

**2.7 The Connétable of St. Helier of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the promotion of the Island during the International Year of the Potato:**

Will the Assistant Minister advise what steps he is taking to exploit the opportunity presented to the Island's agricultural industry by the designation of 2008 as International Year of the Potato?

**Deputy A.J.H. Maclean of St. Helier (Assistant Minister for Economic Development - rapporteur):**

I am delighted that the Constable has asked this question. It gives me the opportunity to emphasise not only the importance of our agricultural industry but to highlight one of the finest export products, the Jersey Royal potato. Our potato industry has an export value in 2007 of £23 million. In 2008 the Jersey Royal marketing campaign will run through May and into June when the bulk of the crop is available and good yields can be expected. The Economic Development Department is investing £250,000 to market the Jersey Royal in national media throughout the U.K., largely in newspapers and colour magazines. The advertising and P.R. (public relations) campaign is currently being finalised and will aim to take full advantage of all opportunities to promote the Jersey Royal premium brand and the Island as a visitor destination with a high quality restaurant experience.

**The Connétable of St. Helier:**

I thank the Deputy Minister for his answer, Sir.

**2.7.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Before the Assistant Minister has his chips I wonder, Sir, could he advise the House whether the presence of 2 operators, both as growers and marketers, has increased the market and, if so, could he give an estimate by the extent to which the market has been increased?

**Deputy A.J.H. Maclean:**

An extra operator marketing organisation is likely to be beneficial for the industry. We are anticipating in 2008 that an extra 1,000 vergées should come into production. Indeed, we have already seen 3 growers re-enter the market on the back of the competition that has been generated by the new organisation, which is operating out of the Island.