only a small percentage has been awarded? Can you please explain?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

I am not sure that is directly related, but never mind. I think the Connétable is referring to the original indication from the States that £10 million would be allocated. It was only an indication. We have sought to have the T.D.F. topped up on a regular basis. It has never been short of funds. The difficulty has been spending the money and that was the reason why I brought a proposition to this Assembly to open up the T.D.F. to allow private sector organisations to become involved. The T.D.F. could not find the projects to spend the money on originally. That is more of a relevant point than having the money and spending it on unwise projects. The important point here is it is a strong, high-quality, independent panel that makes its decisions and I think the decisions it makes are very sound and very good and in the interests of the tourism community.