

5.13 Deputy T.M. Pitman of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding fair and equitable taxation practices:

Always start with the best, I say. I appreciate the statement made earlier today. Given the high level working party's statement confirming that Zero/Ten is viewed as harmful and not compliant, as maintained by critics, does the Minister accept that it is now time that both the Council of Ministers and industry leaders work with the Island's critics to find the best solution to achieving fair and equitable taxation practices?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

I refer the Deputy again to the statement made by the Chief Minister in my earlier answers. I believe the necessary steps are being taken to secure not only the future of the Island's tax system but also the stability and certainty that companies need if they are to choose Jersey as the place to do business. The end goal is always the safeguarding of a successful economic future for Island residents. The Council of Ministers has taken the decision to remove deemed distribution and attribution on the full understanding of the position of various E.U. bodies. This is combined with detailed research into Jersey's economic position, the impact on the business community and international perception. On the factual evidence I have received I make decisions, I think that in many cases some of the Island's critic's analysis is incorrect and they demonstrate - as I have seen from some the internet sites over the lunch time- that the critics of Jersey do not understand Jersey's business. I would rather base a tax policy on full facts and full understanding of the issues and believe that we have done so, and indeed today can be a confidence day in terms of a statement that we have a stable, certain tax regime for the future.

5.13.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

Supplementary? I appreciate the Minister's answer. I have never met Mr. Richard Murphy although I did go along to his public meeting. I also attended the recent Jersey Finance seminar. Whatever his views, Mr. Murphy happily accepted questions from people who were strongly opposed to his views. The Jersey Finance meeting, on the other hand, was closed down as soon as a couple of challenging questions were asked. Indeed the public were excluded from that. As I think this is totally counterproductive, what does the Minister believe can be done to engage the public, who are concerned about this ongoing saga, to ensure that they are engaged in pushing this forward, to come up with a solution that is the most palatable and fair for everyone involved?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I think we have come up with the solution and the announcements today that we have abolished or are planning to abolish, subject to this Assembly's approval, deemed distribution and attribution means that we have dealt with all of the concerns that the Code Group has raised and I think some of the issues that the Islanders are confused about is when they see States Members arguing, sometimes arguing for argument's sake I get the impression. We, together as a united Assembly, need to build a positive economic future for Jersey. That positive future can only be based on a competitive offering for Jersey and we need, as an Assembly, to unite around the need for competitiveness, move forward and start building confidence rather than point-scoring and inappropriate rows in public.