

#### **4.13 The Deputy of St. Mary of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the benefits of funding the proposed Gambling Commission:**

Can the Minister explain the benefits to Jersey of funding the proposed Gambling Commission with an initial grant of ... that should be £225,000 per year?

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

The Deputy has corrected what I was going to say: the initial grant of £225,000 - not £250,000 - will allow the proposed Gambling Commission to update the current gambling regulatory framework and bring it in line with international standards and best practice and in so doing enhance the reputation of the Island as a centre of regulatory excellence. The Commission will also introduce gambling-related educational and social responsibility programmes to protect the young and the vulnerable and keep the industry free from crime.

##### **4.13.1 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Is one of the aims of this whole exercise not to grow the business of gambling? I just want to ask that to establish whether this is so.

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

The intended introduction of the Gambling Commission is to regulate the existing industry. There are opportunities in the future, which is another matter altogether, to look at opportunities such as e-gaming, which is a matter I will deal with later this morning. That, indeed, would possibly in the future need additional resource, which would be solely relevant to the revenue that it would generate. But the purpose of the Gambling Commission is purely to regulate the existing industry and to update the legalisation to bring it in line with modern day standards.

##### **4.11.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Will the Minister assure the House that in this particular case with this particular quango we will not see the growth of funding from the States similar to that which occurred with Jersey finance, which now means that the States funds the vast majority of the activities of Jersey finance?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

As I was mentioning a moment ago, any potential future growth of this particular body will be relevant to the activities that it undertakes and the revenue that it generates in the future from any growth that is approved, and only should it be approved by this Assembly, in the future and that is a matter for 2010.

##### **4.13.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

If I may, can I just confirm that is an assurance that funding from the States will not grow in future years and we have that assurance?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

Indeed, in the short term I could reassure the Deputy that, in fact, it is the intention of the department to move towards cost recovery, and, indeed, the grant element for the Commission will move towards zero within the next few years, based upon increases in fees. I might also add that the issue of fees, which again we will deal with at a later stage, hopefully today, should bear in mind that we are comparable, with the new fee structure proposed, to other jurisdictions. We are a bit cheaper than Guernsey and the U.K. Thank you.

#### **4.13.4 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Given that E.D.D. has been employing these 4 officers for some years and also for the last 3 years there has been a Shadow Gambling Commission, can the Minister explain why there has been no gambling programme of education, counselling and research carried out over that period? Why have we got to wait until we have this Gambling Commission?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

I would not agree with the Deputy that nothing has happened over the last 2 years. In fact, the Shadow Commission and the department have done a considerable amount of work in looking at our 1960s outdated legislation with regard to gambling. We are bringing forward in 2010 ... or the intention is to bring forward in 2010 a modern framework for regulating the industry and modern laws that are appropriate and fit for purpose. In the meantime the Gambling Commission and the department have carried out a public consultation. They worked extensively with the industry, set up a liaison group, brought in codes of practice. I think a considerable amount has been done in a relatively short period of time.

#### **4.13.5 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

Could I just press the Minister? I think I can understand how Back-Benchers get a little bit upset when we hear Ministers failing to answer the question. Will the Minister accept that there has been no education carried out at all in the last 3 or 4 years while there has been a Gambling Commission and all these officers employed? The answer is: none has been carried out.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

The Minister has just said that he did.

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

Perhaps the Deputy would like to confirm what he means by "no education". Is he talking about education with regard to the licensed betting office staff and management or is he talking about education for consumers? Because in both regards there has been work undertaken, and, indeed, assistance has been brought in. We have brought in the Gordon Moody Association, a website has been set up and other work and frameworks have been put in place for the time when, of course, we get hopefully the statutory commission in place. So I disagree with the Deputy.

#### **4.11.6 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

The Minister said that this £225,000 and these 4 officers, *et cetera*, are purely to regulate existing industry and yet on page 5 of his report on P.139, we see the words: "Encouraging business growth, ensure potential harm is minimised and programmes are introduced to protect the young and the vulnerable." Can the Minister tell the House whether this is his new definition of sustainable economic growth, that, first of all, you create a problem and then you try to minimise it and then you deal with the damage caused?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

First of all I would say to the Deputy that I am not, or my department is certainly not creating a problem. If there is a problem and there have been prevalent studies carried out in the U.K. with regard to gambling which shows that, in fact, 0.6 per cent of

those who gamble are deemed to be problem gamblers, that the issue is relatively small, but it is nevertheless serious. We do need to address a problem that exists in the Island already. We know people gamble. They gamble both in the licensed betting offices and in a number of other areas. In fact, there are illegal syndicates that go on in the Island. That is another function that the Shadow Commission has uncovered. There is a great deal more work to be done but it is essential that we have a proper functioning regulator that can ensure that the young, the vulnerable and other people, problem gamblers and addicts are properly looked after.