

#### **4.8 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the impact of Fixed Odds Betting Terminals:**

Is the Minister satisfied that the proliferation of F.O.B.T.s (fixed odds betting terminals) and associated issues which have arisen in the United Kingdom will be avoided in Jersey and if so, on what basis?

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

The short answer is yes, the Minister is currently satisfied but not complacent based upon advice from the Jersey Gambling Commission who call upon wide-ranging evidence. By way of background, fixed odds betting terminals can only be sited in licensed betting offices in Jersey and there is a cap of 4 per shop. Not all operators have 4 machines. There is therefore certainly no proliferation or an ability for there to be so. The issues in the U.K. are driven by a number of factors but largely upon speculation that there is a direct causal relationship between machine play and problem gambling. The evidence, however, does not bear this out and the most recent empirical research into the British gambling prevalence studies in 1999, 2007 and 2010 have not provided any evidence for concern that there is a direct correlation between fixed odds betting terminal play and addiction.

#### **4.8.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Would the Minister then concede that the proliferation of betting shops may be the issue as much as the alleged proliferation of the terminals themselves?

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

With regard to the U.K., that could well indeed be the case. Of course, in Jersey, we have 29 licensed betting offices. That has been a consistent number and indeed is not growing and will not grow I am assured according to the Gambling Commission.

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

How often are checks carried out, if at all, to make sure that the minimum pay-outs required from these machines are paid out and not a lower sum?

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

The Gambling Commission clearly takes its role seriously in this regard. It has the ability to check and monitor these machines on line as well as making visits to the various licensed betting office premises and therefore is able to make regular checks and does so.

[10:30]

#### **4.8.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Is it the case that no evidence has been found of a link between the fixed odds betting and problem gambling because that was not a topic that was examined by the papers the Minister was quoting?

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

No, that was a topic that was examined but there is some very interesting research ongoing at the moment. The Responsible Gambling Trust, for example, has for the first time got a buy-in from 13 major bookmaking firms in the U.K., gambling operators. They are carrying out some research specifically into this area. The Gambling Commission, I know, is monitoring that. That report is due out later this year and I am sure will inform the debate in a constructive way with the right empirical evidence.

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

Would the Minister agree that responsible gambling is only when the gambler calculates that the odds being put down are better and so he should always gamble when that is the case and that any time that we know that machines necessarily have an expectancy that is far less than what you would have if you kept the money in your pocket, then those machines should come with an automatic warning because that is where irresponsible gambling can take place.

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

Under the Code of Practice, licensed betting offices have an obligation to monitor - which they do - play and behaviour of those that are not only on fixed or betting terminals but also undertaking any form of gambling within their premises and that is something they take seriously. Clearly it is not in the licensee's interests to cause harm with individuals using their premises so it is monitored very closely and that is as one would expect.

**4.8.5 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Notwithstanding the good work of the Jersey Gambling Commission and the fact that the Minister wishes to avoid complacency, could the Minister tell us what proportion of the revenues of the Jersey betting industry comes from these terminals and could he confirm that, as in Britain, it is an ever-increasing proportion and they have a vested interest in ensuring the spread of these terminals?

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

Well, I think I made it clear that the spread of these terminals is impossible in Jersey. We have got a limited number of licensed betting offices at 29 and, indeed, it is clear that the terms and the Code make it clear that there is a maximum of 4 of these terminals per premises. That is a total of 92 in total; 116 is potential, that is the maximum, so there is going to be no change in that regard. As far as the other element with the revenues, I cannot give an exact percentage of revenues but the Deputy is clearly correct that there is a significant revenue benefit to operators and that is seen in the U.K. with the results from these particular terminals.