

STATES OF JERSEY

Education & Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Customs & Immigration Review

FRIDAY, 25th APRIL 2008

Panel:

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence (Chairman)

Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. John (Assistant Minister for Home Affairs)

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier (Chief Officer, Home Affairs)

Ms. L. Middleton (Finance Director, Home Affairs)

Mr. M. Robinson (Head of Customs and Immigration Service)

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian (Chairman):

We will make a start then. I would like to thank you for coming. We understand that the Minister is ill today. As you can see, we are somewhat depleted and I have to pass on apologies from Deputy Gallichan and the Connétable of St. John, who are unable to be with us this afternoon. Nevertheless, we are quorate and we made the decision that we did not want to delay the review perhaps by calling the hearing off to allow another member to be present, so I hope you are satisfied that you are being questioned by only 2 of us. We need to start by, I think, generally referring to our terms of reference for the review, and I will read those. They are: "To identify the existing and impending funding pressures on the Customs and Immigration Service; to explore how identified funding pressures impact upon the provision of an effective Customs and Immigration Service; and finally, to examine any further issues relating to the topic that may arise in the course of the review and which the panel considers relevant." Mr. Robinson, I do not believe you have attended a hearing with us previously.

Mr. M. Robinson:

I have not, no.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I understand that you have had sight of the protocol.

Mr. M. Robinson:

I have.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

For clarification, it is the same format as usual; it is being recorded. The transcript will be a public

document. It will be uploaded to the Scrutiny website and everyone will have the chance to check that their words are accurate, to the best of their knowledge. Now, we are aiming to finish, we think, between possibly 3.30 p.m. and 4.00 p.m. and that is because we think you probably have a lot to tell us this afternoon; we certainly hope you have. This is the first hearing for you as a department and senior officer of the service to set the scene. You have just heard our terms of reference. We know from the 2009 Annual Business Plan that funding pressures on Customs and Immigration have been identified for 2009, but also that they have been ongoing. So, Assistant Minister, this afternoon is your opportunity to tell us, as the Scrutiny Panel, why you believe there are funding pressures. I would say that comment has been made to us as a panel about the media coverage that the Customs and Immigration has faced recently, and I hope that you will be as forthcoming to us as you have been in the media recently. I think we will start with putting the funding pressure in context, and I have referred to the pressures that have been identified. I would like to just refer now to the funding pressure document that has been submitted by yourselves to the Council of Ministers - if I can find that - where it says: "Provision of an effective Customs and Immigration Service: maintain existing staff levels would cost £250,000; increase staffing levels to allow the frontier teams to operate at a minimum level of 7 per team would be a further £175,000, and to increase staffing levels to allow the frontier teams to operate at a minimum level of 8 per team, a further £175,000." So, Assistant Minister, to start, could you confirm to us the current level of funding that the Customs and Immigration Service receives?

Deputy A.D. Lewis of St. John (Assistant Minister for Home Affairs):

The total funding? I hesitate slightly, because I know well what our total budget is, but when we break down into departments --

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am obviously happy for you to refer to your officers.

Ms. L. Middleton:

For 2008, the current funding available to Customs and Immigration is around £4.9 million, and that will be enhanced during the course of the year with the transfer of some of the discrimination legislation funding, taking the total budget to £5.1 million for 2008.

The Deputy of St. John:

Does that include our funding from Treasury?

Ms. L. Middleton:

That does include funding of additional posts for G.S.T. (Goods and Services Tax), which have been transferred from the Treasury Resources Department.

The Deputy of St. John:

So it may look as if our funding has increased significantly in recent times, but that has been sucked up with resource requirement for administering G.S.T.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So the £5.1 million - sorry, I missed that, Ms. Middleton- includes the funding necessary to --

Ms. L. Middleton:

To administer G.S.T., which have been the posts, and the funding has been transferred from the Treasury Resources Department. I think it is 5 posts in total and associated funding. You will see from the submission we made for 2008 and 2009, there has always been an assumption on the Home Affairs budget that the impact of administering G.S.T. should be cost neutral to Home Affairs, because Treasury and Resources have funded the additional staff.

The Deputy of St. John:

But the actual percentage increase is obviously way over and above inflation, but that is because of its extra posts for G.S.T., nothing to do with the rest of the operation. Can I also add, Deputy, that I have responsibility for Customs and Immigration (*as delegated by the Minister*), so I am able to speak on behalf of the Minister fully, and in fact, I would have been here even if the Minister had not been. It is my area of responsibility, so I am as briefed as one could possibly be on this whole subject area. Our bid that has gone in to the Council of Ministers has received a whole lot of media attention, as you observed earlier on, and that is because they released the documents - the draft proposals for provisional cash limits - on 27th March, which included our bid. That was picked up by the media, and since then, we have been answering questions to the media as to the reasons for our bid, which is a perfectly legitimate question for them to ask and for us to give, and if that has evolved into what some might think a lot of media exposure, then that has been directed by the media, not by us. The Council of Ministers put that document in the public domain, not our department.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you. I have just realised I have made an error. I have not allowed everyone to introduce themselves. That is because we all know who we are, but I think for the record, it would be important for me to do that, particularly for when this is transcribed, so let us go back a few minutes. I am Deputy Mezbourian, Chair of the Panel.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Deputy Pitman of St. Helier.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

If you could introduce yourselves.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, Andrew Lewis, Deputy of St. John, and Assistant Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

Steven Austin-Vautier, Chief Officer for Home Affairs.

Ms. L. Middleton:

Liz Middleton, Finance Director, Home Affairs.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Michael Robinson, Head of the Customs and Immigration Service.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you. I hope that has not spoilt the flow of things. So we know now that for 2008, you are expecting to be working using financial resources of £5.1 million, and I would like to ask the Assistant Minister - or whoever - to give us an overview of what services will be delivered with that funding.

The Deputy of St. John:

On an operational level, I will hand over to Mike on that, because you are talking operations here, which Mike obviously has a very good handle on.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I think perhaps, Mr. Robinson, it may be a good opportunity to explain your departmental structure here. I am sure that is what you were going to do.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Well, I was just about to open the page on the annual report.

The Deputy of St. John:

It is outlined quite clearly in the annual report. If you have it with you, there is an organisation chart in there.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Deputy, if I could just correct one thing at very outset, when you were talking about £650,000 that was bid, the way it was broken down, it is £280,000 for maintaining staffing levels and the remainder is for the increased staffing. I think you mentioned £250,000.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I did, because that is what it says in the document issued to us.

Ms. L. Middleton:

I think that could be because as part of the timing of the process, the very first submission that the department made had those figures as you have there, and then we up-rated the bid for 2009 to take into account the pay rates that would be effective in 2009. So it is just really a timing difference there.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you, because we need to get it right, because we are looking at funding, so we need to have the correct figures.

Mr. M. Robinson:

So to return to your question about the structure of the department or the Service, the Customs and Immigration Service is comprised of the former Customs and Excise Department and Immigration and Nationality Department. These were merged some few years ago, and as time goes on the impact of that merger increases, so that we seek to merge more of our functions. Because of this, there are a number of remits for the Service. I will just start with the tax raising remit, which is to collect and administer the collection of the Customs and Excise duties and in a few weeks, G.S.T. on imports. For this work, we are responsible to the Treasury and Resources Minister, and we answer directly to the Treasury and Resources Minister for that work. That is under the control of the Director of Customs and Excise, and a small section of the service is involved in doing that work. The majority of the work of the service is on the law enforcement side, and this is where the majority of our resources are, and that is under another director, and for this we are responsible - as well as the general administration - to Home Affairs. So, Home Affairs is the administering department; for this part of the work (*we are*) directly responsible to them, except that for operational matters, I will have control of that, and that is a matter for me. The law enforcement side is split into the frontiers teams, which are the officers that people will see when they arrive back in the Island, Customs and Immigration officers at the Customs and Immigration controls. We have a small team in the Joint Financial Crimes Unit, where we work alongside police officers for financial crime, drug money laundering, those aspects of the work. We have an intelligence section, which is there to develop intelligence on serious offences against Customs and Immigration laws and we have an investigation unit, which is to proactively investigate serious offences against the Customs and Immigration laws. The final section is the Immigration and Nationality, which impacts on the frontier side and the enforcement side, but for the purposes of the structure is shown separately. For this purpose, we are answerable to the Lieutenant Governor. The Lieutenant Governor sets the directions for immigration and is in effect the person I answer to for administering that part of the work. We have a small section that is dedicated to issuing of work permits and overseeing the administration of deportations and naturalisations of persons who want to become British citizens. Also in that section we have the Passport Office. So in brief, that is the structure of the service.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Can I just ask, the 9.5 officers that are shown on the chart from March 2008, that includes those officers who would work on deportation orders that you have just referred to as well as passports?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, Deputy. It is passport officers, and it is the officers issuing work permits and administering deportations and naturalisations.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you. So you have referred to the services that you deliver. Are you able to give us a breakdown of how these services are financed, so to give us a breakdown of how much goes into each area? If you are not able to do that today, it is something --

The Deputy of St. John:

To be fair, most of it is driven by staffing costs. I mean, over 80 per cent of our cost is staff, so you can quite clearly see there the breakdown in the numbers of officers in each area, so clearly the greatest cost is the frontier team.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So do you have figures that would be applicable?

