

#### **4.1 Deputy J.A. Martin of St. Helier of the Chief Minister regarding the decision to reappoint Senator P.F.C. Ozouf as Assistant Chief Minister: [1(324)]**

When did the Chief Minister make the decision to re-appoint Senator Ozouf as one of his Assistant Ministers, did he consult the Council of Ministers before doing so and, if so, was there unanimous support for the decision?

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

A successful financial services sector is essential if Jersey is to maintain a strong economy. We need the best person for the job at this critical time; significant work is needed in the financial services and digital sectors over the coming years. That is why I reappointed Senator Ozouf. I discussed this issue with Ministers on the morning of Thursday, 25th May, and signed a Ministerial Decision appointing Senator Ozouf as Assistant Chief Minister late on Friday. Appointing Assistant Ministers is for the Minister to decide and therefore did not require a vote.

##### **4.1.1 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

Supplementary please. The Chief Minister has given us a lot of background but not answered the question. No, the Minister is shaking his head. He may have not had to get unanimous support. My question was: did he get unanimous support? It is quite simple: yes or no?

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

As I said, the appointment of Assistant Minister is for the Minister and therefore there was no need for a vote. Ministers held various views, all of them recognised and said that it was my decision. Certainly one, perhaps 2, said that they would not have made that decision. All of them recognised that it was a difficult decision considering what some in this Assembly and in the public might think, but also recognised that Senator Ozouf had particular skills that importantly we needed to harness in these areas at this particular time.

##### **4.1.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

But did the Chief Minister get unanimous support, as was quoted by his Deputy Chief Minister?

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

I was out of the Island at the point that the Deputy Chief Minister gave that interview. I have had it referred back to me about what he said. He and I interpreted - he being the optimist - all Ministers saying that it was a decision for the Chief Minister as not objecting. I was being optimistic but trying to understand nuances and the diplomacy of what ... the diplomatic approach that some Ministers might take the view that I had just outlined to the Assembly. That while they said it was a decision for me there were some who were indicating it would not be a decision that they would make.

[9:45]

##### **4.1.3 Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:**

Will the Chief Minister confirm he wanted Senator Ozouf appointed as a Minister but his other Ministers disagreed and therefore he used his power to appoint an Assistant Minister?

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

Right from the start of this Government I said that I wanted to appoint a Minister for Financial Services, Digital Competition and Innovation. Because of a number of factors that did not take place, and I proposed that Senator Ozouf remained as an Assistant Minister. If I am honest - and this is what seems to be upsetting people - Jersey is best served by a Minister for Financial Services and Digital, but there are a number of people in this Assembly who have said to me

they would not support that position. As difficult as I find that situation, I have to accept and understand that Members of this Assembly at this point are not prepared to allow the creation of such a ministry but I am in no doubt that Jersey would be best served by the creation of such a Minister.

#### **4.1.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Supplementary. The Chief Minister did not answer the question. The question was: did his other Ministers say they did not want to see Senator Ozouf in the Council of Ministers as a Minister and therefore you had to appoint him as Assistant Chief Minister?

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

They said that they felt that Members of this Assembly, and therefore they would find it difficult to support it, would not support the creation of a ministerial position. That was, as I understood that conversation, removed from whether then Senator Ozouf would be appointed to it. That would be a second order decision for this Assembly, but it was along the lines of they felt that generally this Assembly would not support the creation of a ministry at this time.

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

Here we are again. Is it not the case that the Chief Minister must take some responsibility for this debacle in that it took him over 13 months to execute his wishes to appoint the Assistant Minister to his department in the first place?

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

The Deputy knows because Deputy Martin asked the question at the last States sitting that Senator Ozouf was the first Assistant Minister of the Chief Minister's Department to be appointed, and not as he suggests.

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

The Chief Minister knows that it is possible to create a new Minister with a mandate from this Assembly without creating an entirely new ministry because we already have that in the Minister for Housing. Is it not the case that the real reason that he does not want to create a Minister specifically for this portfolio is not because he does not think the Assembly would support it, because he has not asked the Assembly - and I suspect the Assembly may well support it - but it is because the Assembly would not choose his preferred candidate to fill that role. Is that not the real reason that he will not create a Minister for FinTech?

