

STATES OF JERSEY

Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel

MONDAY, 21st FEBRUARY 2011

Panel:

Deputy M.J. Higgins of St. Helier (Chairman)
Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour
Deputy D.J.A. Wimberley of St. Mary

Witness:

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier

Also Present:

Mr. T. Oldham (Scrutiny Officer)

[10:13]

Deputy M.J. Higgins of St. Helier (Chairman):

This is a meeting of the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel. We would like to invite Deputy Paul Le Claire to the panel. Paul, will you just introduce yourself for the benefit of the tape.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

Yes, good morning, Deputy Paul Le Claire of St. Helier.

Deputy M.J. Higgins:

Could I ask you to read declaration of the Scrutiny Panel's procedures.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Yes. "The proceedings of the panel are covered by parliamentary privilege through Article 34 of the States of Jersey Law 2005 and the States of Jersey Powers, Privileges and Immunities (Scrutiny Panels, P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) and P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee)) (Jersey) Regulations 2006. Witnesses are protected from being sued or prosecuted for anything said during hearings unless they say something that they know to be untrue. This protection is given to witnesses to ensure that they can speak freely and openly to the panel when giving evidence without fear of legal action, although the immunity should obviously not be abused by making unsubstantiated statements about third parties who have no right of reply. The panel would like you to bear in this mind when answering questions.

Deputy M.J. Higgins:

All right, thank you. I will introduce myself, I am Deputy Mike Higgins, Chairman of the panel.

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:

Deputy Jeremy Maçon of St. Saviour.

Deputy D.J.A. Wimberley of St. Mary:

Deputy Wimberley of St. Mary.

Deputy M.J. Higgins:

Thank you very much, Paul, as I say, for coming to see us this morning. We are obviously reviewing the Draft Gambling (Remote Gambling Disaster Recovery) (Amendment) (Jersey)

Regulations 201- and, as you know, the panel pulled it in the States sitting last time.

[10:15]

I believe you have some experience of dealing with people who are interested in online gambling and you try to facilitate meetings for them to come to the Island for that purpose. Could you outline what your activities are and interests are in the subject?

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Personally, for the record, I do not gamble myself. I have the odd flutter with the lottery ticket, so I have no real interest personally but a friend of mine contacted me out of the blue in June of last year and said that he had a contact in North America relating to a very large e-gambling activity and it wanted to locate in Jersey and how would he go about doing that. So I told him that the first port of call would be for the Minister for Economic Development, Senator Alan Maclean, and directed him in that direction and left it at that. In the next day or so, I think, we met in States and I approached Senator Maclean to see if he had been in touch and Senator Maclean confirmed that he had indeed been in touch.

Deputy M.J. Higgins:

I see. Again, when was this?

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

About June of last year.

Deputy M.J. Higgins:

What did Senator Maclean say about the prospect of this business coming to the Island and coming to the Island quite quickly?

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Well, first of all he thanked me for putting the contact his way and he said that he had spoken with them but unfortunately Jersey's e-gambling law was not in place and for some reason within his department it had been held back basically. He said ... this was obviously a private conversation so I will just in general terms state that at the time he indicated his department had not got the law in the place at that time. He expressed a little bit of disappointment about that and said that when it does come into place then obviously he could possibly progress this business into Jersey. He then subsequently during the States debate confirmed to me in the States that this business had gone to Guernsey. I contacted the person who had spoken to me this morning to confirm the timeline and he confirmed it was June but he said as far as he understood matters to be that the business had gone to Alderney so he is quite keen to get the business to Jersey. I told him I would take him to the Minister with the company to try to get them to relocate to Jersey for the betterment of Jersey if we could do that and he is going to try and contact the company to do that.

Deputy M.J. Higgins:

Okay. Anybody?

The Deputy of St. Mary:

So are you saying they have already set up in Alderney but they might move on to Jersey or are you saying they have not quite yet set up?

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

First of all, I do not know who the company are or who the individuals are. This has come to me through a friend so I am obviously a little bit wary about getting into too much detail about who they are and what their business issues are. As it has come from a friend I thought the best thing to do is put him in touch with the Minister and try to inform him along the way as to why Jersey has not been ready to do this and why it soon will be.

Deputy M.J. Higgins:

Thank you. Anything else? So just getting it clear then that we are talking about June of last year and that the delays in bringing e-gaming to the States were due to delays within the Economic Development Department.

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

As I understand what the Minister said to me, the law was not in place, there was something within the department that had meant that the law initially, I think, had been put on the backburner and there was a delay bringing it forwards. I do not know what the legislative programme was off the top of my head, when it was prioritised within the budget and what priority the Minister gave it within his department. So I am afraid you are going to have to ask the Minister those questions.

Deputy M.J. Higgins:

Okay, thank you very much. Thank you for coming. That is it, thank you.

[10:19]