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18 Deputy K.C. Lewis of the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding assistance with travel and accommodation for competitors at the Island Games in Gotland [1(91)]:

Further to news that some competitors are withdrawing from the Island Games in Gotland, Sweden, due to the high cost involved, what further measures, if any, is the Minister taking to assist with travel and accommodation expenses?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

I wonder if Deputy Lewis would allow the Assistant Minister, with responsibility for sport, to take that question?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Indeed, Sir.

Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade (Assistant Minister for Sport - rapporteur):

I very much thank Deputy Lewis for giving me the opportunity to highlight the forthcoming NatWest Island Games in Gotland in June, a Games I am expecting Jersey to perform extremely well at. My department are both understanding and sympathetic to the costs borne by all competitors travelling off-Island to play sport, be it individually, with a club, or representing Jersey; but to my knowledge few, if any, competitors have, to date, withdrawn from travelling to this year's games, solely due to the final costs involved. The few that have decided not to compete, have generally done so for other reasons, such as work, or family commitments, or personal sporting targets. I am supportive of any athlete who wishes to compete at the highest possible level, either nationally or internationally. As the Deputy should be aware, an additional £32,000 was made available from the department's cash limit as recently as December last year to cover the costs of the deposit on the charter flights to be used in transporting Team Jersey to this year's games in Gotland. The costs in terms of travel, accommodation and subsistence are considerable. However, the combination of historical grant funding, plus that found in December, is intended to reduce individuals' travel costs to around the £1,000 mark, comparable to costs to travel to past off-Island games, such as Bermuda. Each sport is involved in its own fundraising activities, which we would expect will reduce the costs further for most competitors. The level of Government support provided by the States of Jersey is comparable to the offer to competitors in Guernsey, but the department remains in close contact with the Island Games Association of Jersey and will do whatever it can to ensure that Jersey has a strong representation in Gotland later this year.

4.18.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

The Island Games in 2015 in Jersey was a great success and I have nothing but praise for the organisers, [Approbation] but I believe that even the Gotland team struggled to find the funds to come down to Jersey at that time. Even if Jersey were to pay for the charter of the plane to Gotland, or if further funds could be raised, it would go a long way to help. I know several people have got alternative sporting arrangements to go to, but several people have contacted me to say they are, indeed, struggling and any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

As I say, the level of Government funding I think has been quite considerable. Over the last 4 years, Government has put grant funding of £20,000 per year over the 4-year period and has also, as I say, just given another £32,000 towards the cost of the flights. The actual transport and accommodation

is organised through the Island Games Association of Jersey and I think all sports, all 14 sports, understand that the responsibility for getting their athletes to the games very much sits with the individual sports. In saying that, it is a considerable expense, but I know virtually every sport is looking to do their own fundraising. I, personally, have been to events held by the football and swimming squads, which I know - in both of those sports - will reduce the cost of the games and travelling to those games for their competitors considerably. I know that is true of other sports as well. It is very much left in the hands of the Island Games Association and the sports to organise their own travel and accommodation through the Island Games Association but, as I say, we are in close contact with sports. I am aware, as the Deputy will know, of some athletes that have decided not to travel, but as I say, I think they have been not just for financial reasons, they have been because of own personal targets and goals, although I am aware of one or 2 athletes that have mentioned cost. But I think when they were mentioning cost, it was at a very early stage, before the final costs of the games - in terms of travel - had really been finalised. I know of one that probably would have changed their minds had they known what the final cost would be, but like I say, we do work closely with the Island Games Association and its chairman. I only met him some weeks ago in regards to the organisation of the games. He had been over and seen the facilities over in Gotland, so I keep in close contact with him. But I am sure we will have an extremely strong squad there. We are looking to take nearly 270-plus athletes to the games and I would not expect that squad to reduce too much from that number.