

2.14 Deputy K.C. Lewis of the Chief Minister regarding the actual population of Jersey as of March 2008:

Would the Chief Minister inform Members of the actual population of Jersey as of March 2008?

Senator F.H. Walker (The Chief Minister):

An updated estimate of Jersey's resident population is published annually by the States of Jersey Statistics Unit. This measure relates to the resident population at the end of each calendar year. The measure for year end 2007 will be published on 4th June 2008. Resident population at year end 2006, the last published figure, was 89,300.

2.14.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

As States Members decisions are based on figures from the Statistics Unit it is, therefore, essential that Members have an up to date figure of the population of Jersey. Does the Chief Minister not agree?

Senator F.H. Walker:

Yes, Sir, I do but there is a limit to how often that can be measured. An annual measurement is, of course, a huge improvement over the previous position where census and, therefore, any real measurement, was only possible every 5 years, so we are in a position now where we have a good accurate figure annually which, as I said, is a considerable step forward from where we used to be. It will not be possible, I do not believe, to increase the frequency from annually to what I guess the Deputy is suggesting which could, in effect, be quarterly.

2.14.2 The Deputy of Grouville:

Even the Statistics Unit recognises that they have no mechanism for monitoring people and especially local people leaving the Island. How, therefore, can the Chief Minister assume that these figures are accurate?

Senator F.H. Walker:

We have been through this on numerous occasions and I am completely satisfied that the figures the Statistics Unit produce are accurate to within a totally acceptable margin. What they measure is the change from year to year and that change is calculated from data received on births and deaths, and from annual subjects, specific censuses of education, health and employment. The figures represent a tremendous improvement from any information this House has ever had in the past.

2.14.3 The Deputy of St. John:

Between 1991 and 2005, the population increased little more than 5,000. Would the Minister agree that, bearing in mind the enormous economic growth that has occurred during this period, that such slow population growth is nothing short of an economic miracle?

Senator F.H. Walker:

I think Jersey is little short of an economic miracle at the moment. In these specific terms that the question is being asked, yes, I think I would agree with the question.

2.14.4 Deputy C.J. Scott Warren:

In the *Jersey Evening Post*, in the media - it may have been last year, it could have even been the year before - they quoted a figure with seasonal workers and tourists in the Island in the summer months. I believe they said, they certainly said 120,000 people, they may have said as high as 125,000. Was this a wildly exaggerated estimate, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Deputy, you cannot ask, under Standing Orders, whether a report in the press or media is correct. You can rephrase the question if you like.

Deputy C.J. Scott Warren.

Does the Minister agree or disagree with that estimate?

Senator F.H. Walker:

If I understand the question correctly, the figure the Deputy is referring to included tourists at the time. What I would suggest, Sir, is that figure is unlikely to have changed significantly now for many years. It is a known fact that tourist numbers, until last year anyway, were in decline and if we go back a number of years, there were, of course, many, many more hotel beds available, so I have no idea whether that figure is accurate or not, but if it includes tourists, then I doubt very much that that figure would have gone up significantly for a very long period of time.