

2020.01.21

1 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier of the Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding the decline in Christmas Lottery ticket sales: (OQ.10/2020)

Will the Minister advise the Assembly what measures he will implement in an effort to stop the decline in Christmas Lottery ticket sales, while avoiding the promotion of any gambling formats such as scratch cards that may be addictive?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

Deputy Tadier has responsibility, so will take the question.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade (Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture - *rapporteur*):

The Deputy will be pleased to know that we are reviewing the Christmas Lottery game with our partners in Guernsey to consider what and whether any adjustments are necessary. Notwithstanding fluctuations in ticket sales this year, the Channel Island Lottery is hugely successful and raises £1.8 million for good causes in our Islands in 2019 and many millions over many years. **[Approbation]** It is a pertinent time to be discussing the merits as 2020 marks the 45th anniversary and we should recognise the millions of pounds raised for good causes in both Islands over the years. We do have some responsibility as a Government to ensure that Islanders play the instant games in the Channel Islands Lottery portfolio responsibly. On the reverse of the tickets there are instructions about how to get in contact with the Gambling Commission's helpline and about responsible gambling. We do continue to monitor latest research and adopt better practice in this regard.

2.1.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

The Christmas Lottery is actively encouraging the purchase of scratch cards which are now available in £10 units. Camelot announced last year that they will no longer sell £10 scratch cards over fears that they fuel gambling addiction in some players since these games were over indexed among problem gamblers. Camelot are concerned about player protection considerations. Will the Assistant Minister, likewise, remove the sale of £10 scratch cards in Jersey?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I understand the Deputy's concerns. The first thing I would say is a personal comment is that if anyone wants to get rich quick then do not do any form of gambling especially where the returns are vastly less than what you put in. I think most people see the lottery, whether it is the Christmas Lottery or the annual, they run through the year, and it is the scratch cards which are run through the year which are perhaps more of a problem because the Christmas one is clearly half and half and there is a draw prize at the end of that. That is also being up for review as well. I think there is an issue to be looked at but I would say that if somebody is not buying a lottery ticket in a shop they are quite at liberty to buy and to gamble online. They can do that and that will bring no benefit to the Island necessarily tangibly and it certainly will not be helping local charities. I think there is a bigger piece of work to be done around addiction. Whether that is to alcohol, cigarettes, scratch cards, online gambling, *et cetera*, which we need to understand because there are addictive personalities

out there who will find a need to fill, and that is probably something we need to co-ordinate with our Health and Social Services Department, which we are very happy to discuss.

2.1.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

Is the Assistant Minister aware of the latest report from the U.K. (United Kingdom) authorities which highlights gambling on credit cards as a serious risk but suggests that gambling on lotteries is less so?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am not specifically aware of what is meant by “gambling on credit cards” but I presume that is related to online gambling and people accruing huge amounts of debts on credit cards which have of course high interest rates in very many cases, which just gets people into a spiral of debt. I think again this needs to be looked at in the round. But what I tend to think is that people need to go into these situations with their eyes wide open, know how much they can afford to lose and what they are likely to get back. The Christmas Lottery, I think people treat it first of all as a little bit of fun which can raise good money for charity and it is unlike other forms of gambling where you are perhaps trying to beat the bank, whoever owns that bank. In the Jersey context the proceeds go to very good causes across both Islands.

2.1.3 Deputy G.P. Truscott of St. Brelade:

I think it was last year that the lottery moved to £3 per ticket and I think the incentive if you bought 100 tickets was taken away as well. Would the Minister be considering reducing the cost of the lottery ticket and perhaps reintroducing that incentive to buy tickets because it was very popular?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I hear absolutely what my fellow Deputy from St. Brelade is saying and that is something which anecdotally we have been told is the case. It is too early and we do not have the information to say categorically why there are fluctuations from year to year. But it sounds like the £3...There is clearly a figure where it becomes too much for people to bear and they will not necessarily buy them. So what I would say is that everything is on the table. We need to look at what has worked well in the past in terms of the lottery. Should we rebalance the scratch card element and the draw elements, perhaps it is favouring one element of the draw, and perhaps consider even getting rid of scratch cards for the Christmas Lottery entirely, even though they are quite popular with people, and leave scratch cards available for the rest of the year? So everything is on the table and we are happy to have feedback from the public and States Members alike.

2.1.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:

Is the Assistant Minister aware of what the lottery sales were, how bad they were this year?

Certainly my own experience was I went into a supermarket, did buy a Christmas Lottery ticket and was offered 2 for one, which considering they were £3 so you are getting them for £1.50 each, it must show that some of the firms are trying to get rid of their tickets.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am very surprised at that last statement that you could buy 2 for one because I would have certainly been in there myself and it is probably a really good offer. But that notwithstanding, there are going to be yearly fluctuations and we must remember this is not a scheme which benefits Government. Effectively Government is a middle person between the public who want to engage with this game to raise money for charities and then we help distribute the money to charities. There will be yearly fluctuations. I would say the £1.8 million that was raised in 2019 you can look at

that as a really bad result relative to another year, which of course was a better year. But these are relatively minor fluctuations over the period of time. I think either way, whatever year you are looking at, these are really valuable causes that are being helped.

2.1.5 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I did ask the Assistant Minister how many lottery tickets were sold this year in comparison with previous years? He must have the figures by now, surely.

[10:45]

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am happy to distribute all those figures. I have the amount that was raised but not the individual ticket sales. But they are available and I am happy to circulate that to the Deputy and to other Members. The officers who are listening will be on to that straightaway.

2.1.6 Deputy R. Labey of St. Helier:

Would the Assistant Minister, as part of his review, take a look at supermarket staff being put under undue pressure by bosses to hit targets for sales at the tills?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Again, this is just a personal opinion but I vehemently dislike upselling so if I go to a supermarket and they say to me at the counter: "Would you like to buy a lottery ticket?" my instant reaction is that I am thrown because normally I put everything I want to buy in my shopping basket and that is why I go to the till. It perhaps seems unfair that they might be selling like that. But I can understand why they do it. But I do not think that is helpful to badger people unnecessarily. I think the lottery tickets should be on display and then people buy them if they want to. But that is just a personal opinion.

2.1.7 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier:

One of the things about credit card sales is that you can pay at the till with a credit card so if you wanted to gamble here with a credit card you can do that. So would the Assistant Minister look at that in the review because that can cause problems with people in the future?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Again everything is open for discussion but I think you can put any money on a credit card, you can buy anything on a credit card. The pure problem is whether you can afford it if you are putting money on a credit card and buying a packet of crisps which costs £3 or a lottery ticket which costs £3. I think the problem is affordability and people need to consider about what they can afford to do. I accept that gambling is perhaps slightly different to other resale purchases.

2.1.8 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Last year a man who was addicted to scratch cards was prosecuted for stealing from his employer in Guernsey's Magistrate Court. It is imperative that oversight of the administration and promotion of all aspects of the Channel Islands Lottery, including scratch cards, are reviewed by the Assistant Minister's Department. Will the Minister advise the Assembly whether he will conduct such a review?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I have listened to what the Deputy says and that will be put into the review. I would simply add that I have also heard about harrowing cases where people have been before the Magistrate's Court in both Islands where they have been stealing to fund alcohol addictions because they cannot afford to buy the ever-increasing price that is asked for cigarettes due to duty increases by our respective governments. The way that we deal with addiction and those who find themselves in addictive situations, especially when they are on low income and the income support elements do not keep up with the rises in duty for the most addictive substances in our Island, I think those are all bigger questions that we need to take seriously, including lottery tickets.