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

If the Deputy is asking me to bring forward the legislation and he wants an in principle decision to do it, then let him lodge it. I would support that. However, I think you are a scholar of history, Sir, I recall the same Deputy that has just asked me that question suggesting that when the former Chief Minister created the Assistant Minister for External Relations it should have been a ministerial position. This Assembly should have had the right to vote on it. When I came to office, one of the first things I did was create the Minister for External Relations in a ministry and the Deputy that has just asked this question then said: "Sir, there is no need to create a ministry. The assistant ministry is working perfectly well." Let us not reinvent history. The Chief Minister has the ability to appoint Assistant Ministers; that is what I have done. I have outlined my reasons for doing so. If Members wish me to bring forward legislation to create a ministry and a Minister for Financial Services and Digital I am perfectly willing to do so, because I think Jersey is best served by that.

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

Supplementary. I may well do that, and I would prefer it if it was the Chief Minister who brought that forward himself seeing as he believes in it, but I guess we do not always act on what we believe in this Assembly necessarily. May I ask the question then about confidence in the Minister and his Assistant Minister? He said that there were one or 2 in his Council of Ministers who did not agree with the decision. Now, was it one or was it 2? There is a margin of error of 50 per cent there, or 100 per cent, depending which way you look at it. Who were those 2?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

It may come as a surprise to the Deputy but very few decisions around the Council of Ministers' table, when we reach a decision, are unanimous. We have a robust debate. There are all sorts of issues which are at interplay about why a particular Minister may or may not support a particular proposal. But I return to the comments that the Deputy Chief Minister made in my absence, that all Ministers round that table said they recognised it was a difficult decision but it was a decision for the Chief Minister to make.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

There is already a fair amount of time that has been afforded to this, the first question. So I have Deputy Le Fondré, Deputy Mézec and then a final supplementary.

**4.1.8 Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

I am glad the Chief Minister made the last point because it brings us back to, I think, the purpose of the question. Senator Green, on the radio, was very, very clear. He categorically stated it was quite clear there was 100 per cent support for bringing Senator Ozouf back as an Assistant Minister. From the public's point of view that is the information they have been given. Is that factually correct or not? If it is not should that statement be retracted?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I think I answered that question when I said I did not hear the interview. I was out of the Island. Senator Green interpreted Ministers saying that it was a decision for the Chief Minister as support. I interpreted some of their nuanced positions and conversations differently, that if they were me ... it was me making the decision but if they were me they would have made a different decision.

**Deputy J.A.N. Le Fondré:**

So that is not then?

**4.1.9 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier:**

My understanding when Senator Ozouf was last Assistant Chief Minister his areas of responsibility were - and please correct me if I am wrong - finance, digital, innovation and competition. Can the Chief Minister confirm whether or not this time round with Senator Ozouf as Assistant Chief Minister he has responsibility for those 4 specific areas and if not, why not?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

The Deputy will know from the Ministerial Decision and from the press release reappointing Senator Ozouf is to financial services and digital because they are the 2 critical elements for our economy and they are the 2 areas which I think are best aligned to Senator Ozouf's skills and where this Island needs Senator Ozouf's skills in those particular areas. There is an ongoing anti-trust issue with regard to competition and I think that that needs to find its way through the system before I consider again where competition would sit, and likewise with

innovation. There are some details around the monitoring of the current loans and working up how we are going to support innovation into the future before that can move again from where they both currently sit, which is with Senator Routier.

**4.1.10 Deputy J.A. Martin:**

I would like to push the Chief Minister on given that the controversial way that Senator Ozouf stepped aside many months ago, is the Chief Minister still saying and telling this Assembly that Senator Ozouf is the only one who can do financial services and digital; the only one he would have in the job and there is no one else in this Assembly who could do the job?

**Senator I.J. Gorst:**

I have been doing the job for the last 4 months, it seems like a year, because there is so much travelling, there is so much speaking, there is so much meeting of senior executives from international financial services brands. Other Members of this Assembly perhaps over time could get to the position that Senator Ozouf is in relation to carrying out this function but the challenges that we face as an Island today mean that Senator Ozouf is up to speed, Senator Ozouf has got the relationships, and he is the one best suited to build on that base and to take Jersey forward in these particular areas. On Thursday, or on Friday, we will probably have a new Government in the United Kingdom. It is critically important that from a financial and business services perspective that relationship is started and built upon from day one. We face the non-co-operative listing of jurisdictions in Europe all about financial services. It is critically important that someone - that someone has to be today Senator Ozouf - takes on that role and continues to work with it. We have got a strategic refresh, which is looking at financial services into the future. It is looking at the changes in banking, it is looking at the transformation of effective digital; those 2 things sit together. Over time others could do this role but I want the best person in the job for today to start working today and that person, in my view, for the best interests of Jersey and her citizens is Senator Ozouf.