

3.3 The Deputy of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding skateboarders at the Lighthouse Memorial:

I hope you will allow me to rephrase the question slightly because of information I have been given this morning by Senator Cohen. Given that the Lighthouse Memorial to Jersey people who died in concentration camps between 1940 and 1945 attracts youths on skateboards who skate on the polished surface, can the Minister advise whether he intends to review safety in the area to avoid collisions between skateboarders and pedestrians and vehicles in the area? If so, when?

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

Sir, can I ask my Assistant Minister who has responsibility for the harbour to deal with this matter?

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

I and the department staff are really concerned about what is happening at the New North Quay at the present time, particularly about safety and also the reputational effects on the marina. The marina currently attracts a lot of tourists to the Island and only in the last week or so there has been some negative comments from some tourists who have left the Island saying, to a certain extent, that they are not going to come back. So I have to say we are very concerned about it. We do have a 24-hour C.C.T.V. (closed-circuit television) camera security and also the manning security will be increased at weekends. We do log all the complaints and all the problems that have arisen since the skateboard park has been in place and the skateboard park itself is the responsibility of the Education, Sport and Culture Department and it is their responsibility to man and to look after the skateboard park and the management of that site. But I do share the concerns of the Deputy.

3.3.1 The Deputy of St. John:

Given the comments from the Assistant Minister, I sincerely hope that the Minister will be having dialogue with the Minister for Education and also with the Minister for Home Affairs because both of those areas come under those 2 Ministers' responsibility. I am given to understand that police have been called on a number of occasions and they are not of the highest priority, so the time they take to get to the situation being caused down in that area, the youngsters have moved along. Can he confirm that he will be having a dialogue with these 2 Ministries, please?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Yes, I can confirm that the department, the Harbourmaster and the staff have had conversations with the police themselves and also with the other department. There is a major problem emerging currently. I have to say I was one of the people who supported the skate park being there in the first place and I am beginning to recognise now that perhaps it was a decision that may not have been the right decision because there are issues emerging. We need to ensure that we do move forward so that we do provide facilities for young people in the Island, but unfortunately there is a group of young people who are not respecting the provision they have been provided with and it is causing a problem for boat owners for safety, there have been glass bottles thrown into the marina, chairs thrown into the marina, I am afraid there is a building problem which needs to be monitored and we have spoken with the police and they

are going to put some effort into getting there a lot sooner than they have in the past. We recognise there is a problem.

3.3.2 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:

I was against the siting of the skateboard park in this area for that very reason. The Assistant Minister has touched upon the security in the area. I understand there is closed circuit T.V. in the area. Can the Minister confirm whether this is all being recorded and will he consider manning physically the area with security guards?

Senator P.F. Routier:

There is a security team which comes on duty after the harbour staff themselves, there is a commercial team which does monitor the whole area. The C.C.T.V. is made up of various cameras, some are the Harbour's responsibility, some are police responsibility. Because you may have been aware of the incident at the weekend in the other marina which has caused a lot of distress to a lot of people and a lot of damage has been caused. So there is a lot of work going on to monitor all the recordings that have been carried out to try and catch the culprits of the damage that has been caused. I have here a list of documents of 40 incidents which have been caused since the skateboard park has been there and it is a mounting concern. We need to address it. It may be a time that we may have to think that we try to find, I am afraid to say, a different venue for the skateboard park. We need to provide a skateboard park but it obviously is not being used in the way it should have been used.

3.3.3 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

It is remarkable because when these debates about siting these things happened down at the harbour we tried to wave the flag and indicate what was likely to happen. Can I ask the Assistant Minister, given that it was clearly spelt out that this would be an issue and would impact upon the marinas which bring a considerable amount of tourist income to Jersey, that instead of letting this go after this period of questions, the Assistant Minister gets together with the Health and Education and Culture Minister and sorts out between them enough money to patrol the marinas properly and staff the marinas adequately so that activity of this sort does not occur. It is no use, may I add and ask the Assistant Minister to comment, in funnelling the youngsters down in front of the marina for their safety and not expecting them to ride their skateboards on the way to the skate park.

