

4.4 The Connétable of St. John of the Chief Minister regarding Jersey's relationship with the European Union:

Following the Chief Minister's recent trip to Brussels, could he inform the Assembly if he had a chance to discuss a possible renegotiation of Jersey's relationship with the European Union, particularly the freedom of movement of E.U. (European Union) citizens to the Island?

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

My visit to Brussels, together with the Chief Minister of Guernsey, contributed to the promotion and protection of Channel Islands' interests and raised awareness of our positive contribution to the E.U. economy. I made clear that while we wished to be prepared for any eventuality in the event of a change in the U.K.'s relationship with the E.U. we are not actively seeking to change our constitutional trading relationship with the U.K. or the E.U. It is those relationships that enable Jersey to determine its own population policies suited to the needs of the Island.

4.4.1 The Connétable of St. John:

Having read the Chief Minister's press release re his visit and I quote: "There are opportunities for the Island business to benefit from and contribute to the European economy. It is through direct engagement in Brussels that we have the best chance of ensuring that both Channel Islands and Europe can continue to benefit from this relationship." Could the Chief Minister please confirm that it is in the best interest of the Jersey public that he should be acting on and not those of the European economy?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Yes, I am slightly confused by the question. I always act in the best interests of the Jersey economy and promoting Jersey around the world and promoting Jersey and informing important decision makers in Europe that Jersey is co-operative meeting relevant international standards, *et cetera*, and has an interest in many dossiers coming out of Europe is promoting Jersey. If we are not there promoting Jersey and asking the E.U. to consider how it deals with third countries then we will be overlooked and our interests will not be taken into account.

4.4.2 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

On the subject of representing Jersey's interests, did the Minister raise with Europe those Jersey citizens who do not have free right to move throughout Europe because of the fact they were born in the Island and had no relatives who were from the United Kingdom or else.... In other words, there can be free movement of people into the Island throughout Europe but we have these restrictions for Jersey people into Europe and working in Europe. Was it raised and did he fight the corner?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

That is a matter that comes with regard to Protocol 3, which is to do with the U.K.'s ascension into the E.U. As the Deputy will know, the reason that this free movement in Jersey is because we are part of the common travel area with the U.K. and Ireland. That is an historic issue that those certain individuals have those requirements placed upon them but it is my understanding that most individuals can, if they wish to, move and work in the European Union, get the relevant legal documentation to allow them to do so. If we wish to renegotiate that then we would have to renegotiate our relationship and our ascension through Protocol 3.

4.4.3 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Is it not true that the reason why you will not negotiate or try to negotiate this is the fact that when Protocol 3 was signed Jersey was largely an agricultural-based economy and tourism as opposed to finance and you are afraid of the impact it will have on the finance industry, so therefore you are sacrificing these citizens?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not afraid of anything. The Deputy is right to say that our economy has changed considerably since the 1970s when that particular agreement was negotiated, and it is because of that change in our economy that the major part of our economy now that may wish to market and promote into Europe for those areas were treated as a third country, and therefore it is extremely important that we promote ourselves and what we have got to offer and the benefit to the E.U. economy as a whole, it is important that we do that promotion.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

The Minister did not answer the question. The question was whether ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

Deputy, I am sorry, I was talking to you. I understood the question has been answered but you started talking over me and you think it has not been so please say why you think it was not.

4.4.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Apologies for talking over you. I asked the Minister quite specifically: is it the fact that to address this issue would mean renegotiating Protocol 3 and the reason why the Minister is not prepared to do that is because it will have implications on the finance industry?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Renegotiation of Protocol 3 will have implications right across our community and that is not something that we should simply change lightly. The Deputy is aware that the United Kingdom is going to have a referendum on its membership of the E.U: we watch that carefully. We have a number of streams of work to consider how that might relate to us in due course. The Deputy should always be aware that other small micro states are considering their relationship with the E.U. and we watch those developments closely as well.

4.4.5 Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. Saviour:

Could the Chief Minister confirm whether it is a case of renegotiating Protocol 3, or in fact renegotiating the common travel area in order to deal with the Constable of St. John's question with the free movement of E.U. citizens to the Island?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

The Deputy makes a very good point. In relation to the free movement of goods, it would be a renegotiation of the common travel area.

4.4.6 The Connétable of St. John:

Does the Chief Minister believe that in the continued interest of the Island to sustain economic immigration into the Island competing for on-skill jobs at a time of record unemployment?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I do not see how that question is related to the original question. The Connétable should be fully aware of the millions of pounds that Social Security is putting into getting people into

work. The work that the Housing and Work - I forget its full name, what used to be the Migration Advisory Panel - is doing to limit the issuance of non-local licences within our community, while at the same time accepting those of high economic value and bringing their business and jobs also into our community. They are not related.

4.4.7 The Connétable of St. John:

Given the Minister's reply, he did not think it should have been brought up in that particular way, will he please therefore explain how come the U.K. Government require certain Eastern European countries to have work permits to go into their country and blue cards, and yet we allow free movement into Jersey?

The Deputy Bailiff:

The Chief Minister has a wide range of responsibilities, Connétable, but even he is not responsible for the U.K. Government.

The Connétable of St. John:

But he is the man ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

He has answered the underlying question.