

## **5. Urgent Oral Question**

### **5.1 The Connétable of St. John of the Minister for Economic Development regarding the action plan in place in the event of the demise of stevedore company George Troy and Sons Limited to ensure that the Island's transport and freight-handling needs are met:**

With the possible demise of the prominent stevedore company, George Troy and Sons Limited, what action plan is in place, if any, to ensure that the Island transport and freight-handling needs are met in full and will the Minister keep the Assembly fully up to speed on events?

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

The directors of George Troy and Sons have placed the company into solvent liquidation and appointed Grant Thornton to complete the liquidation process. Jersey Harbours have contingency plans in place and I am confident that there will be no interruption to freight, car or passenger services. With immediate effect, Jersey Harbours have instigated a process through which a new contract for stevedoring services within the Ports of Jersey will commence and ultimately be awarded. Provided Grant Thornton establish that the company can trade in a solvent manner, Jersey Harbours' contingency provision will not be required. This is because George Troy and Sons will be in a position to provide stevedoring services for a period of 16 weeks from the date when staff notice is served. This will provide time for the tender and contract award process for a new stevedoring service to be undertaken and completed.

#### **5.1.1 The Connétable of St. John:**

As many freight companies service Jersey and the Island will have the dilemma of having to restructure the licence process for any new stevedore company, in the interim is it possible that the Island may have to take over the company and employ the staff direct or through the existing company, that way allowing the staff some security?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

At this stage, it is impossible to be clear as to what the likely outcome is going to be until we have a full report from the liquidators. However, I can say that, in the event that the service had to terminate at short notice, then the States, Jersey Harbours in particular, would indeed take the service over in the short term until a tender process could be concluded.

#### **5.1.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Can the Minister clarify for the House whether there are features of the current contract that have led to this situation and which, if they were to be repeated in the new contract, would not really lead to an improved situation?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

I think that is a matter for the contract tendering process to take into consideration. The details of the particular contracts are only one point with regard to this business and its sustainability.

#### **5.1.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:**

Could the Minister clarify what are the key contract and non-contract factors that have led to this situation, which he is determined, hopefully, not to repeat in the re-tendering process?

#### **Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

At this stage, that is a matter very much for George Troy and Sons, that is the company, and indeed a matter which the liquidators themselves are at this stage still assessing. Until I have had the report from the liquidators I cannot give very much more information, I am afraid.

#### **5.1.4 Deputy S. Power:**

The Minister referred to the tendering process over the next period of time. Can the Minister give the Assembly an indication as to whether he will consider accepting a tender from a company outside the Island?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

At this stage, it is impossible to say. I think we would need to see who comes forward and what level of services are offered. What I would say is that whoever becomes successful with regard to the contract is going to require the significant expertise that is offered by the men who currently work for George Troy and Sons. I would also add at this point that I think the staff, in total, of George Troy and Sons should be commended for the way in which they have dealt with this very difficult position and the fact that the services have continued uninterrupted in these recent days.

**5.1.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Is the Minister aware of what redundancy payments or similar schemes are in place should this result in redundancies?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

At this stage, no.

**5.1.6 Deputy G.P. Southern:**

Will the Minister agree to consult with Minister for Social Security and come to the House and tell us what is in place?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

Yes, of course I will consult with my Ministerial colleagues. What I have undertaken to do is keep Members fully apprised of the situation as it evolves and clearly that is one element that would be included in that.

**5.1.7 The Connétable of St. John:**

Within the tender process will the 2 main operators who bring freight into the Island be permitted to tender and, if so, would this not be to the detriment of the smaller freight operators?

**Senator A.J.H. Maclean:**

At this stage, it would be wrong to predetermine who indeed may or may not tender. The tender would be open for anyone who so desires to put forward a tender, then it would be a matter of assessing the merits of each and every one that is received. All I am concerned about is that we get the best possible solution for Jersey.