Mr. M. Robinson:

There are a number of answers to this question. I can of course give a breakdown entirely of each section on staffing levels and the cost there, but as the Assistant Minister has said, that falls pretty much, in percentage terms, according to the amount of officers in each of the sections. The way we split our budget to show service areas is not as the structure here. We show revenue collection, enforcement and external obligations. Now, some of the work that is done in enforcement impacts on revenue collection; some of the work is done in the revenue collection section impacts on enforcement, so it is split. It is not a simple split, but I can give you those figures, if that is helpful. So (*expenditure on*) revenue collection in 2008 would be £769,900; on enforcement, £3,938,300; and on external obligations, £913,200. So those are the main areas of the Service. The external obligations would cover naturalisation, passports, so there is a rough correlation between the structure, but it is not an exact science (*fit*).

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Just to go back to the fact that the sum to maintain existing staffing levels has changed from £250,000 to £280,000, have any of the other figures been revised?

Ms. L. Middleton:

Yes, each of the staffing levels is £185,000, so the total of the whole package now is £650,000.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you. I think what we have done, Assistant Minister, is gone straight into our questions, when really I wanted you to speak to us and set the scene about how you have identified these funding pressures, what you think the problems are, so very broadly, to tell us the situation that you find yourselves in at the moment.

The Deputy of St. John:

Sure. Well, a lot of this goes back to the States' Fundamental Spending Review, which occurred in 2005, where we lost 5 posts. At the time, we did flag up the risks to that, and that if anything changed in terms of the operation -- in this case, one particular thing that has changed is the activity on the frontier with the extra boats coming into the Island and also extra aircraft as well, and other things too. But fundamentally, we did flag up the risks (*implications – revision by Deputy Lewis*) of reducing our staff numbers by that number at the time, and those worries are now coming to fruition in that things have changed, moved on. We now find ourselves quite short as a result of that (*in particular extra shipping movements – revision by Deputy Lewis*) in particular, but also, like I say, a change in circumstances with the operation in general, with the activity particularly on the frontiers. So that is why we are bidding not only to replace those 5 staff, but some extra staff on the frontiers so that we can staff the frontiers fully, whereas at the moment I think it has been reported that there are certain elements of the operation that are not always fully operational, particularly Customs checks, for example. Now, there are some other reasons for this, which you might want to add to, Mike.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I would like to ask, Deputy, you just referred to the fact that you are bidding to replace the 5 staff that you lost during the Fundamental Spending Review, but you also need extra. Can you elaborate on that, please.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Well, what we are asking for are 6 officers in total, so that is one more than the 5 we lost. The 5 were not all lost through the Fundamental Spending Review: 3 permanent staff and 2 seasonal staff were lost during the Fundamental Spending Review, then by additional legislation that was introduced in 2006, we had to allocate 2 staff to extra duties there (*to cover that*), for which we did not receive any extra staff. So in total, we are 5 staff down from where we feel we should be, leaving aside the seasonal staff. We are now asking for 6.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you. If you would like to continue; do you have any more to add?

The Deputy of St. John:

Not really. I mean, that is the nub of it, really. There is also the issue that as things progress, officers reach the top of their grade, and clearly that has an impact on the budget too, and if everybody meets the top of their grade at the same time in one fiscal year, then that has an impact too. We need to plan for that, and this bid also allows for that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Was that issue raised at the time of the merger?

Mr. M. Robinson:

The issue for under-funding in Customs, for many years it has been recognised and it has been flagged up. It has not been the same for the Immigration and Nationality Department, it did not have the same pressures, so the under-funding and the problem of people eventually reaching the top of the grades and the staff budget not being able to cope with it has been something that has been a problem from the Customs side going back many years. What has happened is there have been a series of patch and mend approaches to it, so one-off injections of cash, which have taken us through each year and that is kind of where we find ourselves this year, in fact. That you can do, and if that keeps happening, then that is all right, but that is not sustainable, I feel, in the long term. There should be a readjustment of the base budget to recognise what our needs are for staffing costs.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So if you were to receive the funding to pay for the 6 posts that you have just referred to, would you then be in a position to fully deliver the services required of you?

Mr. M. Robinson:

That would bring us, in my estimation, and in the estimation of our senior management team, to the minimum acceptable level to provide Customs and Immigration controls.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

What would be your preferred level of staffing? You talk about a minimum acceptable level.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Well, I have tried to be realistic in what I have identified as being needed, and 6, we would operate satisfactorily with 6. It is always easy to say we could do with more, and if we had more, we could find work or employment for them, but at the moment, 6 is what I judge to be necessary.

The Deputy of St. John:

What you cannot predict is things like sickness; you cannot predict major investigations. If those things are occurring all at the same time, then of course your guard will be down to a certain extent in

other areas of the department. So in Jersey, though we tend not to build in as much contingency as we would like because of limited resources, a lot of departments would say that contingency is stretched to the bone (*limit*) in order to try and keep within as low a budget as possible. But in lots of other jurisdictions, you will find much more slack in the system, so that if something goes wrong, you have contingency. We tend not to do that in the States of Jersey, and there is some good financial reasons for doing that, but when things do start going wrong, you simply do not have contingency to throw at the operation.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Deputy Pitman will be addressing some questions to you in a moment. We do have our usual sort of plan, but I would like to jump, if I may, to something which I think should be addressed now rather than later on. Mr. Robinson, I would like to refer again to the funding pressure document that was issued by the department, where you speak of the increasing staffing levels to allow the frontier teams to operate at a minimum level of 7 per team, and then at a minimum of 8 per team, and I would like you to tell us, please, what impact those 2 levels would have on the delivery of services if the funds were forthcoming for you to have that number of officers.

Mr. M. Robinson:

I think the way to answer that is to explain the pressures that can occur for a frontier team at any one time. When a frontier team is on duty, they have the responsibility for manning the Customs and Immigration controls, wherever they may be. Now, that could be at the Elizabeth Terminal; it could be at the Albert Pier; it could be at Gorey and it could be at the airport, and that is before any other sort of work comes into it, so that is just to man the basic immigration controls. So all of these places, especially in the summer, are busy, and there are constant movements. Very often, the (*shipping and airline*) movements will clash, and it is when we have these clashes of movements that we are at our most vulnerable. If we only have 8 officers, it is not hard to see how they can easily be taken up with an immigration control at the Albert Pier, for instance; 2 officers at the Elizabeth Terminal; if there is a car freighter coming in, another 2 for that. You are up to 6 officers used already before looking at the airport; Gorey, if anything happens out there, and that is without us arresting anybody or questioning them or investigating them. So it is a very slim and very lean operation. We know from experience last year and the year before what has happened, and that the teams have been stretched to a point where they cannot cover all of the areas that they are meant to cover, and this is the problem. On occasions, we have had to walk away from the Customs controls at certain areas. If there is a car ferry coming, for instance, it will take all the officers on duty at that time to maintain the controls at that car ferry. That means there are no officers available if anybody is arriving at the airport or the other ports. Two officers extra will get us to the point where we can start to avoid walking away from those controls as much as we have. It has always been - on the Customs side anyway - the view that we should take a risk-based assessment to which controls we put the resources, rather than have an officer here, there and everywhere, where they are virtually ineffective; put the officers where they are effective, and if we feel that there is a risk at the airport, then we will get the officers there. So walking away from controls is not something that is totally new, but we are doing it to a point now

where I feel it is not acceptable.

The Deputy of St. John:

We risk profile most inbound flights and boat arrivals, so from the passenger manifest, one can make a decision as to whether one really wants to patrol that frontier at that time or not. Immigration is always in place; we are talking about Customs (*controls*). Immigration is a given.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Up until now, we have always adopted the attitude that we have to have 100 per cent immigration controls, and I am concerned that the pressures make that increasingly difficult. That is something I am going to have to look at in the very short term and advise accordingly.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So you are saying that every flight arrival and boat arrival has an immigration control?

Mr. M. Robinson:

No, no.

