

**5.10 Deputy A.K.F. Green of St. Helier of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the provision of free short-term parking areas at the Airport:**

I was pleased to hear in the answer to the Deputy of St. John they are always looking at customer service. As the Minister has introduced a free 10 minute parking area at the airport, although they are few in number and not conveniently placed for the infirm or disabled, will the Minister consider making all public parking areas at the airport free for the first 10 or 20 minutes, and if not, why not?

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

If I may, can I ask my Assistant Minister, Senator Routier, who has responsibility for the airport to answer that question?

**Senator P.F. Routier (Assistant Minister for Economic Development - rapporteur)**

As part of the long term redevelopment plans of the arrivals facilities at Jersey Airport, the current traffic layout is something we wish to seriously consider improving, together with the potential introduction of free pick-up and drop-off zones. In the interim period and acting upon public requests, we have established a pick-up zone adjacent to the departures terminal in an area identified as being the closest location to the terminal to allow us to do this. While this is not an ideal location, we see from the current usage that as a temporary measure it is well-placed and well-used. Both the long stay and short stay car parks at Jersey Airport have dedicated disabled parking areas conveniently located to both the terminals. Jersey Airport is expected to contribute to its overall operational costs by generating income from commercial activities. Income derived from the parking charges at Jersey Airport forms a vital part of this commercial revenue and goes some way to ensure that we maintain the standards of service required and meet the ever increasing regulatory compliance matters. The car parking fees enable us to avoid raising passenger charges in other forms. I hope this answers and explains why it would not be appropriate to give up the income from the first 10 or 20 minutes of every car parked at the airport.

**5.10.1 Deputy A.K.F. Green:**

I just wondered if the Assistant Minister could explain why, for example, Guernsey, who are required to make an income to fund their commercial airport, can afford to give an hour free parking, the first hour free? Bristol, for example, can give 20 minutes free. Have we not lost our focus here? Are we looking at purely generating income and not customer service?

**Senator P.F. Routier:**

Customer service is a high priority for us and obviously customers are the ones that are flying, who use the planes, and if we are to reduce the parking charges we would no doubt have to increase the charges which are made for people flying. With regard to Guernsey, Guernsey are subsidised by their States. This House has only last December taken £4 million from the budget of the airport and we now have to find that money. So this is quite a clear decision about ... no parking is free anywhere. Someone has to pay, whether it be the person using the planes, whether it be anybody else, but as I say if the States are prepared to give the £4 million back, which they took away in December, then there might be a bit more flexibility.

### **5.10.2 The Deputy of St. John:**

Will the Assistant Minister confirm that contrary to what his Minister says, the service at the airport is very poor, given that if we have to deal in the way everything has to be down to pounds, shillings and pence, in relation to disabled people, I think it is a very poor show that they are running the airport in that particular way.

#### **Senator P.F. Routier:**

No, I do not agree with the Deputy. The service at the airport is very good. The point about treating disabled people in a particular way and getting them to pay for parking, I think if you spoke to some of the disabled groups they do not see the actual need to have free parking for disabled people. It is quite common for people to pay for parking. Just because somebody is disabled does not mean they have the funds to pay for parking. Certainly we are very proud of the service we provide to the public and it is a matter of balancing the books. This House has put a demand on the Trading Committee to make a return to the States and we are unable to do that at the airport at the present time because the services we provide are very, very good and we need to be able to fund those, and we are struggling to do that with the income that we are getting.

### **5.10.3 The Deputy of St. John:**

The Minister, I think, put the nail on the head when he said “balancing the books”. Will the Minister accept that the priority of the airport is to make money more so than give a service?

#### **Senator P.F. Routier:**

We have to balance those things quite clearly. The customer service is very important. There is a demand on this House. This House has put a demand on the Trading Committee to balance the books and we need to do that in a very, very careful way. Customer service is a high priority for us and we do provide excellent customer service.

### **5.10.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

I would support that but I wonder if the Assistant Minister could tell the House what is the proportion of the operating budget expended on management and how does that stack-up compared to comparable airports?

#### **The Bailiff:**

That has absolutely nothing to do with this question, Deputy.

#### **Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

I wonder in his analysis of parking charges [**Laughter**] and their impact upon the operating revenue whether it has led the Assistant Minister to analyse the cost of management at the airport?

#### **The Bailiff:**

Good try, but we are going to move on to the next question.

