

3.8 Deputy P.J. Rondel of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the recent events aboard the Commodore Clipper ferry.

Would the Minister advise whether he has requested and received a detailed outline of the events of 16th June 2010 when a fire broke out aboard the Commodore Clipper ferry; and, if so, would he explain why it took close to 24 hours for passengers to disembark the ferry and why neither he nor the Harbour Master have replied to my email on this subject?

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

The Commodore Clipper is a Bohemian-registered vessel and was, at the time of the incident in question, not in Channel Island territorial waters. The incident is therefore not in any way within our jurisdiction. As the incident is part of a preliminary investigation by the U.K. M.A.I.B. (Marine Accident Investigation Branch) we are not fully aware and would not expect to be made aware of the full cause or circumstance at this time until the report and its findings are made public. Regarding the retention of passengers on board, we have been informed by Condor the passengers were kept on board for their own safety. The decision was made by agencies responsible at the scene which included the U.K. emergency services. Finally, regarding the Deputy's email, I understood that he had received a reply but if indeed that was not the case then I offer him my sincere apologies.

3.8.1 The Deputy of St. John:

In response to the reply; I have some concerns given that I was under the impression that Commodore Shipping was a local company. But, that said, the vessel itself brings food supplies to the Island daily along with another vessel. At times of this type of scenario our food supplies in fact are restricted. Given that the Island no longer holds 3 months' supply of food within the Island and as the Minister is a member of the Emergencies Council, will he tell us please how much food is held on-Island at any one time so that we may ...

The Deputy Bailiff:

I am sorry, Deputy, this is nowhere near passengers disembarking from a ferry.
[Laughter]

The Deputy of St. John:

No, but it is to do with the shipping company and the wellbeing of this Island, as well as the wellbeing of those passengers. Therefore, I believe it has something to do with it and I ask the Chair to allow the question.

The Deputy Bailiff:

If you can remember it, Minister.

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I can understand, of course, the concerns that the Deputy raises about food supplies should problems occur with the ship in question, or other supply ships. What I can say that I hope will give some comfort to the Member is that Condor have always, where there have been issues with regard to their supply vessels, arranged alternative vessels in order to provide and ensure the continuance of supplies to the Island. I am confident that they will continue to do that and I do not therefore think that the Deputy should have undue concerns in this regard.

3.8.2 The Deputy of St. John:

Given the response made by the Minister and given that many supermarkets in fact were short of fresh food within them following this incident, does the Minister stand by his comments given that on this particular occasion the vessel has only been out of action for some weeks but in the event of a total loss or otherwise, what is in place, please?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

The Deputy is aware that the supply chain, not only to Jersey but to many other places, is a just-in-time supply chain. As such, disruption by weather, for example, can cause supplies within supermarkets to run low. That is not unusual; it has happened in the past. I will repeat, I am confident that Condor will ensure that we have suitable supplies; they provide backup vessels should there be a severe problem to the one that supplies the Island. I think that to give even more confidence to the Deputy, I will undertake a discussion with Condor on this matter to get even further comfort which I will feed back to him but I do not think he has to be too concerned.

3.8.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I am just seeking clarification because I think 2 or 3 of us on this side of the Chamber may have misheard but we understood that the Minister said the boat was Bohemian-registered [**Members: Oh!**] and I did not think that the Czech Republic in that area of Europe had a coastline. So could he confirm where the boat is registered? I thought it was Nassau.

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

Bahamas-registered, yes. [**Laughter**]

3.8.4 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

The Minister has given an assurance that he will seek reassurance from Condor but bearing in mind that the economics of the Island is an essential route, can he also do a review and check with the other operating companies to ensure that we have the same safeguards or reassurances as a result of this incident?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

Yes. Of course, the Deputy does raise an important point that there are other supply sources to the Island and, yes, I will give that equal undertaking.

3.8.5 The Deputy of St. John:

Given that we have our own registry in Jersey, will the Minister undertake to ask Condor to have their vessels registered on-Island?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

A very good question again from the Deputy. Yes, and, in fact, that conversation has already been had. As it happens, we have a category 2 registry; we would need to move to category 1. Nevertheless, there is an exception where the primary route is occupied by the particular vessel and, as I say, we have had initial discussions with Condor in this regard.