

#### **4.4 Connétable P.J. Rondel of St. John of the Chief Minister regarding the rationale and criteria for sending Jersey delegations to U.K. party political conferences:**

Could the Minister inform the Assembly what the rationale and criteria are for sending Jersey delegations to U.K. (United Kingdom) party political conferences?

##### **Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):**

Jersey's most important political relationship is with the U.K. Due to our status as a Crown Dependency, there are a number of policy areas, such as immigration, citizenship, tax and financial services, aviation and maritime issues, where Jersey's interests can be affected by U.K. Government policy. We therefore need to put forward Jersey's position and interests in relation to these issues directly to those who are developing U.K. policy in both government and opposition. Ministerial attendance at the U.K. party conferences is an important means of ensuring enhanced engagement with U.K. Government Ministers, Shadow Ministers and prominent parliamentarians. It has never been more important that Jersey's message is heard so that we can develop a better understanding among U.K. policymakers of our constitutional position, our key economic and social interests, and the value we provide to the U.K. economy.

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

Given that U.K.I.P. (United Kingdom Independence Party) are polling consistently as the third most popular political party in the U.K. and a Survation poll in the *Mail on Sunday* on 26th May have them within 2 percentage points of the Conservative Party, would the Minister look into the possibility of sending a delegation to the U.K.I.P. party conference?

##### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I would not wish to make government policy on the back of an opinion poll taken out in a different jurisdiction. I do not think anyone in this Assembly would thank me for that. I perhaps could simply remind the Connétable of the amount of representation that that party has in the U.K.'s Parliament itself and perhaps when that increases, Jersey's Government policy will change as well.

##### **The Connétable of St. John:**

In other words, the answer is no?

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

I will come back to you, Connétable.

##### **4.4.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

Perhaps the Constables can be sent to the U.K.I.P conference as a delegation. I would ask the Chief Minister just to clarify how are the delegations ... how do they work? Is it by invite or are the invites sought directly by the Comms. Unit, by the Chief Minister's Department? If the Chief Minister could explain.

##### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I am not sure what the Deputy is asking. The invitation in what regard?

##### **Deputy M. Tadier:**

Let us phrase it in a different way. When Ministers or whoever attends from the Jersey Assembly at party conferences, are they invited by the individual parties or do they simply pay a subscription and attend and in what capacity do they attend?

##### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

Attendance is decided by Jersey Ministers, those Ministers which are members of what we call F.E.R.A.G. (Financial Services and External Relations Advisory Group) which is the advisory

group which advises me with regard to external relations and financial services and often it comes down to previous diary commitments and we divide up in that regard. The party conferences are, as I have said, about engaging Ministers, Shadow Ministers and important parliamentarians and we do not, as such, attend the plenary sessions of the party conference that Members might see televised but we have one-to-one meetings with those policymakers and influencers and occasionally we might speak at fringe events as well.

[10:00]

#### **4.4.3 Deputy T.M. Pitman of St. Helier:**

Along the same lines really, can the Chief Minister advise whether the party conferences attended are just for those who currently have seats in power or if they are potentially any political party? I only ask that because U.K.I.P.'s policies are probably pretty similar to the Monster Raving Loony Party. I wondered if we should go there as well.

#### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I think I have indicated quite clearly what our position would be with regard to U.K.I.P. and we intend this year to send Ministerial delegations to the 2 parties of Government and the official opposition party's conference as well.

#### **4.4.4 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:**

I was unclear by the Chief Minister's answer to Deputy Tadier's question as to whether or not he had been invited or whether he had invited himself.

#### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I thought I was quite clear. Jersey Ministers decide to go. There is a cost to attendance and that is an approach taken by other similar jurisdictions to ourselves.

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

During Nigel Farage's recent visit to Jersey, he spoke of his support for the finance industry and the promotion of the U.K.-Jersey relationship. Does the Chief Minister agree that we should be working with politicians who are respective and well informed of our Island and its finance industry as well as with individuals such as the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer who continued to write ill-informed letters and summoned our Chief Minister and others to Downing Street to be lectured to?

#### **Senator I.J. Gorst:**

The only individual I believe that can summon this Chief Minister is Her Majesty. I get invited to various meetings. As soon as I received the invitation from the United Kingdom Prime Minister... within 24 hours of receiving that invitation, I said that I would be delighted to attend because I support the U.K. Government's approach and its agenda of growth and the priorities that it has got for the G8 so perhaps I can clarify that position. My position with regard to U.K.I.P. and other parties is as I have stated in previous answers.