

Senator Walker refuses to defend the indefensible

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As I noted on 27 November, Senator Walker, Chief Minister of Jersey agreed to debate with me 'any time he likes at any time of their choosing' when interviewed live on BBC Radio Jersey on 26 November.

Deputy Geoff Southern was curious about this, so he tabled the following question in Jersey's parliament for Senator Walker to answer, in writing. His question, and the response he got yesterday are reproduced below. I'll comment more fully on this later today.

~~WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER~~

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 5th DECEMBER 2006

Question

Following his public statement that he would be willing to hold a public debate with Mr. Richard Murphy of the Tax Justice Network would the Chief Minister inform members whether he will be taking steps to initiate such a debate and, if so, when he expects it to be held?

Answer

When I was challenged on BBC Radio Jersey to a public debate with Mr. Murphy, my immediate reaction was to agree as I would have welcomed the opportunity of exposing his position on Jersey as the vindictive crusade it is.

However I have been advised subsequently that, previous experience would suggest that any such debate would be misrepresented by Mr. Murphy and would be damaging to the best interests of the island. I am therefore not now prepared to meet with him, or any other representative of the Tax Justice Network.

Mr. Murphy and his colleagues, who are an unelected, unrepresentative group, responsible only to themselves, are dedicated to shutting down Jersey's finance

industry with no thought or care given to the consequences for our Health, Education and other social services, nor for the jobs of over 12,000 local people. A public debate would give them credibility they neither deserve nor can justify.

I am surprised that Deputy Southern, as an elected member of this Assembly, charged with acting in the best interests of the people of Jersey, is prepared to act as an agent and mouthpiece for such an individual and such an organisation.