

**2.6 Senator B.E. Shenton of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding the estimated total cost to the taxpayer in respect of the recent conviction of Curtis Warren and associates:**

Can the Minister advise the estimated total cost to the taxpayer in respect of the recent conviction of Curtis Warren and Associates?

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

I would refer the Senator and the Assembly to questions 13 and 14 which are written questions that the Senator has asked the Minister for Home Affairs and the Attorney General. I will just preface those answers by saying that as far as the Home Affairs Department is concerned, they report a total spend to date of £964,500 but there are potentially further security matters in relation to the sentencing and, therefore, potentially any appeals. It is the policy of the police not to disclose details around the operational policing requirements. As far as the costs incurred by the Law Officers and Judicial Greffe, the Attorney General has answered that the external prosecution costs have amounted to £1,002,500 and there has been £1.2 million costs on legal aid for the defendants. There are additional costs that have been incurred by the Law Officers which the Attorney General and I will work out at some point in the next few weeks when the matter has been finally concluded.

**2.6.1 Senator B.E. Shenton:**

Does the Minister for Treasury and Resources agree that the legal aid system needs review so that we can have more certainty over costs and ensure a better balance in terms of quality of representation for all members of the public?

**Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

I believe that the reform of the legal aid system is something which is going to need to be done, and I had discussions yesterday with the Home Affairs Minister about his views on the whole issue of the legal aid system. All I would say to the Senator is that the current arrangements for legal aid are serving the Island well and it should be remembered that indeed most of the legal aid work is carried out by lawyers in the Island and, in my experience, to a very high quality level by lawyers that are called to the Jersey Bar. Reforms may be required but I am concerned that reforms that are proposed by some people will have a significant cost on taxpayers.

**2.6.2 Senator J.L. Perchard:**

Could the Minister for Treasury and Resources advise the Assembly whether there will be any effort made on behalf of the States of Jersey to recover court and case costs against the convicted 5? Could he advise the Assembly of whether there will be an effort to recover court and case costs?

**The Bailiff:**

I have to say, Senator, I think we are trespassing into the area ... this sentencing has not yet taken place and that would be a matter related to sentencing, I would have thought.

**Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

Thank you for that direction. I was going to answer yes, but as appropriate.

**2.6.3 The Deputy of Grouville:**

Could the Minister confirm what checks are in place to review the worldwide assets of applicants of legal aid?

**Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

I am not directly responsible for the decisions in relation to the legal aid. The Attorney General has set out to the Assembly a very full answer to the way in which the court decides on who is entitled to have legal aid paid for in prosecutions. Clearly, those are important questions which I am not, at present, able to answer the Deputy as it does not fall directly within my responsibility. But as I have said, I think this is something that should be reviewed and it would be inappropriate to make any comments about any court case which is yet to be determined, as you have said, so I would prefer not to speculate on the particular case in point.

#### **2.6.4 The Deputy of Grouville:**

I was not necessarily talking about this particular court case; I was talking about in general. I have knowledge of applicants of legal aid who have worldwide assets - houses in Tuscany, all the rest of it - and have been successful in being granted legal aid.

**Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:**

Well, I think the Deputy's question is separated out into the question of whether or not there are exceptional cases which are set out in the Attorney General's answer where the legal aid bill is charged to court and case costs. There is the separate issue of whether or not the individuals who are entitled to legal aid then get a bill from the firm that represents them, or from the lawyer that represents them. As far as I am aware, there are appropriate checks and controls put in place in these exceptional circumstances, and they are exceptional when those that are prosecuted get legal aid paid for by court and case costs. These are exceptional, and checks and balances, as far as I am concerned, as far as I have been advised, are made.

**The Bailiff:**

A final question, Senator? Very well then, we will come to the next question which the Deputy of St. John will ask of the Minister for Transport and Technical Services.