### **5.10.5 The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Just to pick up on a couple of things the Assistant Minister has already said. Firstly, I am sure the Assistant Minister appreciates that not everyone who has difficulties in mobility qualifies for, under the current system, a disabled permit. First impressions

of any situation, we all know they count. So do last impressions. I think it is vital that people coming into and leaving the Island through our airport do get favourable impressions. Would the Minister undertake to look at whether perhaps it would be possible to extend the number of free spaces but only for a limited period, for example, the first 10 or 15 or 20 minutes would be free but passing that time you would pay for the whole hour? That surely would alleviate the loss to revenue but still give that important impression.

**Senator P.F. Routier:**

Certainly the combination of charges for parking is something that we have looked at. I know Deputy Green has raised the issue of Bristol. Bristol themselves, although they have a 10 minute free period, they have a drop-off zone at the arrivals airport. Their actual charge for the first 30 minutes is £2.50 and ours is only 60p. You cannot compare things very carefully like that. But we have looked at it. We have looked at having different mechanisms to charge for parking but there is no such thing ...

[11:45]

**The Bailiff:**

A concise answer if you will.

**Senator P.F. Routier:**

I am trying, Sir, but making comparisons across is very, very difficult. It is important for first impressions from people coming to the Island to be good, and I think they do have a good impression.

**5.10.6 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

I welcome Deputy Green asking the question because this is a question I have been asking repeatedly probably every year, and I can see the Minister nodding his head. The concern has been, and will the Assistant Minister answer the question that I am proposing, is that he has mentioned about revenue received. About 6 or 7 years ago no revenue was received at all, because there was free parking for the first 20 minutes. Since then we have had some officer chasing or moving people on. Will the Minister send to the House the amount of money received from that 20 minute period that would be lost? There is a parking area for those collecting passengers. It is 60p for 20 minutes. Will the Minister give the figures to States Members of the total revenue received annually from that parking area, and the cost of policing it? Because I am sure the difference between the amount of money paid for policing ...

**The Bailiff:**

A concise question. I think you posed the question, Deputy.

**Senator P.F. Routier:**

I would have to go back to the department to get those figures for the Deputy. I know that the overall income from parking across the airport is in the region of £600,000 per year, so that is obviously something which defrays the cost of the charges for coming in and out of the airport, but I can certainly look at that and get back to him.

**5.10.7 Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

I think that £600,000 probably defrays the cost of the several directors they have got. Would the Assistant Minister like to make sure that the department have proper rules with regard to the disabled spaces? The disabled spaces in the paid part of the car

park... if you are disabled and parking to pick someone up that is fine, if you are not disabled but you are parking to pick somebody up who is disabled then you cannot park in the disabled spaces, you have to go all round the Mulberry Bush and perhaps bring the car up to the door ...

**The Bailiff:**

So you are asking whether the Minister will look at this?

**Senator S.C. Ferguson:**

Will the Minister please look at this?

**Senator P.F. Routier:**

I think this is an issue which is wider than the airport itself, certainly I know the Constable of St. Helier has a major issue with that, and no doubt the Minister for Transport and Technical Services also needs to look at how parking disabled badges are used. I know it is a bone of contention for many people with disabilities how they are able to use the spaces, but I am prepared to work with the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and the Constable of St. Helier to see if there can be an Island-wide resolution to this issue.

**5.10.8 Deputy A.E. Jeune of St. Brelade:**

I appreciate the financial difficulties of all departments and everybody trying to balance their books. Would the Assistant Minister be prepared to consider a nominal charge on staff parking at the airport in order to facilitate a 10 to 20 minute free parking? It may help him balance the books.

**Senator P.F. Routier:**

At the outset in my response to my question I did sort of say we will be looking at all of the parking around the terminal and the road layout. That is an issue with regard to staff parking, it is all in the mix of trying to see how we can balance all those things out.

**5.10.9 Deputy A.K.F. Green:**

Would the Assistant Minister then confirm that he will be happy to review the parking situation and, to use a term, would he walk a mile in somebody else's shoes, and will he come out of the airport entrance with a 3 month-old baby under one arm and pushchair trying to pull along, and try and find where the person is coming to pick them up in the rain, in the wind? Will he try that, then will he come back with a real customer focus parking solution?

**Senator P.F. Routier:**

I return to my opening comments. As part of the long-term redevelopment plans of the arrivals facility to Jersey Airport the current traffic layout is something we wish to seriously consider improving, together with the potential introduction of free pick-up and drop-off zones. That was my opening comments at the very beginning and I maintain that.