The Deputy of St. John:

No, only those that are coming from outside the C.T.A. (Common Travel Area).

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That leads me on, funnily enough, to the next question, which is I would like you to speak about the obligations that Jersey has regarding the C.T.A. and the legislation upon which they are based.

The Deputy of St. John:

Sure. Well, the legislation, the enforcement of that is a matter for the Lieutenant Governor, believe it or not, and we have a clear obligation to secure that C.T.A. as the first point of entry to the U.K. (United Kingdom), particularly when coming in from France. So yes, that is why Mike was saying that we currently maintain 100 per cent immigration control on all those borders, if we have an aircraft or a boat coming in from outside the C.T.A.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Sorry, just to go back to what you did say, Mr. Robinson, the 100 per cent immigration control is solely when an arrival is from outside the C.T.A.?

The Deputy of St. John:

Outside the C.T.A., yes.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you. Do you want to say some more about the Common Travel Area?

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, this year we will be quite closely monitoring that because, as Mike is suggesting, there is always that risk that we might not be able to fully staff the frontiers from that perspective. That is of great concern to me, because we have an obligation with the C.T.A., and the Lieutenant Governor of course does as well, so we will be watching that very closely, and if at any point we find that we cannot resource that, we will be reporting that very, very quickly, because that is an international obligation to the U.K. government, to make sure we maintain those borders.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

What is the legislation, please, that we need to refer to for this?

Mr. M. Robinson:

There is no specific legislation that set up the C.T.A. It is by agreement, and it is a long-standing agreement between the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and the Crown dependencies that we will operate reciprocal controls.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So just to let me get this clear, if there is no legislation, is it a compulsory provision?

Mr. M. Robinson:

It is an obligation that each of the jurisdictions within the Common Travel Area have undertaken that there will be no immigration controls between one part of the Common Travel Area and another. Whichever part of the Common Travel Area decided that it was not going to undertake its obligation would stand the risk of having an immigration border put up between the other parts of the Common Travel Area. If the U.K. could not be satisfied that we were operating an effective immigration control in Jersey, they would certainly, certainly look very closely at movements between Jersey and the U.K. (*Although the CTA was formed by administrative decisions it has subsequently been formalised by Article 1(3) of the Immigration Act 1971*).

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So if the U.K. could not be or was not satisfied that you were operating an effective immigration service, what would make them think that you were not providing an effective immigration service?

Mr. M. Robinson:

There are a number of things, (eg) if they felt that we were not training our officers adequately; ultimately, they would listen to the Lieutenant Governor and the Lieutenant Government would be obliged to report back. If he felt that training, for instance, was not satisfactory or if we were not meeting all the arrivals or if they suddenly detected illegal immigration in the U.K. and those people said: "Well, we came in through Jersey" - there is a number of indicators that might flag it up.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You said earlier that you have 100 per cent immigration cover for arrivals outside of the C.T.A. and you have just said: "If we were not covering all of the arrivals" and we are talking about the C.T.A. now --

Mr. M. Robinson:

I am talking about foreign arrivals. Sorry, I should have made that clear. I mean, when I am talking immigration, I am always talking about arrivals from places outside the C.T.A.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Because I know nothing about this, I am sorry, you will have to explain it very, very simply, because this is a steep learning curve for us. The Common Travel Area: Ireland --

The Deputy of St. John:

It is as it says, it is the Common Travel Area within the U.K. and the Crown dependencies. Anything outside of that, which is in most cases the E.U. (European Union) states, we maintain the immigration controls for that. It is the first point of entry into the Common Travel Area for the U.K. and the Crown dependencies.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

As the point of entry. Okay, sorry.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, so we have an obligation to ensure that that perimeter fence, if you like, is maintained. Now, it would be quite embarrassing if we were seen not to be maintaining it, so that is why it is crucial that the resource we currently have is first deployed on immigration controls over and above anything else. So that occasionally leaves the Customs controls weak, because our first obligation is the Common Travel Area.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Okay, I understand that now.

The Deputy of St. John:

Now, just by way of indication of the U.K. view on this, they are concerned about their own borders at the moment, so they are, in their business plan for 2008 to 2011, planning to increase their staff by 37 per cent over that period. That is how seriously they are taking their border controls, yet we are looking at just getting ourselves back up to 2005 levels. So it would not be inconceivable that they would not look closely at us to see if we were resourcing things adequately, because as I said before, we do not have any slack in the system. Even if we had these extra 6 staff, that still does not give us much contingency for anything going wrong, so we need to be very mindful that we have to maintain those border controls to fulfil our obligations to the U.K.

Deputy S. Pitman:

So may I ask, with the C.T.A. agreement, is Jersey specified that it must have so many staff?

The Deputy of St. John:

It is not as specific as that, no.

Mr. M. Robinson:

No, no. It is left to each jurisdiction to have the appropriate controls in place, and it is understood that each jurisdiction would do that anyway, because it has to do it for its own purposes as well. But there would undoubtedly be questions asked, if, for instance, if we took it to the extreme and said: "Well, we are not going to have immigration controls any more" there is no doubt in my mind that the U.K. would say: "Well, we have to do something about this." So that is the extreme, and you get to the point where we have what we think are adequate immigration controls. If you are somewhere in between, I do not know at what point the U.K. might say: "This is a problem" but I would have to look and see if the resources were not there, (*would it*) always be possible to provide 100 per cent immigration controls. I have to advise at some stage on that, and I cannot predict the consequences of that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So at the moment, you spoke earlier about the organisational chart and the fact that Immigration and Nationality report to the Lieutenant Governor.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, through me.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Through you. So you meet him, I understand, about every 3 weeks or something; a fairly regular basis. What do you tell him then? Well, I will not put words into your mouth. What do you discuss

with him?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Well, I will keep the Lieutenant Governor informed with what is happening in the Service. It is not every 3 weeks, it is as and when necessary. If I feel I need to discuss something with him, I will arrange an appointment; if he wants to talk to me, he will summon me, so it is as we need to do it. There are regular meetings for operational purposes, for deportations and so forth, but that is another matter. Yes, I mean, he takes a very keen interest, as he would, in what the Service is doing. He has begun the process of asking me questions about resourcing, which I have not yet answered, so I cannot really comment too fully on that, as it is not right for me to speak to those before I have answered him.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Of course not.

Mr. M. Robinson:

But he is expressing an interest and is asking questions.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So to understand the process, if you went to him, for instance, and acknowledged that you were under-resourced and you were not offering 100 per cent immigration control, what would he then do? Who would he report back to?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Well, ultimately, his line of reporting is the Crown, I assume. You are asking me questions here which --

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Which we may need to get clarification on, perhaps.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, that is right.

The Deputy of St. John:

It is through the Minister of Justice.

Mr. M. Robinson:

That is the official route, but I mean, it would be HM Government, the Crown and her government, Her Majesty's Government, so you would see the U.K. government taking an interest.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That is really what I am trying to establish.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, sorry.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Now, who would be interested in the fact that we were not delivering 100 per cent immigration control?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Ultimately, HM Government.

The Deputy of St. John:

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Well, it is the Border Agency now, but it will be HM Government.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

How would they react?

Mr. M. Robinson:

I do not know.

The Deputy of St. John:

They do not maintain full border controls themselves. I mean, you will often see in an airport E.U. nationals waved through quite freely, and that is because they are risk profiling the flights. So if we did not maintain full controls here, we would do the same, but at the moment, we have no intention of not maintaining full controls. At the moment, we are currently maintaining full controls.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am trying to establish what would happen if your resources were such, and you were talking about them being stretched.

The Deputy of St. John:

We run the risk of an incident occurring whereby somebody could accuse us of being a backdoor to

the U.K. That is another bit, but the fact is that how strong can you make your borders (*border controls*) as an island, whether you be the U.K. or Jersey? There is a limit to what you can do. You could throw in enormous amounts of extra resource to make sure it did not happen at all, and somebody could still slip through, so you have to take a risk approach.

Mr. M. Robinson:

I think we run the risk of prejudicing our status within the Common Travel Area, ultimately. I think that is what the real risk is.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I think this is what I am trying to establish, is what could be the result.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, it is a reputational risk there.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes. Well, the risk then is that immigration authorities (*in the UK*) put in controls, because they cannot be satisfied that we have adequate controls, for people travelling between Jersey and the U.K. Now, that is not something they would wish to do for a number of reasons, resources being an issue for them as well. They just would not want to do it. But this is --

The Deputy of St. John:

It would be inconvenient for our passengers as well. They would have pass through immigration in the U.K.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Exactly. I was just going to say that it would be an inconvenience for all passengers from Jersey.