Senator P.F. Routier:

Certainly we want to alleviate the problems which are getting greater as the weeks go by. We will be increasing the security around the area over the next few weeks but we have a limited budget. There is, I have to say, a responsibility on the Education, Sport and Culture Department for the skateboard park itself. Perhaps they should have someone there a bit more, but we need to work together; silo is a thing of the past, but the Education, Sport and Culture... it is their facility and they do need to ensure ...

Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire:

Could I ask the Assistant Minister give way, please? I did ask in my question if after this question period the Assistant Minister would get together with the Minister for the Education, Sport and Culture Department and request the funding is sourced out to give him the adequate manpower. I do not know if he caught that in my question.

Senator P.F. Routier:

Perhaps I did not. Perhaps I may have missed that but certainly we will be doing that. It is vitally important that we get this right to alleviate the problems which are mounting for this coming season of tourists coming to the Island and using the marina. You know, I give that undertaking we will be doing that. There was the question of funnelling the skateboarders through in front of the marina. In front of the Maritime Museum was looked at; unfortunately going on the other side of the building was ruled out by the Health and Safety Department because of the very heavy loads which go through to the freight facilities further down the harbour. So that was not thought appropriate, it would have put people at risk going that way. So we need to get on with it, we need to find a resolution to it and I give an undertaking that we will try and find a suitable one.

3.3.4 Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

Given that during the proposition for the skateboard park last year, Members were not given the full costings of the operation of it, would the Assistant Minister give to the House before the next sitting the projected costings of running the skateboard park, complete with security measures which we are now finding have to be put in place?

Senator P.F. Routier:

The Connétable puts forward a very valid point. I think unfortunately the States were not given the full information of how the skateboard park should work effectively. I am afraid to say, we should have had more information and it should have been more open about what the costs would be involved. I know that there was some discussion between the various departments before my time trying to make these issues very clear but they were, I have to say, ignored. The comments that were made by the Harbours Department, the comments were ignored.

3.3.5 Deputy C.F. Labey of Grouville:

I think Deputy Le Claire asked part of my question. The Assistant Minister said some of us anticipated problems before the facility was built. Would it not have been prudent to make an allowance in the budget to take measures to step up security beforehand?

Senator P.F. Routier:

As was just highlighted by the previous question, the proposition which was approved by the States did indicate that there was very little in the way of additional costs. So the States made the decision in the presumed knowledge that there were very little costs in regard to that. So the department at that time could not put money into the budget if the States was saying that there was no cost.

3.3.6 The Deputy of St. Mary:

In the answers the Assistant Minister has given there seems to be ... I have picked up a connection between the damage done to the boats in the marina and the skateboard park. Would the Assistant Minister care to confirm that there is no evidence of a connection?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Certainly with regard to what has happened at the weekend there is obviously no connection; well there is no evidence of that case and I am very happy to state that. In

fact there are many skateboarders who do behave very, very well and use the facility exceptionally well. But unfortunately there is a group of people who perhaps do not behave as they should do and are causing problems. There is evidence that skateboarders who have been using the skateboard park have thrown and are seen to be throwing stuff into the marina. I have photographs of that happening. So I do know that there is a group of people who do not behave appropriately. But there are some who do use it properly.

3.3.7 The Deputy of St. John:

I was hoping that the Minister would have said a few words for the next of kin who have lost people in the concentration camps. He may wish to follow this, but on behalf of myself and fellow users of that area, to me it is a sacred area, a sacred spot and therefore it should not be abused. Maybe the Minister may wish to say a few words on that.

Senator P.F. Routier:

When I found out about it I was as distressed as the Deputy. We do recognise that 22 people were sent to the concentration camps and that memorial is a very important memorial. I would like to think that we may be able to inform the people who do pass it that it should be respected and we should perhaps get that message to the young people. Perhaps the Education Department whose responsibility it is for the skateboard park might inform the young people who use the skate park.