

2020.06.16

15 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade of the States Trustee of the Jersey Community Relations Trust regarding the discussions of the Trust in respect of prospective actions to address racial prejudice in Jersey (OQ.165/2020):

Following on from the recent Black Lives Matter event that took place in People's Park on 6th June 2020, will the trustee advise what discussions, if any, the J.C.R.T. has had as to what further action, if any, should be pursued by Jersey authorities with regard to addressing racial prejudice in the Island?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet (States Trustee of the Jersey Community Relations Trust):

I thank the Deputy for his question. The trustees meet monthly and our scheduled meeting was yesterday, so we have had a chance to discuss this. We were established in 2004 and through our work we seek to address issues of discrimination and promote equality, diversity and inclusion on the Island. The main way that we do that is by commissioning research and making recommendations. Our current project centres around social mobility and there is a large body of research which shows that socioeconomic status and race are linked, so we would expect to be addressing race within this. In terms of what we would like to see from the Government, who we are working collaboratively with on this, we would expect that the outcomes and recommendations of that report should be taken seriously and acted upon. The trustees also yesterday finalised a letter to the Chief Minister specifically about the COVID-19 emergency and how different groups are being disproportionately affected at this time. Within this letter we talk about one of these groups being ethnic minorities and we refer to some research that has been carried out in the U.K. and our specific request in this area is to immediately collate and publish data on the ethnicity of those suffering with and recovering from the virus and on any associated fatalities. If any inequalities are revealed, we ask that the Government acts to research the reasons why and work to mitigate them. I can give more general ideas as well if there are any supplementaries.

3.15.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes. First of all to thank the Deputy for that comprehensive response. Does the Deputy agree that no one is born racist and that racism is a learnt attitude and a learnt behaviour and therefore education is key if we are to teach people who may have become racist to become non-racist?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I thank the Deputy for the question. Our conversations yesterday did centre largely around education and training, and not just education in terms of schools, but everybody on the Island educating themselves. I think it is fair to say personally I have been researching and educating myself a lot and I believe personally that everybody has a responsibility to do this, but also the J.C.R.T., we feel that we would like to help people with this. In terms of specific actions, we have been made aware of training for teachers. It has started. There is an online module, I think, but more needs to be done there so that it is not just a tick-box exercise. So for teachers and all staff that are interacting with the public, that culture change that the Deputy is referring to of being anti-racist, we would really like to see that ... Sir, I think ...

[11:15]

The Bailiff:

I think that is Deputy Southern. If you could switch off your microphone, Deputy. Thank you very much.

3.15.2 The Connétable of St. Helier:

Would the States representative on the J.C.R.T. acknowledge the support that minorities in Jersey receive, particularly from the Catholic Church, but also from the Parishes through the twinning relationships that all the Parishes have with French communities, and in the case of St. Helier, the twinning relationships established with Germany and Madeira, which go a long way to promote racial harmony locally, particularly because of the community events that are organised and the celebration of national days, especially for the Polish and Romanian communities?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Absolutely. I personally think that these events are really, really important and I think perhaps the next step is to make those events ... Jersey people who maybe are not part of those communities to attend those events a bit more and just for everybody to be understanding each other better by talking to each other. Yes, I think they are really important events and I personally would support them and thank the Constable for the ones that he organises.

3.15.3 The Connétable of St. Helier:

If I could just press the Deputy on the issue of twinning, because clearly twinning relationships involve local people in a relationship with members of the immigrant community and that seems to me where the particular value lies. Does the Deputy agree with me that twinning relationships in particular need to be supported in the way they do break down barriers and they bring this collective approach to organising things and celebrating things in our community?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Yes. I do not see anything to disagree with there.

3.15.4 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I ask the Deputy, would she feel that the work of the J.C.R.T. would be assisted if we had an equalities commissioner?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Yes, thank you. I thank the Deputy for that question. One of the things on the list of ideas that came up in our discussion was that the trustees would like equality and diversity to be considered as a matter of course by all departments. The fact that this question is being asked to me in my role as the States Trustee for a trust which does marvellous work but is essentially a group of volunteers, it does rather highlight that there is not a Minister with specific responsibility for this area, so perhaps a Minister or a commissioner in this area I firmly believe would be of great value.

The Bailiff:

A supplementary, Deputy Ward?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, Sir, that answered the question.

3.15.5 Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour:

The representative said that educating oneself is the best place to start. Would the representative agree with me that the history A-level curriculum does cover the British colonial past and the slave trade and this would be a good resource for people to start who are interested in this subject?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I do not have personal knowledge of the history A-level curriculum so I cannot really comment on that.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I will forward the representative the curriculum for her to peruse. It is a good one.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Thank you.

The Bailiff:

A final supplementary, Deputy Tadier. No final supplementary? Very well.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, please. Sorry, Sir, I think it dropped out there.

The Bailiff:

A final supplementary, Deputy?

3.15.6 Deputy M. Tadier:

Does the Deputy agree with me that racism is a psychological disorder and it is an acquired behaviour and that part of the remedy for it in our teaching, whether for children or adults, is to use psychological methodologies such as, for example, the blue eye/brown eye test to put people in the shoes of others so that they can feel what it is like to experience discrimination and prejudice so that they might change their behaviour?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Interesting question. I have studied psychology at university myself, so I always advocate the use of research methods to help educate children, so yes, I think that is a good idea. One idea that the trustees did have was a project that we would like to resurrect, which was not supported by the previous chief officer of Education, but we are hoping that if we bring it forward again it might be supported because we do think that racism is a learnt behaviour and educating human beings about being fair to each other does start very, very young. We would like to resurrect a project which we had worked on previously to donate some books to the Island's schools which would address issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. With this simple gesture, we would hope to add something positive to young people in Jersey and of course to their families as well.