Mr. M. Robinson:

But I think there are - and these are not for me to comment on, really - other issues as well - there may be constitutional issues here.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That is fair enough, thank you very much. Deputy Pitman has a couple of questions for you. I think we have finished on the C.T.A. for the moment.

Deputy S. Pitman:

This leads to a couple of questions I would like to ask, and that would be the e-Borders, which is noted in your 2007 report, page 13. Could you just explain Jersey's role in this scheme?

Mr. M. Robinson:

E-Borders is an initiative that has been taken forward by the U.K., and it is the early identification of passengers that are wishing to travel to the U.K., and this is to - a couple of things - try and identify those that would be of interest to the immigration authorities, or to catch them early and avoid them travelling (*if they do not have the correct documentation*). E-Borders will also tap in or feed into Customs and police so that persons of interest to Customs and police would be identified and they could take whatever action they felt necessary when the person has arrived. So it is a way of identifying early - persons travelling. Jersey has been asked if it wishes to participate in the e-Borders and we have indicated officially that we do. I do not think it would have been sensible to have taken any other approach. So what will happen is that we will have to make sure that we have the same level of information being provided to us for people arriving from outside of the U.K. as the U.K. are going to have for people arriving there from outside the U.K. In a nutshell, that is what e-Borders is about. It currently looks as though our full participation will not be for a number of years. We are talking about 2010 onwards, probably even later than that. We have started talking at very preliminary stages to the e-Borders team in the U.K., but there is still much work to be done on this. We have to explore with them the impact of legislative changes, technology and resources. None of this work has been done in detail, so I cannot give you, I am afraid, specific answers to that.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Well, that is what I was about to ask, the implications on finance.

Mr. M. Robinson:

I do not know yet, I am sorry.

Deputy S. Pitman:

So this system basically means it is a quicker and more efficient and better system to identify smugglers et cetera?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, anybody of interest to the authorities, be it immigration, Customs or police. It is principally an immigration initiative, but it will be used by police and Customs as well.

The Deputy of St. John:

Basically improving the capture of advanced passenger information.

Mr. M. Robinson:

That is right.

The Deputy of St. John:

But it is not expected to be in place until at least 2010, so if there is extra resource requirements, we

will be making a bid in 2009 or even 2010 and 2011. So it is a couple of years away, so at the moment, as Mike says, we cannot really fully calculate the resource implications until the meetings are finished with the Border and Immigration Agency in the U.K.

Deputy S. Pitman:

When will these meetings be open?

Mr. M. Robinson:

The first one is in June. We have a detail meeting, where we will have legal representatives from the Crown dependencies meeting with U.K. Border Agency, so that is really the first serious meeting to take this forward on a practical level.

Deputy S. Pitman:

It seems to me there will probably be more demand for more officers.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Well, I am not anticipating that, no. It is a technological tool, really, e-Borders .

The Deputy of St. John:

It is the equipment, yes.

Mr. M. Robinson:

So it is the same officers who will just be using this system, yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

If anything, it may speed things up, so you get better use of your resources, but there will be a capital cost to it in terms of equipment you will have to have on check-in desks and incoming border posts and so on.

Deputy S. Pitman:

What possible impacts have you identified on the Customs and Immigration Service of the additional funding of not being provided? For example, will further services need to be cut, and if so, which might they be?

The Deputy of St. John:

I do not think we can cut anything else, can we?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Shall I answer that? Well, I have obviously had to look at the impacts, so I have to look at how I am

going to manage if I do not get the resources, and in effect, if we do not get the first tranche of funding, the only way that the service could manage would be to reduce numbers next year. We would have to carry vacancies.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Can I just check, when you say “the first tranche” are you referring to the 3 amounts, budget £280,000?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, that is right, which is - as I have said - the amount that we need to stand still, so if we do not have the amount to stand still, we will go backwards, and that will mean unless money comes from somewhere else, carrying vacancies, so we will not be replacing officers that are retiring this year. So that makes the situation we are in now even worse, and to go back to the Minister’s point before, where you see the U.K. planning (*to put*) resources into the Border Agency, we will be reducing resources, taking resources away from it (*our border*). The impacts - what we will have to do is fewer again Customs controls, so if we are to retain the priority on immigration controls, it just means walking away from more Customs controls again. That obviously increases the possibilities or increases the ease for people to smuggle, and it is not only prohibited goods, restricted goods such as controlled drugs, but next year - or this year, sorry - we will have G.S.T. coming. That will mean that the chances for revenue fraud will increase. Everything will be liable to tax on import and while there is a *de minimis* level beyond which we will not tax, if we get people bringing in loads of goods and trying to avoid controls, the officers will not be there. The other area that we will have to look at is at the moment we provide what we call onboard immigration controls for vessels that are in transit to the U.K. and what is happening here is that the car ferries that are in transit to the U.K. will have a number of passengers that will disembark in Jersey, and a number of passengers that will be for onward movement to the U.K. What we do at present is we have an obligation, as I said before, to provide immigration control as the first point of entry to the Common Travel Area, so we put officers on board those vessels to do the immigration controls, and that saves taking the people off and putting them back on. The shipping companies wish us to do this as quickly as possible, and the moment we do it at the same time as we are operating the controls on land, so it is again extra officers. It is going to be impossible, I think, to continue with that. What we would have to do is do those onboard controls after we had finished the other immigration controls for that vessel, the car controls and the foot controls. That will mean potentially the vessels staying in harbour longer. This will have an impact on the scheduling for the shipping companies and they will have, I think, an adverse reaction to that.

The Deputy of St. John:

This was raised with the shipping companies last year while we were looking at the development (*resources*) of the department as one of the means of being able to muddle through with our budget as it stood at that point, but they persuaded us to leave it as it was, but we said we would have to review it again if the resource bid that we have made is not met (*successful*).

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Who was it who persuaded you, the shipping companies?

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, the shipping companies spoke to Economic Development, they are their clients, and made a strong case to Economic Development that it would be commercially difficult for them to operate like that. That was their view. We did everything we could then to accommodate their requirements last year, and we are doing that again this year. But that really does stretch resources, and just to give you an indication, the increase of movements at the harbour has been significant with the introduction of HD Ferries, despite it - in some people's minds - replacing Emeraude, the difference being that HD have transit passengers that are going on to Guernsey and Emeraude did not. So immediately you have extra turnarounds that you did not have before, and we also have extra sailings coming from Normandy as well, which is all great for Jersey, and we are not criticising it at all, but if you have an HD ferry coming in and shortly before that, a Condor coming in as well, and some ferries coming in Gorey and some at the Albert Pier all at the same time, then clearly you have a resource issue if you have to put people on board the ships as well as at frontier.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So why are onboard immigration controls conducted? Is it for the convenience of the shipping companies and their scheduled services?

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes. It is something which we have provided now for a number of years, and it has become seen as a standard service. In fact, it is not a standard service, it is an extraordinary service and we have provided it for the benefit of the passengers in Jersey and the shipping companies.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Would it be cheaper for your service if that was done off board?

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, because it would be less resource, because we would not require as many staff per shift.

Deputy S. Pitman:

How much consideration have you given that?

Mr. M. Robinson:

We have entered extensive discussions with the Harbour Office and the ferry companies. The

logistics of taking all the passengers off, passing them through an immigration control and reboarding them and keeping them separate from the people who are going to embark anyway from Jersey are quite significant. The facilities would not allow for it for a start, so something would have to be done there, but it would be logistically very difficult, so I can understand fully why nobody would want to go down this road, and it is not something that, at the moment, we are suggesting. What we are saying is we will still do the onboard controls next year, but they will not be done at the same time as the land controls. Yes, it would be much easier for us if everybody was brought to us, and this is what happens in the U.K. You have an immigration control and you say: "Right, there is the immigration control. Bring the people to us and we will clear them." Now, what we are doing here is moving our immigration control onboard the boat.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So you are providing an - you have just used the term - "extraordinary service" to the shipping companies.

The Deputy of St. John:

Above our standard service.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Presumably, this is free of charge?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

At the moment, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So what consideration have you given to charging for this?

The Deputy of St. John:

We have made suggestions.

Mr. M. Robinson:

We have looked at it, and charging is something that could be explored, but charging would not give us the extra resources we need. We would have some money, but it is people we need, and we could not charge enough and it would not be a guaranteed source of income anyway (*that would allow us*) to employ extra staff.

The Deputy of St. John:

At the moment, the Harbour Department charges a fee for using their harbour, which includes

navigation, pilotage and other things. What they do not charge for though is services that we provide, so there is nothing built in there for the cost of clearing the passengers through Customs and Immigration. There is an expectation that the Government should provide it (*free of charge*), and we do provide it, but (*it should be based on a*) standard services to clear people at the border, so nothing was ever constructed to cost into doing (*processing*) transit passengers on board (*which is an added service benefit to the shipping companies*).

