

### **3.6 The Deputy of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the numbers of travellers by air and sea to Jersey in 2008:**

Would the Minister advise whether the number of travellers by air and sea to Jersey in 2008 has increased, whether this translates to an increase in bed-occupancy figures, and outline what measures, if any, he plans to put in place to reverse the decline in tourism?

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

Staying leisure visitors' statistics for 2008 show a modest 0.4 per cent fall compared to 2007. Those are the January to October figures. In this period, bed-occupancy also fell from 66 per cent to 62 per cent, but this mainly reflects the trend towards shorter breaks. The full year sea-arrivals figures were down 6.1 percent, but air arrivals were up 2.8 per cent. That is for the whole year and represents a remarkable achievement when compared to most U.K. regional airports, many of whom have seen significant reductions during the course of the year. My department and the tourism industry are working together to meet the enormous challenge of maintaining a successful market sector during what will be a very difficult year ahead. A joint government and industry taskforce was established last November to work together on a range of initiatives which include, but are not limited to, continued support for air and sea carriers to maintain an increased route and their performance, and additional funding of up to £500,000 for increased marketing to boost and extend current programmes. This will be augmented by further industry funding from joint initiatives.

#### **3.6.1 The Deputy of St. John:**

Given the Heathrow route is to close, is the Minister still confident that he can grow the visitor numbers, and would he confirm that the 90,000 plus people who came through Heathrow last year, in fact created a problem within his Department? Also, first of all, will the £500,000 that they are putting aside for the additional advertising be sufficient; and secondly, will the impact of the C.A.A. (Civil Aviation Authority) Director who I understand has resigned, have any impact on this?

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

I think there are about 5 questions there, but I will attempt to find my way through them. In reverse order, the D.C.A. (Director of Civil Aviation) reports directly to the Chief Minister's Department, so questions should really be directed to the Chief Minister's Department in that regard. But no, in short, we do not see it as causing any issues with regard to developing air routes. A point worth bearing in mind is that the London market has grown with the advent of the Heathrow route. We were delighted with the performance of Heathrow and we saw the whole of the London market grow over the last 2 years. There is a great deal more work to be done to maintain the routes. During the course of 2009, I think our main aim is going to be maintaining routes rather than seeing, or hoping to see, any significant growth. As the Deputy will have appreciated, the market conditions have deteriorated significantly over recent times.

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

Will the Minister inform Members when he first learnt that the Heathrow route was to be abandoned, and could he further say how much subsidy was paid to maintain this route over the 2 years?

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

The department learned of the withdrawal of the route approximately a week before it was publicly announced. The decision by the airline not to announce sooner was in order to advise staff who were directly involved as to what was going on and some had been away, and that is why it was kept quiet for a week. As far as the subsidy, this particular subject has been aired on many occasions, as the Deputy well knows. It is not a figure that I am prepared to release. It was an arrangement that was met in commercial confidence and I believe that it should remain that way in order that we can deliver the best value possible for taxpayers in the future with further development of routes' network.

**3.6.3 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**

There was recently a presentation to members of the tourism industry. I understand the Minister was unable to be there because of Council of Ministers' commitments. However, could he inform the Assembly what the reception was by the industry to the advertising proposals by his department, and in particular could he tell us what the split is between web-based and television-based advertising?

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

The response to the launch of the campaign for 2009 was very positive in the industry. I was delighted by the feedback that I have had, and I am sure Members will have seen the article that appeared in the *Jersey Evening Post* where industry leaders were impressed by the launch of the new T.V. (television) imprest advertisement. There is a list of high profile members of the industry who were included in that particular article, and I have spoken to a number of them myself. So, I think all in all we can be very pleased with what we have seen so far with regard to the campaign that has been put forward. I cannot give an exact split to the Constable with regard to web versus T.V. advertising. The campaign that is coming out now is approximately £1.2 million. We have put aside a further £500,000 for additional advertising in press, T.V., radio and so on, and that will be utilised as and when appropriate, depending on market conditions as issues unfold.

**3.6.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:**

Deputy Southern has asked the second part of my question, but the first part was, could the Minister tell us when he or his department were first notified that Thomsonfly and easyJet were withdrawing their services in 2008 from the Island?

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

I cannot give an exact date. I am not quite sure what the Deputy is driving at here, if he would like to expand on his question?

**Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

I am just trying to clarify whether you were aware during the election of their withdrawing from the Island at a time when you were telling the electorate ...

**The Bailiff:**

Through the chair, please, Deputy.

**Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Sorry, Sir. Again, I am just trying to clarify when the department and when the Minister knew, whether it was before the end of the Senatorial election.

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

We knew briefly before the announcement was made. There was no pre-announcement. I have mentioned a moment ago about the Heathrow route. We knew approximately a week in advance of that. One of the problems that we have with regard to routes and development and maintenance of routes, is the fact that quite often we do not get to hear. We are working hard with airlines to try and develop better relationships so that we get to hear in advance, rather than picking up the details at the last minute. That is how we are going to help to maintain routes through the future, by having better relationships with the airlines.