

4.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the new baggage handling system at Jersey Airport:

Will the Minister explain to the Assembly the current position regarding the new baggage handling system at Jersey Airport, and the role of the outside consultant and project manager employed to introduce it and the cost of these 2 posts?

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

Sir, if I may, I would like to ask my Assistant Minister, Senator Routier, who has responsibility for the airport and able to answer both this question and question number 13 to the same Member, Sir.

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

The current position is that the construction work started last month on the new baggage system and the overall project is due to be completed by May of next year. For all major capital programmes, such as the one the Deputy refers to, a number of specialist consultants are appointed to support not only the technical delivery of the project but importantly to ensure it meets the financial directions and airport governance processes. The question does not specify which consultant the Deputy is asking about, so if the Deputy can clarify which consultant is of particular interest to him I would be happy to provide the information requested in a written answer.

4.4.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Yes, the project manager we are talking about is Capita Symonds, who have been brought into the airport, and the information that I have says that the person who was originally employed to carry out this consultancy had next to no knowledge of automated baggage systems, *et cetera*, and the airport are currently trying to find other employment for him. He is currently being used as a general dogsbody including trying to sort out fire alarm tests and all sorts. The person is going around trying to find alternative work at the airport and yet he was supposed to be an expert on this. Have Capita Symonds been brought in to do the work that he was employed to do?

Senator P.F. Routier:

That question is rather surprising but certainly Capita Symonds is part of the project's team, among many other consultants and their expertise is very valuable. I think if the Deputy is commenting about another member of staff, which I have to say the way he describes his work I think is absolutely disgraceful. I do not like talking about individual members of staff but obviously the Deputy has been fed some information which is totally off-the-ball and inaccurate. The gentleman he is mentioning is providing a good valuable service to the airport and is doing some valuable work.

4.4.2 Deputy A.E. Jeune of St. Brelade:

I am just a little amazed at the question because I did not realise that the baggage system was that old. Could the Assistant Minister please tell us how old the system that we currently have is?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Yes, certainly. The baggage system was originally put in when the building was rebuilt in 1997 and in recent years it has been failing quite considerably. During this

last year it has failed on a number of occasions and has caused major problems for the operation of the airport. The Department of Transport in the U.K. (United Kingdom) have recommended that the X-ray system also is upgraded because the current X-ray system is below standard for what is currently required so that is part of the work as well. But getting existing spares for the current system is becoming more and more of a problem because the people who built it originally are no longer in business, so it is becoming quite expensive to keep it running. It is beyond its life and it had to be replaced.

4.4.3 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

The reason for my concern and the reason why I am going on about this is that we were told that the particular person is not an employee. It was not a person who was employed at the airport, it was a consultant who was hired specifically - at a salary of £65,000 - to do particular work. The information that I have received from sources at the airport is that the person is not capable of doing it, has not been capable of doing it and, at the present time, is not doing any work associated with the baggage thing. He has been doing work at air traffic control or he has been going round to the health and safety people to find out whether he can do courses so he can become full-time employed at the airport. What I am trying to say is, does he think that the airport got value for money with this particular baggage consultant?

Senator P.F. Routier:

The questions the Deputy asks are very involved and I would suggest that if the Deputy wants to write to me and to ask me those specific questions I can look into it as a deeper concern. But the way he describes the person I think is out of order, and I do not believe that it is appropriate questioning within the States Chamber. But if the Deputy wants to write to me and ask me those particular questions I would be happy to answer them.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I will be happy to write to the Deputy providing he will give the answers to States Members.