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So you have just told us that you provide a service over and above what you believe you should be doing, and is that service provided in other Common Travel Areas?

Mr. M. Robinson:

No, the U.K. do not have onboard controls in the same way, not quite, no.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So are you saying that Jersey is giving special provision to the ferry companies that they would not receive were they to go into a port in the U.K. or in Guernsey?

The Deputy of St. John:

It is unusual.

Mr. M. Robinson:

In Guernsey, they do do onboard controls, but they do not have the same movement of traffic as we do, so it is not as critical there.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Do they charge for them?

Mr. M. Robinson:

No.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

What discussion have you had with E.D.D. (Economic Development Department) about perhaps getting some funding from them for the provision that you are making here, because you have just said they take all harbour entry fees.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, we did have a discussion last year, and they did provide us with some funding last year, which helped mitigate some of our overtime costs at that time, and those were discussions that we had in

advance of the season and we shared some of the cost.

Mr. M. Robinson:

That is right, and we are in discussion with them at the moment, but this will help, and extra money for the budget is never unwelcome, but it does not solve the problem that we have.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I understand that, but we are looking at funding pressures that you have, and obviously from our point of view, if there is any way that you can recoup any money towards your budget, then it seems to me that you should be giving serious consideration to that.

The Deputy of St. John:

Now, one could argue that a percentage of the incoming cost per head of passenger should be contributed towards the cost of clearing those passengers through Customs and Immigration. One could argue that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Who would you argue that with?

The Deputy of St. John:

With Economic Development.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Is that what you are doing?

The Deputy of St. John:

We have had those discussions, yes.

Deputy S. Pitman:

You said earlier that you had tried to put this view across. To who did you?

The Deputy of St. John:

To the Minister responsible for harbours and airports and the management team.

Deputy S. Pitman:

And the ferry companies?

The Deputy of St. John:

Not the ferry companies directly, but you have our correspondence with the ferry companies, have you not?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That is a good point, I think, that Deputy Pitman has made. If you have had discussion with the ferry companies about this, what has their reaction been?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Very negative.

The Deputy of St. John:

It is an extra cost to them.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

It would be an extra cost to them. Have they given any indication that if this was something to be implemented that the extra cost that would be charged to them would be passed on to their passengers?

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, of course it would, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Well, is that something that is affecting your decision to push ahead with making a charge to them?

The Deputy of St. John:

Currently, we cannot within the law anyway make a charge for our services. We have an obligation to provide that public service, but we are talking here about an extraordinary service, above the basic service.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Exactly.

The Deputy of St. John:

So there have been discussions, which Steven might add to, between the Head of Economic Development and our Chief Officer as well, if you want to add to that.

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

I wanted to add 2 things to what has been said: first, on the matter in point, I think hitherto, we have tried to take a corporate view of going down this charging line, because it is one thing taking a parochial view, a Customs view and a Home Affairs budget view, but if you do anything beyond that, you then start to affect the travelling public. We do not just sit here with Home Affairs solely in mind, so we have resisted going down that route up until now. It is the sort of thing that you might consider, like we are getting to now, where it really is getting desperate and you have to think of other

options. So I think it is has been with a responsible attitude in mind.

Deputy S. Pitman:

May I just ask, you were saying that you are considering that this cost would go on to the public. What kind of costs have you been discussing?

The Deputy of St. John:

We do not really have that detail. The only discussion we had last time was the overtime costs that we were incurring at that time to resource those checks. That was done through overtime and one extra seasonal worker or something.

Deputy S. Pitman:

But the cost to the ferry companies?

Mr. M. Robinson:

I mean, if we are talking about recovery of costs, our costs, we calculate it on the overtime, that is what we looked at, and you are talking tens of thousands a year, but it is not massive amounts.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I would just like some clarification on that. You have just referred to tens of thousands in overtime costs. Now, presumably that has increased because of the additional --

The Deputy of St. John:

Extra movements.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

-- port arrivals, as instigated by E.D.D. so --

Mr. M. Robinson:

So they have contributed. E.D.D. have contributed.

Ms. L. Middleton:

Last year, I think the estimate was round about £39,000 for overtime costs but I am not sure how many controls that was for. But that was the cost that was discussed with Economic Development and with the Harbour office and Economic Development did make a contribution towards the costs. But, as Mike said, that is basically overtime, it does not provide any certainty in terms of resource or setting the base budget.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That was last year.

Ms. L. Middleton:

That was last year as a one-off.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

What did they contribute?

Ms. L. Middleton:

Economic Development contributed £13,000.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So a third. What about this year because this is not money that you can rely on to provide the service that you are providing - this extraordinary service?

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

We have asked them to repeat that contribution this year - to get us through this year.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Right and 2009?

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

Well, that is the subject of the funding pressure to try and solve it. Because we know it is a recurring problem we are just highlighting what would be needed to solve it once and for all without tackling it year on year.

The Deputy of St. John:

This is good for Jersey. It is extra movement into Jersey. It is good for Jersey and good for the economy and they have done a great job in getting those extra lights and extra boats into Jersey. We are not by any means criticising that but it does have an unintended consequence, an impact on resources and that was not fully discussed before those (*schedule*) agreements with the shipping companies were made with us. We have fixed that now, that will not happen again. We were caught a little bit last year with this although we had flagged it up with Economic Development at an earlier stage it was not finally discussed until very close to the beginning of the season.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Is not the Ministerial Government meant to resolve issues such as this?

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes.

Deputy S. Pitman:

So what discussion or consultation did you have with Economic Development?

The Deputy of St. John:

As soon as we were aware of the problem we brought it to the attention of the Harbours Department at operation level.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So they did not involve you at initial discussion level when they were aiming to increase boat arrivals?

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

No.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

When did you become aware of it?

Mr. M. Robinson:

It was about --

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

The summer of 2007.

Mr. M. Robinson:

No, it was 2006. It was the end of 2006

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

The year before.

Mr. M. Robinson:

November-December, I cannot remember now.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

And how?

Mr. M. Robinson:

I would like to give an accurate -- so if I could come back on that?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

If you are not able to do that today ...

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, I think it was when we saw the schedules. I think that is right, the harbour schedules.

The Deputy of St. John:

We were given the schedules later on but by that time they had already been agreed with the Harbours Department. So they had agreed their schedules. We were then given the schedules and they said that this is just to let you know what is going on so you can resource it. We should have been involved at an earlier stage than that and they have acknowledged that. This year it was quite the opposite, we were in discussions with them very early about the schedules.

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

Chairman, there was one other point, if you do not mind? When you were talking about this question of does anybody else do these onboard controls, I mean, Mike will correct me if I am wrong, but I think it is something that is fairly unique to here in the sense that the ferries coming in and then going on with a boatload of passengers, 500-600 passengers, and we are the first port of call for the British Isles. So we have that duty to check them but they are going on. That is unusual. If you are going from France to Dover and people are getting off very few may be getting off in Jersey, very few may get off in Guernsey. So we have the duty but we are not getting the people. They have no reason to get off the ferry other than to be checked. It is a slightly unusual position to be in.

The Deputy of St. John:

The only vaguely similar situation that we are aware of was pointed out to us by the Commercial Director of Harbours who told us that during her involvement with ferry companies across the Channel a number of operators clubbed together to speed up the operation of immigration clearance. They put an Immigration officer on board to begin the process of clearing passengers before they arrived at Dover and they paid the Immigration Department for that service.

Deputy D.W. Mezhourian:

That was an initiative by the companies themselves?

The Deputy of St. John:

By the operators. They all clubbed together and they agreed this process.

Deputy D.W. Mezhourian:

Have you suggested this clubbing together?

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, if we did that with our officers we would end up with them all stuck in St. Malo having a jolly old day until the boat came back the next day. So it would not quite work with us whereas across the English Channel there are so many ferries going across every hour that it is possible.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Again, our unique position would not preclude that.

Mr. M. Robinson:

The ferry companies are quite clear in their view on this and they say that the provision of the Immigration control is a function of government and the Government must do it and it is not for them to pay. That is their line.

