

2.11 The Deputy of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding Condor's winter sailings to St. Malo:

Will the Minister advise whether Condor's winter sailing to St. Malo on Fridays will be during the daytime rather than late afternoon or early evening, and do the terms of the Service Level Agreement, the S.L.A., require Condor to consult with the public on timetable changes? Will delays on this route be addressed and does he intend reviewing the S.L.A. or putting the French and U.K. routes out to tender?

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

I understand that Condor now intends to review its plans to remove the 18.00 winter sailing to St. Malo. As such, the 18.00 sailing will now remain in its schedule up to December of this year while this review is undertaken and further customer feedback is sought. As part of their permit to operate, service level standards require Condor to carry out regular passenger surveys and to have effective procedures in place for complaints. However, they are not explicitly required to consult the public on timetable changes. This is something that may need to be looked at as part of our review of the current sea transport policy. The Deputy may be aware that a consultation has just closed on the ferry market and, indeed, this particular point is one that will be considered as part of that review as, indeed, will the other question, one part of his question with regard to tendering of the route in the future and conditions for the service standards.

2.11.1 The Deputy of St. John:

Given all the Condor paperwork, which I have in front of me - and it gives all the ups for the company ... but it mentions within the facts and figures none of the downtime or none of the problems they have had over the last 12 months. Will the Minister, within any agreement or any review that goes on, make sure and look at the procedures that were put in place 10, 12 years ago when the first Service Level Agreement was put in place to make sure that the travelling public are well protected, do have a course for redress, whether it is through delays, through fire or whatever it may be, as happened earlier this year with one of the Condor ferries. Will he make sure that those items come back to this House prior to being debated with Condor in any S.L.A.?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I understand the concerns of the Deputy of St. John in this regard and that was one of the purposes why we have undertaken this consultation jointly with Guernsey. Of course, the sea ferry route - the sea ferry market - involves Guernsey as much as it does ourselves, between the U.K. and France. All these issues are issues that are going to be contained within the review that is undertaken as a result of the consultation. I certainly hope that the Deputy himself replied to the consultation because, clearly, he has some strong views on the matter, all of which would be useful for consideration as we form the future policy for when the current licence permit that Condor has expires at the end of 2013. That is why we are looking at these issues now so that they can be addressed and appropriate policy put in place for the future.

2.11.2 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:

I was interested in your reply about Condor providing a survey with their customers. I know you provide one as the Minister but I am unaware of Condor's one and, as a

regular traveller, I would have thought that I would have known about it, as such. Could you expand further on it, please?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

Yes, indeed. In fact, since Macquarie took over Condor, it has worked hard to try and improve quality of service. As such, it is continually surveying sections of its customers and I think it is probably demonstrated quite well by the response that has come about from its proposed schedule change. It has now decided to put off, as I have mentioned a moment ago, the schedule change; it is going to review that situation, which is going to include further consultation with customers - a survey of customers - so I think the company is demonstrating that it is listening to its customer base and, hopefully, going to react to what the customers want. Clearly, it will never be able to, like any business, satisfy all customers but it will do its best to listen carefully and provide the level of service that will meet the requirements of the majority.

2.11.3 Deputy J.B. Fox:

Is it in the Minister's gift to ask, in this particular case Condor, to spread its surveys a little further that it might reach more of its customers, which it might find useful at the end of the day in gathering knowledge?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I am sure it is as much in the interests of Condor or, more to the point, in the interests of Condor, to ensure that it satisfies its customers; the customers are the lifeblood of its business or, indeed, for that matter, any business. I am sure that the Deputy will be relieved to know that I am happy to pass on his comments and ensure he and others are included in the survey; as a regular passenger, his input is always most welcome.

2.11.4 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I just wondered if the Minister could advise whether Condor is doing any research into improving the quality of engines?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

I am not sure that question deserves a response. We are well aware that Condor has had difficulties from an operational point of view during the course of the last few months, it is working hard to resolve those issues and I am sure they will succeed.

2.11.5 The Deputy of St. John:

Given that the previous time Jersey and Guernsey got together to put in place a tender process on the northern routes, the entire thing finished up a total fiasco, and I sat as the vice-president of the board of the day, it was a total ... **[Laughter]** but I can assure you it was not from the Jersey end. Both Islands came to an agreement that the tender process had been won by P&O Shipping, the tender was handed out, only to be withdrawn because the Guernsey contingent changed their members of their board within 7 days and we finished up with, as I say, a total fiasco and Condor had the route.

[16:15]

Will the Minister please make sure, and confirm here today, that any agreement come to with Guernsey to do with the shipping routes north and south, that the agreement made on the day is not changed within 7 days, so it needs to be belt and braces,

watertight; anything you do with Guernsey to do with shipping is suspect. Will the Minister give us that assurance, please?

Senator A.J.H. Maclean:

Unlike the good Deputy, I do not intend to preside over a fiasco. I certainly do not also share his views with regard to our relationships with Guernsey. I have very constructive meetings and dialogue with my opposite number in Guernsey, it has already led to some very positive co-operation between the 2 Islands. I prefer to focus on looking forward; although I note what happened historically, I am aware of what the Deputy has just referred to, I think we need to look forwards. We will be much better, Jersey and Guernsey, by working together in many areas, than we are working against each other and I feel certain that, with the current politicians on both Islands, it will be nothing other than positive for the benefit of residents of Jersey and Guernsey. I am sure that, moving forwards with policy for the sea routes, we will get a positive outcome which does not necessarily predispose that there is going to be a tender; that is only one of a number of potential outcomes that will need to be discussed between the Islands, having considered the result of the consultation.

The Deputy of St. John:

Sir, can I have a supplementary on that? It is to follow up what was said, Sir.

The Deputy Bailiff:

That was the final supplementary, Deputy. Deputy, will you please sit down while I am talking to you? The position is that that was the final supplementary, we have 3 further questions in under half an hour. The next question, the Deputy of St. Martin will ask a question of the Chief Minister.