

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS BY
SENATOR B.E. SHENTON**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON MONDAY 16th JULY 2007

Question

In light of the recent sentencing of two Portuguese nationals, convicted of heroin smuggling, to jail terms of 4.5 years and 3.5 years in the Island, with a recommendation for deportation at the end of the sentence, would the Minister agree that the lack of repatriation legislation has cost the Jersey taxpayer a considerable amount of money and caused over crowding at La Moye and, if so, what steps, if any, will she take to address this matter?

Answer

I remain committed to introducing the necessary legislation to enable the repatriation of prisoners and that work is at an advanced stage to bring this forward. I believe that it is right that prisoners are able to serve their sentences close to family and friends and close to where they will be released, in order to aid rehabilitation prospects.

The economic argument is much more complex than is suggested in the question. Firstly we need to remember that any legislation we introduce will mean that any Jersey citizens serving sentences outside Jersey will have the right to apply to be repatriated to La Moye. We do not have the available data for how many Jersey citizens may be held abroad (and are unlikely to be able to obtain such data).

In addition, the expectation is that when the new legislation is in place, prisoners would not be able to apply until after they are sentenced and experience in other jurisdictions would suggest that it will then take several months before the transfer actually takes place. Therefore, we would still hold foreign national prisoners for some considerable period of time.

Of our current prison population, it is likely that about 10–15 prisoners would consider applying to be repatriated and, if all were to be repatriated, this would help to alleviate overcrowding in some parts of the prison. However, due to the mixture of prisoners held it is unlikely to lead to a significant reduction in operating costs at La Moye, as it is not likely to lead to a reduction in staff needed to run the prison. It is this cost which forms the largest part of the prison budget.