The Deputy of St. John:

I do not think that is an unreasonable suggestion. But the rest of the other part of the government, we are talking here corporate thinking, the corporate view of our government, needs to consider the consequences of extra movements well in advance and that is now beginning to happen so we can plan. But there is a consequence of additional routes to Jersey in terms of border control, there is no getting away from that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

We have found in one of our previous reviews that the planning of the Economic Development Department does not always take in account the implications that it may have upon other departments and that was in the User Pays review and, of course, they have endeavoured to initiate more events in the Island which has had an impact on the policing situation. This is another example of the Economic Development Department affecting Home Affairs that has been brought to our attention during our review. We made comment on this in the User Pays. I think what we have done is, as you know, identified questions we wanted answered and we have covered quite a few so if we just take time to gather our thoughts. We would like to touch on the Goods and Services Tax and also the merger of the Customs and Immigration Services. Do you want to start on G.S.T.?

Deputy S. Pitman:

Yes. We were just talking about working in a corporate manner with Economic Development into your service. With regards to G.S.T. how much consultation did you have with the Treasury and do you feel that it was adequate?

The Deputy of St. John:

I would say it was very extensive and that it has been planned very, very well and that we have been commended by Treasury to that effect, the way we have communicated with them and the way the teams have worked together to ensure, we hope, a very trouble-free implementation of G.S.T.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So they have commended you; are you able to commend them?

Mr. M. Robinson:

It has been an extremely close working relationship as it had to be and I am happy with the way that both sides have integrated.

Deputy S. Pitman:

And do you feel that your service is ready now for the implementation?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes.

Deputy S. Pitman:

I assume that your officers have had to undertake training with Treasury?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes. I mean, the function of the Custom and Immigration officers for the collection of G.S.T. differs from the function of the officers in the Income Tax so it is our training. The training we had to do was specific to our needs. We have a small G.S.T. implementation team which is growing at the moment and they are fully up to speed. They are working their socks off at the moment getting us ready. We have every confidence that we will be ready but it is a busy time and I am sure there are going to be one or two things that we did not anticipate that we are going to have to cope with. But such is the nature, I think, of introducing a large change like this.

Deputy S. Pitman:

And in addition to the training and added staff, what has been the full cost of the introduction of G.S.T., do you know?

Mr. M. Robinson:

All told, Income Tax and Customs?

Deputy S. Pitman:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, the administration of it is about 0.4 per cent of the total take and the total take, I think, is £45 million, so it is 0.4 per cent of that.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Which is? I am not very good at maths.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Sorry, I do not have the figures with me.

The Deputy of St. John:

About £2 million.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Is that something you could probably find out?

Mr. M. Robinson:

I could certainly find it for you.

The Deputy of St. John:

It is just over £2 million.

Deputy S. Pitman:

May I now refer you to the document called *The Implementation of the Goods and Service Tax 2007*. On page 1 in the introduction it says: "Under the simple broad-base G.S.T. system proposed, 10 additional staff would be needed to administer G.S.T. at an additional total cost, including overheads, of approximately £500,000. In support of that recommendation this report provides a business case for an additional 5 multi-functional staff." Could you tell me, ideally, that you do need 10 additional staff? You have only applied for 5, as far as I am aware, within this report. Will that not stretch even more your resources for G.S.T.?

Mr. M. Robinson:

The 10 they refer to was the figure that was put forward by Crown agents at the very beginning of the G.S.T. work and that was for Income tax and Customs, 10 staff in total. So, 5 extra each. It goes on to say that 5 is identified for Customs, that is the way it was split. The actual recommendation does come out at 5 but it does carry a rider where they say that the officer felt that 8 would have been the most appropriate number for us for G.S.T. and that would have included an extra 3 staff for the Frontier teams as well as the 5 they have identified -- 3 for revenue collection and 2 for intelligence. But they say that they recognised the political landscape at the time and that this was very unlikely to happen and, therefore, restricted their recommendation to 5 extra officers.

The Deputy of St. John:

That is not the 5 we are bidding here?

Mr. M. Robinson:

No.

The Deputy of St. John:

That is already included in our budget because we have been given the money for that already from

the Treasury to support the G.S.T. implementation.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I would like to take you back, Mr. Robinson, please, to the possible impact of not receiving the funding you have identified as being necessary to bring you to, I think you said, a standstill situation. You touched on the Immigration costings there, is there anything else that would be affected?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes. Before I answer -- the onboard control thing, I would mention there would be fewer Customs controls and we would have to do something about the onboard Immigration controls. Another area that I touched on earlier and I will have to look at is the continued provision of 100 per cent Immigration controls and if that is just possible. I mean, there comes a point where something just seems to be impossible, so I am going to have to look at that and His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor has already asked me questions about this and I now have to look seriously at that. The other impact would be that we would not be able to provide Immigration controls in quite the way we do at the moment, where in past it has always been our policy to clear people through Immigration as speedily as possible but, of course, this requires enough officers to do that. What we are going to look at is fewer officers at Immigration Control which will, I am sure, create longer queues to go through Immigration.

The Deputy of St. John:

There were a couple of occasions last year whereby there were boats arriving at the same time and when other active investigations were going on (*resulting in*) long queues at the border but it was minimal (*rare*). We did receive some complaints about that but it is only about the queue times and we know what the reaction of the public was as a result of that. We would like to try and avoid that if we can.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Absolutely. I mean, the reason that this would happen would be to avoid walking away from as many customs controls as possible, that is why. So if we have fewer officers at the Immigration Controls it leaves more to spare to put at Customs Control. Often now when the car ferries are coming in we are just not there for a customs purpose and I do not think that is acceptable.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Do you have any evidence of the impact that not having officers at those car checks may be having on goods brought into the Island?

Mr. M. Robinson:

There is no evidence and it is impossible to say definitively what the effects will be. In my view if you are not at the controls you increase the chances of smuggling and if you are increasing the

chances of smuggling you are probably increasing the eventuality of smuggling and I think that is extremely possible.

Deputy S. Pitman:

I am going to change the subject slightly and ask a few questions about the merger of Customs and Immigration. The audits of the merger, of the frontier teams, endorse that initiative but identifies, as one of the 2 high priority observations, the lack of resources and the impact that it is having upon the customs controls and potential effect on the commitment and wellbeing of officers. The G.S.T. Starting review noticed that while recognising significant changes brought about by the merging of Customs and Immigration and the result saving in administration and management operational staffing levels remained reasonably constant. Would you remind us about the background to the merger and the Immigration?

Mr. M. Robinson:

The merger you are referring to is the merger of the frontier teams. Once we had the merger of Customs and Excise Department and Immigration and Nationality Department we looked at how this should move forward and in 2006 decided that the logical step was not to have separate Immigration officers at the frontiers and separate Customs officers at the frontiers but to have Customs and Immigration officers so it was the merger of those frontier teams. Now what we have are Customs and Immigration officers who can undertake the full range of functions. There is still a lot of training going on here but that is what the merger was about. This ties in exactly with what is happening elsewhere. In the UK in the last month they have announced the UK Border Agency, they have done exactly the same thing. They have merged the customs and immigration frontier functions into one Border agency. So you are going to have Customs and Immigration officers now who are 'all agency' officers.

Deputy S. Pitman:

And how much does this merger save the service?

Mr. M. Robinson:

It saved us -- I have not the figures in front of me but I can provide those. We actually reduced the number of senior officers that we needed for the teams so whereas you would have senior officers looking after the Immigration teams, senior officers looking after Customs teams, we could reduce those because we merged those teams so we just had one senior officer for each team. The principal savings were achieved through that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You mentioned the Customs and Immigration officers rather than separate entities, that is an advantage, presumably, of the merger. Have you identified any other advantages?

Mr. M. Robinson:

That is the principal advantage. The service operates what we call multi-functionality, which is not a very nice phrase, but what it means is that officers in the service can be moved and move anywhere else. So you can have an officer working in the G.S.T. section and at the end of a certain period would be moved to the Frontier section or would be moved to the Intelligence section. This flexibility is good, I believe, for the officers and is good for the service, for the small service. It gives us the ability to use our staff to the best. So increasing the knowledge and expertise of the officers does give us that flexibility as well.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Any disadvantages?

Mr. M. Robinson:

The disadvantages: it could be argued that you lose expertise and so that is something that we have to monitor very carefully. It is not something we have experienced but it is something that we are aware could become a problem and so we monitor it closely and we make sure the training is there.

The Deputy of St. John:

From a professional point of view, it is not. The staff I have spoken to on the frontiers have welcomed it because now they have learned lots of new skills and they are multi-disciplined; they have got a more challenging role that is even more varied than it was before. So, from a personal development point of view, most of them -- I think all of them -- are very happy with it that they have got more demanding and challenging jobs, you need a complete mix of skills. From a professional development point of view, it has been a great step forward and I believe that has also helped maintain good morale as well.

Mr. M. Robinson:

I think that is a very good point and it is worth saying that when the merger took place no officer was coerced into becoming a customs and immigration officer. Every officer had the ability to decide and that was quite clear from a political level that it had to be like that. All the officers that are now Customs and Immigration officers have chosen to be Customs and Immigration officers. We have about 3 officers, I think, that have said: "No, I still want to just stay as an Immigration officer or Customs officer", for their own purposes.

The Deputy of St. John:

They were close to retirement, were they not?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, some of them were close to retirement and they have been allowed to do that. But the vast majority agreed and signed up.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So the vast majority have received training to multi-task, multi-skill? You have got about 3 who you are only able to use in one area and there is training for G.S.T.?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes. There will be an element of G.S.T. training for all officers. Even the frontier officers will have to know what they are going to do if they encounter goods at the frontier, but that is very simple for them to do it, charge 3 per cent. But for the officers working in the Revenue Goods Control section, yes, G.S.T. training has been higher.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Can I come back to what you said earlier, Mr. Robinson, about duplication or avoiding duplication which was one of the reasons behind the merger, and I say again that this is a complete learning curve for me and there is a great deal that I do not know. But I can see the States of Jersey Police Report for the first quarter of this year where they feel that the total number of police checks on passengers passing through the harbour and airport on Border duty has dropped by almost 40 per cent. Now, can you explain to me why the police are conducting Border duties and why Customs and Immigration is doing the same? I want to know whether it is duplication because another thing is that you are referring the Board to your report that police and Customs have complementary roles in keeping the Island safe from illegal drugs and that it is essential that the resources available to both are utilised efficiently to prevent duplication of effort. Is any duplication taking place here?

Mr. M. Robinson:

On the police checks that you mentioned at the Borders, these are Special Branch checks and these are done principally for anti-terrorism purposes. That is the reason that Special Branch are at the ports. That does not stop them - and nor should it, I believe - undertaking normal policing duties. So if they detected somebody who there was an arrest warrant out for they would take the appropriate action, that is what they are doing there. What we are doing at the borders is obviously the Immigration Controls - Passport Control; and the Customs Controls will be looking for smuggled goods. So there are 3 separate functions, if you like. As to whether you could merge totally those functions, that is a moot question. It has not happened in the UK even the new UK Border Agency does not undertake the Special Branch function although Immigration officers are entitled to undertake some Special Branch functions if necessary. But that is just sensible.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That is in the UK?

Mr. M. Robinson:

And here. They are empowered to do it. So they could ask questions for terrorism purposes if they needed to do so. But that is the reason why you have Special Branch officers at the ports. That is one

side of the question. The other side of the question was duplication on drugs investigations. This is where we have to ensure that there is a co-operative working relationship between the 2 agencies because the overlap I am talking about there is - we are both interested in illegal drug crime. We are principally involved in detecting and investigating importations. Of course, being a small island any work that the police do (*on drugs*) will involve the importation at a very close level so what you want to make sure is that the agencies are co-operating in a sensible way to utilise their resources.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

And is that happening?

Mr. M. Robinson:

I think there is some work to do to improve the situation as it is and that is something that we are looking closely at. It is not as good as it could be but it is a work in progress.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

How long will it take to progress?

Mr. S. Austin-Vautier:

Sorry, Chairman, did you mean about the borders with that question or are you talking generally?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I do not mind how it is answered. Maybe you can answer both. Maybe you can answer that about the borders and then generally.

The Deputy of St. John:

I mean there is a regular co-operation between the 2 forces that has never stopped and the Financial Crimes Unit is staffed with both Customs and police officers and is successfully running at the moment and has been for some time (*and throughout this period*). I was having a conversation with an officer today about that and it works extremely well. I think one of the areas you are probably getting at is the Joint Intelligence Bureau.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Well, it may be because what I really wanted to know was the reason for the recent downturn in drug seizures which you reported in your 2007 report. So for you to tell us why there has been a downturn, initially.

Mr. M. Robinson:

It is mentioned in the report - the reasons we think would have contributed towards that. You cannot say definitively what are the reasons but if we are looking back at where we were in 2007 and trying to find possible reasons for a downturn in drug seizures we have identified 3 areas. They were - the resources which meant we were not at the frontier controls as often as we would have wished. The

effect of the criminal investigation in the latter part of the year by the police which affected our capabilities to undertake proactive operations for a while and the ongoing training of officers to sufficient levels in our customs and immigration work. Another factor which could be there - it is not in the report - is disruption of the syndicates in the Island by the States Police, so their success there would affect drugs coming in. As I say, it is not possible for anybody to say definitively this is the reason for that. But if we look back at possible effects, those are they.

The Deputy of St. John:

If I could also add that we have had a great deal of success (*in apprehending people at the border*) in recent years so people have started to realise: "Hang on a minute, this is not a border that is a soft touch, by any means". We would like to believe also that the result of that work over a number of years that the signal (*warning*) has gone out - do not try and get through our borders with, particularly, narcotics. So we believe we have had an impact too. But as Mike says there is no scientific way of identifying exactly which has had that effect. It will be a combination of all of them and there is really no way of proving it. The only indicator we have at the moment is through police intelligence. They can tell roughly what the street price of drugs is and that has maintained at a consistently high price throughout this period which usually indicates that no extra supply is getting in other than what was coming in before. So we would like to think that the border is still reasonably strong. We can only really give more definitive answers after a 3-year period because then you can take a 3-year average and look at any changes during that period that may have affected it. But at the moment it would be too early to point the finger at one particular thing or, indeed, any of those things.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

We just have a few general questions.

Deputy S. Pitman:

I have a question for you on the biometric passports. What pressures has been placed on the service relating to the passports in the associated interview process?

Mr. M. Robinson:

We anticipated quite a lot of extra work. In fact, it has not proven to be as bad as we did anticipate. So it is manageable at the moment. The passport section is always busy and in summer that increases but it has been coped with.

Deputy S. Pitman:

What particular pressures have you had? Have you had to employ more overtime staff?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes. There was quite a bit of overtime last year and we put extra resources in there, some of our administration officers will go in and help out at times when the workload is extremely busy. It has increased the workload but we have increased the size of the passport office slightly to help as well.

It is probably fair to say it is busier than it was before but we are coping with it.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Has it slowed down the process of being issued with a passport?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes. In that we were missing the targets last year -- in the summer it did, yes. We got particularly busy. We have tried this year to encourage people to apply for their passports early and to apply before they start planning their travel even -- you know, "look at your passport". There is some evidence that has worked because we have seen a slight increase in the applications during the winter so, hopefully, that might feed through to the summer but it is too early to say.

The Deputy of St. John:

But it is still a significantly shorter period to obtain a new passport than it is in the UK, a fraction of the time. But it is more than it used to be because of the resource issue.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am sure if Deputy Gallichan was here she would be complimenting your service because I understand she needed to have a passport issued relatively quickly last week and I think she had it within about a day.

The Deputy of St. John:

We still have a fast-track service for which one pays extra, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

But even with the fast-track service she received it much faster than she was expecting to.

Mr. M. Robinson:

They can turn around things extremely quickly if needs must but if you are in the pile of waiting then it is ...

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I would like to come back, please, to the increase of flight and shipping arrivals. I am not sure if I have overlooked it but I notice that in your report for last year you referred to there being an 85 per cent increase in boat arrivals from France. I could not see any figures relating to the UK arrivals.

Mr. M. Robinson:

That would have been because ... they are not there.

The Deputy of St. John:

There were changes -- in 2007 i.e. the new Heathrow link. The most recent ones would be Liverpool

and Luton.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

No, sorry, did I say flight arrivals?

Mr. M. Robinson:

No, you said boat arrivals.

The Deputy of St. John:

Boat arrivals, right.

Mr. M. Robinson:

The increase was really -- that factor was really from France and UK arrivals were really ...

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Can you give us an indication of the percentage of flight arrivals that are not checked?

The Deputy of St. John:

Do you want to go on public record? There is a border security issue here which we would rather not have in the public domain.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Okay. Maybe I will address that under private information - that is no problem.

The Deputy of St. John:

All I would say is that we are profiling flights anyway so if we have any major cause for concern officers are there.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Which you have made clear.

The Deputy of St. John:

I would not say our guard is down. We would not want necessarily to say exactly when we are and when we are not there.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Can you tell us about the impact of the relocation of customs officers to Maritime House?

Mr. M. Robinson:

The Intelligence Section?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes. I believe some of your officers were located ...

Mr. M. Robinson:

That is right. This came about in July last year after the report we had on the staffing review by Crown agents where they recommended that we need extra resources in the intelligence function to cope with G.S.T., basically, to make sure that we were not going to be caught cold with any revenue frauds with the introduction of G.S.T. They also recommended that we should not have 2 separate intelligence functions suites, one at headquarters and one elsewhere, which would have been at the Joint Intelligence Bureau. So we knew that there was insufficient room in the Joint Intelligence Bureau for extra resources so we had to do something about this. The obvious solution was to relocate and to put the intelligence officers together in one place and that is what we have done.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am not 100 per cent certain on what your Joint Intelligence Bureau section does and your Joint Financial Crimes Unit does. Can you explain about those, please?

Mr. M. Robinson:

The 3 officers in the Joint Financial Crimes Unit are part of a much larger team which is principally -- well the rest of the team are principally police officers. The total complement of the team is something like 19. They undertake, as the title says, investigations into all aspects of financial crimes - that could be fraud, money laundering, anything that is going to be financial crime will go through that unit. They also receive suspicious transaction reports from the banks. If the banks have anything suspicious to report that is where they go. The officers that we have placed there principally work on the drugs money laundering, it just happens to be part of the work that they get involved with, but they are part of that joint team. So that is the Joint Financial Crimes Unit.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Can I ask why it is necessary to have officers from your department?

Mr. M. Robinson:

When the law came in - the drug trafficking offences law - it was quite clear there it was both police and customs officers that would have the power to investigate under that law. For a long time there was just a small section that was dealing with drugs money and there were equal numbers of police and customs officers. The police still had their Fraud Squad independently. It was decided that it would make sense to put all financial crimes in one unit. So the officers that were there in the small section just became subsumed into the larger. Is it necessary? The advantages are that the customs officer will have contact with the customs officers elsewhere. They will bring the knowledge of customs work to the Unit, which would not be there necessarily from the police side. If they were not there and they were taken out numbers would have to be made up by somebody else, so it might help us to deploy the officers elsewhere in the Service but the Unit would still have to find the numbers

and they would have to find the numbers to meet international requirements anyway.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

But if you had 3 officers released from there then that would help the delivery of your services and if the remaining officers - 16 officers - needed to have a complement of 19 it would be for the police, surely, to identify the funding for them.

The Deputy of St. John:

It would be but it is all Home Affairs.

Mr. M. Robinson:

That is just what I was going to say, it is all the Home Affairs budget.

The Deputy of St. John:

The same lot, so it would not make any difference. We would be bidding then for more money for the police.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes, I understand that but at the moment you are talking about pressures within Customs.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, there are pressures in the police as well which I will not go into today; it is not part of this particular scrutiny review. Those resources are finite as well; there is no contingency in the police either. So there would be knock-on impacts on the police budget or on what they deliver.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Okay. Tell us about the Joint Intelligence Bureau then, please.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes. The Joint Intelligence Bureau is there to research intelligence on major crime that, principally from the Custom's point of view, has focussed on drugs crimes. So our priority is the detection of illegal drugs. Officers in there will look to find out information and intelligence about drug syndicates to a point of effecting arrest and seizures.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Can I just say that we were aware that Channel Television may want to come and at this hearing we normally have the media in. We do not normally have them arriving so far through the hearing so I am sorry that it has caused some interruption. But I am sure you will be grateful to get more media attention and public interest in the fact you are under-funded. I have been very quickly trying to total the number of officers that you had on the departmental chart here. In 2007 I think I have made the total 90 but I have not calculated it for -- that would be including, I think --

Mr. M. Robinson:

It should be 80.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Well, that means I cannot count. Can you just talk me through the difference then, please, between the departmental manpower for 2006 and what we see on the 2008? But there are some differences.

Mr. M. Robinson:

I have not got the 2007 structure in front of me.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

The total was --

The Deputy of St. John:

Some of them would have been the G.S.T. officers.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, that is right.

The Deputy of St. John:

We should have, I think, 82.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Well, Revenue and Goods control section, 8 officers in 2008. This is to do with the G.S.T., is it?

Mr. M. Robinson:

Partly G.S.T.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

And 6 for October 2006. So, more in 2008.

Mr. M. Robinson:

The extra officers are for G.S.T.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Then from March 2008, 8 officers on your Service Investigation Unit and you had 10 with G.S.T.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes, we have down-sized the Service Investigation Unit and reallocated those officers to the frontiers.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Then 6 Joint Intelligence Bureau officers in 2007, 7 now.

Mr. M. Robinson:

Yes. That is also a G.S.T. occupation. Yes, we have to put another officer in there at some stage but at the moment it is 7.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

And 3 constant to the Joint Financial Crimes Unit. Frontier teams, 28 in 2006 and 30 March 2008.

Mr. M. Robinson:

That is the Service Investigation Unit officers being reallocated.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Okay. Then an increase of 2½ on Immigration because it is now 9½ as opposed to 7.

Mr. M. Robinson:

We put an extra officer in the casework - it was the workload there, and extra officers into Passport section.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Tell us what the Service Investigation Unit does, please?

Mr. M. Robinson:

They will take on proactive investigations into any Customs and Immigration serious offences, but principally it is drug offences that they will be looking at. So they will be looking to work up the intelligence that is coming through from the Joint Intelligence Bureau. The Joint Intelligence Bureau are receiving what the Service Intelligence officers are working on and receiving intelligence on drug syndicates. They will pass that on to the Service Investigation Unit who look to do proactive work to try and identify when importations are occurring.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Just one last question from me and I do not think you will be able to provide the details here. I would just like to know what the overtime costs were for the years since 2005 caused by the lack of staffing.

Mr. M. Robinson:

I can certainly give you the overtime costs and we can break them down to why the overtime has been allocated for and specific reasons. To say this bit is for lack of staffing and this bit is for somebody being off sick would be extremely difficult to do. I do not think I would be able to break it down like that.

Deputy S. Pitman:

So would a comparison be able to be made with previous years, before 2005?

Mr. M. Robinson:

We could certainly do that, yes. I could find that for you, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you. I think we have done quite well with the timing. Just one general question to finish on and that is to discuss the relationship between Customs and Immigration and the States of Jersey Police at the moment and whether there are any implications from that relationship on the services that you are delivering.

The Deputy of St. John:

I would not say it is having a resource implication at the moment but I am a great believer that in "joined up government" we have a finite resource in Jersey. We are both law enforcement agencies and we should - whenever possible - work as closely together as possible to maximise the finite resource that we have. There is plenty of evidence of that and I hope, going forward, there will be even more. But at the moment I would not say that it is wasting any of our resources I just think we can make better use of it if we were working fully, in terms of joined up working.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So you say if you were working fully in terms of joined up working, does that mean you are not?

The Deputy of St. John:

At the moment we do not have full co-operation going on in the Joint Intelligence Bureau, I think that has been publicly stated on a number of occasions. But that situation is about to be resolved so I expect business as usual fairly soon.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Did you say it is about to be resolved?

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So how will it be resolved?

The Deputy of St. John:

One of the things that has happened which Mike referred to earlier is that we will be working from Maritime House with the Intelligence Bureau there, with full co-operation with the police in that they have an intelligence bureau at Police Headquarters and there will be plenty of joint working going on albeit some of it in cyberspace, and regular meetings will be occurring to make sure that intelligence is exchanged.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So how is morale?

The Deputy of St. John:

Morale as a result of the investigations that we are talking about, of course it dipped somewhat. Nobody likes that type of thing going on in the workplace but since then the officers are very professional, they have got on with the job and they are fully engaged in doing a very professional job which takes one's mind off other things, for sure, because they are busy people doing a responsible job.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So did the drop in drug seizures, was it due to the investigation that was carried out last year into Customs ...?

The Deputy of St. John:

Well, no. As we said earlier on there were lots of mitigating reasons for that, none of which we can categorically prove. We already highlighted 4 reasons why there may have been a drop in seizures.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So are you categorical that it had no implications on the delivery of services?

Mr. M. Robinson:

You cannot say that.

The Deputy of St. John:

It is as outlined in the report.

Mr. M. Robinson:

It will be one of the issues that possibly affected the downturn in seizures, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

To end, do you foresee if not an increase in drug seizures on 2006, do you see this year an increase on 2007 or at least building up to perhaps the previous year's figure?

Mr. M. Robinson:

We have to get back to the situation we were and that is taking time. So there will be an effect --I think there could be an effect this year. But we are very close to being back to our effectiveness. So, I am happy (*about that*).

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So a positive note to finish the hearing on. Thank you very much for coming. As I indicated at the start, you have given us a lot to think about and we have had submissions from the public which we will be looking at and we invite you back to hearing to perhaps clarify any issues that we need clarification upon. So, thank you very much.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Thank you.

The Deputy of St. John:

Thank you. As you know, the invitation still extends to visit the facilities at the Border at any time.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes, that is being arranged now with our office.

The Deputy of St. John:

Thank you for your interest in this matter.